

#### Community Life:

- Yes to a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly plan
- No to absenteeism, careerism, and individualism

#### Chastity:

- Yes to a pure heart, a pure mind, and a pure body.
- No to using others, or technology, for our own ends of self-pleasure, self-aggrandisement, or self-service.

#### Obedience:

- Yes to listening to God, to one-another, and to our Superiors at the Local, Regional, and General levels;
- No to the mindset "I will not obey",
- No to being a "squatter" – that is - claiming to be a Marist but not being available in fact.

#### Poverty

- Yes to owning all things in common, knowing and making known our personal and communal finances, properties, and possessions.
- No to keeping ones wages or salaries for oneself;
- No to having a personal bank account which my superiors don't know about, or which does not have another Marist's co-signature on it;
- No to lack of financial accountability.

#### Mission

- Yes to those who are most suffering and in need.

- No to using others to meet my own needs.

#### Leadership

- Yes to taking up responsibility at the Local, Regional, and Provincial levels.
- No to fear, side-stepping, and avoidance.

Like our good friend Paddy, let us all put our head out the window, have a good look, and see what we are saying Yes to, and what we are saying No to, in concrete and specific matters of our consecrated Marist life at this time.

Where have my Yes's and No's brought me to so far at this stage of my Journey? Where do I see them taking me in the future?

#### Exercise

Take one issue, one day at a time:

- Prayer
- Spiritual Life
- Community Life
- Chastity
- Obedience
- Poverty
- Mission
- Leadership



Ponder slowly and deliberately my ongoing configuration into the person of Jesus:

- What am I saying Yes to?
- What am I saying No to?

Write down my deliberations and share them openly and courageously with my Spiritual Director, or Soul Friend, and my Confessor.

## The Yes's and No's

of Jean-Claude Colin  
and Pope Francis



Bernard McKenna SM

A reflection for the  
Province of Oceania, Sep 2014

Perhaps we know the story of Mick and Paddy. As they were driving along Mick said to Paddy: "Can you put your head out the window to see if the indicator light is working." Paddy promptly did so and replied: "Yes, No, Yes, No, Yes, No....."!

Yes..... well.....on the Journey of life we have both many Yes's and No's. We are called to give a resounding Yes to what is good and life-giving, and by consequence a categorical No to what is harmful and destructive.

### **No's (and Yes's) of Jean-Claude Colin**

Fr Colin insisted on Three Great No's to what he saw was harmful and destructive in the Church and the World of his time:

- No to Greed
- No to Pride
- No to Power

These categorical No's imply three resounding Yes's to their opposites:

- Yes to Generosity
- Yes to Humility
- Yes to Service.

Perhaps focussing on the Yes's might enable us to live the No's in a more positive and inviting light, to take up what is fruitful and life-giving.

### **No's and Yes's of Pope Francis**

Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Ch 2, outlines many No's and two Yes's which he wants to see in the Church and the World today:

- No to an economy of exclusion
- No to the new idolatry of money

- No to a financial system which rules rather than serves
- No to the inequality which spawns violence;
- Yes to the challenge of a missionary spirituality
- No to selfishness and spiritual sloth
- No to a sterile pessimism
- Yes to the new relationships brought by Christ; No to spiritual worldliness
- No to warring among ourselves

Again if we focus on the positives we can hear him saying emphatically: Yes to an economy of inclusion; Yes to money as a servant; Yes to an equitable distribution of resources which enables peace; Yes to generosity and zeal; Yes to the virtue of hope; Yes to seeking the Glory of God; Yes to having one mind and heart among ourselves.

### **Jesus' Yes's and No's**

Both Fr Colin and Pope Francis walk in the footsteps of Jesus, who has both many Yes's and No's.

His Yes's come in the form of a blessing. To bless is to give life. Blessed are those who: depend on God; are gentle; who mourn; who hunger and thirst for truth; are merciful; pure in heart; peacemakers; and are persecuted in the cause of truth. [Matt 5: 1-10]

His No's come in the form of Woe's, or Alas's: the hypocrites; those shutting up the Kingdom of heaven; forming disciples fit for hell; swearing by the sacred; neglecting justice, mercy, and good faith; focussing on external rather than internal cleanliness; refusing to listen to the prophets and

messengers of God [Matt 23: 13-39] taking the seats of honour; loading up people with burdens that are unendurable; taking away the key of knowledge. [Lk 11:37-54].

At our recent Council of the Province Meeting in Futuna, Larry Duffy, our Vicar General, outlined the foundations of our Marist Identity, [cf: *The Superior General's Letter: Light from our Origins*]:

1. Spiritual Life,
2. Community Life,
3. Mission.

The Regional Superiors all acknowledged that in their Regions it was exactly the opposite. Mission came first, Community second, and Spiritual Life third! Hopefully they weren't 100% serious, because if they are then the Province is descending into the No, Woe, and Alas territory.

### **What are we saying Yes and No to?**

Perhaps it would profit all of us, as we enter the last quarter of the year, to take time to do our own examen on what we are saying Yes to, and No to, as individuals, communities, and as a Province. I would like to offer the following:

#### **Prayer**

- Yes to an unconditional surrender to God
- No to half-heartedness

#### **Spiritual Life:**

- Yes to a healthy asceticism [what I need to do to be open to God], and openness to a healthy mysticism [what God wants to do in my life];
- No to self-indulgence, and self-determination