

The beginning of the Marist movement

On Jul 23, 1816, twelve young Frenchmen began the Marist movement of men and women, laity, religious and priests, with a pledge at the shrine Fourvière in Lyon:

“The seminarians who climbed the hill of Fourvière were caught in a dream. They were convinced that Mary wanted something. She wanted to transform the Church into a Kingdom of mercy. In God’s providence she was to be the instrument to renew the Church into a servant and pilgrim people. She was to bring a new sensitivity and compassion. A compassion which saw in the skepticism of the time a desire of people to be authentic, to cast off all masks and illusions. A Church which would be gentle with unbelievers because it recognized in their disbelief the possibility of a deeper and sounder foundation for the faith. The men of Fourvière burned with a vision. They were innovators and prophets. They wanted to create something new. For the sake of their vision they were willing to set aside all desire for personal power, for fame, for possessions. The invitation to go to Oceania had not yet been made, the question had not yet been asked, and yet one knew that the answer would be ‘Yes’. They were men available. They were men on fire, the men of Fourvière.” (John Jago SM, Superior General, Letter of 24 September 1986 (“Mary Mother of our Hope”))



Françoise Perroton, Marist
Missionary Sisters



St Marcellin Champagnat
Marist Brothers



Marist Laity



Jeanne Marie Chavoin
Marist Sisters



Jean Claude, Founder
of the Marist movement

The Fourvière Pledge

We the undersigned, striving to work together for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary, Mother of the Lord Jesus, assert and declare our sincere intention and firm will of consecrating ourselves at the first opportunity to founding the congregation of Marists. That is why by the present act and our signatures, in so far as we can, we irrevocably dedicate ourselves and all our goods, to the Society of the Blessed Virgin. We do this, not childishly or lightly or for some human motive or the hope of material benefit, but seriously, maturely, having taken advice, having weighed everything before God, solely for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary, Mother of the Lord Jesus. We pledge ourselves to accept all sufferings, trials, inconveniences and, if needs be, torture, because we can do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens us and to whom we hereby promise fidelity to the Roman Catholic Church, cleaving with all our strength to its supreme head the Roman pontiff and to our most reverend bishop, the ordinary, that we may be good ministers of Jesus Christ, nourished with the words of faith and of the wholesome teaching which by his grace we have received. We solemnly promise that we shall spend ourselves and all we have in saving souls in every way under the very august name of the Virgin Mary and with her help. All this is subject to the wiser judgement of our superiors. May the Holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary be praised. Amen