

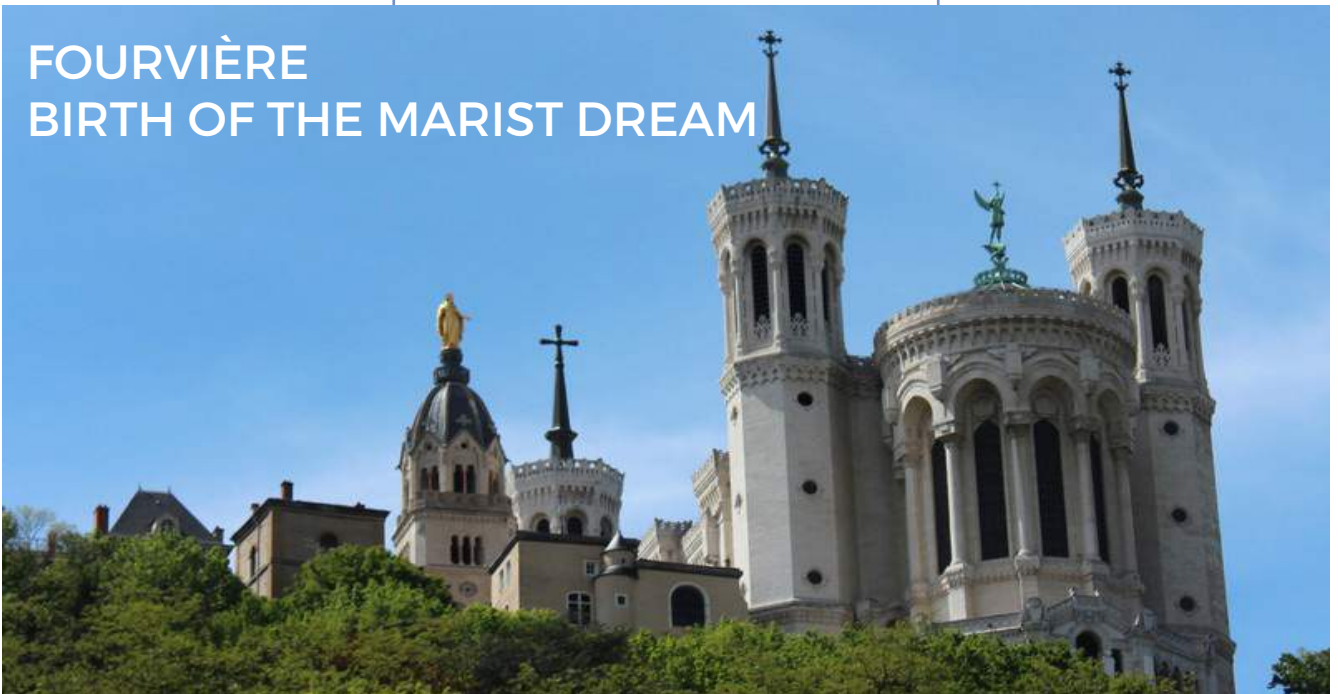
Join us for 9 days of focused prayer as the Marist Family around the world ponders the significance of the Fourvière Pledge taken in 1816 and its relevance in our lives as Marists today.

2

MARY'S PRESENCE IN
TODAY'S WORLD

3

**FOURVIÈRE
BIRTH OF THE MARIST DREAM**



**9 DAYS OF FOCUSED PRAYER IN
THE JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY**

7

8

All branches of the Marist Family in Australia will come together in Sydney on Saturday 23 July 2016 to celebrate this very significant event.

DAY ONE

A reading from Pope Francis' **Easter Urbi et Orbi message**, March 31, 2013.

God's mercy can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones (cf. Ez 37: 1-14)... Let us be renewed by God's mercy, let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives too; and let us become agents of this mercy, change through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish.



A reading from Craig Larkin sm, **A Certain Way**, p. 44-45

On 27th September 1846: Fr Mayet records in his Memoirs the following being said by Fr Jean-Claude Colin:

“The Society must begin a new Church over again. I do not mean that in a literal sense, that would be blasphemy. But still, in a certain sense, yes, we must begin a new Church. The Society of Mary, like the Church, began with simple, poorly educated men; but since then the Church has developed and encompassed everything. We too must gather together everyone through the Third Order.”

How might we understand what this means and its deep implications?

An entirely new civilization has arisen, deeply secularised to the point that the very existence of God and His merciful call is for many people meaningless and irrelevant. The message of the Father must be preached again in a new language, in terms of a new culture. The incarnational movement of the Church is to start again in this new civilization. She must meet this new world on its own terms. This is how we must read today the call of our Founder: “The Society must begin a new Church over again.”

New missionaries are needed, with a new approach, to manifest the mercy of the Father in such a way that it will be understood....

Fr Jan Snijders, sm

WE PRAY

Mary, of Fourvière,
show us what love is
and from where it draws its origin
and its constantly renewed power.

Holy Mary,
good Mother of Fourvière,
you have given the world
its true light,
Jesus, your Son - the Son of God.
You abandoned yourself
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and this became a wellspring of
the goodness which flows
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You inspired the first Marists
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dedicated to showing
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Teach us to know and love him,
so that we too
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and be fountains of living water
in the midst of a thirsting world.
Amen.

DAY TWO

A reading from **The Church of Mercy** by Pope Francis, 2014

We all carry our sins with us. But the Lord wants to hear us say to him, “Forgive me, help me to walk, change my heart!” And the Lord can change your heart. In the Church, the God we encounter is not a merciless judge but is like the Father in the Gospel parable. You may be like the son who left home, who sank to the depths, farthest from the Gospel. When you have the strength to say, “I want to come home,” you will find the door open. God will come to meet you because he is always waiting for you – God is always waiting for you. God embraces you, kisses you, and celebrates. That is how the Lord is, that is how the tenderness of our heavenly Father is. The Lord wants us to belong to a Church that knows how to open her arms and welcome everyone, that is not a house for the few, but a house for everyone, where all can be renewed, transformed, sanctified by his love – the strongest and the weakest, sinners, the indifferent, those who feel discouraged or lost.



A reading from **Recollections of Mother St Joseph**, Doc. 241:96 recorded by Sr Jacques

In 1835 Sr Marie (Marie Jotillon) contracted an illness with which she suffered greatly until her death on 25 February, 1838. On one occasion when the doctor indicated that there was every chance she would die, the community gathered around her bedside. Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn was holding her, when she attempted to sit up and managed to speak the following words to the assembled Sisters. Her words refer to Jeanne-Marie, Mother St Joseph:

Behold your mother, respect her, love her, obey her as your tender mother. It was she who brought me forth to the life of grace.

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DAY THREE

A reading from **The Church of Mercy** by Pope Francis, 2014

Have the courage to go against the tide of this culture of efficiency, this culture of waste. Encountering and welcoming everyone, building solidarity – a word that is being hidden by this culture, as if it were a bad word – solidarity and fraternity: these are what make our society truly human.

A reading from **a letter from Sr Marie de la Croix (New Caledonia) to Fr Yardin (Lyon), February 20, 1859, (OPS I, 133)**

Sister Marie de la Croix lived the simple, hidden life of Mary at Nazareth, sharing the life of the people of New Caledonia during the second half of the nineteenth century. Despite her fragile health, she led a fully apostolic life as an active missionary in the field of education. Her vocation, which is also ours, was “to unite apostolic zeal with discreet presence” (Const. 53) in the spirit of Mary both at Nazareth and in the new-born Church.

I am writing to you from my palace with an upturned box for a table. ...I am so happy here in this stable, a wretched little corridor made of tree branches, badly lined with the bark of the ‘Niaouli’ tree, where the rain is pleasantly refreshing! This is my classroom!

In the morning I assemble all the children who are spared from sickness or death, for the latter mows down everything here, and I make them read while teaching them a hundred and one little things which will be developed later. In the evening I have as many women as my stable can hold. I have two reading classes, then I make them sew while we talk half in French and half in ‘Tuo’, which is the language that has fallen to me by chance and which I am studying. I cannot do much, not being able to speak, but the Blessed Virgin who is the Mistress over us, has already won the hearts of these people for me; women and children jostle around me with affection. When finishing a class I have to repeat the signal ten times, I always give it reluctantly.

‘Come now. If we are Marists, it must be seen in our behaviour.’ Fr Jean-Claude Colin

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Amen.

DAY FOUR

A reading from **Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy**, 12 by Pope Francis, 15 April 2015

The Church's first truth is the love of Christ. The Church makes herself a servant of this love and mediates it to all people: a love that forgives and expresses itself in the gift of oneself. Consequently, wherever the Church is present, **the mercy of the Father must be evident**. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an **oasis of mercy**.



A reading from **Water From The Rock**, 33, 35, 36, 37

At the heart of Marist spirituality coming from Marcellin and the Brothers is humility. It expresses itself in simplicity of behaviour, most especially in our way of relating to God and to others. We strive to be persons of integrity - truthful, open-hearted and transparent in our relationships.

Young people are attracted to this simple spirituality. The images of God we offer them, and the language, experiences and symbolism we use, are accessible and touch the heart. The more our evangelisation and catechesis are rooted in our distinctive Marist spirituality, the more effective they become.

This spirituality of simplicity shapes the whole life of the disciples of Marcellin. In humility, we seek to know ourselves in our strengths and weaknesses and readily accept the help we may need. We grow to be at peace with the person God has created.

Approaching others with openness and gratitude, we accept them as they are, and readily listen to how they experience us. We willingly offer forgiveness and take the first step toward reconciliation.

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Amen.

DAY FIVE

A reading from a **homily by Pope Francis**, 17 March 2013

I think we too are people who, on the one hand, want to listen to Jesus, but on the other hand, at times, like to find a stick to beat others with, to condemn others. And Jesus has this message for us: mercy. I think – and say it with humility – that this is the Lord’s most powerful message: mercy.

Marist Laity Australia



A reading from **the Summarium** presented by Fr Colin in Rome in 1833.

Although some of the wording and sense of the document appears strange to us, because of its nineteenth century context, its intention (and that of its author) is all-embracing. Colin had what we would call today an ‘open-door policy,’ which welcomes all people to the nourishment of a life lived in the way of Mary. Given the mentality of the nineteenth century Church in France, Colin’s overarching vision of ‘one heart and one mind’, its openness and inclusiveness, is astounding.

The general aim of the Society is to contribute in the best possible way, both by its prayers and its efforts, to the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the faithful, and to gather, so to speak, all the members of Christ, whatever their age, sex, or standing, under the protection of the Blessed Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God; and to revive their faith and piety and nourish them with the doctrine of the Roman Church, so that at the end of time as at the beginning, all the faithful may with God’s help be of one heart and one mind in the bosom of the Roman Church, and that all, walking worthily before God and under Mary’s guidance, may attain eternal life. For this reason entry to the Society is also open to lay people living in the world in this Confraternity or Third Order of Blessed Mary.

LM Doc. 9, par.109. (See E.Keel, p.57)

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Amen.

DAY SIX

A reading from a **homily by Pope Francis**, 17 March 2013

It is not easy to entrust oneself to God's mercy, because it is an abyss beyond our comprehension. But we must! ... "Oh, I am a great sinner." "All the better! Go to Jesus: He likes you to tell him these things!" He forgets. He has a very special capacity for forgetting. He forgets, He kisses you. He embraces you and He simply says to you: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more" (Jn 8:11)

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A reading from **Water From The Rock**, 25, 26

The relationship of Marcellin to Mary was deeply marked by an affective and total trust in her, as the "Good Mother," because it was her work that he undertook. He wrote once: Without Mary we are nothing and with Mary we have everything, because Mary always has her adorable Son within her arms or in her heart. This belief remained constant all through his life. Jesus and Mary were the treasure on which Marcellin had learned to place his own heart. This intimate relationship helped shape the Marial dimension of our spirituality. In our tradition, the phrase, "Ordinary Resource" has come to encapsulate our constant reliance on Mary. The motto attributed to Champagnat by his biographer, All to Jesus through Mary, all the Mary for Jesus, captures this close relationship between the Son and the Mother and our Founder's attitude of confidence in Mary, which we are invited to live.

We share in the spiritual motherhood of Mary, as we take our part in bringing Christ-life to the world of those whose lives we share. We nurture that life in the ecclesial community, whose communion we strengthen through fervent prayer and generous service.



DAY SEVEN

A reading from **The Church of Mercy** by Pope Francis, 2014

Only a faithful and intense relationship with God makes it possible to get out of our own closedness and proclaim the Gospel with parrhesia. Without prayer our acts are empty and our proclamation has no soul; it is not inspired by the Spirit.

A reading from the **Rules of Mother Mary Denyse**, Art V, pp. 120, 121, 122

Sister Mary Denyse was one of the first formators of the Marist Missionary Sisters who, after missionary experience in Wallis, took the Rule written by Fr Raffin and added to it a Directory for the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Mary. This directory was to be used in the formation of generations of sisters and remained in force until the pontifical approval of the Congregation in 1931.

The life of a perfect Christian is not simply a hidden life, but a life hidden with Christ in God, which shows us that its source is intimate and constant union with God.

And what is this union? It is the soul, interiorly absorbed with God and the things of God through the exercise of habitual prayer; it is the soul contemplating God, longing for God, waiting on God alone for all it desires, bringing back to God all it undertakes. Peace, silence and solitude of heart characterise such a life. The soul alone with God alone, enveloped, as it were, in God's fatherly embrace, delighting in the most sublime communication with Him. The soul speaks to God, questions, listens, responds and above all focuses all its affections on God alone in an incomparable act of love, joyfully putting before God all its desires. And while the soul laments that it still feels so far distant from God, it rejoices in coming closer to Him more and more each day.

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DAY EIGHT

A reading from **The Church of Mercy**
by Pope Francis, 2014

What a beautiful truth of faith this is for our lives: the mercy of God! God's love for us is so great, so deep; it is an unfailing love, one which always takes us by the hand and supports us, lifts us up and leads us on.

A reading from Jeanne-Marie Chavoin's
Recollections of Mother St Joseph, Doc. 108

After many trying years, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, or Mother St Joseph as she was known, tendered her resignation as Superior General of the Marist Sisters. The last years of her life were spent at Jarnosse, a village not far from where she had grown up. There she led a small group of Sisters in bringing about a transformation in the lives of the villagers, "in bringing a little warmth to our famished people" – as a visitor to the area put it (RMJ 223:2). She was weighed down, however, by financial worries, incurred through the building of a school. Illness set in after a long walk in the snow to borrow money. When the Foundress knew she was dying she spoke at length with her niece, Thérèse Millot (Sr Thérèse de Jésus), who was living in the same community at Jarnosse. Thérèse reported these words to Sr Jean Chrysostome.

Look child, she is your mother. Simplicity, the very greatest simplicity should be your only ornament... A Marist sister's sole desire should be to imitate the little family at Nazareth... Always be a bond of union between your sisters so that all may have but one heart and one soul...

These words of the dying Foundress show us what mattered most to her:

1. The place of the person of Mary in our lives
2. The virtue which is the hallmark of Marists
3. Our communion with one another.



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Amen.

DAY NINE

A reading from a **homily by Pope Francis**, Divine Mercy Sunday, 7 April 2013



A reading from no. 228 of the **Marist Fathers Constitutions** (1986) on Fidelity to the Spirit of the Society which contain Fr Jean-Claude Colin's own words to us (1872 Const. no 49):

Finally, let them learn from the first Marists to find in the presence of Mary at Nazareth and Pentecost, in the early Church and at the end of time, the secret of their own presence in the Church and the world of today: a presence attentive to God and vibrant with zeal, so that while doing great things for the Lord, they may seem to be unknown and even hidden in the world. This was Mary's way; this is Mary's work. It is expressed for all Marists in the words of Jean-Claude Colin:

“Let them always bear in mind that they belong by a gracious choice to the family of the blessed Mary, Mother of God, from whose name they are called Marists, and whom they have chosen from the beginning as their model and their first and perpetual superior. If therefore they are and desire to be true sons (and daughters) of this dear Mother, let them try constantly to breathe here spirit; a spirit of humility, self-denial, intimate union with God, and the most ardent love of neighbour. So they must think as Mary, judge as Mary, feel and act as Mary in all things.

Let us remember Peter: three times he denied Jesus, precisely when he should have been closest to him; and when he hits bottom he meets the gaze of Jesus who patiently, wordlessly, says to him, “Peter, don't be afraid of your weakness, trust in Me.” Peter understands, he feels the loving gaze of Jesus and he weeps. How beautiful is this gaze of Jesus – how much tenderness is there! Brothers and sisters, let us never lose trust in the patience and mercy of God!

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