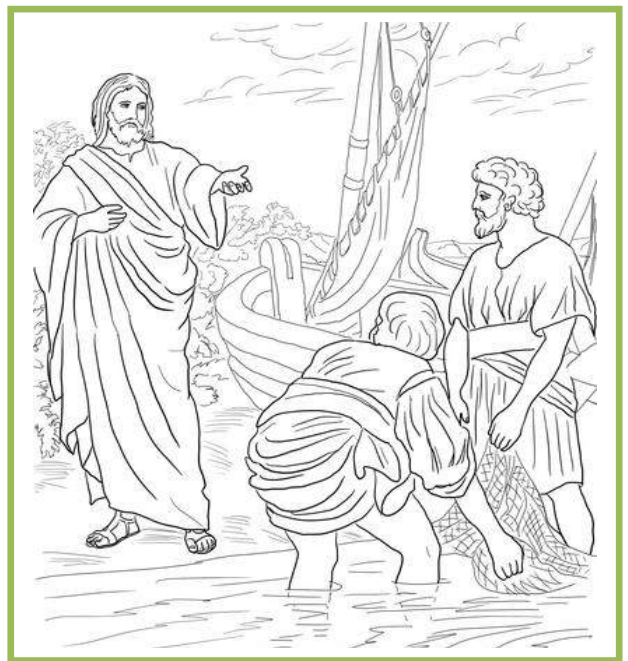


ON MISSION

VOCATION AWARENESS

In the Church, where there is a diversity of gifts, Jesus continues to call: “Come, follow me” (Mt 19:21), and He tells us, as He did the disciples, to “pray the Lord of the harvest to send workers into His harvest” (Mt 9:37). Each sister and each community are urged to take to heart the pressing invitation of the Lord to pray for vocations. Constitutions n° 196

On the photo: S. Christiana Nshiliyimana and S. Teresa Nyawira Georges with a group of young people from the parish of Ruganza in the diocese of Ngozi in February.



VOCATION AWARENESS WITH THE MARIST FAMILY IN PARIS



From March 31 to April 1, the Marist family represented by (From left to right): Father Rafaël RAMILA, sm, Sisters Aimée HERINDRAINY and Grazia Anna MORELLI, smsm; Father Christian ABONGBUNG, sm, Sister Teri O'BRIEN Marist sister, Sister Hélène DIOUF, smsm and Father Mika TUILAU,, sm went to meet the students of the Ensemble Scolaire Mariste Bury-Rosaire, establishments of Catholic private education, under the supervision of the Marist Fathers.

It has 2,800 students, the youngest of whom are 3 years old, their eldest over 20. They are supported by a team of around 300 adults - teachers, educators, administrative and service staff, management and supervisors.

A vocation is a precious gift that God sows in our heart, a call to leave ourselves behind and embark on a journey of love and service. Every vocation in the Church, [...], is a sign of the hope that God has for this world and for each of his children.

From Pope Francis' message for the 62nd World Day of Prayer for Vocations.



Vocation awareness with other members of the Society of Mary, for the promotion of vocations in the spirit and values of the Marist Family, was for me a true act of faith and hope. When I went to meet the students, from the youngest to the oldest, I said to myself: **this is hope for the Marist vocation!** Through our words, the sharing of our mission in connection with cultural objects, listening to their questions, sharing the testimony of a call. Each moment was a privileged moment of connection and sharing. To inspire a vocation is to sow seeds with confidence, without always knowing if they will bear fruit, but with the certainty that God acts in the silence of hearts.

It is a service that also renews me in my own SMSM vocation. I think that continuing such activities every year in the schools is important for the promotion of Marist and SMSM vocations because young people can keep the memory of it and grow with this experience.

Sœur Aimée HERINDRAINY, smsm

What can we say about this experience of missionary vocation awareness in Paris with the Marist Family, 25 years after another one we had in 2000 during the World Youth Days in Rome.

The first was with an all-Italian team, this one with a multicultural team. The one at the World Youth Days, the other in schools, with young people educated in Marist history and spirituality.



What can we say, then? I do not wish to dwell on the programme of these days but on the heart of what my experience was.

The basic idea was to make ourselves known and to stimulate the interest of young people through a series of objects from our mission countries, which we displayed on tables.

We had to collaborate in the programme and take turns giving our testimony. The first collaboration was with my sisters, each with an idea of what she intended to do, an idea that emerged from her experience, her skills, but above all from what the Spirit suggested to her.

And so we were seen talking about what the sisters were experiencing in different missions, about what we ourselves had experienced, about the culture of the countries that had welcomed us as missionaries, or we were seen questioning the young people about their experience, about what it means for them to study in a Marist school, or simply the word Marist and what that means for them. It was a very enriching experience for me.

Then the collaboration with the three Fathers, respectively, from Spain, Cameroon and Fiji, each with his own culture and way of relating to young people. The shared knowledge, the moments lived together, even in prayer, have been a grace for me.

Then I met Sister Terry, a Marist Sister full of energy, who by her very simple and interactive way of leading the meeting, made the young people want to open up and participate.

Something even more interesting was the meeting with teachers who share our same spirituality. They are very committed and very joyful to be Marists. In schools, you breathe a different spirit and you feel at home.

This experience made me think as I reflected on the importance and the urgency for us Marists to meet more often as a family and to work together for this proclamation of the Gospel. With a particular Marist approach: that of the Mother who speaks of her Son, that of humility that facilitates encounter, that of simplicity which makes understanding possible.

These two days have confirmed me in my vocation and in the conviction that we need to work together. Fathers, Sisters, Missionary Sisters and Laity, together for a common project that is lived not only in the spirit but that becomes a word, a Word that becomes Flesh.

It is my wish that I entrust to the Spirit and to the Virgin Mary.

S. Grazia Anna, smsm

"Our world needs so much to rediscover the taste and beauty of decision, especially when it comes to definitive choices that determine a decisive turning point in life, like that of vocation. Such decisions need fathers and mothers who help young people in particular to understand that to be free is not to remain eternally at the crossroads, making little 'escapades' to the right and to the left, without ever really taking a road."

Pope Francis



Meeting again the students of these two Marist establishments was a pleasant and joyful experience. I very much appreciated the thoughtfulness, availability and openness of the school directors and pastoral leaders who collaborated with us. I was delighted to see that in one of the colleges, a poster in a corner of a classroom had a small list of some Marist values.

Most of the students we met showed great interest. The objects from various mission countries that were exhibited captivated their attention and also raised questions.

It was a beautiful moment of exchange around the origin and meaning of these objects. We were able to share experiences of our Marist vocation: "consecrated with joy for the service of the Kingdom of God".

Father Colin said: **"A society must have its spirit; the spirit of a society is like the soul that animates the body, if the spirit is good, all is well."** So, my wish is that all the students who attend these schools can get to know the Marist Spirit better and try to embody some of Mary's attitudes in their lives, whatever their religion.

They should be helped to focus on certain attitudes of Mary that touched and inspired the life of the first Marists in order to immerse themselves in them. Because with the current reality of the world, it will be a great help to them.

S. Hélène Diouf, smsm

Let us pray for the aspirants of the Region



Claudine, burundaise



Simone, sénégalaise



Gabriella, italienne

