



Fourvière : Bicentenary plus four !

Jul 23, 1816 to Jul 23, 2020

204 years ago at Fourvière, the Father Jean-Claude Colin with twelve seminarians and priests started the Society of Mary. This is where our illustrious congregation took shape to become the one we have today.

204 years have passed and the Society of Mary continues to walk with Mary in the world. This in order to perpetuate Father Colin's idea of making the World a Marist world. Today, many of these young people knock on the Marist door. They have the zeal and the taste and wish to

serve in this nascent Church, which needs each of us in the construction of this church, our mother. Each of us to be a promoter of vocations wherever we are.

For 204 years, things have been done so that young Marists that we are, can better understand the Marist world. There are many who go to Marist sources, following in the footsteps of our venerable founder. Many are those who make serious studies for a better professionalization and a better knowledge of Marist texts. This in view of a better tomorrow for the Society of Mary. We have many volunteers who today work in our various Marist institutions and projects which, a priori, should be taken over by the young generation of Marists. We also have the young Marist laity who are increasingly laying foundations for the future.

I am currently in Lyon, France, where the history of the Society of Mary came to light. I am there for a pastoral experience at L'Arche in Lyon. A great experience with these people who need us especially our "Presence" in their midst. We learn with these people the humanity, the patience, the mercy, the humility, the service which are Marian virtues.

In addition, my presence in Lyon is also an opportunity to rediscover our history and to follow in the footsteps of Father Colin. I was able to visit the community of Sainte-Foy le Lyon where Fr Roger warmly welcomed me. This allowed me to see some of our senior confrères. Because the pandemic does not allow us to approach them ...

I had a wonderful stay at La Neylière where Fr Jimmy and Fr Ray gave me a warm and wonderful welcome. Which makes me realize that there is a strong bond between all Marists in the world. This gives the impression of knowing each other, even if we don't always see each other. I was able to visit the Espace Colin and meditate at the tomb of the venerable Jean Claude and at the Pompeys cemetery where our confrères, like Etienne Déclas, rest.

So I was able to visit Fourvière ... Great was my joy to climb the many steps to reach Fourvière and to come down again. I had a time of Meditation in front of Our Lady of Fourvière. A unique moment to see the names of these Marists who have accepted to go on a mission to Oceania, a destination unknown to many.

Fourvière after 204 years reminds us that we are a Marist family, we missionaries in the world, we are the builders of this nascent Church and each of us must always remember our commitment as a Marist in the world. Let us therefore take the time to revisit our Marist places, to meditate on our constitutions, to revalue these places by our presence of quality and to give new life to our institutions. Happy bicentenary, plus four !

Christian Ngoura, SM.