

**A COMMEMORATION OF THE FOURVIERE PROMISE
JULY 23**



REMEMBERING FOURVIERE IN THREE ACTS.

This service of readings, reflections, songs and prayers is offered to communities or individual Marists of the four branches as we remember the foundational event of the Marist Project - the Fourvière Promise.

The prayer is divided into three "acts". A community may decide to use only one or two or all three.

A selection of songs is suggested to choose from. AOV refers "As One Voice" volumes I and II; other alternatives can be found online.

I. The Twelve Go Up to Fourvière.

Lyons, France, 23 July 1816. It is early morning, and twelve young men are climbing the 800 steps leading up to the ancient Marian shrine of Fourvière on top of the hill that dominates the city. Five of them had been ordained priests the day before; the others had not yet completed their studies for the priesthood. During the preceding months, they had formed a group and made a commitment. Now, they were about to separate. But, before they broke up, they wanted to seal their act of commitment before the venerated statue of Our Lady of Fourvière. . . . During the Mass it was placed on the altar under the corporal, thus uniting their commitment with the sacrifice of Christ. . . . (From this day) the multi-branched Society of Mary, envisaged by the seminarians at Saint-Irénée and the object of their act of commitment consecrated at Fourvière gradually took shape. (Justin Taylor sm)

Reflection:

“We solemnly promise” – what audacity! Or what naivety?

The commitment is simple: “we irrevocably dedicate ourselves and all our goods. . . . that we shall spend ourselves and all we have” – to the extent of our possibilities. Are we capable today of making such a promise?

For them, as for us, the only guarantee for the promise is the gift they make of themselves without being assured of what they will become and what they will be able to accomplish. . . . What makes these pioneers hold on, the foundation that justifies the gift they make of themselves, is love and the trust that love gives – love of God, love of life. . . . There is a great similarity between this commitment and that which a man and woman make to each other without knowing what they will become. There is the same madness. When we give, we give to one another that which we do not yet have, that which is not yet, for the present and the future, no money-back guarantee, in trust alone. “The glory of God and the honour of Mary” seem to these pioneers the sufficient guarantee for risking their lives. After all they know, as we know, these words of Jesus: I have come so

that they may have life and have it to the full (Jn 10:10). They love life and believe in life, apparently this is sufficient for them to dare the adventure.
(Francois Drouilly sm)

Song: *Let God's Dream Be Born* – K. Bates (AOV II-30)
Galilee Song – F. Anderson (AOV I-5)
Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore (Pescador de Hombres)
– C. Gabarain (Hymnary.org)

Prayer:

**Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life
in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,
help us to say our own “yes”
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus. . . .**

II. Mary Goes with Haste to Visit Elizabeth.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.' (Luke 1:39-45)

Reflection:

How lyrical that is, the opening sentence of St. Luke's description of the Visitation. We can feel the rush of warmth and kindness, the sudden

urgency of love that sent that girl hurrying over the hills. "Those days" in which she rose on that impulse were the days in which Christ was being formed in her, the impulse was his impulse.

Many women, if they were expecting a child, would refuse to hurry over the hills on a visit of pure kindness. They would say they had a duty to themselves and to their unborn child which came before anything or anyone else.

The Mother of God considered no such thing. Elizabeth was going to have a child, too, and although Mary's own child was God, she could not forget Elizabeth's need—almost incredible to us, but characteristic of her. She greeted her cousin Elizabeth, and at the sound of her voice, John quickened in his mother's womb and leapt for joy.

I have come, said Christ, that they may have life and may have it more abundantly. [Jn. 10, 10] Even before He was born His presence gave life.

With what piercing shoots of joy does this story of Christ unfold! First the conception of a child in a child's heart, and then this first salutation, an infant leaping for joy in his mother's womb, knowing the hidden Christ and leaping into life.

Song: *The Magnificat* – P. Kearney (AOV I-52)
All That I Am – D. Haas (YouTube)
Holy Is His Name – J. M. Talbot (YouTube)
Tell Out My Soul – T. Dudley-Smith (catholicymn.blogspot.com)

Prayer:

**Mary, filled with Christ's presence,
you brought joy to John the Baptist,
making him exult in the womb of his mother.
Brimming over with joy,
you sang of the great things done by God.
Standing at the foot of the cross
with unyielding faith,
you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit
so that the evangelizing Church might be born. . . .**

III. The Church Who Goes Forth.

The word of God constantly shows us how God challenges those who believe in him “to go forth”. Abraham received the call to set out for a new land (cf. *Gen 12:1-3*). Moses heard God’s call: “Go, I send you” (*Ex 3:10*) and led the people towards the promised land (cf. *Ex 3:17*). To Jeremiah God says: “To all whom I send you, you shall go” (*Jer 1:7*). In our day Jesus’ command to “go and make disciples” echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church’s mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary “going forth”. Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel.

The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. *1 Jn 4:19*), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy. . . . An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the “smell of the sheep” and the sheep are willing to hear their voice. (Pope Francis: *Evangelii Gaudium* 20, 24)

Reflection:

How did Elizabeth herself know what had happened to Our Lady? What made her realize that this little cousin who was so familiar to her was the mother of her God?

She knew it by the child within herself, by the quickening into life which was a leap of joy. If we practice this contemplation taught and shown to us by Our Lady, we will find that our experience is like hers.

If Christ is growing in us, if we are at peace, recollected, because we know that however insignificant our life seems to be, from it He is forming Himself; if we go with eager wills, "in haste," to wherever our circumstances compel us, because we believe that He desires to be in that place, we shall find that we are driven more and more to act on the impulse of His love.

And the answer we shall get from others to those impulses will be an awakening into life, or the leap into joy of the already wakened life within them.

(Caryll Houselander: *The Reed of God*)

Song: *Here I am Lord* – D. Schutte (AOV I-90)

Prayer:

**Mother, obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.**

**Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.**

**Virgin of listening and contemplation,
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.**

**Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.**

**Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
pray for us.**

- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

IV. Intercessions

Let us give thanks to Christ, our Lord, who has called to be his disciples after the example of Mary, his Mother. Let us pray:

Sun of Justice, you showed your day was dawning in the immaculate Virgin Mary; *help us to walk in the daylight of your presence.*

Eternal Word, you taught your mother Mary to choose the part that was best; *let us follow her example and hunger for the food of everlasting life.*

Saviour of the world, by your redemptive power you preserved your mother Mary from every stain of sin; *deliver us from the evil that lies hidden in our hearts.*

Christ, our Redeemer, you made the Virgin Mary the sanctuary of your presence and the temple of the Spirit; *make us bearers of your Spirit, in mind, heart and body.*

The Lord's Prayer