

Jean-Claude Colin
Novena



Reflection and prayer
with the Founder of the Society of Mary

Who is Jean-Claude Colin ?



Barbery forest, near the birthplace
of Jean-Claude Colin

Jean-Claude Colin was the founder of the Marist Fathers – priests and brothers of the Society of Mary

Born at the close of the 18th century in revolution-torn France, Jean-Claude was convinced that the Blessed Virgin wanted a group of men and women to do her work in the world at a time of turmoil and challenge.

With this inspiration he forged the way for a new

family of consecrated religious and laity in the Church - the Marist family.

Under his leadership, as founder and father, Marist missionaries would proclaim Christ's message in Mary's gentle spirit 'on whatever distant shore' to which they were sent.

Today Marists throughout the world pray that he will become better known and revered. As the Cause for his Beatification is pursued, they seek graces through his intercession for themselves and the people they serve.

Devotion to Jean-Claude Colin

Many who know the person of Jean-Claude Colin sense in him a closeness to God and a desire for the kingdom be proclaimed in the gentle spirit of Mary. They ask his intercession for the graces they seek, large and small, from our loving God.

This Novena

Daily themes drawn from '*A Founder Acts*' help us know Jean-Claude Colin better. Extracts from the 1988 Marist Constitutions resonate with these themes and are followed by a prayer to Jean-Claude requesting a particular grace. To this may be added any other prayer or, indeed, a prayer for a miraculous grace.

Miraculous Graces

Miracles are clearly beyond the course of natural events. For the Cause of Jean-Claude Colin to be advanced, a miracle through his exclusive intercession is needed. This novena offers the following prayer for such a miraculous grace:

Loving God, you inspired Jean-Claude Colin to live a life faithful to the Gospel and in the spirit of Mary.

If it is your will that he be honoured as a saint to the glory of your name, please show us the favour he enjoys in your sight by granting the miraculous grace we now ask through his exclusive intercession:

(*name the person and grace being sought*)

We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen

Day 1



Villa Santa Maria, Rome

Colin in a niche

A priest said to Father Poupinel standing in St. Peter, Rome, and looking at the empty niche besides Blessed Alphonse Liguori: “Look, the place reserved for your superior!” (FA 218, 1).

Like many others this priest was struck by the look of holiness and simplicity on Colin’s face.

Personal holiness

Mary, as their first and perpetual Superior, inspires them with courage to pursue the aims of the Society: to grow in personal holiness, to work for the salvation of their neighbour, and to keep the faith of the Catholic Church and defend it with all their strength. It is in pursuing these aims in the spirit of Mary that they will help to renew the Church in her image, a servant and pilgrim Church. (n 10)

Venerable Father Founder, at your intercession may God help us to be of the same holiness and simplicity. May we find our niche where God wants us to proclaim the Good News today. Amen.

Day 2



Bugey snow

Colin on ice

In his time, people walked a lot and travelled even great distances on foot.

Colin walked the Bugey Mountains. He went on regular walks, and did not mind even trying a sledge on a frozen pond in winter to get exercise (FA 295).

Follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ

By vowing poverty Marists put their trust in a Father who knows their every need. They choose to be poor to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Like the first believers, they bring what they have to their brothers, and hold everything in common with them (Cf. Acts, 4:32). (n 106)

Venerable Father Founder, may God at your intercession help us to appreciate our body as temple of the Holy Spirit. May we care for our body, and may we walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day 3

Colin and health



Bedroom window of Fr Colin

Colin had lifelong health issues. Malaria was but one of his conditions (FA 222; 230). He used the available remedies.

Overall, his energy was often interrupted but not paralyzed by illnesses.

Care for one's health

The criteria for admission to the novitiate are determined by the aims and the spirit of the Society. Besides the requirements of Canon 642, the candidate shall have the following qualities: (e) the intelligence, judgement and physical health necessary to enable him to contribute effectively to the mission and apostolates of the Society. (n. 42)

Venerable Father Founder, at your intercession may God give us the faith to deal with sickness and ageing. We also pray for those who care for our sick confreres and for all doctors and nurses. Amen.

Day 4

Colin shows his feelings



Profession cross of Fr Colin

In many ways Colin was a very emotional and sensitive person and could easily shed tears both of joy and of mourning.

He gesticulated with his hands, his feelings showed on his face. He tried not to be overcome or determined by his feelings.

After allowing his feelings to show he turned to God in prayer and in praise (FA 216).

Emotional balance required

The criteria for admission to the novitiate are determined by the aims and the spirit of the Society. Besides the requirements of Canon 642, the candidate shall have the following qualities: (c) the emotional balance to live in community and work with others. (n. 42)

Venerable Father Founder, at your intercession may God help us to integrate our feelings in our personality. May we be open to how other people feel and show them the compassion you showed the world in sending your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day 5

Colin in a joyful spirit



Fr Colin in 1866

Colin said to the students in Belley: ‘Servite Domino in laetitia et exultatione’ – Serve the Lord with gladness and in exultation.

He quoted Saint Francis of Sales who said ‘Les saints tristes sont de tristes saints’ – Saints who are sad are pitiful Saints (FA 395, 2).

Marist spirit a joyful spirit

Marists prefer to be known by their life and their work with the poor and abandoned rather than through publicity. Their joy in belonging to Mary's family and the generosity with which they do her work will attract candidates to join them. (n. 37)

Venerable Father Founder, at your intercession may God give us the holy joy and holy freedom that characterized your life so that we can proclaim the Good News in gladness and joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 6

Colin makes decisions



Desk of Fr Colin

Colin was well-known for being very slow in making up his mind.

The reason? He wanted to be as certain as possible to do God's will and so gave it time (*Dare Locum Dei*).

But once he came to a decision he implemented it promptly (FA 307).

Spiritual decision making

Unity in the Society and effective action require that its members be consulted and participate in decision-making, and that superiors have a well-defined authority. In this way decisions will be based on accurate information and reflect the needs of the people they serve, and at the same time decisions can be taken with flexibility and promptness. (n. 161)

Venerable Father Founder, at your intercession may God help us to discern and follow the divine will and to put it into practice in our daily life as Jesus did, our Lord. Amen.

Colin has his failings



A book of Fr Colin

Those who lived with Colin saw in him a saint but were also well aware of his little failings.

Those little failings helped to keep pride in check. Colin gave way to his timidity and other weaknesses except when it

was about the Society of Mary. Then he would overcome his limitations (FA 235, 24-28)

Living with my limitations and those of others

In this way, liberated from undue self-concern, they will be useful to others and do great things for God, and so the Society will achieve its goals. They leave it to the Lord to say the healing word that brings inner peace and the freedom to serve their neighbour. (n 220)

Venerable Father Founder, at your intercession may God helps us to accept our limitations and to use them to understand the limitations of others. God may give us the single-mindedness to serve the Society of Mary as you did. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Colin prays constantly



Fr Colin's study, La Neylière

In seeking God's will alone Colin was a person of constant prayer, especially with important matters ahead – of which he had many.

Then he would pray all the time and have others pray a lot in these intentions.

He would study the issue, consult many, but mainly trust in prayer (FA 349, 12).

Prayer to appropriate the Marist spirit

Marist tradition can continue to be a living reality only if it offers an experience of the Gospel similar to that of Jean-Claude Colin and his companions. Successive generations make the tradition their own by praying and reflecting on the events crucial to the foundation of the Society. (n 50)

Venerable Father Founder, at your intercession may God make us all people of prayer, both individually and as a community. May our decision making be guided by prayer. And may we continue to serve others by praying for their intentions. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Colin the Marist



Our Lady of the Journey

The name Marist is not an empty title. Come, if we are Marists, it must be seen in our conduct.

There is much to be done. Colin was and remains the very model of a Marist (*FA 395, 4*).

Follow Christ as Mary did

The Society, like the Church, finds its model in Mary the woman of faith. Its spirituality is simple and modest in its

expression, close to the lives of ordinary people, apostolic in character, and marked by spontaneity and joy. It tries to make its own the Christian experience lived by Mary. (n 117)

Venerable Father Founder, at your intercession may God strengthen us in our vocation to be a disciple as Mary was and to serve people as Mary did. Through her Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

If you know of any miraculous graces received through the exclusive intercession of Fr Colin please advise:

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