

Reflection from the Superior General

MARIST VOCATION YEAR, NOVEMBER 15, 2021 – NOVEMBER 15, 2022

We invite every Marist to participate in one year of prayer and activities especially dedicated to celebrating our Marist vocation. This Marist Vocation Year starts on November 15, our Founder's Day. We are preparing for the Vocations' Year by praying the novena to Father Colin for Vocations (Nov. 6 – 14). To mark the opening of the year there are two video presentations. One of these videos guides us through a time of prayer for November 15. I have also prepared a video message.

The theme of the year is "enrich, encourage, assist" and each of these three verbs relates to one of the three goals of the year.

The first goal is for each of us to **enrich** his own vocation. This year provides an incentive for each Marist to grow in his gratitude and joyful response to the invitation each of us has received from Mary to be a disciple of her Son in her Way. It is a call to renewed prayer and discipleship. Our own enthusiastic response to our own Marist vocation is the most dynamic invitation to others to follow the same Way. There will be two on-line seminars (in January and April) to further this first goal.

Secondly, we are invited to **encourage** others to live their Marist vocation ever more profoundly as we live and serve in our Marist communities. This year invites us to deepen our commitment to our quality of Marist community life and mission. To help us with this goal we invite you to make use of material that has been prepared around the theme of Marist vocation for your monthly community recollection days which would, ideally, include Lay Marists. We are also inviting each unit to arrange your annual retreat in 2022 around the theme of "Marist vocation". Our fraternal encouragement and human kindness among ourselves in community encourage us and others to rejoice in living as Marists.

The third goal of the year is to **assist** others to discern their own vocations and specially to invite young people to consider committing themselves to

being a disciple of the Lord according to the grace of the Marist charism. Each unit in the Society has a Vocations' Director. He will assist you with material and ideas of how to implement these initiatives in your region of the world.

It would be easy for any of us to say: "I'll leave the vocations' animation to someone else" or "vocations are for another part of the Marist world rather than for us". This year is about nurturing a rich culture of vocations, wherever we are. By our evident delight in our particular vocation we Marists quietly attract others to respond to our Marist call. This is a time for us to invite others to respond like Mary before us: "Here I am, the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your Word". (Lk.1:38)

Last week I was in Canada where the youngest Marist is 60. I was greatly encouraged by their initiative during 2021 to open a new community in Quebec especially as a welcoming space for young people. Three confreres – one Brother and two Priests - pray together especially for vocations, invite young people to their community Eucharist six days a week, and open their community life to young people – university students or working people – to come and stay with them for an extended period.

I invite each Marist to enter fully into the grace of this year of Marist Vocation. We Marists have been blessed with a wonderful charism from the earliest days. Let's deepen this charism in our own hearts, communities and ministries and invite others to share in this unique charism given to us freely by the Spirit of God.

John Larsen s.m.

