



# Our Mission

*The Marist Way*

“Do whatever he tells you”

John 2: 1-10

# Let your God love you

[Anonymous]

*Be silent.*

*Be still.*

*Alone.*

*Empty*

*before your God.*

*Say nothing.*

*Ask nothing.*

*Be silent.*

*Be still.*

*Let your God look upon you.*

*That is all.*

*God knows.*

*God understands.*

*God loves you with an enormous love*

*and only wants to look upon you*

*with that generous love.*

*Quiet.*

*Be still.*

*Let your God love you.*



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# Introduction

## *What is our mission?*

In his letter for the Montagne year, Brother Emili, reminded us that our mission, as Marists, is God's mission. We are to “walk in this world as salvation, as healing, and as the stimulating presence of God.” <sup>1</sup>

How do I know that I am actually engaged in God's mission and not my own mission?

Perhaps Mary's last recorded words in the Bible hold a key, when she commands the servants at Cana “**Do whatever he tells you**” (John 2:5).

If our mission is to do whatever he tells us, then **listening for the voice of God** must lie at the heart of our mission as Marists. Listening, along with silence, prayer and meditation, is one of the “Little Virtues”, the practice of which were, for Marcellin, a way of living Mary's attitudes in everyday life. <sup>2</sup>

Just as she was at the wedding feast at Cana, Mary is at the centre of our ministry with young people, and like Mary, we are called to provide ourselves with the space to encounter God, to not only listen to God's voice, but **to treasure and ponder what we hear in our heart.** <sup>3</sup>

## Opening Prayer

*God, our Creator,  
we gather in your presence  
conscious that our mission in this world is Your mission.  
May we, like Mary, listen to your voice and ponder in  
our hearts the events and experiences of our lives.  
May we have the courage to do what you ask of us.  
We ask this for the good of our sisters and brothers,  
to whom we minister.  
Amen*

# Our Mission in Scripture

Finding God is a matter,  
not of learning to  
become something we  
are not, but of learning  
to see what we already  
know, to touch what  
we already contain,  
to recognize what we  
already have.

[Joan Chittister OSB]

## *From John*

**2: 1-10**

The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." **But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."**

Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions. When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"



## *From Luke*

**2: 15-19**

The shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. **As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.**



## *From Matthew*

**7:21**

Jesus said to his disciples: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who **does the will of my Father in heaven.**"

# Reflection on Scripture

In the episode of the wedding at Cana, St John presents Mary's first intervention in the public life of Jesus and highlights her co-operation in her Son's mission.

Mary's command, "Do whatever he tells you" has profound effects on the servants, inspiring them to trust Jesus in a radical way.

Put yourself in the servants' shoes. Jesus tells them to take the six stone jars for the Jewish rites of purification, fill them up with water, and draw some out to present to the steward of the feast. These stone jars would have been used for ritual washings of hands (and possibly feet). Astonishingly, Jesus tells the servants to fill up these very jars with water and then present their contents to their boss for serving as drink for the guests.

This would take a lot of faith! Imagine what the servants are thinking: "Fill up these jars? With water? And serve it to the guests? How is *this* going to solve the problem?" From a human perspective, Jesus' plan does not make any sense. Yet first and foremost, Jesus is asking the servants not to understand His plan, but to trust Him.

Similarly, we may not always grasp Jesus' work in our lives. We may not see clearly where the Lord is leading us. Yet, as Pope John Paul II reminded us: ***Mary's command, "Do whatever he tells you" challenges us to trust Him without hesitation not only when it makes sense to us, but "especially when one does not understand the meaning or benefit of what Christ asks."***

The episode of the wedding at Cana urges us to be courageous in faith and to experience in our lives the truth of the Gospel words: "Ask, and it will be given you" (Matthew 7:7).

Edward Sri<sup>4</sup>

He who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too. This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life. .... Anyone who thinks that his time is too valuable to spend keeping quiet will eventually have no time for God and his brother, but only for his own follies.

[Dietrich Bonhoeffer; German Lutheran pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident.]



"Do whatever he tells you"



# Our Mission from our Marist sources

Like Mary, who ponders events in her heart, we are constantly alert to the signs of the time, to the calls of the Church, and to the needs of youth. In this way we can understand the sacramental meaning of events, people, and things which are for us a meeting place with God. This was Marcellin's understanding of his encounter with the dying boy, Jean-Baptiste Montagne. (*Water from the Rock; 75*)

As for Marcellin and the first Brothers so also for us, Mary inspires the style of our fraternal relationships. At the marriage of Cana, Mary is sensitive to the need that has arisen, and with discretion arranges what is required. She encourages us to exercise authority in a spirit of service to our community, and demonstrates that our actions can spark an increase in the faith of others. At the same time, her words to her Son, "They have no wine", show her desire to bring those in need to the attention of her Son. (*Water from the Rock; 113*)

Mary inspired Marcellin's style of being on mission. She received the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation and responded immediately to Elizabeth's need. In so doing, she shows us that contemplation and action are both indispensable elements of spirituality. Mary's way lays the foundation of all our actions: listening, patient waiting, nurturing interiority and responsiveness to God's will. (*Water from the Rock; 131*)

All Marists share the same mission: to make Jesus known and loved. As apostles we passionately centre our lives in Jesus. We allow ourselves to be captivated by him and his gospel. Close to him, we want to form our hearts. Learning from him the ways of the Kingdom, we communicate his message and his way of being and acting through our presence, our words and our deeds. (*Water from the Rock; 135*)

Our spirituality, Marial and apostolic, invites us to look to Mary as Jesus' First Disciple for our response. She is for us a model of listening, of love for poor people, and of welcoming the message of God. Her way of living the Word of God inspires us and directs us along the way we should go. Like Mary, we not only magnify the Lord with our lips, but commit ourselves to serve God's justice with our lives. (*Water from the Rock; 151*)

It was in prayer that he [Marcellin] conceived and decided up on all his projects. It was by prayer that he began, continued and ended everything he did. "I could never undertake anything," he used to claim, "without having long recommended it to God". (Quoted by Brother Jean-Baptiste in "The Life").



# To ponder

Contemplating Mary, we realize that she who praised God for “bringing down the mighty from their thrones” and “sending the rich away empty” (Lk 1:52-53) is also the one who brings a homely warmth to our pursuit of justice. She is also the one who carefully keeps “all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19). Mary is able to recognize the traces of God’s Spirit in events great and small. She constantly contemplates the mystery of God in our world, in human history and in our daily lives. She is the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town “with haste” (Lk 1:39) to be of service to others. This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization. (*Evangelii Gaudium*, #288)

**As I reflect back (over the past week, month, longer ...) what traces of God’s Spirit do I recognize in my life? Have these affected my ministry with people?**



God is not in the whirlwind, not in blustering and show, Scripture teaches us. God is in the breeze, in the very atmosphere around us, in the little things that shape our lives. God is in the contradictions that assail us, in the circumstances that challenge us, in the attitudes that impel us, in the motives that drive us, in the life goals that demonstrate our real aspirations, in the burdens that wear us down, in the actions that give witness to the values in our hearts. God is the stuff of life, not in the airy-fairy of fertile imaginations bent on the pursuit of the preternatural [*supernatural*]. God is where we are, including in the very weaknesses that vie for our souls. (*Joan Chittister*)

**Where do I hear the voice of God in my life?  
When you listen to God in your life, what do you hear him tell you to do?**

In her book, *The Taste of Silence*, the Belgian spiritual writer, Bieke Vandekerckhove recounts how an idealistic friend of hers shared his dream of going off by himself into some desert to explore spirituality. Her prompt reaction was not much to his liking: “A person is ready to go to any kind of desert. He’s willing to sit anywhere, as long as it’s not his own desert.” How true. We forever hanker after idealized deserts and avoid our own.

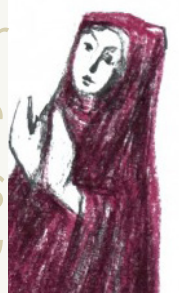
But there’s a peace and a meaning that can only be found inside the desert of our own chaotic and raging insides. The deep wells of consolation lie at the end of an inner journey through heat, thirst, and dead-ends that must be pushed through with dogged fidelity. And, as for any epic journey, the task is not for the faint of heart. (*Ron Rolheiser OMI; Only in Silence; January 2016*)

**What are the deserts of my own life? Do I avoid going there? Why?**

**How might my ministry as a Marist be different if I spend time in my own desert?**



“Do  
whatever  
he  
tells  
you”



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**Reflect a moment on these words of José Luiz Pérez Álvarez:**

*Poverty and detachment in place of wealth and accumulation.*

*Forgiveness and reconciliation in place of hatred and vengeance.*

*Self-giving as opposed to the interests of egoism.*

*Quiet service in place of pretentiousness and control.*

*Affective and effective solidarity as opposed to a concern for safety and domination.*

*The quest for peace that rejects all forms of violence.*

*Justice that eliminates oppression.*

*The acceptance of persecution as against a life of comfort.*

*Purity of heart that shies away from duplicity and unjust submission.*

*Fraternity taking precedence over all forms of discrimination.*

*Equality, against all dominance over brothers.*

*A preference for the poor and the lost for the sake of the Kingdom.*

**As I reflect on my life and ministry as a Marist, what in these words affirms what I do?**

**What challenges me?**





# Closing Prayer



*Gracious God,*

*open our hearts and our eyes to the wonders  
of your presence among us.*

*Make us constantly alert to the signs of the  
time, to the calls of the Church and to the needs  
of young people everywhere.*

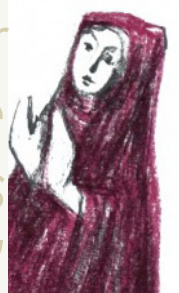
*Deepen in us a realization that contemplation  
and action are both indispensable elements  
of spirituality.*

*As we commit ourselves to your Mission and to  
passionately centre our lives on Jesus, may we  
come to know the ways of the Kingdom.*

*May we communicate the message of Jesus  
and his way of being and acting through our  
presence, our words and our deeds.*

*Amen.*

*“Do  
whatever  
he  
tells  
you”*



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## (Endnotes)

- 1 "Montagne: the dance of mission"; Letter of the Superior General, March 2015; page 4.
- 2 The Little Virtues: They are attentive listening, enlightening dialogue, willing service, availability without counting the cost, gentleness, tolerance, courtesy, mutual support, silence, prayer and meditation. Refer: *Avis, Leçons, Sentences* (Lyon, 1927), Chapter 28. Refer also: *Water from the Rock*; 99.
- 3 Refer: Luke 2:15-19. Refer also: *Evangelizers in the midst of youth*; 133.
- 4 Refer: *Mary's last words*; Edward Sri. (<http://www.cuf.org/2007/09/marys-last-words-the-spousal-meaning-of/>). Refer also: Pope John Paul 2, General audience; February 26, 1997 (<https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP970226.HTM>)