



# Today's MARISTS

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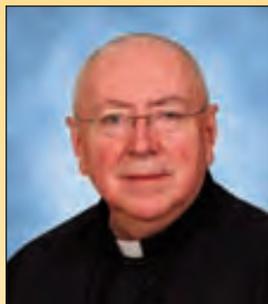
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Tom Ellerman, S.M.

## *With Christ in the Garden of Olives*

By Tom Ellerman S.M.

While most of us associate penances and mortification primarily with the season of Lent, for Father Jean-Claude Colin, founder of the Marists, they were a regular part of the interior life and the religious life, not something restricted to a special season. In Fr. Colin's mind, spiritual practices in the Society also had a profound apostolic meaning for strengthening Marists for the mission and leading them to do "great things for the Church". In the "Constitutions of the Society of Mary-1872", article VII, #34, Father Colin lists some practices he considered appropriate for Marists priests and brothers.

Among these practices one stands out because of the detail with which the Founder describes it... "to spend a quarter of an hour on Fridays, with head bowed at least part of the time, praying in union with Christ in the garden of Olives."

Father Colin is specific about the length of the exercise, the day of the week on which it is to be done, the bodily posture involved, and the particular incident in the life of Christ with which it is to be associated. It is as if he would engage not only our minds and hearts but also our imaginations and bodies in this prayer in union with Christ. It also emboldens the Marist in the face of the folly of worldliness to remember Jesus in His moment of rejection, isolation, and desolation so that in their own moments of difficulty they will be able to get a true perspective on how a Gospel-centered life so often leads to desolation with respect to worldly consolations.

Since he mentions "olives" and St. Luke

refers to the location of Jesus' agonizing prayer as the "Mt. of Olives", we assume that Father Colin had St. Luke's account of the event in mind. (cf. Luke 22: 39-46)

Father Founder encourages Marists to prayerfully unite themselves in mind, heart, body, and imagination with the praying Christ. In his prayer Our Savior unites himself to the Father's will and humbly asks that the suffering and trials connected with carrying it out may be removed. He ends his prayer by sacrificing his desires in order to carry out the salvific will of his Father. Father Colin encourages each and every Marist to make this prayer his own.

Marists know that following Mary always leads to identification with Jesus Christ and to a deeper and more conscious participation in the life of the Holy Trinity. To be identified with Christ means being committed to the redemptive will of God the Father and being open to the movements of the Holy Spirit.

Aware of their limitations and weaknesses, the Marists realize that identification with Jesus will not be achieved without the Cross. This weekly spiritual exercise can be of immense help to the Marist or anyone else in recalling the mission of the Society of Mary, his personal identification with Jesus, and his commitment to the Father's saving will. In praying in union with Christ in the Garden of Olives, we are reminded how easy it can be to leave the Way of the Cross and to follow our own path, but we must never forget that those who follow Christ to Calvary will share in the glory of his Resurrection.



Father Ted Keating, S.M.,  
Provincial

*Dear Friends,*

The headline is a tricky phrase to try to help communicate what we are working at in our new unified Province of the Society of Mary in the United States! We think we are reflecting so much of the same struggles and dialogue in the Church and in our U.S. Society. The Church after Vatican II called for religious congregations like ours to return to our foundings to retrieve the authentic fervor, charism, and founding mission of our congregations in order to assure their truthful adaptation to the pastoral needs of a changed world and a changing Church at Vatican II.

# Provincial LETTER

Foundational to the cultural tradition of Catholicism, you have to go back to go forward. If you move forward without reference to

your past, you lose your identity and often your mission. If you do not move forward, you can often find yourself no longer faithful to your tradition. We have a complicated Founder in that regard in John Claude Colin. He already had a vision of Mary, her role in Church, and her place in spirituality that looked forward to Vatican II. When we are faithful to our Founder, we have no difficulties at all in envisioning his approach to Mary in today's Church.

We also have little difficulty in making sense of his founding purpose for the Society of Mary in a Church renewed in its pastoral vision at Vatican II. He was already talking about the "persons" of these times with their love for freedom and human rights. He already envisioned Mary's role in this era of secularization that he already saw emerging after the French Revolution. He saw Mary encompassing all humanity in a communion of mercy beginning in a movement of laity, religious, and priests bringing about a different Church from the one he saw around him. He saw a laity emerging in the Church that we saw come to full emergence in the documents of Vatican II.

Of course, he used language, images, theological concepts, and approaches that reflected his own time. But along with some other visionary leaders of that time, he saw something else emerging and he committed the Society to in its encouragement and growth. We are an unusual religious congregation in that sense because the Third Order of Mary was recognized by the Vatican before our own Congregation.

So, you can see that we have done our work of going back to our foundations and it has been a fascinating and energizing journey through models of Church, Mary, laity, and mission that are still precisely relevant to our contemporary Church and world. One Vatican Cardinal's comment about our Founder was that "He is a man that knows his times." We have rediscovered that every time we go back to engage what he was up to in the early nineteenth century.

But I will let you in on a secret now. The hardest part of this "return to the foundations to discover the future" is still before us as Marists as we continue to work on our renewal of prayer life and practice in community. This is the third goal that we are working on right now in the Province. The previous two goals have to do with renewal of mission and better communicating the extraordinary mission that we have to young men who may want to join us. They are hard work, but you see how energizing they can be when we "catch fire" with the passion of our Founder.

But our Founder had very high ideals and expectations of what kind of personal and communal prayer life would be necessary to sustain all of this. Early Marists spent an hour in meditation each morning, did a morning and night prayer in common, did what we call a particular examination of conscience together before lunch, prayed together after lunch, and had a general examination of conscience together at night. They also said their rosary daily and did the Divine Office. They did daily spiritual reading. They celebrated Eucharist, of course. There are many monastic communities today that have such a rule of life but the bounding pace of modern ministry in parishes, schools, and other settings make this more than a challenge for us in active ministry. Our Founder expected us to be "contemplatives in action" to use the Jesuit phrase.

Every time we try to raise the cry of "How can this be possible in modern ministry without being at prayer all day," we hear our Founder blatantly challenging our missionaries and their bishops in his letters to them in what were then the "wilds" of the Pacific Islands that we were religious first and must maintain the bonds of this rule together if we were to have any hope of truly fulfilling the mission he envisioned for us. We still marvel at the courage, energy, passion of the founders of the US province scattering themselves across the country to help in building the Churches of Southern Louisiana, West Virginia, Maine, Georgia, San Francisco, Utah, Boston, the Merrimack Valley, and Minneapolis/St. Paul, but we know that Colin was right that this was the source of

*Provincial Letter* continued on page 3



Fr. John Edward Gunn, S.M.



Sacred Heart, Atlanta, Georgia



Bishop Michael J. Keyes, S.M.

## MARIST FOUNDATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE

### THE MARISTS IN GEORGIA: 114 YEARS OF CARE AND SERVICE

On a June day in 1897, two Marist priests arrived in Georgia and opened a pathway of Marist service in pastoral work and education that continues to thrive in the area today. The two Marists, Fr. William Gibbons, S.M., and Fr. John Guinan, S.M., had come to answer the invitation from Bishop Thomas A. Becker, sixth bishop of Savannah, to minister in the burgeoning Diocese of Savannah, which at the time encompassed all of Georgia.

The Marists had been offered two parishes: Sts. Peter and Paul, now Sacred Heart, in Atlanta, and St. Francis Xavier parish in Brunswick. The former was a full conveyance in perpetuum, while St. Francis Xavier was handed over for a period of care. The first Marist Mass celebrated in Georgia took place in Atlanta on June 8, 1897.

It soon became apparent to Frs. Gibbons and Guinan that a new church would have to be constructed in Atlanta to suit the growing needs of Sts. Peter and Paul, which comprised 340 parishioners. A parcel at the intersection of Peachtree and Ivy Streets was selected for the new church, which was built in the French Romanesque style and dedicated on May 1, 1898, by Bishop Becker, as Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The dedication of the new church coincided with Fr. Gibbons' retirement from priestly service. He was replaced by another Marist, Fr. John Edward Gunn, S.M., whose contributions in the areas of parish and education ministries included, in 1901, the creation of Marist College, a school for

boys, which was constructed and opened adjacent to the church. By 1910, the parish community had grown to 1,250 members, with an additional 300 in the north Georgia missions. Fr. Gunn's time in Atlanta would come to an end during the following year when, on Aug. 29, 1911, he was consecrated bishop of Natchez, Miss. The ceremony took place at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Atlanta.

In 1922, a Marist priest, Fr. Michael J. Keyes, S.M., was named bishop of the Diocese of Savannah. During the course of his 13-year tenure, Bishop Keyes was distinguished by his effective care for the aged, infirmed, orphans, and the materially poor.

Over the coming decades, the Marists cared for as many as 14 missions in north Georgia, many of which became parishes. In 1965, Sacred Heart in Atlanta was returned to the care of archdiocesan priests and the Marists were given pastoral care of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, where they continue to serve today.

In 1962, Marist College moved to a new facility and changed its name to Marist School, where boys from grades 7 to 12 were educated in the Marist tradition. The school became co-educational in 1976 and continues to provide exceptional learning opportunities under the guidance of Marists and lay faculty and staff.

For 114 years, Marists have tended to the spiritual, academic, practical and charitable needs of north Georgia's Catholics.

They have participated in the growth of the area's Catholic population and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Georgians from all walks of life during Georgia's transformative century.

— Paul Carr, Director of Development

### *Provincial Letter*

*from page 2*

their boundless and unflinching boldness, energy, and creativity.

So we are working away in our communities trying to find a way to balance this charge from our Founder with the busy expectations of today's climate of ministry. We have surveyed our communities with respect to their present prayer practices and will be sharing best practices among ourselves based on what we have reeled back.

We know our Founder called us to a contemplative climate of life that is hard to find outside of monasteries in our own time, when ministry now moves at the fast pace of the world around us, but we are working mightily at measuring up. Please keep us in your prayers as we move along backwards to go forwards.

*Father Ted Keating, S.M.*



## MARIST CENTER CITY PARISHES ENCIRCLE THE GLOBE

At the 2009 Marists General Chapter, members looked at the global Marist world, noting the centrality and commonality of key center city churches across Australia, New Zealand, the United States, France, Great Britain, and Germany. The consensus was that the geographic location of these non-parochial parishes, that already reach a widespread population, could serve as a global focus of Marist mission to the spiritually or materially marginalized. Already attracting urban populations that need special ministry and accompaniment in faith, something dear to our Founder's heart and sense of mission, these parishes could also be places focused on inviting and forming Marist laity into a common sense of communion and mission, as Fr. Colin called us to do. These churches, pictured here, also can form larger communities where our witness of life together can be clearly manifested.

— *Father Ted Keating, S.M.*

1. **St. Mary of the Angels**  
Wellington, New Zealand
2. **Our Lady of Victories**  
Boston, MA, USA
3. **Notre Dame de France**  
London, England
4. **Notre Dame des Victoires**  
San Francisco, CA, USA
5. **Marianische Votivkirche**  
(dedicated to the Immaculate Conception)  
Passau, Germany





4



6

- 6. Notre Dame des Anges  
Paris, France
- 7. St. Louis, King of France  
St. Paul, MN, USA
- 8. St. Patrick's  
Sydney, Australia



7



5

Passau



8

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SAN FRANCISCO, ST. PAUL, BOSTON  
THREE U.S. PARISHES JOINING MARIST GLOBAL NETWORK  
FOR CITY-CENTER EVANGELIZATION



*Fr. Joseph McLaughlin, S.M., in front of the Christmas altar at Our Lady of Victories Church in Boston.*

In 2009, when the Society of Mary met in its General Chapter, the subject of increasing societal secularization was discussed and met with a decision that will reach into three U.S. cities where the Marists have urban parishes. The Marists will grow these parishes, in areas classified as “city-center” locations, into centers of evangelization with ministry emphasis on those who can be considered materially or spiritually impoverished. A network of these Marist center-city parishes will develop in cities around the globe.

The U.S. parishes involved in the city-center network are: Notre Dame des Victoires in San Francisco, Calif.; St. Louis Church in St. Paul, Minn.; and Our Lady of Victories Church and Shrine in Boston, Mass. Each parish represents well over a century of Marist ministry to their city’s faithful.

In Boston, a team of three Marists, led by Our Lady of Victories pastor, Fr. Joseph McLaughlin, S.M., are developing the evangelization program for the church, which is tucked inside a shadowed corner of three diverse neighborhoods: Back

Bay, Bay Village, and the South End. With a relatively small census of registered parishioners, about 160 in all, Our Lady of Victories also welcomes transient visitors from the city’s tallest office buildings and several hotels nearby.

Fr. Joe, a former missionary to the Philippines, took over as pastor last year. He acknowledges the church’s significance to Boston and discussed the unique suitability of the church to extend its arms to individuals who may not yet view a Catholic church as a useful place of respite from their troubles. “Over the decades, Our Lady of Victories has been a beacon of light in Boston for thousands of people,” said Fr. Joe. “A number of things, like changing demographics and businesses, have influenced this church’s place in the city. In many respects, it is a hidden jewel that most people pass but never see. When I first came here I wondered how we would most effectively develop the parish under the symbolic title of Our Lady of Victories while reaching out to new people who need us.”

The answer came to Fr. Joe as he reflected on the statue of Our Lady of Victories.

“There is a small child, Jesus, with Mary,” he said. “Mary is, in one sense, holding her son but also pushing him forward, standing on the world. Mary’s eyes are cast down, so that the attention is not on her, but her son, whose eyes are looking outward with arms outstretched. The sense taken from this is of Mary leading us to her son, who is victorious over the hurts, pains, struggles and sickness of the world.”

Fr. Joe said the image of Jesus as a small child, extending out his arms, sends the message that anyone can come to him. “Jesus wears the crown of victory because of his dying for us on the cross, overcoming death and pain and giving meaning to life. Mary wears the crown because she was willing to say yes and accept her place in God’s plan of salvation.”

Fr. Joe described the experience for a visitor to Our Lady of Victories and mentioned a large crucifix on the wall of the entrance lobby. “A person can stop and look at that crucifix and recognize that here is a place where Jesus understands my pain and he will take that pain upon himself,” he said. As people proceed into the church, an exceptionally beautiful, prayerful sense of space takes hold. “People are invited here to sit quietly with Jesus, with Mary leading them, allowing the atmosphere to bring the peace of mind and heart they are seeking.”

Fr. Joe says that his team is working to develop ministries of prayer that will underscore for people that, at Our Lady of Victories, they will find a place of God’s healing love. “We want to develop various liturgical ministries that will speak to the people and call them to want to come to the Shrine because they know they will be welcomed, and that all people, no matter what their station in life, will find a place of God’s peace and rest.”

— Paul Carr, Director of Development

## CHRIST, THE SOWER OF GOOD SEED



We hear about the sower who went out to sow seeds in Mark's Gospel. (Mark 4:1-20) As he sowed, some fell on the path and the birds ate it; some fell on rocky ground with little soil and it withered as soon as it grew; some fell among thorns that choked it; and some fell on rich soil and yielded an abundance of fruit. We need to look at our lives each day and see how we respond to the Word of God (Christ): some hear it, some don't; some respond; but in the end we have all heard Christ's call.

This listening to God's Word and his plan for each of us, requires that we consider how we are going to live our lives as baptized committed Catholic Christians. We have three choices: as a single celibate person living in the world with all of its pleasures as well as all of its pitfalls; living as a married man or woman with all of society's advantages gained over time; and the final choice open to us is living the consecrated life as a religious and/or as a priest.

Living and responding to God's Word does not depend on what we pray or by doing good works outside of our daily lives. It is reflecting on God's Word in the innermost part of our life; it is within our bones, you might say, and it is the experience of our daily lives.

As we continue to grow and pray about vocations, we slowly realize that it is up to each of us to promote them in what we do, how we pray, how we approach our children, our grandkids, our neighbors, and to recognize God's Word in that experience of our daily life.

We have all been called to *be* from the very beginning of our life. God has chosen us from the very beginning, and with our baptism we have been called once again to live our life with Christ.

Lent is a special time set aside for reflection and how best we can live it and how fertile the ground of our life has been. The fertile ground for the fostering of vocations--or simply put, the "culture of vocation"--has slowly dropped out of sight, mind, and practice. Our daily life has been influenced by secular values whose goals are focused on the individual, not on God and His life and "sowing" the good seed and letting it grow within our hearts.

The Vocation Office within the past year has been blessed with many individuals who have responded to the sowing of the good seed and have expressed a desire to see where God is leading them in their lives. We continue to be blessed and ask your prayers and help to continue to keep the soil ready for those receiving the Word in their daily life.

— Jack Ridout, Director of Vocations

## WHY I SUPPORT THE MARISTS

By Jean Castiglione  
Whitinsville, MA

I came to know the Marists several years ago through their publications and, on occasion, I caught the late Fr. Tom Dubay, S.M., on television, whom I found to be a good teacher.

I have learned that the Marists are a far-reaching Order with priests and brothers working quietly in education, pastoral work, prisons, and missions around the world. What has struck me most about the Marists is their choice to remain relatively unknown, to avoid fanfare heralding their contributions, and to choose ministry work in places where they would serve the abandoned and forgotten.

The choice to support the Marists financially came easily to me because I have always hoped that the church of tomorrow will show the way to God through Mary. Future Marist priests, I would assume, will ensure this. I am also aware of some of the un-trumpeted Marist contributions over the past century to people in this country and abroad. Many of these men are still alive, living in retirement, in need of care. I learned a few years ago that some Marists never took a salary for their work, and if they did, they put the money right back into the ministries in which they served. That has proved to be an unforgettable fact in my mind, and enough reason to include the Marists in my regular financial gifts.

I consider my support of the Marists to be excellent stewardship of God's gifts. I hope others will too.

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# Today's MARISTS

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Please visit us online at:  
[www.societyofmaryusa.org](http://www.societyofmaryusa.org)

## FOOD FOR HEALTH AND VIRTUE

During Lent, many of us think about our relationship with food and some of us strive to regulate that relationship. Unlike some religious legislators, Father Colin does not speak extensively in his Rule about food, but in article VI, #26, of the "Marist Constitutions, 1872," he does mention food in the context of the "simple and ordinary manner of life" in the Society of Mary.

Father Colin seems more concerned about what and why Marists eat than about how often or how much. He does not want Marists to use "delicacies" for food, i.e. to have rare and expensive food items. In this prohibition he deals with problems concerning expense, socio-economic class identification, food snobbery, and food as an end in itself.

He wants Marists to eat "the ordinary dishes used by the poor." What Marists eat makes a kind of social statement: the Marist table should reveal true Marist values. Father Colin is concerned that the bodily health of the members be maintained with a healthy diet; he does not want the confreres to make food choices that bring pleasure but do not nourish.

Even at meals "virtue may be tested." In matters of food and drink, as in other things, Marists work for "the greater service of God" by eating in a simple, ordinary, and healthy way.

- Tom Ellerman, S.M.

## NEW MARIST WEBSITE LAUNCHED

We are pleased to announce the new website for the United States Province of the Society of Mary, celebrating our new national identity as one US Province. Months in the making, the website is totally up to date, not only technology-wise, but also with its current use of media capacity on the Internet. Here, you will find useful information on the Society of Mary in the US and around the world, with up-to-date news and excellent resources on Marist history, mission, spirituality, the laity's role in the Church, and Marist ministries nationally and internationally. We think you will appreciate its vibrancy and energy, too. For our congregational members, a password protected area is available to the US Province for internal work and communication. We hope that the website will reach the interests and needs of young people, not only in their faith lives but for their ongoing discernment of state of life and vocation. The website's focus on changing images of Mary will also be a contribution to Mary and culture for many, and could be a central instrument in calling for vocations for the Marists. You will find the new site at [www.SocietyofMaryUSA.org](http://www.SocietyofMaryUSA.org).

