



Today's MARISTS

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A Marist's Reflection

- Paul Frechette, SM

All Marist spiritualities start with the human person because they are Marian congregations. The person feels called to respond to Christ and assist him in his mission as Mary did (FMS; SMSM) or to be open to the grace of God and allow great things to happen through humble people (Priests and Brothers; Marist Sisters). The Annunciation and the Magnificat illustrate the approach of the priests and sisters and Christ at Cana and Christ before his ascension the Brothers and Missionary Sisters.



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Marcelin Champagnat (1789-1840), founder of the **Marist Brothers (FMS)**, saw Mary very much as mother of Christ, Christ as the Son of Mary. This was accompanied by an emphasis and practice of Marian devotions (statues, prayers, titles) and virtues.

The **Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary (SMSM)** (1936) are missionary, Marist, and Marian. In their spirituality they share the Marist heritage, to imitate the mother of the Lord in our life in particular, in her humility and compassion. The Marist element is something they received from and shared with the first Marist priests and brothers in Oceania. The sisters see Mary as someone who is a "grass roots" person

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Provincial LETTER



Father Ted Keating, S.M.,
Provincial

Dear Friends,

So many of us were saddened and, at times, horrified by the scenes coming out of Haiti. It seems to have touched so many so personally. I have visited Haiti a number of times over the years in other positions that I have held, and have always been amazed by the joy, hope, and resilience of the people.

One trip to Cité Soleil, an especially poverty-stricken section of Port au Prince, transformed my faith in one sense. I went there as a US religious from this wealthy and secure nation thinking I knew what poverty was and what is necessary to sustain human life and society. The poverty and living conditions in that community devastated me. I could not imagine how people could live with a sense of hope and faith under the conditions I saw. I was scandalized by it in accordance with all that I had ever known of human life, security, faith in God, a fundamental sense of hope. I realized that I had the problem. I have never forgotten that lesson. Without justifying in any way such dehumanizing poverty, I learned that my religious sense was wrongly based on the life of relative security that I have always known. In a real sense, I am trapped in my security and need to reach beyond it to find profound faith and hope.

The people in that community, as victimized as they might be by economic impoverishment, live with a stronger sense of faith, hope, and love than I could even have imagined and that I still struggle to understand. Those who are poor evangelize us in a very real sense when we engage them and enter their lives. In a sense, I have too much and am too secure to fully know what Christian hope is really all about. I pray over that and have often spoken about the struggle in homilies. I saw that resilience in their love for one another, their abundantly expressed

religious praise of God in worship, and their love for family and community.

I talked with Fr. Juan Gonzalez, the pastor of our parish in Brooklyn with one of the largest Haitian communities in that city. When I asked him about the reaction to the tragedy in the parish, his constant refrain was his inspiration at the resilience of the parishioners in the midst of it all, reflecting the resilience we have also been seeing in media reports. Bishop Sansaricq, auxiliary of Brooklyn, Haitian himself, celebrated a Mass at our Brooklyn parish on February 5, especially to struggle with grief of large numbers whose families had been touched by death or disappearance. As you probably saw in the media about Haiti, the prayer and praise of God is full-throated if grief-stricken and heart-wrenchingly emotional. But it is always in the context of closeness with God in tragedy. Counselors from Kings County Hospital volunteered their services. A night vigil was held a few days later to show the world their sense of solidarity and faith in the midst of this enormous tragedy.

Our own Fr. Souvenir Jean-Paul, SM, who ministers at that hospital found that his family members were safe but often left homeless. As our brother, we try to share his burden of loss and relief that his family survived it all.

You will see in a side bar the participation of our schools. Our parishes all participated in the special Bishops' collection for Catholic Relief Services. The Province made a significant contribution in its own name to CRS as well. Our campus ministries did collections and programs and helped the college students become more deeply aware of the meaning of this tragedy for Haiti and its future, and of the long and troubled relationship of our nation with Haiti even though it responded in an admirable way to this particular tragedy.

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Provincial Letter

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There is no explaining away this kind of suffering and these types of tragedy as I tried to show from the viewpoint of our own Marist values. But light and darkness always shows through when we look for Christ's suffering in His people in these moments of grief and even horror. Perhaps it is the Haitians themselves and their profound and irrepressible hope and love for God that shows us the light that there is here. St. Paul tells us to "grieve" but not "grieve without hope like the pagans". God is a mystery to us but God's closeness to us in even the most unexplainable tragedies is a grace we dare not miss. The Haitian people seem to know that well and had to learn it to embrace their own history. It leaves us with good questions to reflect on during this season of Resurrection and our own resurrections.

Father Ted Keating, SM



VOCATIONS – RESPONDING TO “THE CALL” - by Jack Ridout



Jack Ridout

While attending a recent conference for Vocation Directors, I learned from novices who were there that while they were growing up, they had not known a religious sister, brother or priest (outside of Sunday Mass). Their knowledge of religious life was gained through the Internet and other social networks.

In the 1960s, following the Second Vatican Council, many men and women religious switched to lay attire, and they are simply less readily notable than they were in the past. A greater involvement of the laity in service to parishes, schools and hospitals overshadows today's dwindling religious within their traditional avenues of ministry and service. And, while they seek new approaches for living their religious life by serving Christ, many are now less visible.

The number of religious and diocesan clergy have flourished and faltered over the centuries, but there have always been men and women who sense a "call" and have had the grace and courage to respond to that call. I sincerely believe that there are young people who are willing to devote themselves to the "call." Without a loving and generous response by the laity, however, to foster these vocations, the number of men and women responding to God's call may continue to be small.

On a positive note, the Marists have been in contact with a young man for the past four years, after he attended a vocation weekend. After additional visits and prayer he has requested to start the application process. By creating a "culture of vocations" among the Marists, we have reached out to this man to begin the journey of discovering the direction in which God is leading him.

What does this have to do with us?

To the best of our ability, each one of us needs to create a similar *culture of vocations* where we live, work and pray. As parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends we need to cultivate vocations through prayer and action. We must never hesitate to ask young people to seriously consider whether God is calling them to religious life. Additionally, we must allow ourselves to be the instrument of that call through encouragement and guidance. Allow God to call them through your words and actions.

An important symposium on vocations developed five actions for creating a *culture of vocations*. These actions are: *pray, evangelize, experience, mentor and invite*.

In future articles I will expand on these five actions.

Part Three: Expansion to Central West Virginia

THE MARIST PRESENCE IN THE MISSIONS OF WEST VIRGINIA

Two important factors contributed to the success of the pastoral work in Richwood and Buckhannon: the establishment of Catholic schools and of Catholic hospitals.

In 1909 a Catholic school was begun in Richwood under rather unfavorable and primitive conditions. After three years Pallotine religious sisters came from Limburg in Germany to make the first American foundation for their congregation. The sisters agreed to take over the parochial school at Richwood and to board the Catholic children from outlying places. On August 21, 1912, the sisters arrived at Richwood and in September they took over the teaching in the parochial school. The following month their number increased from four to six by the arrival of two more sisters from the motherhouse.

The sisters had not been in charge of the school long when a new field of activity, health care, opened for them. A hospital was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and opened in 1914.

New missions meant new needs and called for a reorganization of the mission field and an increase in the number of missionaries. It was thought also that a division of the territory with two centers, one in Richwood, the other in Buckhannon, would be a practical and helpful measure.

Richwood, situated as it was at the southern extremity of the mission field, was not suitable as headquarters of the whole territory. On May 8, 1920, Father Hengers turned over the charge of Richwood and adjoining missions to the new pastor, Father Leo Marx, S.M. Father Hengers moved on to Buckhannon to see what could be done about organizing a new center there.

Father Marx was pastor at Richwood from 1920 to 1927; his successors were the following: Father Ferdinand Ries (1927-1930), Father Joseph A. Petit (1931), Father Thomas S. Canning (1931-1937), Father Charles Fijal (1937-1951), and Father Thomas J. Roshetko, (1951-1952). Since 1952 many Marists have served in Richwood and today Father Jerome Rawa, S.M. and Brother Richard McKenna, S.M., continue the pastoral ministry there.

In 1920 Buckhannon had a Catholic population of ten families. In May 1920 St. Joseph Parish was founded with Pickens and Century as its principal missions. The memory of the Pallotine Sisters' success with the Richwood hospital led Father Hengers to consider their founding one in Buckhannon. A renovated mansion was opened as St. Joseph's Hospital on March 28, 1926. The Pallotine Sisters were not only engaged in the operation of their hospital but they also opened a one-room school in the rear of the church.

Upon leaving Buckhannon Father Hengers was named pastor of St. Vincent's Parish, Wheeling, in 1936. He served there until his death on July 7, 1939. In Buckhannon Father Hengers was succeeded by Marist Fathers James Palmowski, James Reilly, and Matthew Faschan. Today Holy Rosary Parish in Buckhannon is served by Father Ronald Nikodem, S.M., and Brother Roy Madigan, S.M..

This brief survey of Marist pastoral presence in Central West Virginia, restricted to the first 50 years of its history, has attempted to show those pioneer Marists to be true, missionary sons of their founder, the Venerable Jean Claude Colin, who called them to work for the salvation of the neighbor by missions among "country people." The Marists of Central West Virginia fulfilled and continue to fulfill their call "to go from place to place for the greater service of God."

Fr. Tom Ellerman, SM

Teacher and Friend Committed to the Solomon Islands

When Marist Fr. David Galvin left the U.S. for the Solomon Islands missions, LBJ was president, the Vietnam War was in full swing, and the Beatles were top of the charts. Some 44 years later, Fr. Galvin, 73, has recently taken on new work at a rural training center and couldn't be more content.

Growing up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Fr. Galvin was an altar boy at his Marist parish. He first heard about South Pacific missionaries from a priest he met in Boy Scouts. "I went to minor seminary in 1950, and when the provincial came to visit every year, I would tell him I wanted to be a missionary." Ordained in 1963, Fr. Galvin taught for two years in Detroit. At the request of the bishop in the Solomon Islands, Fr. Galvin completed a MA before he finally realized his dream of becoming a missionary.

The experience of the South Pacific was "surprising – there is no real way to prepare for this," he said, but Fr. Galvin quickly learned from other Marist missionaries and religious, and quickly became bilingual in one of the islands' 50 languages, Lau. Fr. Galvin taught high school and was a parish priest before he went to San Christobal two years ago to oversee the rural training center on the island, founded by Dutch Marist Fr. George Vanderzant.

At the center - two and one half hours from electricity and Internet access – 92 young adults are trained in agriculture, animal husbandry, small engine maintenance, home economics, religious education, child care and leadership/communication skills.

Between pastoral visits and marriages, Fr. Galvin finds time to continue to work on his great passion. In fact, he has built an international reputation in bee keeping. The hobby began in 1978, when he started a Scout troop at the Marist school where he taught biology. He encouraged his scouts to build hives. "Everyone got stung – the kids found the process pretty exciting," Fr. Galvin remembers. Soon the hives were producing enough honey to earn \$4,000 a month, which helped support the school. Soon, Fr. Galvin created a honey producers co-op and found markets in Australia, New Zeland and Germany for his "exotic and totally organic" product.

Along the way, Fr. Galvin connected with bee keepers around the world, and developed a reputation for not only bee keeping, but domesticating wild Asian bees. From their remote island community, Fr. Galvin and his student helpers "are part of a large bee keeping community around the world."

Interviewed while in the U.S. for medical treatment, Fr. Galvin eagerly awaited his return to the South Pacific. "I hope to spend the rest of my days there," notes Galvin. "I love the people and their attitude to life...their culture and tradition equips them: they have little but are happy with what they have and life in the village."

Fr. Galvin does hope one day to have electricity at the Styvenberg Center. "With electricity we could fish and have refrigeration. With a generator or solar or water power, we might have computers and the ability to be in touch with the outside world." Fr. Galvin welcomes notes at goneeast@solomon.com.sb.



Fr. Galvin with students at the Styvenberg Center



Fr. Galvin at Baptism in local village



Launching School Boat for 2 hour trip to local hospital



Student helpers tending the bees.

Students Reflect on Marist Qualities



Christopher is going to college where he wants to study English or History. He also hopes to do some theater.



Sascha is going to college "and try everything." She doesn't know what she wants to do, so will keep an open mind.



Chris will graduate from the International Baccalaureate Diploma program at NDP and hope to attend either Michigan State University or the University of Notre Dame beginning in the fall of 2010. He plans a career in business.



Emily hopes to attend either Northwestern or USC in the fall to study dentistry.

Graduation season is approaching and so Today's Marists asked some students in Marist schools what was on their minds. Meet graduating seniors and student council co-presidents, Christopher Ryan and Sascha Brown, students at Marist School in Atlanta; and Christopher George and Emily Wade, students at Notre Dame Preparatory High School in Pontiac, Michigan.

Are there qualities that you can identify as being uniquely Marist that have carried you along during your school years here? If so, what were they — and how do you suppose they might be expressed in your adult life?

Christopher: A sense of community; it is found in everything we do here at Marist School. Everything is centered on the people and the connections and bonds we make. Being a Marist student has made me learn the importance of relating with other people. If you don't respect them or have a common bond, the quality of the work you do is not going to be the best it could.

Emily: The Notre Dame Preparatory environment is a very accepting and kind community. Teachers and staff are always willing to lend advice in both academic and personal context. As well as the adults in the school community, the students also support and even encourage strong academic and moral values. I believe these qualities are very unique to a Marist school. These qualities of the school community will definitely influence my adult life. By growing in a community that is so supportive and encouraging, I know that I have the confidence and ability to have a career as well as keeping my moral values.

Sascha: Marist people are caring and compassionate about their community. There is a strong sense of community and everyone wants to get involved. This has taught me the importance of getting involved, working together, and being committed to what you are doing. I think this will take me far as an adult.

Chris: A quality I could identify as uniquely Marist found in our school would be the encouragement of success. Teachers and administrators do not only preach becoming good Christian people, they actively pursue its resonance in the minds and hearts of students. A truly whole person graduates from Notre Dame Preparatory, not just one with a high intellect.

If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be?

Emily: I would make the world a more optimistic place. I believe that there are many people who say they can't do something and many times they really can. Optimism would make the world happier and more productive.

Christopher: I would make sure everyone on earth had access to fresh water. It is the absolute source of life.

"The Marist Way" continued on page 7 . . .

A WILL IS A WAY
TO SPREAD THE

Good News

Who will decide where
everything you've worked for
your entire life, will go?
You, or a Stranger?

About 65% of Americans die without a Will
telling the state and their heirs how they
want to dispose of their estate.
And about 65% of their estate goes to
the IRS and the State.

If you don't want this to happen, write a
will leaving your estate to people and
causes you care about most, and save
expensive probate and legal fees.

Consider leaving a legacy that is in conformi-
ty with your values, that will continue
God's work.

Please consider including the
Marists Fathers and Brothers in your will.

Our legal name is:
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Why I Have Supported the Marists with a Charitable Gift Annuity

By Dr. Louis Verroi, Charleston, SC

I have always been interested in supporting organizations that have much or most of their attention directed to helping the materially poor and marginalized in any society, whether it is in our country or abroad. When I first learned about the Marists, I was drawn by the simplicity and humility of their approach to the world, but mostly, it was their concern for the deeply poor that caught my eye.

Over time, I recognized that the Marists have helped build our Church quietly in various places throughout the world. There are pockets of our Church around the country that owe their very roots to the efforts of the Society of Mary, and, of course, there are the missions that continue to exist today. The Marist preference for working with the poor has an obvious conclusion: those most deeply touched by the Marist presence are the least capable of supporting them financially.

Charitable gift annuities (CGAs), as I have come to know them, are a two-way street that make a lot of sense for people interested in supporting a group like the Marists while desiring a lifetime income (quarterly payments) with tax benefits. I have chosen to support the Marists with a CGA because I recognize the long reach of their service and want to reach back to help them continue their vital work and care for their elderly members who served so selflessly.

In exchange for my gift to the Marists, they are providing me with annuity payments each quarter for the rest of my life. After my lifetime, the balance will belong to the Marists to help support their mission. People who establish CGAs are eligible to claim a sizable charitable gift deduction on their income tax in the year they open the annuity, and the tax savings continue over coming years.

I would encourage anyone who is interested in establishing a charitable gift annuity in support of the Marists to contact Paul Carr, their Director of Development, at 508-879-7223.

"The Marist Way" from page 7 . . .

Sascha: I want people to be more giving and selfless. If they were more caring about the people around them, it would go a long way.

Chris: If I could change one thing in the world, it would be the lack of self-respect people have. Respecting others is quite hard to achieve when one does not respect his or her self, and I believe society would be much more wholesome if humans first gained self-respect, and then worked to spread this respect outward to all of their fellow men and women.

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Reflections continued from front page. . . by Paul Frechette, SM

and not up on a pedestal. Mary as the Mother of Mercy and Mary of the Magnificat often are part of their liturgical celebrations.

The **Marist priests and brothers** (SM) find in their founder, Jean-Claude Colin (1790-1875), the experience of the grace of God at work in humble people achieving great things. Colin did not promote a new Marian devotion. You will find little in terms of images, statues, extraordinary prayers to Mary. That is not the point. The point is her experience of grace, great things through the one who was as it were unknown and at the same time so full of zeal as Colin said to Mayet: “The aim of the society is to imitate the blessed Virgin, who was at once so unassuming and so full of zeal for the salvation of the world, working for it in silence.” Colin to Mayet in 1837 (FS, doc.1,2))

The foundress of the **Marist Sisters**, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin (1786-1858) lived with the Colin brothers in the presbytery of Cerdon. Mary is seen as the mother of the Holy Family at Nazareth, the woman, the person aware of the needs of the people, interceding for them and assisting them.



As many recognize Mary with special devotions this month, we reflect on the human qualities to which we can aspire in following the Marist Way – to imitate the Blessed Virgin in our relationships with all, seeking to be unassuming and full of zeal.