



Today's MARISTS

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Mary's Devotion

By Edwin L. Keel, S.M.

The month of May is, for many Catholics, a time for special devotion to Mary. It is a time of Marian processions and May crownings.

Father Jean-Claude Colin and the early Marists had deep personal devotion to Mary. It has often been supposed that the Society of Mary exists because of their devotion to Mary: being devoted to Mary, they decided to form a religious congregation dedicated to her.

But Fr. Colin was always very clear about the origins of the Society of Mary: "It is not a work of human beings, but of God."

It was Mary, in union with the will of God, who took the initiative and inspired the foundation of the Society. Fr. Colin even got the General Chapter of the Society in 1872 to declare that Mary is the Foundress of the Society.

Mary desired this Society that bears her name because she was concerned about God's people in this modern age, with all that threatened them and their practice of their faith. We can say, then, that the Society of Mary was founded not because of Fr. Colin's devotion to Mary, but **because of Mary's devotion to the people of God.** The purpose or mission, then, of the Society of Mary, of the Marists, is to be the vehicle whereby Mary continues to care for God's people in this world.

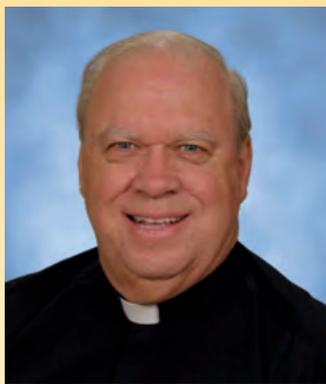
This is why Marists have never promoted specific devotions to Mary. We have directed our Marian devotion toward the people who are Mary's concern. Our Marist energies have been channeled into doing Mary's work and being the vehicles of Mary's merciful presence in the Church of our day. So, while we may each be person-



ally devoted to Mary, celebrate her feasts, pray the rosary and other prayers in her honor, our devotion to Mary expresses itself principally in our devotion to God's people, especially in service to those most in need.

From the very beginnings of the Society, it has been evident that this mission of doing Mary's work and thus making Mary present, as it were, in the Church and world of our day, could not be accomplished without the collaboration of lay people in this effort. The central dynamic of Marist life is something that lay people can share in very simply: anyone who becomes captivated by Mary's motherly, compassionate concern for God's people, and reaches out in action to bring Mary's care to people, is doing Mary's work and sharing in the mission of the Marists.

Obviously, Mary's concern for God's people originates in God's mercy, in the salvation



Edwin L. Keel, S.M.

PROVINCIAL'S LETTER MAY 2012

Dear Friends,

Ministry must always be responsible and accountable and transparent. To that end, the US Province of the Marists has just been through a thorough accreditation process by Praesidium, Inc., one of the premier accrediting agencies for child care in the United States. The organization usually works with YMCA's and child care agencies around the country, assuring that they are within generally accepted standards applicable to those kinds of agencies for their dealing with the protection of children and minors in the course of their work.



Father Ted Keating, S.M.,
Provincial

You may wonder why a religious congregation of men (the Marists) would subject themselves to such a thorough assessment for being in compliance to these standards. In the view of the collaborative work of U.S. men's religious congregations in responding to the crisis of 2002 regarding the Church's actions and accountability for dealing with the protection of minors in the course of their ministries, it was decided to submit to this process together to assure the public and the Church that we always follow the strongest and toughest standards in our dealing with these issues. Our public accreditation by Praesidium, with its national expertise and reputation, would help assure our continuing accountability for doing this work well.

There are 26 separate standards: for example, how well we psychologically evaluate and form our incoming Marists to be sure that there is no psychological predisposition that could provide risk in their dealings with young people in ministry. Another standard is to insure that they have a foundation for and good understanding of healthy celibacy. The standards also cover our continuing education programs that deal with, among other areas, the continual updating of healthy boundaries in ministry to assure that our membership act responsibly in all of their ministerial relationships, especially those with minors.

We are also assessed for how pastoral and helpful we are in dealing with anyone who may come forward with a complaint against one of our men with respect to sexual abuse. We are required to use an outside objective review board in determining the credibility of allegations of this type and the subsequent pastoral handling of such allegations. The agency does file reviews to assure that we are complying with these standards. There is a review of provincial policies to assure that they are in compliance with these national standards.

The U.S. Bishops in 2002 issued a blanket mandate that no one who has ever abused a child in the course of ministry is to be permitted to engage in any further ministry, no matter the circumstances. Praesidium assures that the mandate is being followed and reports to the Bishops of the Dioceses in which we work that a check has been made, and that the Society of Mary is in full compliance with the Bishops' mandate.

This gives us Marists the assurance that we are in conformity with the highest standards in the United States for dealing with issues of the protection of minors, and also assures those that we minister to (and with), that we do so. We men religious thought in 2002 that it was the best way to reassure the public and the Church in a continuing way of our compliance with the Bishops' Norms, and that these national standards were applicable to everyone dealing with minor children in the United States. In spite of the best efforts, we were concerned that once all the media attention in 2002 died down, there could be a tendency to unconsciously slip back into old ways of operating. This accreditation process is repeated every three years in the face of continuing development in this field. It is designed to keep us fresh and "on our toes" in this critical area of our work. Our Founders would have expected nothing less of us in light of the awareness that the sexual exploitation of minors has been a scar on human society in this country. Our Founders would have expected us to be in the forefront of this new cultural awareness, and not merely reacting defensively in the face of it. We see this work as part of our mission as religious, and are convinced that this work could be a useful addition to many of our institutions in this country.

Both the former Atlanta and Boston Provinces had been accredited separately in 2008 and this accreditation process was conducted for the new Province three years later. It is hard to imagine how a religious congregation with Mary, the Mother of Mercy, as its Foundress, could do any less.

Fr. Ted Keating, S.M.

www.societyofmaryusa.org

MARIST DEVELOPMENT, MISSION OFFICES COME TOGETHER

By Paul Carr, Director of Development

When, on January 1, 2009, the two former Marist American Provinces (Atlanta and Boston) reorganized and unified into one Province, a number of administrative functions of the Province merged as well—including the two former Offices of Development, which exist today in one office in Boston. A late-stage merger took place last year when the Development and Mission Offices came together in offices next door to Our Lady of Victories Shrine in Boston.

Many people tell me they don't understand what is meant by "development" in the context of a Catholic religious men's order. Let me try to explain here.

The Marists do not have a stream of income that supports its congregational life in the same fashion as a for-profit business. The Marists rely on the financial and in-kind gifts made by their friends: people who understand and appreciate the life and work chosen by the Marists, and who recognize the value of Marist ministries over the years.

Today, they see these ministries continue in parishes, schools, prisons, hospitals, colleges, the military, the missions, and more. Not-for-profit development programs are sometimes called Advancement Offices because our work is aimed at helping to advance the mission of the organization through fundraising and communications. The communications we produce help the Marists share their stories with friends and communicate essential information to them. The fundraising enables the Province to meet its financial obligations in the care for their members, the custody and operations of their ministries and the planning for tomorrow's Marists and their ministries.

We also meet with donors who have the capacity and desire to support the Marists with a major gift. Some of these gifts are cash donations, many are structured through wills and bequests, while others involve placing a charitable gift annuity, which is a significant gift (minimum \$10,000) that provides lifetime income to the donor while affording significant tax benefits.

The Marist Mission Office exists to support the worldwide missions of the Society of Mary. Marists have been missionaries from the time they were first recognized by Pope Gregory in 1836. Today, Marists work as missionaries in Africa, Australia, Brazil, Europe, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Oceania, Peru, the Philippines, Thailand, Venezuela, and the United States. One common thread in a Marist missionary work is that most Marist missionaries can be found doing more than one job (e.g. teaching, preaching, socio-economic enablement) in a place where they are ministering to poor, underserved, marginalized people.

Fr. Joseph McLaughlin, S.M. is the director of the Mission Office, and I am director of the Development Office. Through the year, we work together to plan communications and fundraising strategies for the Mission Office. This past Lent, we produced a booklet in which six Marist missionaries shared their reflections on their ministries and vocation. We also send news-bulletin letters to our Marist Missions friends. This spring, we hope to have a Marist Missions website. Funds raised through the Marist Mission Office are sent to the Marist Generalate offices in Rome where they are disbursed to ministries throughout the world.

MISSION CO-OPS

Each year, the Marist Mission Office is invited by (arch)dioceses throughout the United States to visit parishes in their area and speak at Mass about the Marist missions. About 20 Marists from the U.S. Province participate in this activity, which is referred to as Mission Co-ops. These visits become excellent opportunities for Marists to explain the Marist qualities of serving God in the way of Mary, while raising awareness of the Marists' demonstrated commitment to missionary work.

Sometimes the Marist priest will not only speak about the missions but will also celebrate the Masses at which he is scheduled.

The mission co-ops are also fundraising activities because there is a collection for the Marist Missions that accompanies each Mission Co-op Mass.

Coming Up . . .

150 YEARS IN

THE UNITED STATES

This year, the Development and Mission Offices are preparing for a major Marist U.S. Province celebration that will take place next year around the country: the 150th Anniversary of the Marists coming to America (*Marist-150*). The celebration is expected to include observances and special programs that will bring together Marists with laity, students, alumni, friends and other religious. *Marist-150* is viewed by Marists as a superb opportunity to reflect on the past and assemble resources to help build toward a strong Marist future. For more information on this celebration, please watch our future communications and consult our website (societyofmaryusa.org). You are always welcome to contact Paul Carr in the Development Office in Boston with questions or comments: 617-451-3237.

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER'S MINISTRIES: WOMEN'S CONGREGATIONS AND THE MARISTS

By Paul Carr, Director of Development, and Tom Ellerman, S.M., Phil Gage, S.M. and Paul Frechette, S.M.



Mother Maria Amada of the Child Jesus, M.S.C.Gpe.



Mother Mary Rose and Mother Mary Pia, SMSM



Fr. Joseph Sollier, S.M.

As Fr. Keel's reflection points out so eloquently, the Marists strive to reflect the qualities of Mary, responding to both her devotion to God and divine inspiration, which brought the Marist congregation into being. They are not alone in aspiring to reflect the qualities of Mary in their lives and ministry as Marists; the qualities of service "hidden and unknown," so much a hallmark of Marist spirituality, are shared by Marist laity and women's religious congregations.

In this Marian edition of Today's Marists, we highlight and celebrate the religious women's congregations who have served and continue to serve with the Marist Fathers and Brothers: the Marist Missionary Sisters in North America (SMSM) and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of Guadalupe (M.S.C.Gpe.). Deeply embodying that charism of hidden and unseen service, both congregations have worked side by side with the Marists in Oceania, Jamaica, the United States and Rome, united in a common call of service in the way of Mary.

In the following pages, Paul Carr outlines the founding stories of these women's orders, while Marists Tom Ellerman, Phil Gage and Paul Frechette, provide personal histories of the "Misioneras" serving with the Marists in San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and Boston, and a SMSM celebration of 90 years of service in the United States.

Every great association begins with a shared understanding. This holds true for the two most significant modern collaborations between the Marists and two women's congregations: the Marist Missionary Sisters in North America (SMSM), and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of Guadalupe (M.S.C.Gpe.). Each of these congregations holds true and close to essential tenets that direct them into service to poor and marginalized people. This one thread is not the only similarity these two orders share with the Marists; after all, the SMSMs are part of the Marist family, but it is perhaps the most evident when one considers the lives lived and work done by these religious.

After Pope Gregory XVI requested the Marists send men to convert a vast region of the south Pacific, the first Marists arrived on the islands of Wallis and Futuna in 1837, where Marist priest St. Peter Chanel would be martyred in 1841. A few years later, two women from Wallis wrote to the Marists in France asking that they send women to help them and their children. At first, just one woman responded, Marie Françoise Perroton; she traveled from France and worked with the women and children of Wallis for 12 years, until being joined by 10 other French women, who worked as missionaries in Wallis, Futuna, New Caledonia and Samoa. These women are credited with being The Pioneers of the Marist Missionary Sisters.

Before long, the women were recognized by the Church as Sisters (Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Mary) and consecrated by vows as religious in the diocese of Oceania. Their first two novitiates were opened in 1881, one in France, the other in Wallis.

Rev. Joseph Sollier, S.M. was instrumental in bringing the Sisters to Boston. His focus was on the missionary work of the Marists, and he recognized the need for English-speaking members for the Pacific. Through the efforts of Fr. Sollier, the Third Order and other benefactors, on March 19, 1922, the Blessed Peter Chanel Convent at Our Lady of Victories, the Marist parish on Isabella Street in Boston, was opened for women wanting to serve in the Marist missions in the South Pacific.

Fr. Sollier transformed an apartment building next to the Church to receive the Sisters, which was to become their first home in the United States. The convent, under the direction of Mother Mary Pia, who had served in Fiji, trained women who wanted to become members of the Third Order Regular of Mary and go to the missions of Oceania. In 1931, the Sisters' Congregation was recognized by the Church and became known as the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary.

During this same period, a revolutionary war was raging across Mexico. Amid this turmoil, a pious young Mexican woman, Maria Regina Sanchez Muñoz, felt divinely led to teach the forgotten children of Mexico about Christian life. She entered into spiritual direction with a Jesuit, Fr. Lazaro Valadez, S.J., and, in 1926, founded the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady of Guadalupe as María Amada of the Child Jesus. The congregation's goal was to extend the reign of the Heart of Jesus throughout the whole world. The ministry her Sisters would undertake was to spread the news of God's love to the poor

and suffering, to children in particular, to teach about the Sacraments, and to counter the anti-Church effects of the Revolution.

Today, the Sisters who followed Mother Maria Amada live in 47 communities across the Americas, including four Marist communities (Boston, Washington, San Francisco, and Rome), where they tend to the cooking and cleaning needs for Marists in active ministries and those who are retired in apostolates of prayer. The wages they earn are sent back to Mexico where they help finance the unique week-day "orphanages" to serve and educate children whose parents must travel for work during the week.

On April 8, 2003, Norbert Cardinal Rivera Carrera, Archbishop Primate of Mexico, opened a diocesan inquiry for the beatification of Mother Mary Amada.

The origins of the relationships between the Marist Fathers and Brothers and the Sisters of these two different congregations reach back to periods of great need and strife. The collaborations the Marists have enjoyed with these Sisters have enriched the quality of their service to God and provided shared joys and mutual fulfillment along the way.

"MISIONERAS" IN SAN FRANCISCO, CA: A MAGNIFICENT BLESSING TO MARISTS

For many years, the Marist community of San Francisco has been blessed with the prayerful and inspiring presence of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Guadalupe — our wonderful "Misioneras".

The Sisters first came to the California Region in 1963 to render domestic and culinary services to the faculty, staff, and students of St. Peter Chanel Seminary, the Marist Apostolic School at San Rafael, Marin County, California. After the closing of St. Peter Chanel Seminary in 1971, the Sisters continued their ministry in San Francisco for the juxtaposed communities of the Marist Center of the West and the Parish of Notre Dame des Victoires. Even though these San Francisco Marists are exceptionally fortunate to experience the superb cuisine, the impeccable housekeeping, and the cheerful service of the "Misioneras" on a daily basis, they are even more privileged to witness the prayerful presence of these wonderful Sisters pictured at right.

These Sisters form a powerhouse of prayer in our midst. While the Marists appreciate and benefit greatly from their



"Misioneras" in San Francisco, CA. Left to right: Srs. Victoria Medina Contreras, Engracia Ixtlahuoc, Maria Hernandez Cortes, Ana Luisa Alcala Torres and Alejandra Perez Zaragoza, M.S.C.Gpe.

material services, the Sisters' five hours of daily community and personal prayer and worship are a magnificent blessing that brings invaluable graces upon all Marists everywhere.

... CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

“MISIONERAS” IN WASHINGTON, DC: MORE THAN A HALF-CENTURY OF SERVICE

Sr. Emerenciana and Sr. Beatriz arrived at St. Joseph’s Manor, Bettendorf, Iowa, on October 15, 1960, the first Sacred Heart Sisters to travel from Mexico to work with a Marist community in the United States. At that time, the Washington Province had decided to open a second minor seminary. In 1961, two more Sisters came, Sr. Cecilia and Sr. Maria Veronica, as well as Mother Foundress, Mother Maria Amada Sanchez, who stayed for a two-week visit and whose cause for beatification is now underway in Rome.

The help, support and service the Sisters provided proved invaluable to the Marists, and they applied to Mother Sanchez for even more help. In 1966, five Sisters came to St. Peter Chanel High School in Bedford, Ohio to manage the school cafeteria and domestic needs of the large Marist community. Even with an increase of Sisters the following year, the whole operation of the cafeteria, purchasing the food, doing all the cooking, dealing with so many students and faculty, etc. was too much for them. It was decided to concentrate their ministry on caring for the Marist community.

St. Joseph’s Manor closed in 1972, and the four Sisters went elsewhere, including to Chanel High School. When the Washington Province sold the school to the Diocese of Cleveland, and by 1987, when there were more Sisters than Marists at the school, the provincial asked the Sisters if they could come to the provincial house in Washington. D.C. They would be of tremendous service there in helping with numerous visitors, council meetings, various celebrations, and



“Misioneras” in Washington, D.C. Left to right: Sr. Angelina Blanco, Mother Beatriz Navarro, Sr. Maria Eugenia Lara, Sr. Bertha Cibrian, Sr. Pabla Ponce.

with the second Washington community, the seminarians and faculty at the major seminary called “Marist College”.

Accordingly, five Sacred Heart Sisters arrived in Washington in 1988, where they still serve so faithfully and with such dedication. The Sisters drive every weekday morning from their convent to provide their much appreciated domestic ministry to the Marist Community. Each of those days is started together with the Marist Community at Mass at the residence, near the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and the Catholic University of America.

Their Mother Superior is currently Sr. Beatriz Navarro, who was one of the two Mexican Sisters who first came to work with the Marists 52 years ago in Bettendorf, Iowa.

“MISIONERAS” IN BOSTON, MA: AN EXAMPLE OF JOYFUL RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Marists in Boston have been blessed by the service of The Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Guadalupe for the past 45 years. They first arrived to serve at Our Lady of Victories October 29th, 1967. Their ministry supports the Marists' ministry through prayer, and taking care of the sanctuary and the flowers for the church, in addition to the cooking and laundry for the priests and brothers. “The sisters witness to us Marists,” notes Fr. Paul Frechette, S.M., who lives at the Isabella Street rectory. Noting that the sisters choose at final vows for a ministry of domestic work or teaching, Fr. Paul speaks with great respect of the sisters' example: “They live their community life and ministry with such joy, a joyful living out of religious life.”



“Misioneras” in Boston, MA. Clockwise from lower left: Srs. Cristina Cabrera Ibarra, Mònica Rocha Alvarado, Eva Pérez Saldivar, Concepcion Flores Galindo, Teresa Garcia Jara, M.S.C.Gpe.

A PILGRIMAGE OF REMEMBRANCE, THANKSGIVING

By Paul Frechette, S.M.

Our Lady of Victories Shrine and residence (on Isabella Street in Boston, Mass.,) was the setting for a lively pilgrimage on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, when 40 Marist Missionary Sisters (SMSMs) arrived in a large coach bus from their Waltham residences and work places. The occasion marked and celebrated their Order's 90th anniversary in the United States, a history which began right up the road, at 13 Isabella Street.

Fr. Joe McLaughlin, S.M., pastor of Our Lady of Victories, presided at the Mass of Thanksgiving which began at 10:30 a.m. He was accompanied by five other Marist priests who concelebrated in this joyful occasion. Fr. Ed Sheehan preached and cited, among many details, the importance of Fr. Sollier, S.M., who was the superior of the Marist Fathers at this same church, in 1920. Fr. Sollier was integral, along with the Marist laity and several benefactors, in buying and preparing the Isabella Street property, which was adjacent to the Shrine and Rectory, for what would become a launching pad for women wanting to serve in Marist missions in the South Pacific.

Sr. Judith Sheridan, SMSM, spoke at the beginning of the Mass, and began with the challenging phrase: ***"Blessed Are They Who Dream Dreams and Are Willing To Pay the Price to Make Them Come True."*** She continued: "After the postulant house was opened, over 15 women entered the SMSM program of preparation within the next six months. These hard-working women would soon return the kindness of Fr. Sollier and the Marist Fathers for their comfortable lodging, coal, electricity, and gas by taking charge of the Sacristy and the Church, the care of the Rectory and laundry and linens. Thus began a working relationship that would last on Isabella Street until 1969."

Sr. Judith went on: "We stand on the shoulders of these great women. As we scan the horizon of our world in March 2012, there is no less urgency, no less need to proclaim the love of God today than in any other time or place ... Fidelity to our SMSM vocation and to our quiet, simple presence — like Mary in the midst of the early Christians — is our great gift to the world."

When Sr. Judith asked how many of the sisters had worked at Isabella Street over the years, over 10 raised their hands. Many took the opportunity to visit 13 Isabella Street after Mass, which is now a small office where five individuals assist transitional persons, especially veterans, to find living quarters and work.

Lunch was then served with a catering service, during which many stories were exchanged between the priests and the sisters. Fr. Roger Bourgea, S.M., was delighted to find some of the sisters who worked in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji, where he had lived and served for years. Several of the other priests had similar stories to share, though on the American continent.

When it was over, all could agree that this pilgrimage to Isabella Street was more than an opportunity to reminisce. It had been a joyous gathering of Marists, women and men, who spent an extraordinary afternoon with their family.



Sr. Judith Sheridan, SMSM, gives talk at the beginning of the Mass of Remembrance and Thanksgiving.



Srs. Avelina Raiwaleta, Judith Sheridan, Virginia Fornasa, SMSM and Fr. Joe McLaughlin, S.M.



Marist Missionary Sisters attend pilgrimage on the Feast of St. Joseph.

ANSWERING THE CALL: THE PATH OF DISCERNMENT

IN THE SOCIETY OF MARY — By Jack Ridout, Director of Vocations



In Marist schools today, how is the topic of vocations discussed with students? Certainly, the example of their Marist teachers is always before them. However, there are often vocational questions students have that are not easy to discuss directly with a Marist, even if a well-known teacher.

Bob Fisher, Marist School's Director of Communications, has developed a four-part series on vocations in the Society of Mary, to offer an answer to some of those questions in the school's magazine, *Marist Matters*. This local approach may be of help to others you know discerning a vocational call, so we reproduce this series in this and upcoming editions of *Today's Marists*.

Part One of Four Installments

To many of us, the process of becoming a priest or brother is filled with mystery. How does the journey to ordination feel? What goes through the hearts and minds of men who undertake it? This four-part series seeks to answer these questions and provide a glimpse into the process of formation in the Society of Mary.

What Will You Have Me Do for You?

For some it is a sentiment, vague yet persistent, that can take years to decipher. It may feel like a wish to serve others or a yearning for a closer relationship with God. Those who feel it know that something larger is expected of them, but they do not know what it is.

For others, the direction is very clear: they are called by God to serve others as a vowed religious—a priest, brother, or sister.

The decision to devote oneself to consecrated life in a religious order can be difficult and frightening. People who are drawn to that life must balance the joy of serving God with formidable choices: should I marry and have children? Do I have what it takes to live vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience? Am I ready for such an important lifelong commitment?

Every Christian must go through a process of discernment in order to uncover God's divine plan for his or her life. Humility and vulnerability are integral to discerning the plan.

"It takes a lot of courage to place God at the center of the process and ask 'What will you have me do for you?' But it does mean I am sincere in my search," says Father John Walls, S.M., who recently celebrated his fortieth year as a Marist priest.

There is no single way that the to priests and brothers

of the Society of Mary discover their call. Some found their vocations while in the seminary as teenagers. Some left the seminary, only to return many years later. Others discovered their calling after pursuing careers in education, the law, or other fields.

Young people in the process of discernment today face challenges not present in prior generations. In recent decades, the reduced number of priests, brothers, and sisters, as well as the drift toward a more secular society, has eroded support for young people considering religious vocations. "Forty or more years ago, young Catholics were immersed in a culture that promoted vocations," said Jack Ridout, vocations director for the Society of Mary. "Today, there are fewer people showing the way, which can make the call to religious life more difficult to discern. I think that support still exists, but it is just not as obvious as in the past."

Many who are called find it difficult to fight social pressure and their personal desires in favor of a religious vocation—especially one that involves vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. But, according to Marist priest Father David Musso, S.M., those who resist their calling forego the rewards of a consecrated life. "I am uncomfortable with the word sacrifice. Anytime you give something up and get so much in return is no sacrifice," said Father Musso, who left a law career at age 40 to enter the seminary. "Every day of my Marist life has been a day of joy. When you are where God made a place for you, you can't help but be filled with God—which is to be filled with joy."

CALL TO ACTION

If you are interested in finding out more about a life in the Society of Mary, or know someone who might be, please contact Jack Ridout, vocations director for the Society of Mary at (510) 845-3326 or vocations@maristsociety.org

HOW CAN I HELP?

In today's environment, concerned Catholics cannot leave the matter of vocations to others. "It is now everyone's responsibility to do what they can to promote vocations," says Jack Ridout, director of vocations for the Society of Mary.

If you would like to help promote vocations, you can

- Learn more at the Society of Mary's vocation resources webpage (<http://www.societyofmaryusa.org/join/vocations/vocationresources.html>)
- Suggest to young men whom you feel have a vocation that they consider religious life as a brother or priest.

AN EARLY MARIST IMPRINT ON ME INFLUENCED MY CHOICE TO SUPPORT MARISTS FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE — *By Jerry Levesque*



My relationship with the Marists began in 1936, when I entered the Marist seminary, called Maryvale, in Bedford, MA. That was where I went to high school and did a half-year of college before moving on to a life where a career in diplomatic service awaited me, and much more.

I credit my parents for giving me a solid foundation in religious devotion. We all worshipped at Sacred Heart Church in Lawrence, MA, then run by the Marists. My cousin Vernon, who was to become a Marist priest, went to the seminary, and on his recommendation, I joined him. It proved to be a beneficial decision on my part.

Life in the seminary was challenging, but enjoyable. It was there where I learned valuable skills in self-discipline, tenacity, and sharing with other people. I became close to the Marists there, and many of my fellow students who went on to become Marists.

When I was drafted into the military I recognized soon that the discipline imposed in the Army was nothing compared to that to which I had become accustomed in the Marist seminary. Simply put, I was fully prepared for anything the Army had to throw at me.

My entering the state department involved a series of attempts requiring tremendous tenacity. Suffice to say, after more than one attempt, and drawing on the stick-to-itiveness instilled in me by my parents and the Marists, I landed a job in Washington for two months, after which I embarked on a career that, all told, would have me living in eight different countries. My work abroad began as an administrative assistant in Dakar, and ended with the position of administrative officer in Beijing, China, before



Mary Kay and Jerry Levesque

I moved back to Washington and served on the State Department's Board of Examiners. I married in 1959 at the age of 39 and enjoyed a wonderful marriage with Mary Jane until she went to God in 1998.

I have been doubly-blessed with a terrific Chapter Two, thanks to my wonderful wife, Mary Kay, whom I married in 1999. I have kept busy in my retirement working for a bank for four years and then ultimately as a career counselor at The American Graduate School of International Management, known as "Thunderbird."

Mary Kay and I enjoy these days, near her children. As part of our devotion to Our Lady, we have built a Grotto to honor her. It is near a walking track so she gets visitors every so often. We see some making the Sign of the Cross as they walk by. We enjoy looking out of windows and seeing her there.

On reflection, the relationship I have had with the Marists over the years, which has benefited me in my private life and in my work with the Foreign Service, was so valuable that I wanted to make a fitting gesture of appreciation. Mary Kay and I have each taken out charitable gift annuities with the Marists, representing a considerable sum of our estate. This gift to the Marists has been giving back to us ever since, and was a good investment for the tax benefits and income it has provided to us. I will always be grateful for the training and friendship I have had with the Marists, and will always appreciate their way of serving God in the way of Mary. We encourage anyone who is thinking about donating to do so now when the need is so great.

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MARY'S DEVOTION, FROM PAGE 1 . . .

God wrought in Christ Jesus, and in Jesus' compassion toward people. So, in a way, Marists don't do anything other than what any good Christian would do.

Nevertheless, by identifying with Mary in her motherly concerns for people, Marists find their hearts and the focus of their attention directed in particular ways. Like Mary, they are particularly solicitous about those of her "children" who have lost their way and perhaps have become disaffected from the Church. They are on the lookout for those who have been marginalized by society or who have "fallen through the cracks" of the Church's ministry.

Marists share Mary's motherly sensitivity to every kind of division or conflict: Mary wishes to gather people together in her embrace, heal the wounds in the human community, and reconcile people with God, with the Church, and with one another. The deep political and social divisions in our American culture, and the bitter antagonisms among Catholics today, cry out for Mary's healing presence and therefore for the ministry of Marists.

Now, it may sound easy to be a Marist and to do Mary's work. But Fr. Colin knew how we humans can get in the way of God's



The Society of Mary has four branches: the fathers, the brothers under the name of the Little Brothers of Mary, the sisters under the name of Religious Women of the Holy Name of Mary, and the Third Order. Isn't the Society like the mantle of the Blessed Virgin which offers shelter to all God's children? And aren't the four branches like avenues which lead us beneath the folds of that protecting mantle?

Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, as told to Gabriel-Claude Mayet, in *A Certain Way*.

grace, how readily we get self-absorbed, how we act out of mixed motives, seeking benefit for ourselves rather than being single-hearted and wholehearted in our service of others. So Fr. Colin left us a bit of wisdom to guide us in our service: we Marists are to strive, with the help of God's grace, to be, **like Mary, hidden and unknown in this world.**

This does not mean that we shrink from engagement in service in the world. What it does mean is that we Marists are to serve without seeking benefit for ourselves: we are not to allow any desire for prestige, for control over others, or for personal gain to animate us. Solely the interests of Jesus and Mary are to consume us.

It was Fr. Colin's experience that, paradoxically, the more we strive to remain hidden and unknown while doing great things for God and God's people, the more we will have an impact on this world.

Mary's invitation is always there for you: come, join us in doing the work of Mary. Leave yourself and your selfish desires behind, and discover the joy of serving as Mary did, she whose spirit always "rejoices in God my Savior."