

# CONSTITUTIONAL STATEMENTS

## CHAPTER 1

### The Society Of Mary In The Church

1. **To be a Marist** is to keep in mind that, by a loving choice, God has called us to live the Gospel as Mary did, in a Society which bears her name.
2. It was Mary who brought into the world God's own Son. She was the first to welcome the good news of his love and to know of his role as servant among men, sharing in his poverty and in his total gift of self to the Father.
3. It is from Mary that we learn to serve the Church in a special way.
4. For Jean-Claude Colin and his companions inspired by God at a moment of history, Mary present when the Church was born was its strength and support. Hidden in its midst as a simple believer she yet remained beyond all the apostles the type of the Church. At the end of time in an age more difficult than that of the apostles her presence would give the disciples courage to carry out their mission.
5. We, like the first Marists, have made our own this intuition born of meditation on Mary's role in the early Church and at the end of time.
6. This same intuition finds its expression in the mystery of Nazareth. With Jean-Claude Colin we place ourselves in the house of Nazareth and from there we see what we must do.
7. Thus the Society of Mary is ready for any task. It is not characterized by any special work nor by a particular form of Marian devotion but by the desire to draw inspiration from the mystery of Mary's presence in the Church.
8. In the Society our prayer, our community life, the apostolates we choose and the way we carry them out express our concern: to think, to judge, to feel, to act in all things as Mary did.
9. The way we live and work in the Church and our dealings with all its members will be a sign of this concern. We will work side by side ready to yield our position as the work of Christ demands.
10. At the service of all the people of God we affirm our fidelity to the Pope, to all who lead the Church, and our solidarity with its members in the diversity of their cultures and situations.
11. In the exercise of our ministry we intend to remain faithful to this same spirit which finds its origin in the Gospel. Jesus, in the midst of men, rather than imposing himself, preferred to remain hidden, attentive

to the real needs of each, disarming them with love and drawing hearts to Him.

12. Our Founder's inspiration 'hidden and unknown in the world' reminds us of this. Far from preventing us from undertaking great things for God these words tell us how they should be done and challenge us to do them. 'We must win souls by submitting ourselves to them.' (1)
13. This spirit which is also Mary's leads us to reject all sham and desire for attention. It enables us to welcome and serve others with simplicity. It moves us to action and is not just content with theories. It makes us attentive to hidden values and attunes us to the humble and the poor.
14. Confident that God is guiding events we set out in fidelity to the Spirit 'to re-create the faith of the first believers'. (2) Mary, too, from Nazareth to Pentecost knew how to wait in hope. With her we advance in faith towards the unforeseen.
15. Our communities witness to the Church's desire to take on a Marian image: a Church ever in search of Jesus Christ, a servant Church, not wanting to domineer, without place of privilege, concerned only that He be proclaimed.
16. With all generations of Marists we gladly recognize the initiative of Mary in all we undertake. She

remains our 'founder and first superior'. (3)

17. Our life in community, our consecration through vows, our rule of life, our work for the Kingdom, make this spirit a reality today and enables us to hand it on.
18. Jean-Claude Colin had boundless hope in this tradition. Our vision is not tied to any one generation: an enduring relationship with Mary, whose name we bear, is our surest hope of being now and always, what; the Church expects of us.

(2) A Founder Speaks, Doc. 117, par. 3

(3) Cf. Declaration of the General Chapter of the Society of Mary, 15 August 1872, acknowledging and proclaiming, in the name of the whole Society, Mary as founder and first and perpetual superior, Origines Maristes, III, Doc. 848 pa·r.12