

‘We are all founders’.
Three presentations on the history and spirituality of the Society of Mary
as basis for a Marist school ethos
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“While I am speaking of that, one small thought. ... All the same, the age of the Society, its youth, should not discourage us. Each one of us should say to himself: ‘I am the instrument of providence, I am a founder’. Yes, Messieurs, we are all founders”.

Jean-Claude Colin (1790-1875), Marist founder; from *A Founder Speaks*, doc. 175, 3-4 (14 September 1849).

1 A soft globalization and modernization with a new role of religion.
The Society of Mary in the world of today

2 Jean-Claude Colin (1790-1875), Marist founder, superior general, spiritual teacher, leader of the Oceania mission

3 Marist Spirituality – Marist ethos of a school

Father Alois Greiler, born in Germany in 1959, ordained a Marist priest in 1988. He holds a licentiate and a doctorate from the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium (1998). Over the years he worked in different pastoral ministries such as youth ministry, parish priest, school chaplain, and others. His fields of research are Vatican II for his doctorate and Marist history and spirituality. He has published books and articles in both areas. Over the last few years he has preached Marist retreats in different countries and continents: Europe, the USA, and the Pacific. At present he is coming to the end of a sabbatical year which took him to Fiji and New Zealand and now the United States.

1 A soft globalization and modernization with a new role of religion.
The Society of Mary in the world of today

Continue as Marist school – or not? An example and an introduction

Let me give an example from a Marist school in Germany. The last Marist priest to be principal had joined to be a priest, religious, and teacher. He had to become principal – something he did not really want to be. He served for many years and could always rely on his lay assistants. At the time the staff had to make up its mind: do we want to continue as a Marist school or not? They decided “yes”, and that is important to us. They experienced the Marist atmosphere of a school and the values behind this ethos (a powerful work that can be explained in its Greek sense of “the air we breathe”) and wanted it to continue. After the last Marist priest resigned, the first layman became principal. He brought in professionalization,

took up leadership and guidance, and explicitly fostered the Marist ethos through events at the school and in Europe, Marist topics, and presence of Marists as guests and chaplains.

What does this story tell us? It is in your hands as staff of a school with a Marist tradition to continue this tradition or not. And, there is an obligation on the side of the sponsoring congregation of the school, the Society of Mary, to assist in the process.

This process of a school passing from religious to lay staff is a world-wide phenomenon. The Province of Europe established a network of the schools in different countries to meet and share and deepen the Marist ethos of its respective schools. Circumstances and state regulations are very different in each European country. The meetings focus on the Marist ethos. I had the privilege to give some input at these meetings in Germany 2012, France 2015, and Blackburn, England, in 2016.¹ At the urging of the principals, meetings of the provincial leadership and the school principals were introduced two years ago. The schools in New Zealand have a similar network and cooperation on the development of the Marist ethos.

In this workshop I will try to guide you through sessions focusing on the story of the Society of Mary as the basis for a Marist ethos in your school. The first talk is about the place of religion in a modern secular society like in the USA and shows how the Marists tried to respond to these new challenges from the beginning. The Marist approach is to listen to the times and to work towards an answer to the needs of the time. The Society of Mary and a Marist school is a body, a structure, an organization, offering a collective answer to its particular needs. The second talk is about the man who started it and who calls us to be founders today, Jean-Claude Colin. Once you discerned the needs of the times you need people to take the initiative. Colin said: 'We are all founders'. The third talk is about the Marist spirituality and Marist ethos, shared commonly by religious and lay people. We have a body, a school, we have people. The question then is to reflect on the spirit guiding them.

The globalization story and the Marists

The US society is a modern, often secular, global, intercultural society with major paradigmatic shifts regarding the role of religion. Let me illustrate that the Marists were founded precisely as faith response to this development out of modernization and globalization.

Around 1500 a new phenomenon started coming out of Europe: one culture and population developed a dominant position in other countries and cultures. The Americas are one of the major illustrations.² The Marist congregations are set in this broader picture concerning the 19th century Pacific. Explorers, traders, and politicians came first introducing a hard globalization often with a fatal impact for the local people. The Marists tried to offer an alternative to the hard globalization of economic dominance and colonialism. They offered values, faith, and mediation for peace. Saint Peter Chanel is an example. He gave an authentic and convincing example of the Christian faith. He worked for reconciliation. Like Jesus, he suffered violence instead of using violence.

This movement of globalization is still going on. From areas such as economy and politics it moves into culture, life style, and personal convictions about life. Therefore, the Marist mission continues to keep the role of religion alive.

¹ Alois Greiler sm, *Marist Ethos in Our Schools Then and Now*, in FN 14 (2012) 114-122; Id., *The One-Page Rule. Colian inspiration for Independent Thinking in Marist Education Today*, in FN 16 (2014) 9-14; Id., *Marist Ethos in a Global World. 90 Years St. Mary's College Blackburn*, in FN 17 (2015) 63-69.

² Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York, 1974.

Marists in the secular age

Marists, as religious, find themselves situated in the field of personal convictions about how to live a good life. The Marist answer is based on the Catholic faith. Modern life in the so-called West is associated with secular ideas. Religion is delegated to the private life, and public in varying degrees is without visible religion.³ The historical origins of the Marist coincide with a further strong push towards modernization, i.e., the time of the French Revolution of 1789.

Again, the Marists represent together with others an alternative approach. They opted for a renewed faith and a renewed church and a renewed pastoral approach responding to the signs of the times and demanding a conversion of the Church.

The digital revolution pushed secularization even further and the international digital culture spreads into more and more countries in the southern hemisphere, including the Pacific, where the Marists have a strong presence.

There is an endless literature, and there are many statistics and case studies about the future of religion generally and the future of religious life particularly in the USA. Let me pick some examples at random to illustrate the major trends.

One terrible scenario is fundamentalism which includes the use of violence against forces and ideas of globalization and secularization. Very traditional groups feel threatened by modernity and react with defensive attitude to preserve their own value system and, then, go on to attack other systems. They do not want to lose religious values as they perceive the 'West' has done. And they cannot imagine living and integrating both in a healthy way. These groups often exclude critical thinking and reasoned decision-making. This does enormous damage to the image of all religions.

Will Europe become a continent without Christianity? And will the USA follow? **Philip Jenkins** discusses various scenarios for Europe with an eye to the situation in the US.⁴ Jenkins quotes US author, George Weigel:

"In his powerful book *The Cube and the Cathedral*, George Weigel uses Europe as an awful warning for the United States, a disturbing object lesson in how Christianity dies, and the destructive effects of secularism. A Godless Europe, he argues, may for a few years appear pleasantly tolerant and nonjudgmental, but without commitment to faith and family, evaporating moral standards and plummeting birth rates create a society that is literally unsustainable. A society that rejects the supernatural turns instead to short-term hedonism, with the only real criterion for actions being the pleasure and fulfillment of the individuals concerned. Why, in such an atomized world, should individuals make the commitment to posterity implied by the decision to bear and nurture children?"

These emotions of fear are balanced by an historical experience Jenkins refers to:⁵

"In contemplating such a benevolent scenario, a U.S. analogy comes to mind. A hundred years ago, Protestant Americans were deeply concerned about the cultural and religious implications of mass immigration, and the rhetoric of the time had many resemblances to contemporary warnings about the rise of European Islam."

Awaken the latent faith

³ Jan Snijders sm, *The Age of Mary - Le siècle de Marie* (Maristica, 1), Rome, 1988.

⁴ Philip Jenkins, *God's Continent. Christianity, Islam, and Europe's Religious Crisis*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007. For the Weigel quote: page 9.

⁵ Jenkins, *God's Continent*, p. 22.

Statistics show reduced Church practice. However, there is much latent faith in people, and the new mission is to encourage this latent faith to come forward, at least for certain events. This is an opportunity for a Catholic school.

Often there is some irony in expressions like 'submarine Christians' or 'seasonal Christians' that is Christians who only practice at Christmas, Easter, and when receiving a sacrament. With a new perspective we could see this as something positive, as an opportunity. Jenkins refers to the popularity of other events of faith: pilgrimages, retreats, prayer groups, ecclesial movements, social activity like helping children or refugees, and Christian schools. And, we should not forget that Christian values enjoy high acceptance among most people, and therefore, they choose a Catholic school.

New ecclesial movements often pick up what the established structures of a church neglect: role of women, lay people, and young people. They work in a flat hierarchy, communicate a group feeling, touch body and soul, and preach more about joy than about sorrow. Their liturgy combines elements, with a special emphasis on feeling, emotion, music, and a more open teaching. A school can do all of this.

In summary, religion will diversify more and more with the individual mixing of different elements into one's personal faith and with more and more different churches, and tendencies within each world religion. Fundamentalism is strong now. Secularism is growing. Marists try to live the faith in the world as it is for the good of God's people. Marist schools are a wonderful instrument for this. Like others Marist religious pass this tool on to lay staff.

The Society of Mary

It is time to present this religious congregation in a more systematic form.

The Society of Mary is the *Societas Mariae* with the Latin abbreviation of SM. There is another congregation with the same name and abbreviation – quite unique in the Church, namely the Marianists.⁶ In short, the Marists got church approval first and later state approval, while the Marianists got state approval first and later church approval. This echoes the above mentioned sudden growth of religious life after religious life was called 'dead'.

In juridical terms the Society of Mary is a congregation of papal right. This means it is a world-wide congregation with its own proper leadership under the general leadership of the pope. Distinct would be a congregation of diocesan right under the authority of the local bishop. The Marists include mainly priests among their members but also brothers and religious not ordained. By right it is a clerical congregation. That means that normally priests take up positions of leadership. The Marists are an apostolic congregation. They are not like a contemplative group centered on their monastery and a contemplative life within the monastery. Marists have a community as a spiritual base and from there they reach out to different apostolates or ministries like schools. The founder, Jean-Claude Colin, in fact favored schools inasmuch as they allowed a regular common and prayer life for the Marists active in a ministry. The fathers and brothers are part of the wider Marist family,⁷ including other Marist branches. We come back to the story of Colin and to the wider Marist family later.

Religious life is marked by following a rule of life, the constitutions. We have the original constitutions approved by Rome in 1873. Today we follow a rule revised in the light of Vatican II and the new Code of Canon Law of 1983, a text approved in 1987. The

⁶ Timothy Phillips sm (Marianist) – Alois Greiler sm, *Why Are there Two "Societies of Mary"? Notes on the Origins of Marianists and Marists*, in *Marianist Soundings* 9, 2 (2005) 3-12.

⁷ Alois Greiler sm, *Marist Family (in a literal sense)*, in *Marist Note Books* 18, 23 (2006) 39 – 53; = id., *Famille mariste (au sens littéral)*, in *Cahiers Mariste* 18, 23 (2006) 39-53.

constitutions deal with internal matters like leadership, administration, and formation. In the main they present the spirituality nourishing the group. The key themes here are a Marian church, solidarity with the poor, and serving where the Church or the people of God ask us to serve – like Mary. Traditionally the fields of ministry were home missions, education, teaching in major seminaries (philosophy and theology), and foreign missions, especially in the South Pacific. The sections on spiritual life are to prevent an ‘inner desert’ which often results in an ‘outer desert’ as Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si*. We come back to this. The rule of life favors community over individualism, mission for others over self-fulfillment, and service over my own plans. The rule of life gives religious a basic rhythm and makes them part of the God-project.

We are not a political party or NGO. We are a religious institution. On the other hand, as Pope Francis says drastically in the encyclical *Laudato Si*, good Sunday Christians can act to destroy ecology during the week. The ecological interpretation is certainly needed. The Marist School News e-mail from April 2017 gave an example. Marist is going ‘green’, using recycled material for caps and gowns.

Why do we have Marists in the USA?⁸ In short, it had to do with immigration, education, and a more intensive faith life. The large number of Catholic immigrants to the US in the 19th century, including French and Catholics, had bishops search for priests and religious to serve a growing church. Some of the bishops and parish priests in the US were of French origin and some were friends of the Marists. They asked the founder, Colin, and his successor as superior general, Julien Favre, to send Marists. Their motivation was to serve French-speaking Catholics around New Orleans, Boston, and later in San Francisco. And the bishops and priests knew the Marists administer successfully Catholic schools and other educational enterprises. Catholic schools, for instance, was a big issue in the States at the time. Another asset was to send Marists out on so-called home missions, a form of spiritual and pastoral renewal. The superior general sent the first Marists in 1863 to minister in a parish and to take over a school near New Orleans in Covent, LA.

Marist ethos in schools: Think globally – act locally

“The assumption that we live in a secularized world is false” wrote the well-known American sociologist Peter L. Berger (*1929).⁹ He himself had introduced the term. However, today religion is a growing phenomenon albeit in many different ways. Religion and a religious school ethos have significance once more.

For a Marist school we come back to a classical motto: ‘Think globally – act locally’. It would be naïve not to be aware of the major trends affecting daily life at home and in school. It would be fatalism to resign in face of such strong global forces at work. It is a sign of living faith to act where we are able to act and change things. This is what the Marists have tried to do since their beginnings, be it a soft globalization in the Pacific or a renewed faith in secular Europe.

The Marist mission is to discern the signs of the times and the needs of the people. Mary responded to a call and we try the same in the modern world of today.

A Marist ethos is a religious ethos. In the past this meant purely catholic. In the global and secular world of today where religion is coming back it means to be open to other faiths and

⁸ Philip Graystone sm, *A Short History of the Society of Mary. 1854 to 1993*, Rome, 1998; Patrick Corcoran sm, *The Irish Province of the Marists: An Early History, 1850 - 1870*, Maynooth, The Cardinal Press Ltd., 1987; Alois Greiler sm, *The American Missions and the Early Marists: A Prehistory of the US Provinces*, ms, 2016.

⁹ Quoted in Hovdelien, *Post-Secular Consensus?* See Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Grand Rapids, W. Eerdmanns, 1999.

to non-believers without hiding the Catholic tradition. 'Religious' is understood in the broad sense, body, mind, and soul of the person.

In a world of broken relationships the word 'school family' may serve as a remedy understood as literally as possible, in any case as personal knowledge for students.

A modern person has to organize life alone as best as possible. There is no need for a God or a neighbor. A religious person acts in community and based on faith values. The understanding of the human person is based in community and in context, against the dominant individualism of our time.

A modern person can afford to a varying degree a life style based on personal flavors and likes. A religious person opts for a life style responsible in view of world poverty and climate change even if 'more' could be afforded.

For the modern life-style of the West the three vows could call to live an alternative. They tell us to be responsible in how to answer human needs. Answer human needs of owning, belonging, and commanding in such a way that is healthy and in solidarity with others.

With Dietrich Bonhoeffer we might say: Prayer does not change the world but prayer changes people and people change the world. Prayer is the soul to a school.

Marists did see the weaknesses of Church and former pastoral approaches. They decided to do something about it and to bring about change! That is the challenge to discern our response today. We can do so in confidence. Religion has a place in modern life.

My example from the beginning illustrated two points. Leadership is very important. This is recognized in many studies about change. And, the staff of a school has to ask itself the same question: do we want to continue as Marist and religious school or not? It is in your hands. As Marists we try to assist in this process.

In other words, I am sure your original intention was not simply to be a communicator of a subject in school but also to be close to young people. Yes, Marist ethos in a school is to place the person in the center of a holistic approach – human and intellectual development, body, mind, and soul.

2 Jean-Claude Colin (1790-1875), Marist founder, superior general, spiritual teacher, leader of the Oceania mission

Let me recall two basic insights of the Marist founder: one, understand the time you live in and what it calls for; second, good ideas need a person! Mary lived her faith in body and soul. Marists are not about ideas only but about active religious like the first Marists.

1 Jean-Claude Colin (1790-1875) – a life

1790 - Post-Revolutionary France

From Television or reading you may have some idea of life in a country torn by civil war, religious persecution, and a divided church. That was the France during the childhood of the Marist founder, Jean-Claude Colin.¹⁰

Colin was born in 1790, one year after the French Revolution. By then the Revolution had turned anti-church. People faithful to the church were persecuted. Among those was the father of Colin. The official church had split. Some followed the guide-lines of the revolutionary government and swore an oath to the new constitutions. Others stayed faithful to the pope and did not take the oath. In consequence, they were removed from posts, put into prison or were exiled. Here you find the biographical background for two of the main points in Colin: fidelity to the Holy See and unity in the Church.

His father paid the price and died, not long after followed by his wife. His mother said to Colin on her deathbed: I leave you but I entrust you to a new mother, the heavenly mother, Mary. At the age of six, Jean-Claude was an orphan and traumatized. Modern psychology tells us that it takes a long time to overcome a trauma suffered in early childhood. And it did take Colin a long time. But with the grace of God he did overcome it and became the founder and leader and spiritual teacher we know today.

Colin, priest, Marist superior general

He was ordained a diocesan priest for Lyon, France, in 1816, and became assistant parish priest to his brother Pierre in Cerdon near the Swiss border. From 1817 to 1823 he was blessed with spiritual experiences which transformed the traumatized shy young man into a dynamic leader and spiritual teacher. Colin called it the time of the 'early ideas'. He understood those as 'given' by God to him for a new religious congregation. He put those into writing, the basis of his later constitutions. He shared the spiritual insights with Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, also living in Cerdon, the future foundress of the Marist Sisters.

The Colin-brothers and others, inspired by the Marist idea, worked as home missionaries and teachers, spiritual directors and confessors. In 1836 they won papal approval for their group as Society of Mary. Colin was elected the first superior general. At the same time the Marists agreed to send missionaries to the newly created vicariate of Western Oceania. Among the first group accompanying Bishop Pompallier was Peter Chanel. Thus, Colin became the co-founder of the Catholic Church in the South Pacific.¹¹

¹⁰ Modern Biographies: Stanley Hosie sm, *Anonymous Apostle. The Life of Jean-Claude Colin, Marist*, With a Preface by Morris West, New York, William Morrow and Co.Inc., 1967; Donal A. Kerr sm, *Jean-Claude Colin, Marist. A Founder in an Era of Revolution and Restoration: The Early Years 1790 – 1836*, Dublin, The Columba Press, 2000; = *Jean-Claude Colin Mariste. Un fondateur dans une ère de révolution et de restauration: les premières années 1790-1836* (mémoire d'Église), Paris, Karthala, 2010; Justin Taylor sm, *Colin*, forthcoming...

¹¹ Alois Greiler sm (ed.), *Catholic Beginnings. Marist Missionary Perspectives*, Adelaide, ATF, 2009.

In Europe, he sent Marists out to schools, to major seminaries of different dioceses, into parishes, on home missions, for social work, and as chaplains to the Marist Brothers and the Marist Sisters.

In 1854, Colin resigned as superior general. He worked on the constitutions for the Marist Sisters and the Marist Fathers. In 1875 he died in La Neylière, near Lyon, where he is buried.

2 The wider Marist family

Colin assisted in the foundation of the Marist Teaching Brothers whose founder is a Marist priest, Marcellin Champagnat (1789-1840). Colin is co-founder of the Marist Sisters with Jeanne-Maire Chavoin. Out of the Marist laity movement developed the first group of women going to Oceania as missionaries. Marie-Françoise Perroton (1796-1873) did so answering a letter from women of the island of Wallis who thanked Colin for the priests and brothers he had sent and now asked him for women to assist them in their Christian life.

There is a school of saints around Colin. Peter Chanel was martyred on Futuna in 1841. In 1954, he was canonized as patron saint of the Pacific. Marcellin Champagnat, assistant to Colin and founder of the Marist Brothers, was canonized in 1999. Jean-Marie Vianney, the holy cure of Ars was a member of the Marist Third Order. Father Peter Julian Eymard left the Marists to start the Blessed Sacrament Fathers and was canonized in 1962. Chavoin, Perroton, the pioneers of the local churches in the Pacific – some of those might be saints in future!

3 The founder

What is a founder?

What is a founder? The Church believes that God calls men and women in different times to respond to a need of the Church or a need of God's people. These persons are given special insights, gifts, and often endure special challenges and difficulties.

What is a founder or a foundress? In other words, what is a religious congregation? The ordinary church, structured around bishops and diocesan priests and active lay people, serves the local Church as it is established in its different forms, especially in parishes. Religious congregations are usually called to a more specified work. We broadly discern contemplative and active religious. Contemplative religious focus on a spiritual life in the monastery with some pastoral outreach, preferably on the grounds of the monastery like a Benedictine school. Active religious live in community and from there go out to different pastoral ministries near and far. A Jesuit called religious God's therapy for the world. Whenever there is a need, God calls men and women to gather others and to respond out of faith to this need. This basic principle is still valid today and we might reflect on the needs of today and in how much religious or a Christian school could respond.

The early Marists were called in their time of secularization and globalization. After the turmoil of the French Revolution the challenge was to re-build faith life. Some simply repeated what they did before the Revolution. Colin and others however realized that a revolution does not happen without a reason. What has the Church done wrong? How can we change and be closer to the rich example Christ has given us? He found the answer in looking at Mary and in meditating the early Church as it is presented in the New Testament in the Acts of the Apostles.

The man who understood his era

And this is part of the challenge Colin leaves us with. Marist father Jean Coste, after decades of studying Colin, made the following statement in 1988:¹²

"If ever Colin gets to be beatified and canonized, I hope that this is what they will put in Bernini's Glory: Colin, whose holiness consisted in understanding his era and not in turning away from it, who sought the means to touch it, to heal it, to convert it. He did not turn his back on his era, but he tried to imagine a kind of presence, 'unknown and hidden', which enables us to be there, as close as possible, at the very core of what is in the hearts of people."

Coste refers to a statement by Cardinal Castracane, the cardinal Colin had most dealings with in Rome in 1833 about the approval of the Marists as new congregation. Father Poupinel reported later:¹³

"Cardinal Castracane spoke about him, praising him very highly, to Mr Crociani and to Mr Duclot. He is one of those men you rarely see any more; he is the *vir simplex et rectus* spoken about in holy Scripture. Mr Colin is a saint. He has understood the age in which he lives."

Colin places a guiding question: 'This century asks this of us...' (FS, doc. 99, 4). The adapt response is to be full of respect for the freedom of the person (CS 1872 50.228; FS 99, 1). The Society of Mary lives in this time of unbelief with all the consequences of unbelief:¹⁴

"As the end of time draws nearer, the Faith is disappearing. Would you not say that we are in the days of which our Lord said, "Do you think the Son of Man will then find much faith on the earth!" (Lk 18:8)... The human race appears to me today to be like an old stump, one whose roots have been eaten into by a worm. That worm is the unbelief, the indifference which has made the world pagan for a second time".

So it is about faith and unbelief, religious commitment and indifference. Colin's analysis of the times is still valid in broad terms. So, the leading question for a Marist school could be: Which needs in the Church and with the people do I discern? What does our era ask of us? How can I or we or our institution respond out of faith?

4 The spiritual teacher – Colin's contributions

A Marian Vision of the Church

Colin looked for an alternative way of being Church to avoid the mistakes which had estranged people from the Church, faith, and God. He meditated Mary: the first disciple, the support of the early Church, the woman who hears and sees the needs of others, the person who acts with a patient approach. The Marists are to take her place today. And, this is unique to him: Not only as one group in the Church is to take her as inspiration, but the Church as a whole not to be an obstacle between people and the God.

The Marist constitutions develop this theme of a 'Marian Church'. They say, Marists at the same time support and try to renew the Church. A Marian Church reaches out to those on the margins, those who struggle with faith, and those who were hurt by church.

Selecting the opinion most favorable to people and God's mercy

In theology, especially in moral theology and canon law, the two basic disciplines for pastoral work at the time, different theological schools were available. The general tendency was in France to be Jansenistic, morally very strict to rigid. That gave people who came for

¹² Jean Coste sm, *Une vision mariale de l'église: Jean-Claude Colin - A Marian Vision of the Church: Jean-Claude Colin* (Maristica, 8), Rome, 1998, edited by Gaston Lessard, p. 336-338.

¹³ OM, doc. 544, 18 (1842); quoted in Coste, *Marian Vision*, p. 272.338; Kerr, *Colin*, p. 2270-272; 313.

¹⁴ FS, doc. 117, 2. Lk 18:8 is three times in FS! Cf. Acts 3:25 and 15:16 as parallels, so Gnllka, *Theologie*, p. 2014.

confession for counseling a hard time. In Rome, they followed a broader approach as Colin got to know when he was there on month long visits. A rather famous word of Father Colin is the one about saving people without the law (FS, doc. 163, 2; 1848):

“Rome was very useful to me on this point. It was there that I learned the maxim: “Law was made for man.” If I cannot save him with the law, I shall try to save him without it.”

On the balance of law and mercy I follow Colin’s conclusion (FS, doc. 37, 2 (1838-3):

“In the Society, we shall profess all those opinions which give greatest play to the mercy of God, on account of the great weakness of poor human nature, without however falling into a laxist theology.’

Mariology of hope

In the first half of the 19th century people thought a lot about the end of the world. It was the time of Nostradamus and of a number of prophets of doom.¹⁵ The great theologian Yves Congar put it this way: there was the fear of final judgment, but the eschatological office was not occupied. That is a word of Christian faith not only about fear but about Christian hope. We can say Colin occupied this office. He spoke about the support Mary would give at the end of time, that is to say, about the mercy of God and he did little follow the apocalyptic scenarios. Marist historian Jean Coste calls this a Mariology of hope.¹⁶

Mary and the Holy Spirit

As in eschatology, Colin also preserved an important theological, spiritual, and biblical element of our faith in always highlighting the link between Mary and the Holy Spirit. He did so in Marist prayer life. He meditated the link Mary – Holy Spirit – the Church. He often referred to Acts 1:14 as model: gathered around Mary like the early church in the upper room praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Like Mary, Marists are to be full of grace, full of the Holy Spirit. The constitutions say in number 156:

“All Marists, especially those in authority, see Mary as the founder and perpetual superior of the Society. They will constantly imitate her delicate responsiveness to the promptings of the Spirit and to the needs of God's people...”

A body for a spirit

To have great ideas is good and is one step. The gift of a founder is to give a body to a spirit. Colin was both, the Founder and the Superior General¹⁷ who directed the body and Colin was the spiritual teacher to implement the Marist spirit.

Pope John XXIII said the church is not a museum but a living garden. The same must be true for the Society of Mary. Yes, there is a past, a long history, many things achieved then. The challenge is what Colin meant when he said all Marists are founders. The challenge is the example of Mary who gave her ‘yes’ to God with heart and soul and mind and her whole body. Marist historian Jean Coste said without the body the spirit is little. And, we have a

¹⁵ Bernard Bourtot sm, *Des prophéties et des prédications à Lyon dans les années 1830 - 1840 - Prophecies and Predictions in Lyons in the Years 1830 - 1840*, in FN 3, 3 (1996) 264 - 318.

¹⁶ Coste, *Marian Vision*; John Thornhill sm, *The Eschatological Vision of Jean-Claude Colin and Contemporary Theological Awareness - Vision Eschatologique de J.C. Colin et conscience theologique contemporaine*, in FN 3, 4 (1996) 686 - 720.

¹⁷ Jean Coste sm, *Une certaine idée de la Société de Marie. Jean-Claude Colin - A Certain Idea of the Society of Mary. Jean-Claude Colin*, Rome, 1990 ; = ID., *Una cierta idea de la sociedad de Maria* (Documentos SM - España, 14), Madrid, s.d.

name for the separation of body and spirit – death. In the spirit of Nazareth, of incarnation, in the spirit of Mary, Marists are called to give a body to a mission, a spirit. To answer such a call means to make it visible in the choices we make, the way we organize each single day, and the joy we share about finding peace and purpose in this.

Author of writings

Many new congregations took over one of the traditional constitutions like the text of St. Benedict or of St Ignatius. Colin drafted a rule based on spiritual insights he felt he was given in Cerdon. Later he added material approved by the Church from the Ignatian text and from Canon law. However, the spiritual thrust remained with his inspirations. So, he gave a new text to a new congregation. Other groups like the Marist branches and related local congregations in the Pacific copied some of his material into their rule of life.

His other main writings include a guide book for the teachers at secondary schools, sermons, formation agendas and study plans, possibly a newspaper article, and in the main body letters as was the custom of the time before telephone, fax, e-mail, and the like.

Catholic Beginnings in Oceania

Mary supported the Church in the beginning and does so since. When the church leadership in Rome was looking for missionaries for the newly created vicariate of Western Oceania the Marists accepted in the spirit of availability to the Church like Mary.

We can hardly imagine the immensity of the task in the framework of their time but they did go.¹⁸ The Marist paid a high price including the recognized martyrdom of Peter Chanel and many others victim to the mission life. The Catholic Church was established and since 1966 is a fully recognized local church. The Marists have to re-define their role: from founders to religious side by side with diocesan clergy and lay people.

Colin's contribution was huge in many ways. He gave the missionaries a spiritual formation that sustained them. He negotiated with banks, shipping companies, the French government, the king of Futuna, the bishops, Rome. He helped to establish a shareholder company in support of the missions. The new vicariates were mainly organized along his proposals. Colin also named those to be appointed bishops. And there was the endless stream of problems around the men out there and around money.

In his farewell letter he gave his man a sound principle: We do not know how it will be out there. Act according to the circumstances you find yourself in!

Spirituality for lay people

From the times the Church was persecuted Colin knew about the important role of lay people to keep and pass on the faith. His main work shifted to start and organize the religious branches, but he never lost sight of the Marist laity.¹⁹ His vision underwent changes due to circumstances.²⁰ Originally, he analyzed that lay people could reach out much more

¹⁸ Greiler, *Catholic Beginnings*; Jan Snijders sm, *A Mission Too Far... Pacific Commitment*, Adelaide, ATF, 2012; Ralph M. Wiltgen svd, *The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania. 1825 to 1850*, Canberra - London - Norwalk, Australian National University Press, 1979.

¹⁹ Charles Girard sm (ed.), *Maristes laïcs: Recueil de sources historiques* (FHSM, 9) Rome, 1992; = ID. (Ed.), *Lay Marists: Anthology of Historical Sources* (FHSM, 9), Rome, 1993; Laurence Duffy sm – Charles Girard sm, *Like A Bridge. The People of God and the Work of Mary*, Rome, 1994; = Id., *Comme un pont. Le peuple de Dieu et l'œuvre de Marie*, Rome, 1994; = Id., *Como un puente. El pueblo de Dios y la obra de María*, Madrid, 1995.

²⁰ Frank McKay sm, *The Marist Laity. Finding the Way Envisaged By Father Colin - Laïcat mariste. Vers une mise en œuvre des perspectives du père Colin* (Maristica, 4), Rome, 1991; = Id., *El laicado marista. Buscando caminos en la perspectiva del P. Colin* (Documentos SM - España, 16), Madrid, s.d.

to people in a way than religious, especially in the context of the secular world. The first organization was traditional, a Third Order with a rule of life. This Third Order could include priests. One of the members was Jean-Marie Vianney, the holy cure of Ars.²¹ Later, more specialized groups came up like for young men, young women, or mothers with children. The Marist laity is now a very broad and flexible movement in terms of organization. At its heart, it remains Marist spirituality lived by lay people in association with one of the Marist branches.

Colin's original vision got dimmed by the actual directors of the Third Order and by the general neglect of laity in the church after the restoration after 1815. Clergy and religious were in the center, lay people on the margins. At the end of his life Colin left behind his vision, the opposite idea: a centrifugal orientation, committed Christians reaching out to the world. This can be easily linked with the vision of Vatican II on active participation of laity in the liturgy and mission of the Church. For Colin, it was very clear – the majority of Christians are lay people. Priests and religious are to assist them – not the other way round!

Wider Marist Family – other congregations

The name 'Marist' opens different doors. Like the religious following St. Francis, the Marists are a religious family of different independent but related congregations.

The Society of Mary (SM) are the fathers and brothers who acknowledge Jean-Claude Colin as their founder, first superior general, and spiritual teacher.

The Marist Sisters (SM) are the branch of sisters founded by Jeanne-Marie Chavoin (1786-1858) together with Jean-Claude Colin. Theirs is a spirit of prayer and work, imitating the trust of Mary in God's grace and following Mary's son. They worked with girls and in schools and came to the Pacific in the 1880s.

The Marist Teaching Brothers (FMS) are a congregation of brothers working with children and youth, mainly in schools but also in many other social and educational activities. At one stage, they were one of the biggest male congregations in the Church. Their founder was Marcellin Champagnat (1789-1840), Marist priest, canonized in 1999.

The Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary (SMSM) are a missionary congregation. Their origin goes back to women who went to the Pacific as response to a call from the women of the islands. The first was Françoise Perroton (1796-1873), followed by others, all members of the Marist laity. In the Pacific, they became a religious congregation, approved in 1931 with the present name.

All the branches have lay people attached to them who want to deepen their spiritual life and their pastoral commitment in a Marist way.

The Marist tree is growing. Former Marists started other congregations and thus shared part of the Colinian inspirations out: Eymard and the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, Félix Rougier and the male and female congregations he started in Mexico dedicated to the Holy Spirit, and the local Pacific religious congregations like the Sisters of Our Lady of Nazareth (SOLN) and others.

Conclusion

Discerning the signs of the times like Mary Marists they say their 'yes' to the times and the people they live among and with as Mary did. Marists take initiative. In the words of Colin:

²¹ Jean Coste sm, *Le Curé d'Ars et la Société de Marie - The Curé d'Ars and the Society of Mary*, in *Acta SM* 5 (1958 - 1959) 368 - 417.

“While I am speaking of that, one small thought. ... All the same, the age of the Society, its youth, should not discourage us. Each one of us should say to himself: ‘I am the instrument of providence, I am a founder’. Yes, Messieurs, we are all founders”.

We are all founders! There is confidence and trust expressed to each generation of men and women who walk in the Marist spirit to serve God’s people and God’s church.

A Marist school is a body, a collective response, carried by all members of the school family who join in and who are willing to say ‘yes’. Sometimes people say: Who cares? What can I do? Let others do it. Who cares? Marists care. As Mary did.

Who was Colin – who is Colin? He was one who felt called and who said ‘yes’ as Mary did. He placed himself in the background and the Work of Mary which is the work of God in the foreground. A discovery is awaiting anyone who makes the journey back in time to meditate his life. On his return, a number of spiritual inspirations will be in his backpack, and those will help to continue his insights in a modern work today!

3 Marist Spirituality in a Trinitarian Key - Mary and the Marists

1 Thinking in models

Christian spirituality is built on faith in a triune God, spiritual nourishment from Scriptures, living the faith in the community of the Church, and mission for the good of the world. Let me address the Trinity and Scriptures to this talk about Marists and Mary.

There are many ways to present Marist spirituality. Marist spirituality was often focused on 'hidden and unknown', 'like Mary'. Another model explained it in terms of Marian virtues, especially humility. Next was the interpretation of Marist attitudes as fruitful in pastoral work. This resulted in the theme of a 'Marian Church'. All these models continue to keep their value. Right now, I will refer to the Trinity and to Mary in the New Testament as the basic model of understanding Marist spirituality.

From Marist spirituality we will move on to the faith life of a Marist school.

2 Marist Spirituality in a Trinitarian Key

Colin spoke about the experience of faith and how this transforms a person and how this bears fruit. The example is Mary who experienced the grace of God, a grace that transformed her. She acclaims it in the *Magnificat*.²² Colin says to the Marists and the Church: Be like her! Allow God's grace to transform you! Follow her Son! Pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit! Mary is the person par excellence of the Trinity.

Colin lists Mary's virtues, her attitude, her spirit, her work – everything is to say: to be like Mary is to be another Mary today, another person available through whom God can do great things, another person through whom God's grace can be at work. And what such a person does in this attitude of Mary God will be blessed and it will bear fruit.

Another person to illustrate this is Saint Paul.²³ Colin focuses not so much on the teaching of Paul. Colin points to the experience of transforming grace Paul underwent:

"By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain (1 Cor 15:10)".

Colin speaks about Christ mainly in the field of education and of foreign missions. Here, Colin is more Christocentric. In Christian education, the ideal is to direct youth towards Jesus Christ, to encourage young people to be good Christians and followers of the Lord.²⁴ In foreign missions, it is a follow up of the command of the risen Lord, go and preach the Good News to all peoples. Missionaries went to proclaim Jesus Christ and to baptize in the name of the Trinity.

Colin is very much theocentric in his discourse on God at work in the world. A typical line would be (FS, doc. 161, 2; 1848):

"It is God, God alone, who changes them by his grace. We, by putting ourselves into the picture, we can only be an obstacle to the working of that grace."

²² See my earlier meditations of this theme: Alois Greiler sm, *Transforming Grace: Marists, Mary and the Magnificat*, in *Forum Novum* [=FN] 10, 2 (2008) 397- 399 = Id., *Une grace qui transforme. Les Maristes, Marie et le Magnificat*, in FN 10, 2 (2008) 400-403. Some of the present ideas I used for the retreats I was invited to preach for the US province in 2010 and in 2016.

²³ Alois Greiler sm, 'God's grace towards me was not in vain'. *A Reflection on the Pauline Dimension of Marist Spirituality*, in FN 13 (2011) 78-101. The Pauline year took place 2008 to 2009.

²⁴ From his Instructions to the staff at Belley College: Colin states (§2) that the principal duties of educators are to make of their pupils 'Christians, upright gentlemen (*hommes honnêtes et polis*), and lastly men of learning (*savants*)'. He goes on to expand on each objective in turn (Source: Taylor, *Colin*, ms).

A specific richness about Colin is him speaking about the Holy Spirit, in Western European theology often the neglected, but not with Colin and because of Mary. I believe this is a specific Colinian and Marist contribution to the wider Church: the link Mary – Holy Spirit.

Let me use an example from Colinian prayer. Colin reprised a Marian prayer and a prayer to the Holy Spirit for gatherings. Like Mary and the early church in the upper room Marists are gathered together. This is a reference to Acts 1:14. The disciples pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. And who could more draw the Holy Spirit than Mary? This way of praying reveals its deeper meaning as core elements of the Marist charism: the early church, the guidance by the Holy Spirit.

The **Third Order of Mary or Marist laity** is too complex even for an initial approach. Lay spirituality has its own richness and is specific to people living in the world and not in a monastery. At the same time, many lay people associate with a religious congregation to deepen their faith life and their work for the Church and for God's people. Working at a Marist school does not require enrolling with the lay Marists. However, some knowledge and sharing of the Marist way of living the faith helps to establish a common school ethos.

3 Marists and the Mary of the New Testament

Another pillar of our faith is Scriptures. Like the Trinity, Scriptures also open us to the ecumenical dimension of our faith. As does the person of Mary to whom we now turn in Scripture according to the teaching of Jean-Claude Colin.

Colin used different resources to meditate on the role of Mary for the Church and the world and for her Society. Concerning Scripture, he focused very much on the Acts of the Apostles, the first two chapters, and on quotes from the Gospel of Luke.

Acts 1:14 shows his ideal of the Church and of the Society of Mary. The Marists were to re-create the faith of the first believers. They had no other model than the apostles and the early Church. The hallmark of the early Church was that they gathered around Mary. Colin refers to the text many times. Mary is the person of unity. She is the inspiration through her attitude, humility, and example. The disciples turn to her for spiritual guidance, and she always acts in union with the whole church. This line also inspires Marist prayer around a gathering as I mentioned above.

Another important verse for Colin is the *Magnificat* from the Gospel of Luke. Here, Mary praises God's grace which does great things for her. This includes a political dimension. It is said that during the terrible reign of the Junta in Argentina the generals asked the Catholic bishops to forbid praying the *Magnificat*!²⁵

Although it is not typically Colinian, let me add another verse . . . this time from the Gospel of John. In chapter 2, at the wedding feast at Cana, Mary is presented as the one sensitive to the needs of the people, in a discrete way, and bringing these needs before her Son.

If we take Acts 1:14 and John 2 together, we have the biblical basis for the Marist spirituality. Like Mary, support the Church and be aware of the needs of God's people. Here we find the deeper reasons in the spiritual discernment about which works Marists took on.

A difficult faith journey

An open reading of the Marian passages in the New Testament will possibly appeal to many people of today as it clearly shows that Mary had to live in faith, not in certitude.

²⁵ Jean Coste sm, *Marie, aujourd'hui chez les pères maristes – The place of Mary among Marists today* (SM Document 1), Rome 1972, page 32-33.

Lk1:38 Her yes at the annunciation – and then the angel leaves her!
Mk 3:31-35 and John 2:4 Jesus and Mary separate – Jesus separates from his natural family and shifts to his spiritual family. Mary is left standing ‘outside’.
John 19:26-27 Jesus unites natural and spiritual family: John takes Mary into his home.
Acts 1:13-14 Mary unites spiritual and natural family as Jesus has willed.
Acts 2 Pentecost: The coming of the Holy Spirit unto all believers finally reveals the purpose of her difficult and challenging faith story.

For myself, I am often struck by the verse ‘And the angel left her’. Mary had to live her faith in the ordinary challenges of life. Mother Theresa had her conversion to serve the poor and dying in the streets of Calcutta. Most people thought her faith made it easy for her in her life. After the publication of her diary we know – ‘the angel had left her’. She continued her vocation despite not feeling the presence of God for the rest of her life!

A woman rules this house

Outside the door of the Marist superior is a statue of Mary. This goes back to the tradition installed by Colin – she is the real superior, That is to say, a Marist house may be like Nazareth, a house where the spirit of Mary is present.

There is a certain psychological richness in this point. A male congregation chooses a woman as inspiration. Once this is integrated it makes for a healthy psychological state, balancing animus and anima.

Sometimes that is what people say. A Marist house is different. They expect a rather bachelor like atmosphere but come to say – a woman rules here. As Jean Coste wrote:

“Mary enters my life as a presence in somewhat the same way that the presence of a woman is felt in a house, without one’s knowing who precisely is there”.

Others are disappointed as they do not find many Marian images in the house of the Marian congregation. Marist spirit is not to look up at statues or images of Mary. The Marist spirit says – be Mary!

What Colin imagined for a Marist house he extended to have a meaning for the church as a whole, and therefore, we speak of a Marian Church.

4 Who cares? Marist formulas

The Trinitarian approach is the basis for the trust and confidence we have in each person to be called by God to grow. The grace of God will lead on.

Mary in the New Testament is the basis for different key Marist formulas as expressed by Colin. The short formula is – like Mary. When decisions need to be made:

*Think, feel, judge and act as Mary did.

*It is not about me but about the other and relationship: stay as it were hidden and unknown in the world.

* “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”.²⁶

*Marists work for a Marian Church, a church like Mary, a human church.

*We are called to the Work of Mary that is the work of God. Outside church you find like-minded people.

²⁶ Father Colin, cf *A Founder Speaks*, doc. 1, 2 (Nov. 20th - 22nd, 1837).

In simple words, in a modern world when people are often rivals we say: who cares? We care – about one another, about the other, and about the world.

5 From Marist spirituality to Marist ethos in a school

We have already touched on the ethos for a Marist school in our first presentation. Now, at the end of our three sessions, let us come back to the practical and inspirational insights of the Marist spirit for a school today.

Colin called all Marists ‘founders’. So, let me extend this to the staff of a Marist school. The simple but decisive point is: a spirit needs a body. If I am convinced of the value of the Marist approach – I am the one to communicate it.

Colin prepared decisions by broad consultations inspired by the example of Mary and the apostles in the early Church. Common deliberation will lead to a project supported by many.

Colin wanted collaborators. He did not carry out one single work but started a religious congregation. He co-founded other groups so they were able to respond to further needs: teaching in technical schools and doing catechesis (Marist Brothers), working with and for women (Marist sisters), going to assist the women in the Pacific (SMSM), and generally lay Marists who live and act in family and political life.

Colin had a view for the broader context, the secularized and globalized world of his time. This is still so today and tells us the importance of the Marist mission.

In the Marist world, there are two trends concerning education. In countries in Europe and North America we deliver the Marist ethos to lay people running the school inasmuch as they are willing to continue the Marist tradition of their school. In Europe, we have a network established. In the US, you have made the effort to come to this workshop. In the Pacific, the Province decided to invest in schools and sent priests for teacher training. Secondary schools train future leaders in society, be it in business or politics or culture. Can we communicate some faith values to them?

A simple step is information. This workshop tries to serve this purpose. Names like Colin, Chavoin, Champagnat, Chanel – are they known to the staff and the students? Are they visible in the school building? Are dates remembered in some ritual? Places like Cerdon, Belley, or the South Pacific – are they known? Are they represented in pictures or artifacts?

The religious world of the restoration in 19th century France is not our world nor is the missionary situation of the Pacific then or the strong religious mark of schools in Fiji today. Our situation is inter-religious and ecumenical. School chaplaincy, religious symbols, feast days and so on should echo this modern religious context. And, religion is coming back!

The historical reasons for Marists coming to the US are still topical: immigration, education, and a more intensive faith life.

Marist philosophy of education builds on religion, on a broad and open approach, in no way fundamentalist or exclusive. Mary as model prevents such an approach. Colin knew the wrong pastoral approach can cause – a revolution!

Modern life often reduces a person to a consumer, a function, a skill or the capacity as workforce. A religious approach sees the whole person. Who cares? We care!

6 Marist school logo or ‘As it were a second creation’

Let me conclude with this expression of Jean-Claude Colin, Marist founder. He used it to describe teaching as privilege, opportunity, and project with a vision for the good of people. The first creation is our coming into the world. Education and teaching and socialization and

so on are like a second creation. They shape the young person and lay the foundation for his future life and work. The school is one place of this 'second creation'.²⁷ It is about creativity!

Does this leave you with additional work to your already heavy workload of teaching and administration? Yes, it might be. However, the Marist ethos is not and should not be something extra, out there. The Marist ethos becomes the delivery system. It is a certain way to teach and relate, the way of Mary. In this sense, it is not an extra. On the other hand, it is a question of organization. In France, they have the *educateurs*, staff to look after the religious and human needs of the students. In Germany, we do not have those and the teachers face the preparation of liturgy for their class. With some thinking a solution will be found.

Much can be done through experience. In Europe, school exchange among Marist schools on the group and individual level proved effective. The same is true for the meetings or pilgrimages to places of Marist origin. People come to church with emotions – and are given ideas. Such experiences feed the heart more than another lecture can achieve.

Marists do not excel with new Marian prayers, devotions, or images. Marists do not look so much at an image of Mary. Marists try “to be” like Mary today.

So, what is the ethos of a Marist school? Let me reflect upon it briefly with the help of Marist logo or Marist crest or coat of arms of a school.²⁸ In our modern world a logo, slogans, and publicity are part and parcel of life and people know to look for those and to interpret those.

When the Marists started their first school in Ireland, in **Dundalk**, they simply used the traditional Marist crest²⁹ as logo of their school: a Catholic, Marist school, geared towards Catholic formation and motivation of vocations for the congregation and its foreign missions.

The modern building of the Marist school in **Blackburn** reads: 'Excellence in Learning'. They continue the Colnian ideal of excellence in academic work. Where is the religious element? It is in the symbol of Mary portrayed in an abstract way.

In Fiji, the well-known Marist secondary school **St John's on Ovalau** has the clear motto: 'Centered in Christ'. Not all students are Catholics. This works in a country with many religions and Christian denominations. It is Colnian as he is christocentric once it comes to education.

The Marist secondary school in **Fürstzell, Germany**, works with a poster with a reading of the Marist values along the word 'Marists' as acronym. This poster is the result of the work of the staff. Years later a student of the school wrote a paper for her university studies interviewing students about their experience of Fürstzell school. Her acronym – echoes similar values! I find this to be a great example of reception of an ethos.

The logo of Marist-related schools in **New Zealand** give you ample illustration how to create a logo, include elements of Marist tradition, and express a mission in a (Latin) phrase.

The Logo of the Network of Marist schools in **Europe** is a balance between tradition, education, and Marist values. The star and the color yellow are elements from the traditional Marist crest. The 'M' is to mean Marists and to show people – in the center of a Marist ethos. The dot is a head. The blue and yellow with a star is also the flag of Europe. The cross on the globe depicts the global mission of the Marists and the global world we live in today.

²⁷ Jan Hulshof sm, 'As it were a second creation', in FN 10, 1 (2008) 8-20; = 'Comme une nouvelle création', in FN 10, 1 (2008) 21-33.

²⁸ Notre Dame, Pontiac: Notre Dame, siège de sagesse.

²⁹ Mervyn Duffy sm, *Investigating the Marist Crest: 1 Precursors*, in *Forum Novum* 13 (2011) 147-153.

You will remember that I started my first presentation with an example of a transition from Marist religious to lay staff in a Marist school. The point was the staff making a decision. Do we want to continue the Marist tradition? It has to be creative fidelity, possibly on the Marist values and on religion in a broader sense. Such a decision could be reflected in the logo of the school. Which in a modern world would be a discrete combination of religious and academic aims. Not all transitions work. Sometimes a school closes or a diocese takes over. It is in your hands. Thank you.

Further reading

Marist sources are available in most Marist houses or via the provincial house. Some of the material is online on different websites (see respective note below).

There are electronic versions of power point presentations on Saint Peter Chanel and other topics. Some of the literature also exists in electronic version. Images of historical topics can be searched for contacting Father Carlo-Maria Schianchi, Rome, general house. He is the general archivist.

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= Id., *Letters from the Marist Missionaries in Oceania (1836-1854)*, Adelaide, ATF, 2015.

= Id., *LRO Anthologia*, 2015, Spanish translation, copy not available to me at this moment.

GIRARD, Charles SM (ed.), *Lettres reçues d'Océanie par l'administration générale des pères maristes pendant le généralat de Jean-Claude Colin, Textes revus, corrigés et ajoutés, 1836 – 1854*, 10 volumes, Paris, Éditions Karthala – Société de Marie (Pères Maristes (Fontes historici Societatis Mariae XI)), 2009-2010.

Alois Greiler sm – 3 Presentations – Questions for Groupwork

About 40 participants; Form groups of 5-6 according to language; if possible, with members from different schools and/or countries.

*1 A soft globalization and modernization with a new role of religion.
The Society of Mary in the world of today*

A Time for a general feedback on the presentation

What did I hear? What do I take with me?

B The process of transition from religious to lay people running a Marist school. How does this process work at the school I come from? What is helpful (best practice)? What could the sponsoring congregation do to assist?

C The place of religion, Christian faith, and unbelief: In which environment does your school work? How 'religious' are staff and students?

2 Jean-Claude Colin (1790-1875), Marist founder, superior general, spiritual teacher, leader of the Oceania mission

A Time for a general feedback on the presentation

What did I hear? What do I take with me?

B 'We are founders': Marists respond to the signs of their times. Which needs do you discern globally - locally? In which way does your school respond?

C Invest in people! What would help staff and student to engage even more in the Marist ethos of your school?

3 Marist Spirituality – Marist ethos of a school

A Time for a general feedback on the presentation

What did I hear? What do I take with me?

B Spell out 'Marists': Agree on one Marist value for each letter as a description of the Marist school ethos.

C A Marist logo: Design a new logo to combine both, Marist tradition and excellence in learning.