



Feast of the Annunciation

Be it done unto me...

The Word was made flesh...

March 25, 2020

Dear Marists,

As Congregational Leaders of the four religious branches of the Marist Family, we greet you on this feast of the Annunciation. Mary is our mother and model, our first and perpetual superior, and we look to her as we strive to live ever more fully our own 'Yes' to the God who every day calls us deeper into the mystery of God's Love.

Several experiences that we have lived together during recent years, the celebration of the bicentenary of the Fourvière pledge, International Youth Gatherings, and particularly the Youth Gathering in Guatemala in January 2019 was a powerful experience for us – our sense of one-ness as Marists felt stronger, indeed more primordial, than our membership in a particular congregation. This calls to mind the historical fact that our founders, during the early years in France, sought recognition from Rome as one Society, a Society which from the beginning envisaged a branch of Marist Laity.

We are sensing this one-ness more and more in recent years. As Congregational Leaders we meet regularly to share what is happening in each of our Congregations. In June the four General Councils will meet at l'Hermitage, and we will visit together our different places of origin to reflect on the future of these important places for us.

We are aware that meetings among the branches do take place in many countries where we are present and we encourage this. We invite all members of the Marist Family to promote such gatherings, both social and reflective, and to encourage engagement in Marist mission together, collaborating wherever and however possible. *What else could we do to strengthen our one-ness?* Do send us your ideas please.

As missionaries of prayer and action, let's celebrate our belonging to Mary's Family.

Fr John Larsen sm

Sr Georgeanne Donovan smsm

Br Ernesto Sánchez

Sr Grace Ellul sm