

# Reflection from the Superior General

## Marists and the Love of Learning

Father Jean-Claude invited Marists to be people who love learning. He once commented: "We must undertake learning, confreres, and a great deal of it ... in order to do good we must study, but not for our own sake - rather for the glory of God and the salvation of souls". (F.S. 160,5). Importantly, there have always been some Marists who have dedicated their whole lives to the intellectual apostolate. However, we are all called "to be thoroughly equipped, intellectually as well as spiritually, for our mission." (C. 26). In our tradition, the motivation for study has never been about self-aggrandizement but always about the work of Mary. Our efforts to keep us as updated professionally as possible serve to make us more available for Marist mission.



In our world of rapid-fire communication, the Gospel offers depth, beauty and wisdom and "the Way" to God and his people. Marists are inspired by Luke's Gospel where "Mary pondered all these things in her heart". Conversation and dialogue can be moments of grace when we enter into them with loving and intelligent attentiveness. We search the Scriptures and the Tradition so that we can be well prepared to listen and respond to the concerns of the people of our time.

Each Marist, no matter his age or stage, is invited to consider with his Superior and his community how he can best keep renewing and updating for the sake of our mission. We may be "busy about many things", even very worthwhile things, but there are no short-cuts to living prayerfully and reflectively.

Within our own Society there are opportunities for on-going formation, as well as for writing, reading and producing Marist resource material. Marists are invited to study advanced theology (usually to Licence or Masters' level) and we are hoping all younger Marists can meet together when travel is easier so that they can grow together in their experience and share their vision. We plan to offer another Colinian renewal when possible. We plan to continue annually with the Summer Marist Studies programme which began this year. If you have ideas or suggestions for on-going Marist formation at an international level we are always happy to hear from you.

Even more important than regular courses and retreats, on-going training and sabbaticals, is our focus on our daily commitment to live our interior life ever more deeply. Each day we contemplate the Word of God. We maintain our theological and spiritual reading so that we minister among our people with informed insight. It is good for each of us to have at least one area of theology or spirituality where we work to develop a special expertise and an intelligent interest in the latest developments. Intellectual and spiritual breadth and depth help us to dialogue enthusiastically with our world around us.

These are difficult times for education almost everywhere. Most countries are going through a crisis of how to open schools safely. Marists as well are struggling with many other issues around education. There is a greater need than ever to have Marists who are well educated and updated so that we can invite people into the beauty and profundity of the Word of God. Even if we ourselves no longer teach in many Marist classrooms we are still all called to be teachers of the Word. Our life-long ministry of teaching the Word is the fruit of the depth of our prayer and our study and our intelligent appreciation of culture.

*John Larsen s.m.*