



**A Champagnat Marist Prayer Resource
for Advent 2017
District of the Pacific**



A Champagnat Marist Prayer Resource for Advent

What is in the resource?

The resource comprises:

- A theme developed from the Gospel of the day
- A selection of morning offerings and Marial greetings
- The readings and psalm of the day
- An opening and concluding prayer
- A reading from a Champagnat Marist source related to the theme of the Gospel for the day
- Three intercessions, to which you may add additional prayers

How to this resource could be used:

The Advent Prayer Resource is designed to assist in focusing our community prayer on the Gospel reading of the day as we journey through the season of Advent. The resource is flexible and could be used on its own or as part of another form of community prayer.

A suggested process:

As part of the community prayer:

- Read the Gospel of the day.
- Then allow several minutes of silent reflection.
- Then invite the participants to share any reflection they may have on the Gospel and/or the Champagnat Marist reading.
- The psalm of the day could be used as a response to the readings and reflection.

Preparation for Community Prayer:

As part of the preparation for community prayer:

- Read the Gospel for the day,
- Read a Scripture commentary. An online commentary from the Society of Jesus in Ireland is available at <http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie>
- Make a short note of what emerged for you from the reading.

Why was the resource developed?

Our recent General Chapters have all urged us, as part of the ongoing process of centring our lives on Jesus Christ, to deepen our personal and community prayer. One way to assist this is to develop a style of community prayer based on the Gospel reading of the day.

Brothers Today has developed this resource, based on the Gospel theme, as an example of one approach to a Gospel centred style of prayer. The Sunday readings are Year B and the weekday readings are Year 2.

Advent 1 – Sunday 3 December | Stay Awake!

Prayer

Gracious God,
in this Advent of expectation
you call us to be awake and ready
to recognise the signs of your
kingdom in our midst
A kingdom of justice and mercy,
of joy and of peace.
May we be aware of your presence in our lives.
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1, 3-8 | That you would tear the heavens apart and come down**
- **Psalms 80**
- **1 Corinthians 1:3-9 | The revelation we looked for, Christ Jesus, our Lord**
- **Mark 13:33-37 | Stay awake! You never know when the Lord will come**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, par. 73

As mystics we perceive “the footprints of God” in all the events of life. Through a reading of our reality in faith, we are taken beyond appearances and surface meanings, and brought into the depths of each situation. Our prayer becomes, *Oh Lord, how great is your love!* And with a deep trust that comes from knowing we are profoundly loved, we confidently open our hearts to God’s will.

Intercessions

We pray that we may use this time of Advent to examine all of our relationships with others, material possessions and God. Lord hear us.

We pray for those trapped in the darkness of addiction, that they may be freed. Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to recognise you and respond to you in love through every person and every experience of this day. Lord hear us.

Poem | Christmas 1939 (Patrick Kavanagh)

O Divine Baby in the cradle
All that is poet in me
Is the dream I dream of Your Childhood
And the dream You dreamed of me.

O Divine Baby in the cradle
All that is truth in me
Is my mind tuned to the cadence
Of a child’s philosophy.

O Divine Baby in the cradle
All that is pride in me
Is my mind bowed in homage
Upon Your Mother's knee.

O Divine Baby in the cradle
All that is joy in me
Is that I have saved from the ruin
Of my soul Your Infancy.

Prayer

Loving God,
You loved the world so much
that You gave us Your only Son
to be our Saviour.

When Jesus humbled himself
to be born among us
and take on our humanity,
he fulfilled the plan You formed long ago.
Jesus opened for us the way of salvation.

In this Advent season,
we watch in expectation for the day,
hoping that the salvation promised us will come,
when Christ our Lord
will come again in his glory. Come Lord Jesus!

Advent 1 – Monday 4 December | Faith

St John of Damascus

Prayer

Gracious God,
we pray that we may have the same faith
as Jesus speaks about in the gospel.
May the faith that can move mountains
also move our hearts
as we prepare for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
We make this prayer through
Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 2:1-5 | The Lord will gather many nations in peace in the kingdom of heaven**
- **Psalm 121**
- **Matthew 8:5-11 | Many will come and take their place in the kingdom of heaven**

Champagnat Marist Reading - A Revolution of the Heart, p. 9

Many of us realize that the worlds in which we live can no longer be expected to carry the faith for us. The time is long past when we could count on living in a Christian culture, or even on being surrounded by believers. Even in some of our Marist communities, those among us who wish to have a vibrant life of faith cannot count on some in the group for support.

So, here at the dawn of a new millennium, more than a few of us long for a God who will dwell at the centre of our lives. One to whom we can relate easily, and who will provide depth of meaning and an answer to our ultimate concerns. This is the God around whom we long to renew our spirituality and build a life of personal and communal prayer.

Intercessions

We pray for all those who show genuine concern for their neighbours and bring peace of mind and heart to those who suffer from our inhumanity to others. Lord hear us.

We ask your blessing, Lord, on those who show real concern for the spiritual and material good of their neighbours. Lord hear us.

Lord, increase our faith as we wait in hope for the coming of the Saviour. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of hope, be with us as we begin this
Advent journey.
Increase our faith,
Show us your ways,
Teach us your paths,

That we might walk with you more closely,
Our hand in your hand,
Our feet in your footsteps,
That we like Mary and Marcellin
May be your willing servants.
Amen.

Advent 1 – Tuesday 5 December | Openness to Revelation

Prayer

Loving God,
you reveal great things to your followers,
especially those with a humble and open disposition.
Help us to set aside our fears and hesitations,
and to embrace you more wholeheartedly
in this season of active preparation for your coming among us.
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 11:1-10 | The Spirit of the Lord rests upon him**
- **Psalms 72**
- **Luke 10:21-24 | Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, pars. 19-20

Marcellin taught the first Brothers: To make Jesus known and loved is the aim of our vocation and the whole purpose of the Institute. If we were to fail in this purpose, our congregation would be useless. In saying this, Marcellin clearly expressed his conviction, and a growing conviction for Marists today – the centrality of Jesus in our life and mission.

For us Jesus is the human face of God. In a privileged way we encounter him in the three special Marist places, where Jesus reveals God to us.

Intercessions

Lord, open our eyes, ears and minds to the mystery of your revelation in our daily lives. Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to welcome the Word of God into our hearts, as a beautiful gift and a privileged encounter with you. Lord hear us.

Lord, may all Champagnat Marists encourage one another and the young people confided to our care. May our relationships with others be marked by joyful simplicity and wholehearted generosity. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God, loving Father of us all,
we are encouraged to confidently welcome
and share your message
despite our limitations.
May your kingdom be proclaimed.
May your gifts be received.
May we live in charity and authenticity
and thus reveal you in today's world.
Amen.

Advent I – Wednesday 6 December | Healing

St Nicholas

Prayer

Loving God,
you challenge us this Advent,
this time of preparation,
to put aside our pride
and to understand our need for
repentance and forgiveness.
Purify our hearts and sanctify our lives.
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 25:6-10 | The Lord God will wipe away tears from every face**
- **Psalm 23**
- **Matthew 15:29-37 | Jesus healed many and multiplied the bread**

Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, par. 124

Marist spirituality, being apostolic, is lived out on mission. The mission of Marist apostles is born of the experience of being loved by God and of our desire to actively participate in the mission of Jesus. God is passionate about the world and its people, and Jesus expresses this love by a ministry of teaching and healing. *I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly.* Like Jesus we recognise the urgings of the Spirit within, calling us to witness to this Good News. Out of these inner promptings, the mission of the Church is born: to proclaim the Kingdom of God as a new way of living for humanity, a new way to relate with God. We join in this mission of the Church as we look upon the world with compassion.

Intercessions

We pray that we may be open to hear, to see and to understand the message of Jesus. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may be open to the healing presence of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may follow faithfully the way of Jesus Christ, to tell courageously the truth of Jesus Christ, and to live joyfully the life of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Gracious Father,
your words are spirit and they are life.
Through the prayers of St Andrew,
make us true disciples of Christ,
eager to spread the Good News by word and example.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Advent 1 – Thursday 7 December | Doing the Father’s Will

St Ambrose

Prayer

God who dwells with us, we pray for one gift this Advent;
we pray for a change of heart.

For any relationship with you
is more an affair of the heart than of the head.

We pray for hearts open enough so that we can,
like Mary, take you at your word and not demand
that all of our questions
be answered at that outset.

We pray too that our hearts be as fruitful as Mary’s
and eventually as passionate, on fire,
full of love for Jesus and His Good News. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 26:1-6 | Let the upright nations, the custodians of truth, enter**
- **Psalms 118**
- **Matthew 7:21, 24-27 | Whoever does the will of my Father will enter the kingdom of heaven**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Constitutions #43

The call to live evangelical obedience for the Kingdom involves communities, Provinces, and the Institute itself in a constant search to know God’s will. It is not always easy to be sure of what He asks of us, especially in times of profound change and renewal. We discern it in prayer, so as to arrive at a decision in concert with our Superiors. This discernment in the Holy Spirit calls for a spirit of faith, attentiveness to the word of God, fidelity to the charism of the Institute, an accurate reading of the signs of the times, and a putting aside of particular interests of individuals or groups.

Intercessions

We pray for a disciple’s heart that is open to the action of the Holy Spirit. Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray that we may be like the sensible person who listens to your word and acts on it. Lord hear us.

Lord, as we prepare for Christmas, help us to find the right balance between action and prayer in our lives. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Lord, what you will, let it be so,
Where you will, there we will go,
What is your will, help us to know.

Because you will it, it is best,
Because you will it, we are blest,
Until in your hands our hearts find their
rest. Amen.

Advent I – Friday 8 December

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Greeting to Mary

O with what joy we sing of Mary, a woman of great love,
whose openness and loving kindness,
gave birth to God's own Son.

Mary, O so gentle and discrete, be with us as we pray,
to know the whisper of His presence,
The wonder of His love.

Prayer

Gracious God,
may the life of Mary, preserved from sin,
help us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.
Open our hearts to your Word,
and help us to respond generously, as Mary did.
May we become beacons of light
where there is darkness,
transforming our world, day by day.
Amen.

Readings

- **Genesis 3:9-15,20 | I will place enmity between your seed and the seed of the woman**
- **Psalm 98**
- **Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12 | God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world**
- **Luke 1:26-38 | Rejoice, favoured one, the Lord is with you**

Marist Reading

Mary is, for each one of us, the sign and reality of the Kingdom already here and still to come. During the time of Advent Mary is, more than ever, the way which leads to Jesus. Without waiting for the morrow she is already living, in every detail of her daily life, the values of the kingdom which her Son is coming to establish.

Dialogue Prayer (based on the *Constitutions*)

- Mary lived out her whole life in the spirit of her "Fiat".
She is blessed because she listened to the word of God and carried it out. (C. 38)
- As Champagnat Marists, Lay and Brothers, we come to Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord, to be schooled by her, and we respond to her call:
"Do whatever he tells you". (C. 38)
- Faithful handmaid, she lives out her YES even to the Cross.
Mother, she ponders in her heart what Jesus does, and relates his actions to the words of Scripture. (C. 67)

- We contemplate her, hidden and unknown in the world, faithful in her mission of bringing God to us.
Patiently she awaits God's hour. (C. 84)

Intercessions

Let us praise God who has given us Mary as a model of holiness. We pray:
Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.

Be praised in Mary, comforter of the afflicted; teach us to be a healing presence in the lives of others.
Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.

Be praised in Mary, help of Christians; help us to proclaim the Gospel with our lives.
Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.

Be praised in Mary, Queen of Peace; give us forgiving hearts and bless our world with the peace that only you can give.
Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.

Prayer

Loving God,
you have given us Mary, the mother of Jesus
to encourage and guide us on the way to union with you.
Let her life of loving obedience and prayer
be a beacon of light for us
as we seek to follow your Christ.
We ask this in the name of that same Jesus Christ,
the Eternal Word,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

Advent 1 – Saturday 9 December | The Kingdom is at hand
St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

Prayer

In your time, Saving God
You walked upon this earth
And in your time
Became one of us
To show what we could become.
Remind us always
As we look at our lives
In comparison with yours
That at the centre of all things
Is the saving Grace of God. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26 | If you have mercy the Lord God will be gracious when you cry**
- **Psalm 146**
- **Matthew 9:35, 10:1,6-8 | When Jesus saw the crowd he felt sorry for them**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved, p. 39

I believe Marcellin might also raise some troubling questions. Honest questions, but disturbing, nonetheless. Questions such as: Does sufficient evidence exist to prove that you and I are bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to poor children and young people here at the outset of the third millennium? When the Christian young people entrusted to our care move on from our programs and institutions, have they come to know and love Jesus Christ? Are the teachings and values of his *Good News* evident in their day-to-day lives?

Intercessions

May we be carriers of the Good News by becoming shepherds leading the sheep to where they belong. Lord hear us.

May we have the courage to accept the call from the Good Shepherd to liberate people from all binds them. Lord hear us.

Lord, we ask your blessing on those who labour in the fields among the needy to bring hope into their lives. Lord hear us.

Prayer

In your time, Mighty God
You will come in glory
And in your time
Gather the harvest
From one end of this earth to the other.
Your saving power reaches
the ends of the earth.

Through the prayers of St Juan Diego,
may we become more aware
that at the centre of all things
is Your love and mercy. Amen.

Advent 2 - Sunday 10 December | Prepare a way for the Lord

Prayer

Lord of heaven and earth,
you govern all things according to your love.
May the light of the Gospel
scatter the darkness of the world,
And may you open the hearts of all
who remain blind to the Truth.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 | Make straight in the desert the way of the Lord**
- **Psalms 85**
- **2 Peter 3:8-14 | We wait for a new heaven and a new earth**
- **Mark 1:1-8 | Prepare a way for the Lord**

Marist Reading – Evangelisers in the Midst of Youth, par. 69

We are invited to be prophets in our time, to listen to the calls that God is sending us through the lives and suffering of so many brothers and sisters who find themselves at the margin of society. In these specific conditions, feeling a responsibility to proclaim the Gospel and denounce the profaning of God's face present in each person, our mission takes shape and becomes set, enriched by the particular goings-on in the world us. In this process we approach young people and open our eyes to their dreams and plans and their genuine challenges. This offers us the wherewithal to truly become builders of justice and peace in the world. Ours is a prophetic Church in tune with the prophetic vocation of youth.

Intercessions

We pray that our faith may make a difference in the world. Lord hear us.

We pray that all nations may know true and lasting peace. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may be attentive to the prophets in our time. Lord hear us.

Poem | A Christmas Prayer (Ian Oliver)

On that holy night,
Somehow
It happened.

Somehow,
God took a handful of humanity:
Proud, petulant, passionate;
And a handful of divinity:
Undivided, inexpressible, incomprehensible:
And enclosed them in one small body.

Somehow, the all too human
Touched the divine.
And was not vaporized.
To be human was never the same,
But forever thereafter,
Carried a hint of its close encounter with the perfect.
And forever thereafter,
God was never the same,
But carried a hint of the passion of the mortal.

If God can lie down in a cattle-trough,
Is any object safe from transformation?
If peasant girls can be mothers to God,
Is any life safe from the invasion of the eternal?

If all this could happen, O God,
What places of darkness on our earth
Are pregnant with light waiting to be born this night?

If all this could happen, O God,
Then you could be, and are, anywhere, everywhere,
Waiting to be born this night in the most
Unbelievable places,
Perhaps even in our own hearts.

Prayer

Almighty God,
You sent John the Baptist into the world
to prepare the way for Your Son.
May we also prepare a place for
Your Son in our hearts.
Give us the conviction to actively work
for a more just world
on which all of creation
reflects Your goodness and grace.
Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Advent 2 - Monday 11 December | We have seen wonderful things

St Damasus I

Prayer

Gracious God,
open our hearts to prepare the way for the coming of Christ.
Open our hearts to your Word,
and instruct us in your ways of compassion.
May we become beacons of light
where there is darkness,
transforming our world, day by day.
Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 35:1-10 | God will come and save you**
- **Psalm 84**
- **Luke 5:17-26 | We have seen wonderful things this day**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Marvellous Companions, p. 70

Our rediscovery of Scripture in the years that have followed Vatican II has changed our vision of God significantly. No longer consigned to the role of distant purveyor of history, He is at last able to be himself. Rest assured that God is fully invested in our world's transformation. The gospel stories remind us that where life was diminished, Jesus restored it; where the human spirit was imprisoned, he made his presence felt by liberating it.

Intercessions

Most provident God, you promised us that the desert shall rejoice and bloom, may all people find sufficient water of spirit and truth to satisfy their thirst. In trust we say, **our God is here.**

May the eyes of the blind be open. Grant us the gift to recognise our own blindness. In trust we say, **our God is here.**

Your highway shall be called the holy road. Grant us the courage and understanding to share in the burdens of our companions on the journey. In trust we say, **our God is here.**

Prayer

God of wondrous deeds,
your grace and mercy astound us.
Make us more aware of your vision of truth and love,
of justice and peace.
Strengthen us as we prepare the way
for your coming among us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Advent 2 – Tuesday 12 December | Welcoming the Lost Sheep
Our Lady of Guadalupe

Greeting to Mary

O with what joy we sing of Mary, a woman of great love,
whose openness and loving kindness, gave birth to God's own Son.
Mary, O so gentle and discrete, be with us as we pray,
to know the whisper of His presence, the wonder of His love.

Prayer

Father, we praise you with Mary, for the wonders of your love.
We thank you for renewing us this morning with the gift of life in your presence.
We thank you for sending Jesus, your Son, to reveal to us your wonderful love.
We thank you for searching for us and calling us to follow Jesus.
We open our hearts, hands and minds to the people and the events of this day. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 40: 1-11 | God consoles his people**
- **Psalm 96**
- **Matthew 18: 12-14 | God does not will the little ones be lost**

Marist Reading – In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat, par. 204

Along with other persons and institutions, we accept an advocacy role on behalf of young people who are victims, or where their rights and well-being are concerned in any way, and on behalf of greater social justice generally. We communicate with our Province community regarding our experiences and the concerns that arise, seeking collective support where this is appropriate.

Intercessions

Let us pray for one another that the Lord will open our minds and hearts to be true to the message He gives us through His word today. Lord hear us.

On this feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we pray that like Mary, we may hear the Word of God and respond generously to His call. Lord hear us.

We pray that like John the Baptist, we may be heralds of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Loving God,
you sent your Son among us,
born of a woman, to be our Messiah.
Open our ears to hear your Word,
and our hearts to recognise you

present in the daily events of our lives.
Help us, like Mary, to say "yes"
to all that you ask of us.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Advent 2 – Wednesday 13 December | Come to me

St Lucy

Prayer

Gracious God,
you heal and restore all of creation.
Make us steadfast as we prepare for the fulfilment
of your kingdom.
A kingdom of justice and peace,
of love and mercy.
We make our prayer through Jesus our brother. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 40:25-31 | God gives strength to the weary**
- **Psalm 103**
- **Matthew 11:28-30 | Come to me**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Fidelity to the mission in situations of social unrest, p.102

When the Constitutions tell us that our ways of being and acting draw their inspiration and guidance from the attitudes that made Mary the perfect disciple of Christ (cf. C 4), they are asking us to live her spirit. ... I ask Mary to give to me and to each one of my Marist Brothers that attitude of attentive listening, prompt obedience, simple commitment to people, trust, strength, humility and serene joy.

Br Benito Arbués

Intercessions

Jesus, you invite us to come to you to and find rest for our burdens. In confidence we pray, **come, Lord Jesus.**

You show us the love of a caring God, may our lives witness that the time of salvation is now.

In confidence we pray, **come, Lord Jesus.**

You call us to be gentle of heart, may we be your gentle presence for others. In confidence we pray, **come, Lord Jesus.**

Prayer

God of love,
you invite us in Jesus to lay down our burdens and to be gentle of heart.
Help us to be open to your unconditional love.
Teach us your ways of mercy and love
that we may show your compassion to all people.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Advent 2 – Thursday 14 December | Take up your cross

St John of the Cross

Prayer

Father, as we prepare for the birth of your Son, Jesus, who walked the path of obedience, even to the Cross.

Help us to discern your holy will in our lives and make our hearts obedient to the prompting of your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 41: 13-20 | I am your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel**
- **Psalm 145**
- **Matthew 11: 11-15 | No greater than John the Baptist has been born**

Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 22 & 24

At the foot of the Cross, we are in awe of a God who loves us without reserve. We find a God who shares the physical and psychological suffering, betrayal, abandonment and violence experienced by

humanity, and transforms these experiences. There we enter the mystery of redemptive suffering and learn humble fidelity in love. The crucified Christ is the sign and deepest expression of a God who is love.

At the Cross, we associate ourselves with people affected by failure and suffering, and with those who struggle for bread, justice and peace.

Intercessions

We pray that we may remain faithful to proclaiming the Kingdom of God through our words and actions. Lord hear us.

We pray for those who courageously witness to the Gospel in areas where the Church is persecuted. Lord hear us.

We pray for all those who have committed their lives to building relationships of peace and justice. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God our Father, we remember the violent deaths of John the Baptist and of Jesus, who were obedient to your will.

Look with pity on those who are suffering persecution because of their faith.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Advent 2 – Friday 15 December | God's wisdom
Foundation Day of the District of the Pacific 2013

Prayer

God of life,
help us to look forward
to the coming of your Son
who shoulders our yoke and lifts our burdens
that we may be enabled to proclaim
the coming of your Kingdom.
Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 48:17-19 | If only you had listened to my commandments**
- **Psalm 1**
- **Matthew 11:16-19 | They listened neither to John nor the Son of Man**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, par. 109

With God's grace we engage in the challenging journey of growing into that inner harmony that attracted people to Jesus - humble and gentle of heart. We cannot grow towards our potential as human beings without being involved with others, and responding to the support and challenges posed by those who share our journey most intimately.

Intercessions

Lord, we thank you for your Word which lightens our way and lifts our burdens. Lord hear us.

Lord, lighten our burdens, grant us we ask your forgiveness and healing. Lord hear us.

Lord, bless those who are overburdened and give them your peace. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of compassion and love,
we thank you for your Word today
as we prepare for the birth of Jesus,
our way, our truth and our life.
Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.
Amen.

Advent 2 – Saturday 16 December | Recognising the Saviour

Prayer

Father, as we prepare for the birth of your Son, Jesus, help us to discern your holy will in our lives and make our hearts obedient to the prompting of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Readings

- **Ecclesiasticus 48:1-4, 9-11 | Elijah came to them**
- **Psalm 80**
- **Matthew 17:10-13 | Elijah has already come and they did not know him**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Revolution of the Heart, p. 34

The members of our 20th General Chapter challenged us “to centre our lives and communities in Jesus Christ, like Mary, with passion and enthusiasm, and to implement processes of human growth and conversion which promote this.”

Their Message is a challenging one, but not without its own measure of joy. Certainly, today joy must be very evident in our life and mission as Marcellin’s brothers. As one of our brothers said to me recently: “Wouldn’t it be wonderful for you and for me to come to the end of our Marist life and wonder if there was any merit in it at all, because we had enjoyed it so much?”

So, my Brothers, let us be up and doing. The challenge we face is clear, and we have the resources to contend with it. But hasn’t the challenge ever been the same, beginning with our foundation on 2nd January 1817? Marcellin put it very simply: “To love God,” he said, “to love God and to labour to make God known and loved – this is what a brother’s life should be.” In giving us this description of our vocation, he was reminding us that at the heart of our identity as Little Brothers of Mary, now as then, must be found, first and foremost, Jesus Christ and his Good News.

Intercessions

We pray that we may remain faithful to proclaiming the Kingdom of God through our words and actions. Lord hear us.

We pray for those who courageously witness to the Gospel in areas where the Church is persecuted. Lord hear us.

We pray for all those who have committed their lives to building relationships of peace and justice. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God our Father,
open our eyes to your presence in our lives and in our world that we may perceive and announce Christ’s saving presence to all who wait in darkness.
Grant this through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Advent 3 – Sunday 17 December | Rejoice in the Lord

O Sapientia

O Come, O wisdom of our God most high,
guiding creation with power and love,
come to teach us the path of knowledge. (Isaiah 11:2-3)

Prayer

At this Advent-time we remember
Mary and Joseph,
giving thanks for their faithfulness,
courage and obedience,
stepping out into the unknown,
in the strength of your Spirit,
playing their part
in the fulfilment of your plan
to bring your prodigal people home again.

We pray that their example
might be the pattern of our lives.
That when your gentle whisper
breaks through the clamour of this world
and into our small corner,
we might be ready to listen,
and having listened, to act. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11 | I exult for joy in the Lord**
- **Psalms LK 1:46-48**
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 | May you be kept blameless for the coming of the Lord**
- **John 1:6-8, 19-28 | Standing among you, unknown to you, is the one who is coming after me**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Water from the rock, par. 66-67

In this relationship with God, we experience ourselves as unconditionally loved. A love that draws us ever more deeply into this relationship and, at the same time, more deeply into relationship with all of life. With Mary we experience life as a wonderful gift from God: *Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me.*

We find ourselves yet again hungry, not this time for meaning and purpose, but rather to know this God more and more and to become God's loving presence in the encounters of our day.

Intercessions

We pray that we may recognise Christ in the presence of our brothers and sisters. Lord hear us.

We pray that all new born infants may be welcomed into homes of love. Lord hear us.

We pray in this Advent season that Jesus Christ may increasingly become the centre of our lives. Lord hear us.

Poem | A New Zealand Christmas (Eileen Duggan)

Oh, the grace was on it that He chose that country –
We have kind oxen and our straw is sweet,
We have shepherds too now, and stables and a manger,
Had we but one footprint of His little feet!

Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of summer,
Through the sleepy summer, slow with streams and bees,
Had my land been old then, here He might have lighted,
Here have seen His first moon in the ngaio trees.

Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of waiting
While our lilies open and our tuis sing,
Had my Lord been born here angles might have ringed us,
Standing round our islands wing to wing.

Had my Lord been born here in the time of rata,
Three dark-eyed chieftains would have knelt to Him,
With greenstone and mats and the proud huia feather,
And the eyes of Mary, seeing, would grow dim.

Oh, my heart goes crying through these days of waiting,
We too have oxen and our straw is sweet,
We too have shepherds and stables and a manger,
Oh, for one footprint of His little feet!

Prayer

Rejoice in the Lord always
Shout out his name
For God is with us
Our God is with us
The God of our salvation
In whom alone we trust.

Rejoice in the Lord always
Shout out his name
For God is our Father
He draws us home
By streams of living water
Where we shall thirst no more.

Rejoice in the Lord always
Shout out his name
He knows our thoughts
Understands our hearts
And enables us to become the people we were meant to be. Amen.

Advent 3 – Monday 18 December | From Doubt to Faith and Trust

O Adonai

Come O Leader of ancient Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai,
come to rescue us with your mighty power. (Isaiah 11:4-5)

Prayer

O God of might,
you revealed yourself to Moses in the burning bush.
You continue to reveal yourself
through your Son, Jesus.
Come to us and set us free from all that
blocks our complete acceptance of your unconditional love.
Amen.

Readings

- **Jeremiah 23: 5-8 | I will raise a virtuous branch for David**
- **Psalm 72**
- **MT 1: 18-24 | Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David**

Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 21

At the Crib we find the innocence, simplicity, gentleness and even weakness of a God who is capable of touching the hardest of hearts. ... There is no room for fear of a God who became a child. We come to know a God who has pitched his tent in our midst, and whom we call "brother."

Intercessions

Lord, you call us to be salt for the world. Give us your strength to confront unjust structures in the Church and the world. Lord hear us.

Lord, you call us to be light for the world. Give us your strength to demand accountability, transparency and honesty of those in authority in the Church and in public office. Lord hear us.

Lord, you call us to be yeast for the world. Give us your strength to proclaim the Good News through our words and actions. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Loving God,
you are the light that gives light to our way.
You are our hope as we await the coming of your Son.
May we like Mary have Jesus constantly in our hearts.
Amen.

Advent 3 – Tuesday 19 December | Chosen by God

O Radix Jesse

Come O Flower of Jesse's Stem,
sign of God's love for all his people,
come to save us without delay. (Isaiah 11:1, 10)

Prayer

O God, Enlarge our hearts that they may be big enough to receive your Word.
Expand our hearts that they may be a shelter for those in need of healing.
Stretch our hearts that they may be a place of nourishment
for those who hunger for truth and justice.
Enlarge our hearts until they become your kingdom here on earth. Amen.

Readings

- **Judges 13: 2-7, 24-25 | The birth of Samson was announced by an angel**
- **Psalm 71**
- **Luke 1: 5-25 | The birth of John the Baptist was announced by Gabriel**

Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 60

God chooses individual men and women and calls each of them by name. He leads them into the desert and there he speaks to their hearts. ... By his Spirit, he transforms them constantly leading them more deeply into his love in order to send them out on mission. The more we come to know God, the more we come to know the deepest meaning of our lives. We grow in the knowledge that we are part of God's project for the world.

Intercessions

Lord, comfort your people and clothe us with your compassion. Come to save us without delay.

Lord hear us.

Lord, calm our anxieties, lighten the darkness that surrounds us. Come to save us without delay. Lord hear us.

Lord, surround us with your love and anoint us with your peace. Come to save us without delay. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of love,
we pray with a joyful heart that Jesus
be born among us again this Christmas.
Instruct us in your ways of compassion
so that we may extend your love
and mercy to all people.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the Eternal Word, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

Advent 3 – Wednesday 20 December | The Call of Mary

O Clavis David

Come O Key of David,
opening the gates of God's eternal kingdom
come and free the prisoners of darkness. (Isaiah 22:22)

Prayer

God of wonder,
you cause springs to burst forth in dry lands,
deserts to bloom and the rough path to be made smooth.
Release us from all that holds us back from accepting
your grace in our lives.
We make this prayer through Jesus,
who lives with you and the Father.
Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 7: 10-14 | The virgin shall conceive**
- **Psalm 24**
- **Luke 1: 26-38 | You are to conceive and bear a son**

Marist Reading – He gave us the Name of Mary, p. 63

Mary in the Annunciation is our model of openness to the Spirit, to whom she listens attentively in silence and to whose action she abandons herself. Like her, who treasured these things and pondered them in her heart, we seek to be contemplatives in action. Our prayer, faithful to Marist tradition, is simple, inserted into everyday life, but also with specific times of contemplation. We educate ourselves and others by cultivating interiority, and promoting sensitivity and openness to beauty.

Intercessions

Lord, show us how to be true witness of the Good News for all children of the world.
Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray for families at that they may experience the love of the Holy Family.
Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray that justice and compassion may flower in hearts that have grown cold. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Creator and Mighty God, you have promised strength for the weak,
rest for the labourers, light for the way,
and grace to meet the challenges of life.
Come and free us from all that prevents us
centering our lives on Jesus Christ. Amen.

Advent 3 – Thursday 21 December | God’s love will renew you

St Peter Canisius

O Oriens

Come O Radiant Dawn,
splendour of the eternal light, sun of justice,
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death. (Isaiah 9:1)

Prayer

God of power and might
you revealed the coming of Your Son
into our world through the message of an angel.
May we attune our hearts to the many ways you enter our lives,
and respond as Mary did to your invitation.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Song of Songs 2:8-14 | My beloved comes**
- **Psalm 33 | Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just**
- **Luke 1:39-44 | Why am I honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 102

All our relationships are enriched when they are lived by taking Mary as the inspiration for our way of being and doing with others. With Mary we learn how to express God’s love in all the relationships of our personal and communal living, since from her *we learn how other people are to be loved, and we, in turn, become living signs of the Father’s tenderness* (Constitutions 21).

Intercessions

Lord, make us aware of the many ways you enter our lives. Lord hear us.

Emanuel, God-with-us, may we live in you and you in us. Lord hear us.

Lord, come and shine your light into the darkness of our lives. Lord hear us.

Prayer

O God, as we await the coming of the radiant dawn, Jesus Christ,
enlighten our darkness and transform our hearts.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Advent 3 – Friday 22 December | Praise for God’s actions in our world

O Rex Gentium

Come O Desire of all the Nations, keystone of the Church,
come and save us, whom you formed from the dust. (Isaiah 9:5)

Prayer

God, our Father,
may your kingdom come, your will be done:
in our choices as we struggle with the complexities of our world,
and confront greed and the desire for power in ourselves,
our country and our world.
May your kingdom come this Advent.
Amen.

Readings

- **1 Samuel 1:24-28 | Anna gave thanks for the birth of Samuel**
- **Psalm - 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8 | My heart exults in the Lord**
- **Luke 1:46-56 | He who has done great things for me is powerful**

Marist Reading – Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved, p. 10

Keeping Mary in mind is equally important. At the Visitation, she carried Christ to John the Baptizer with simplicity, generosity, and charity; she presented him to the shepherds and the Magi in the same spirit. And Mary waited until the first signs of faith stirred among the apostles and then stepped aside so that the focus could fall on Jesus. We do well to heed her example and imitate her ways.

Intercessions

Creator God, open our eyes to the wonder and truth of the Word made flesh in Mary. Lord hear us.

Lord, open our minds to the beauty of the promise of new redeeming life when our Saviour is born. Lord hear us.

Loving Father, may we follow Christ as faithfully as Mary did, and keep to the path he shows us to the fullness of life. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Loving Father,
we thank and praise you for blessing us with the great things which Mary proclaims in her *Magnificat*.
In your tender mercy you care for each one of us,
and especially for those this world sees as lowly,
the poor, weak, outcasts and marginalised.
Help us to do all we can to bring these blessings
to all whom we meet.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Advent 3 – Saturday 23 December | We learn to say ‘Yes’

St John Kanty

O Emmanuel

Come O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of the Law,
come and save us, Lord our God. (Isaiah 7:14)

Prayer

Lord, as we come to celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus,
we thank you for the gifts that you have given us.
We thank you for the example of Mary and Elizabeth
in accepting your Word in their lives.
We thank you for the gift of the charism to Marcellin.
We thank you for our community and family. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Malachi 3: 1-4, 23-24 | The day of the Lord is near**
- **Psalm 25**
- **Luke 1: 57-66 | The birth of John the Baptist**

Marist Reading – Evangelisers in the Midst of Youth, par. 68

In the fullness of time God sent His only Son Jesus Christ. The Word of God became flesh to live among human beings. He came to put us in touch with that very God: “He who sees me sees the Father” (JN 16:9). He proclaims the Reign of God to all who find themselves “weary and downtrodden” - the poor, the sick, those rejected by mainstream religion, sinners, women and children. By His death and resurrection He transmitted divine life to all. In fact He had already proclaimed this: “I have come so they may have life and have it in abundance” (JN 10:10).

Intercessions

Creator God, open our eyes to the wonder and truth of the Word made flesh in Mary.
Lord hear us.

Lord, open our minds to the beauty of the promise of new redeeming life when our Saviour is born. Lord hear us.

Loving Father, may we follow Christ as faithfully as Mary did, and keep to the path he shows us to the fullness of life. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of love, we thank you for your servants, Mary and Elizabeth.
Their unconditional acceptance of your Word
gave birth your kingdom of love, justice and peace.
We thank you for the blessings we have received through their actions.
Give us the grace to work for justice,
that we may bring your love to those in need of healing.
Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Advent 4 – Sunday 24 December | God with us

Come, O Lord, and set us free

Prayer

Emmanuel, “God with us”,
like Zachariah of old, may we be conscious of your redeeming love
and you meet you in those whom we encounter,
in the Scriptures and the breaking of bread. Amen.

Readings

- **2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 | The kingdom of David will be established forever in the sight of the Lord**
- **Psalm 89**
- **Luke 1: 67-79 | From on high the rising sun will visit us**

Marist Reading – A Revolution of the Heart, p. 50

The incarnational nature of Marcellin’s spirituality was the source of his practice of the presence of God; he had a passion for both the Lord and his mission. For Marcellin, Jesus was always close at hand. Consequently, his conversations with the Lord continued uninterrupted, and his confidence in him and abandonment to God’s will deepened over time. He often quoted the words of Psalm 127, “If the Lord does not build a house, in vain do its builders toil.”

Marcellin’s incarnational spirituality can be found in the wording of many of his letters. In an April 8th, 1839 note to Brother Marie-Laurent, for example, the founder wrote, “Your letter, my very dear friend, greatly aroused my compassion. Since then I never approach the holy altar without recommending you to Him in whom we never hope in vain, who can help us overcome the greatest obstacles.”

Intercessions

Loving God, help us to receive Jesus as Emmanuel and like John the Baptist, proclaim his message of peace. Lord hear us.

Gracious God, as you revealed your presence among us through Zachariah, may we too be aware of how actions give birth to an unfolding of God in our day. Lord hear us.

Mighty God, just as Zachariah announced the coming of a Messiah may we, by our joy in living, proclaim the coming of your Kingdom. Lord hear us.

Poem | Nativity (Joy Cowley)

Look now!
It is happening again!
Love like a high spring tide
is swelling to fullness and overflowing the banks
of our small concerns.

And here again is the star,
that white flame of truth
blazing the way for us
through a desert of tired ways.

Once more comes the music,
angel song that lifts our hearts
and tunes our ears
to the harmony of the universe,
making us wonder how
we ever could have forgotten.

And now the magi within us
gathers up gifts of gold and myrrh,
while that other part of ourselves,
the impulsive, reckless shepherd,
runs helter skelter with arms outstretched
to embrace the wonder of it all.

We have no words
to contain our praise.
We ache with awe,
we tremble with miracle,
as once again,
in the small
rough stable of our lives,
Christ is born.

Prayer

Father, reveal yourself to us so that we may know
how to welcome you as you become present to us
in the person of your new born Son, Jesus.
Help us to share the joy of his coming
with all whom we meet today.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Marial Greeting

Mary,
you welcomed Jesus,
you carried Him,
gave,
presented,
sought.

For Him, you were
a woman of faith
a courageous woman
a bosom that
welcomed and protected
time,
intelligence,
a mother,
an educator,
the first disciple,
open to His mystery,
open to the Cross,
both member and mother
of the Church.

You made Him
your centre,
your treasure,
the life of your life,
the beloved Son,
the absolute Lord,
God, in our fragile flesh.

Mary in the Gospels, (p. 71)
Br. Giovanni Maria Bigotto FMS

An Advent Morning Offering

As we await your coming among us, Jesus, grant us hearts attuned to your message of peace and goodwill to all people everywhere. Let us remember especially those who suffer in our world and in our city as they await a better dawn. Encourage us to hear your 'divine whisper' in all the events of our day, as you invite us to grow in closeness to you and to all our sisters and brothers. May we especially be conscious of the need to care for and support all those to whom we minister and with whom we shall engage this day, especially our Brothers in community, and those who may be aged, sick or in pain. Amen.