

# MARIST FAMILY CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

COMBINED LETTER TO MARIST FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

SEPTEMBER 2014

## BICENTENNARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE PLEDGE OF FOURVIÈRE 1816-2016



*“We the undersigned striving to work together for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary, Mother of the Lord Jesus, assert and declare our sincere intention and firm will of consecrating ourselves at the first opportunity to founding the pious congregation of Marists” (July 23, 1816. OM 1, doc 50)*

On **15 August 2012** we recalled the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the words directed by Mary to Courveille *“heard, but not with his bodily ears, but from the heart...a Society which will bear my name...calling itself the Society of Mary”*. Consequently, 12 young men from the major seminary in Lyon, including five newly-ordained priests signed the **Pledge of Fourvière on July 23 1816**; only 4 persevered in this project, among these were **Jean-Claude Colin** and **Marcellin Champagnat**.

They went their separate ways. Jean-Claude Colin was made curate at Cerdon, where his brother Pierre was parish priest. Pierre embraced the Marist project and brought to Cerdon Jeanne-Marie Chavoin and her first companion Marie Jotillon who laid the beginnings of the Marist Sisters. From Cerdon, Jean-Claude Colin and Etienne Déclas began to preach parish missions. Groups of lay tertiaries, from whom the Marist Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary later took their origin, were formed in subsequent years. Consequently, the multi-branched Society of Mary, the object of the act of commitment consecrated at Fourvière in 1816, gradually took shape.

As **Marist Family** we would like

- to provoke a sense of curiosity and awe at the significance of the Fourvière Pledge for today;
- to foster an enhanced sense of Marist identity as “Marist Family”;
- to boost a renewal of energy, hope, joy, motivation and commitment to the “work of Mary”.

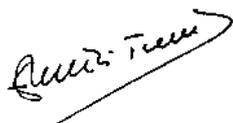
A Marist Family committee has been working on your behalf to ensure that we commemorate this foundational event for the Marist Family. The culmination of our considerations will be a celebration of the Eucharist at the Basilica of Notre Dame de Fourvière, Lyons, on 23 July 2016. Hopefully Cardinal Barbarin will be our main celebrant!

The Marist youth preparing for World Youth Day in Poland, already gathered in Lyons will also be participating. It is hoped that the Mass at Fourvière will be broadcast live through the web so that Marists in many parts of the world will be able to be linked in as part of, or in conjunction with, their own Fourvière celebrations that day. The intention is that there will be Marist family celebrations held throughout the Marist world.

In preparation for the day itself, the branches of the Marist family will celebrate **Fourvière Year** from **23 July 2015 to 23 July 2016**. We hope that communities of the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, together with Marist laity will collaborate to organise some preparatory events in order to reflect and pray, giving us all an opportunity to be open to renewal and offering an impetus for going forward in building a Church with a Marian face.

The committee has prepared activities to focus our thoughts and prayers for the year: a short history of the back drop of the Pledge and what inspired it written by Justin Taylor, S.M., together with a reflection on its significance for us today by François Drouilly, S.M.; a guide for a short series of three community meetings of reflection and prayer for communities and individuals; and the provision of other resources that will be linked to each of our Congregational websites. Added to this, we hope to publish a collection of contributions from the young members of our Marist family on their hopes and dreams for the future, inspired by the young men of Fourvière. You will hear more about this later.

We encourage each of you and your communities to embrace *Fourvière Year* with open hearts so that we, in this time and place, will be renewed in our desire and commitment to give ourselves fully, "All for the glory of God and the honour of Mary" as did those first Marists who made their Pledge at Fourvière in 1816.



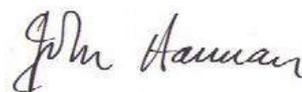
Brother Emili Turú FMS



Sr Georgeanne Donovan SMSM



Sr Jane Frances O'Carroll SM



Fr John Hannan SM

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**2014**