Introduction

THE MARIANIST CROSS

Noël le Mire, S.M

1. Historical Introduction

From 1963 onwards, the clergy generally abandoned the wearing of a particular habit (cassock) and the religious followed. They felt, however, the need for a distinctive, discreet and clear mark, indicating both their religious status and their belonging to a particular religious family.

An insignia was made for the Marianists at the end of 1963, adopted by several Provinces of the SM, then by the International Marianist Family.

- *Constitutions* 1967, art. 80. "Even in their appearance, Marianists manifest the double dimension of their vocation: involvement in the world and renunciation of the world. They dress like the priests and laymen of the country where they live, concerned only with simplicity and modesty. However, all Marianists, except when on a special mission and for the time that it lasts, wear *an exterior sign* which denotes their membership in the Society of Mary."
- *Rule of Life* 1983 (art. 77): "As Marianists, we dress like the people of the country in which we live: lay religious as the laymen, and priests as the ecclesiastics of the respective dioceses, both concerned only with the simplicity and modesty appropriate to religious. *External signs* which denote membership in the Society of Mary are specified in the Directory of each Province."

2. What is the meaning of this insignia?

It is a Cross that incorporates a capital "M", in the shape of a circle.

- *Jesus Christ is the living center of all things, beings, and enterprises in the Church. "All things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Col 1:17). Through his cross, too, everything was saved from what was lost: "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 6:14). Finally, it is through him that all people will find their unity in charity: "to gather all things together in Christ" (Eph 1:10).*
- *This Cross incorporates an "M" in the shape of a circle. This carries a double meaning:*
    - *This circle is the image of the world. But Jesus says: "before the world was, I am!" The foot of the Cross is therefore outside the circle. But, once incarnate, Christ is definitively part of our world: the Cross is therefore fixed to the world, giving it all its meaning and its true*

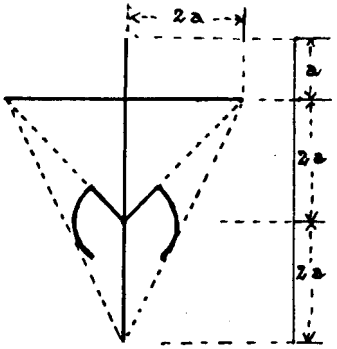
"dynamic". The universe may be in revolution, but the Cross remains firm!

- *This circle is in the shape of an "M." Was it not through Mary that Christ entered the world and made his home among us? He existed prior to her, and it is in God's Son that Mary herself subsists. But once he has come into the world, Christ remains indissolubly bound to it, until the Cross and the Resurrection. Thus, it is always with Mary's motherly help that Christ comes to be born in each one of us, so that we may be re-formed in his likeness (S.F. I, No. 90).*

This is a fitting Marianist insignia: Jesus is the foundation and the culmination of everything and everyone. *God predestines no one except to be conformed to Jesus Christ* (SF. II, No. 895) was laid down as a principle of our Founder who loved the words of Saint Paul: *" for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ."* (I Cor 3:11). And he recalls these words at the very moment when he wants to establish the foundations that are to be full of devotion to Mary (EF. I, No. 106). - The Marianists can thus carry this Cross in plain sight which will remind them of their unfailing attachment to Jesus Christ and their desire to be conformed to *this God-made-man; to serve as a model for men* (Const. 1839, art. 4).

Our Society *is always gloriously privileged to bear the Name of Mary... and we believe ourselves to be so strong and powerful in possession of the Name of Mary* (S.F. I, Nos. 7 and 128), to the point, the Founder continues, that "*I need not advise you, that the Name of Mary must naturally be found everywhere"* (id. 134).

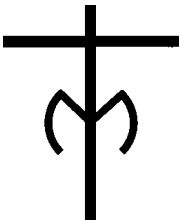
This sign, therefore, shows that we belong to the Family of Mary and derive glory from the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ!



Opposite
the sketch that shows
the ideal proportions
for the insignia,
with dotted lines
helping
to do the geometric
construction.

Cf. *Revue marianiste internationale* n°4, Oct. 1985, pp. 91-93.

1. The Marianist Cross is the insignia of religious men and women Marianists



The founder of the Marianists was Guillaume Joseph CHAMINADE. He was born in 1761 in Périgueux, not far from Bordeaux (France). He was already a priest when the French Revolution broke out in 1789. The Church was then persecuted. The priests were thrown into prison or exiled; some were beheaded. Chaminade went into hiding but continued his work as a priest in Bordeaux, risking his life.

One day, however, he is forced to go into exile. He went to Zaragoza, Spain, where there was a large Marian basilica, NOTRE-DAME DEL PILAR (of the Pillar). Chaminade prayed and reflected a lot on the future of the Church in France; He discussed it with other French refugee priests.

After the Revolution (1800), back in Bordeaux, he brought together Christians, young and adult, women and men, in FRATERNITIES - then called the Congregations of the Immaculate Conception -. Chaminade *formed their faith* through conferences, retreats, debates... He teaches them to pray and meditate on the great mysteries of the Christian faith, summarized in the CREDO and in the Rosary... Thus formed, these Christians become Apostles. "You are all missionaries!" he said to them.

Several members of these groups decided to dedicate themselves entirely to God, to assist Mary in her mission, in the Church and for the world, and first of all as accompanists and formators of the Marianist lay communities. Thus, two religious institutes were born: the DAUGHTERS OF MARY (Immaculate – *this last adjective being added to their name after 1854), in 1816, whose co-foundress was Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, and the BROTHERS OF MARY, Marianists, in 1817.

Today, these religious live and share their charism on the five continents. G.-J. Chaminade died in 1850. He was beatified by John Paul II in 2000. Adèle was declared *Venerable* in 1986.

1. Prayer for the Canonization of Blessed Chaminade

O Lord, you are constantly at work in your Church, and through individuals and communities you manifest your Spirit for the good of your people. In a special way you bestowed your Spirit on your servant Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, so that he might live fully according to the Gospel and with love devote himself to Your saving work.

You have inspired communities of men and women to follow his example by consecrating themselves to you to serve the Church under the leadership of Mary.

We now pray to you to give us signs of your grace and holiness in his life by granting us the special favors we ask through his intercession, especially . . .

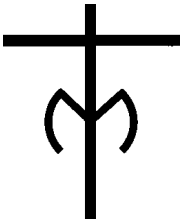
***

May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary!

2. Prayer for vocations

Lord, you have called us to assist the Virgin Mary
in her co-redemptive mission;
Do not forget this work, we beg you.
Send laborers into your harvest!
Inspire many religious and priestly vocations.
Raise up missionaries with ardent and generous hearts.
Give everyone a living faith in their apostolic mission,
an indomitable courage in the face of difficulties and failures,
an understanding charity towards people and for the needs of the Church,
a tireless devotion to the salvation of souls!
We ask you through the intercession of the
Queen of the Apostles, Mary our Mother. Amen!

2. The Marianist Cross
is a cross,
the cross of Christ Jesus,
"Son of God, who became the son of Mary
For the salvation of mankind".



Jesus, who was rich, made himself *poor* in order to enrich us with the only wealth that can truly satisfy man, namely God.

The Almighty *overturns* our ideas about God. It overturns the hierarchy of values of the world. He appears destitute of everything in the manger, even though he is the SAVIOUR (Lk 2:11); on the cross he is naked, he who is truly KING (Jn 18:37)...

"When Jesus loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end, to **the utmost of love***"* (Jn 13:13). This sentence introduces the story of the Last Supper... On the cross, at the moment when he *"commits his spirit",* Jesus concludes his life by sighing: *"It is finished!"* (Jn 19:30)...

The cross thus remains, for the Christian, the symbol of a great love, *the* extreme *love of the Son of God for men*; the symbol of a life entirely given, given up, sacrificed...

The cross also speaks to us of **God's gift to mankind**: *"God so loved the world that he gave it his only Son*, *so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"* (Jn 3:16).

Like every Christian, the religious, in order to respond to this love of God, strives to follow Jesus, to walk to the end with him – who is the **Way**, the **Truth** and the **Life**.

Jesus, in fact, *leads us* to the Father and *sends* us to men, especially those most in need... Jesus *shows* us the true face of God and the true face of man. Jesus, finally, *gives* us his life through the sacraments and by breathing his Spirit on us (cf. Jn 20:22).

On the cross, Jesus wants *to draw* all men to himself to make them the Church, the family of the saved, of the children of God. The Christian, especially the religious, allows himself to be inhabited by Jesus' *passion* for salvation and the gathering of men in *unity*. ...

On **Good Friday** at the ninth hour - three o'clock in the afternoon -
It is the **Hour** of Jesus, the Hour of His death on the cross,
out of love for us men; for love of me...

Blessed Chaminade willed that every day, at this hour,
the entire Marianist Family, scattered throughout the world,
meets **at Calvary**, at the foot of the cross,
with the Virgin Mary and Saint John
and thus prays:

THREE O'CLOCK PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
we gather in spirit at the foot of the Cross
with your Mother and the disciple whom you loved.
We ask your pardon for our sins,
which are the cause of your death.

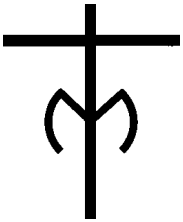
We thank you for remembering us
in that hour of salvation
and for giving us Mary as our Mother.

Holy Virgin,
take us under your protection
and open us to the action of
the Holy Spirit.

Saint John,
obtain for us the grace of taking Mary
into our lives as you did,
and of assisting her in her mission.

May the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit
be glorified in all places
through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.
Amen

3. The cross rises to heaven
and tells us:
"Let us lift up our hearts!"



The first role of the religious, his first service in the Church and in the created world, is to **praise** God, the **Creator** and Father. He is religious first of all *"for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity... »*

Every day, the Marianists sing of God through the **Psalms** and through the celebration of the **Eucharist**.

Blessed be the Lord! –Alleluia! –Magnificat!
Glory to God! Holy Lord! Amen, Hallelujah!

Like Jesus putting his life into the hands of his Father (Lk 23:46), the Marianist strives to make his whole existence an *offering to God* (I Pet 2:5). He gives himself up to the Spirit of Christ to produce *fruits of* holiness: charity, peace, goodness (cf. Gal 5:22ff).

The Eucharist is the center of the Marianist religious' day. There he gives thanks to the Father in union with Christ; there he makes his sorrows and joys an *offering*, a *sacrifice* to the Father...

Work and rest, trials and joys, everything in our life becomes, in the Eucharist, a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to the Father (Rule, art; 50).

If, through consecrated chastity, we offer to God an undivided heart, He transforms it into an abundant source of life and disinterested love, open to all (art. 18).

To participate in Christ's obedience, we offer our will unreservedly to God, and we give ourselves entirely to a community and a society whose members seek together to carry out the Father's will (art. 29)

MAGNIFICAT

Through the Canticle of Mary, every day I praise God for the wonders he does in my life. He makes me exist; a paternal-filial relationship is arranged with him; he calls me to be a child of the Church; in his Son Jesus Christ, he fulfills his promises by offering salvation to men.

The Magnificat is also the canticle of those who fight for the liberation of the poor, for the respect of law and justice. It is the song of a world worked by the hidden energy of the Kingdom, sown in him like a seed, buried in his dough like leaven...

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."
Amen!

4. The Cross of Jesus
is **planted** in the **land** of men
like a **tree** of life.

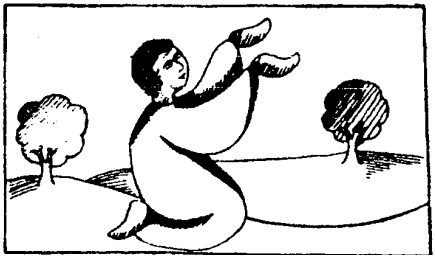
Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was *first* of all things, humbled himself : he became *man* in all things except sin. Out of obedience to the Father, he went to the poorest of men, to the *humiliated*... He himself suffered the *death of bandits* and slaves to save even the greatest sinners, the lost sheep, lost far from the flock.

Like Jesus, the Marianist wants to remain *close* to *men* and women and **share** their joys and sufferings...

Like Jesus from the cross, the Marianist looks *at the world* with a **loving** and trusting gaze, the gaze of an apostle; he wants men to be saved by turning to Christ and by practicing his Word, the Gospel.

Like Jesus, the Marianist calls *forgiveness* upon the world, and he works for reconciliation, justice, peace. *"Father, forgive them...!"* (Lk 23:35).

Like Jesus, he is impatient for the **Spirit** of God to descend *on men* to change their hearts: *"I am thirsty!"* (Jn 19:28). *"Whoever is thirsty, let him come to me to receive the Holy Spirit! And it will become a source!* (Jn 7:37-39).



Trusting in God alone, we respond to the call of Jesus to leave everything and follow him. The life of poverty frees us so that Christ can take full possession of our lives, and through us reach out to others.

Thus, we hope to bear witness to dependence on the Lord, the primacy of his kingdom, and the redemptive character of gospel poverty.

Rule of Life (Art. 23)

"*Today, as in the past...*

… Mary's power is not diminished.
She will overcome the heresy of religious indifference like all the others because she is, today as in the past, the Woman par excellence, promised to crush the head of the serpent; and Jesus Christ, by calling her "Woman," teaches us that she is the hope, the joy, the life of the Church, and the terror of Hell.
To her, therefore, is reserved in our day a great victory; to it belongs the glory of saving the faith from the shipwreck with which it is threatened among us.
Now, we understood this thought from heaven and we hastened to offer Mary our feeble services to work under her orders and to fight at her side.
… We want to extend his worship and, through him, the Kingdom of God in souls." (Letter of August 24, 1839 to the preachers of retreats)

The two poles of our spirituality...

We know the two poles around which the entire Marianist vision of Mary is built:

1. **To let oneself be formed** by her, to let oneself be impregnated by her intimate attitudes, to take her as a **model**...
2. The second pole is that of mission; **to be missionaries**, apostles, instruments of Mary; to place oneself under her orders, at her service; **to assist** her in her mission. Take seriously Mary's words to the servants of Cana: *"Whatever he tells you, do it!"* The axis that connects the two is the covenant with Mary.

(J.M. Salaverri SM, Sup. Gen., Circular 15, 25.03.1987)

5. On the cross,
Jesus opens his arms to all,
from one horizon to another...

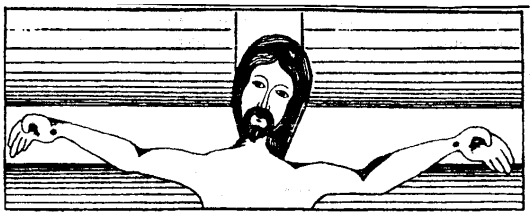
Jesus did not close his arms to any of his beloved... Celibacy gave him the freedom to be *all things to all*, a friend of publicans and sinners, at table with Simon the Pharisee, with Matthew the publican, with Zacchaeus... He talks with the woman of Samaria, receives Nicodemus, the notable of Jerusalem, accepts the help of rich people (Joseph of Arimathea, some women...)

Jesus often watches at night, in prayer, and during the day he lets himself be consumed by the crowd of the sick who want to be healed of their illnesses, the crowd of hungry people who ask for bread or who want to hear the Good News.

Zeal burns in Jesus' heart and pushes him ever further, *"into the villages, let us see",* where he must also preach the Rule of God, his Father, in word and deed.

The Marianist, in taking a vow of **chastity** for the Kingdom, also wants to give God the first place in his life, like Jesus. He wants to imitate *the selfless love* of the Master, *open to all*. In particular, he agrees to love the brothers of the community to which he has been sent and whom he has not chosen himself.

Experienced as a call to *love without limit* and without withdrawal into oneself, the **celibacy** of the religious is for him the source of a fruitfulness that is often difficult for others to understand. He knows a deep happiness in total giving. He waits for him to blossom into eternal joy, according to Jesus' promise.

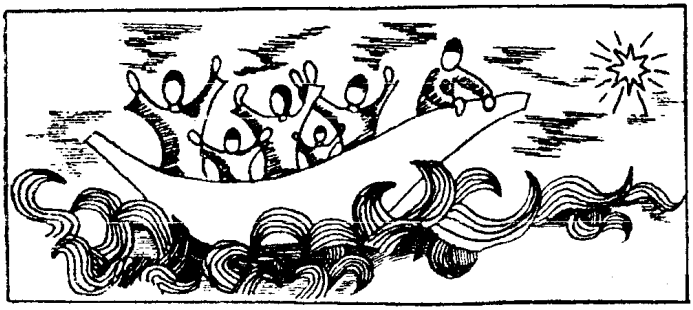


In prayer, as religious, “we allow the Spirit of Christ to take possession of our lives, filling us with faith, hope, and charity." *Rule of Life* (art. 55).

Mary, star of Advent

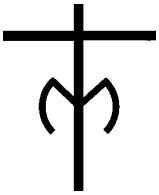
"...Mary appeared on the horizon of salvation history before Christ. It is a fact that when "the fullness of time" was definitively drawing near-the saving advent of Emmanuel- she who was from eternity destined to be his Mother already existed on earth. The fact that she "preceded" the coming of Christ is reflected every year in the liturgy of Advent. Therefore, if to that ancient historical expectation of the Savior we compare these years which are bringing us closer to the end of the second Millennium after Christ and to the beginning of the third, it becomes fully comprehensible that in this present period we wish to turn in a special way to her, the one who in the "night" of the Advent expectation began to shine like a true "Morning Star" (Stella Maris). For just as this star, together with the "dawn," precedes the rising of the sun, so Mary from the time of her Immaculate Conception preceded the coming of the Savior, the rising of the "Sun of Justice" in the history of the human race..."

(John Paul II, *The Mother of the Redeemer*, encyclical, 1987)



I am all yours, Mary, Holy Virgin.
All that I have is yours, Mary, pure Virgin.
Be my guide in everything, Mary, our Mother!

6. The Marianist Cross through a capital M, initial of Mary ...



The Word became flesh: Jesus, Son of God, became **son of Mary**, to save men.

Mary said yes. She let God visit the world, inhabit it, recreate it...

Mary said yes to Jesus, standing under the Cross with the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn 19:25). She has a yes to Jesus who gave himself entirely so that the Kingdom of God might come on earth and that the Cross might open the door of the Kingdom to converted sinners (cf. Lk 23:42-453).

Mary said yes when the dying Jesus gave her, in Saint John, a great family, the family of disciples. Mary thus became the Mother of the Church.

Mary said yes when Jesus gave her, his Mother, to the beloved disciple, as his most precious treasure on earth...

The Marianist religious wants to welcome **Mary** into his life as the **Gift** of Jesus. He wants to love her as his mother and let himself be educated by her to become an adult in the Christian life, in the image of Jesus, his Son.

Like Jesus, the Marianist wants to present **Mary** to men and say to them: *"Behold your mother!"* and entrust men to Mary, saying to her, *"Here are your children!"*

To know, love and serve **Mary**... so that others can learn to know her, to love her and to serve her...

> It is from Mary that Jesus was born; nourished and brought up by her, she did not separate herself from him in the whole course of his mortal life; she was submitted to him, and he associated her with all his works; to all his sorrows and all his mysteries. Devotion to Mary is therefore the most salient point of the imitation of Jesus Christ." (Chaminade, letter of August 24, 1839).

MEMORARE…

Remember, O most
gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help, or sought thine intercession
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee,
O Virgin of virgins, my mother;
to thee do I come,
before thee I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions,
but in they mercy hear and answer me.
Amen.

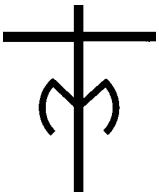
O MY SOVEREIGN LADY…

O my Sovereign Lady!
O my Mother!
I offer myself entirely to thee,
and to prove my devotion,
I consecrate to thee my eyes,
ears, mouth, heart, and my entire being.
Since I belong to thee, O good Mother,
guard me and defend me
as thy very own property and possession.
Amen.

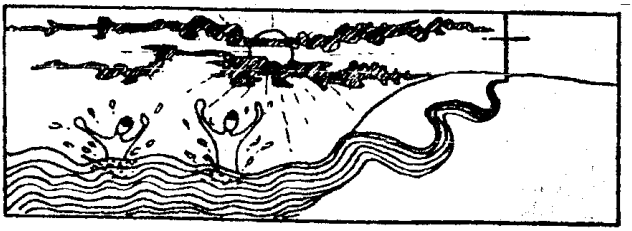
WE SEEK REFUGE

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O Glorious and Blessed Virgin. Amen

7. In the Marianist cross, the M of Mary in the form of a circle, which represents the world of men to be sanctified...



The vertical axis of the cross crosses this M...
The Son of God enters *the world* through Mary, to **save it**, to purify it, to sanctify it, to fulfill it. Jesus himself is *the salt* and *light of the new world* (Mt 5:13-16).



Mary is the first human person to be fully sanctified by the grace of the cross. **Immaculate Conception**, Mary participates from the moment of conception in the victory of her son over sin, death, the serpent... She is already what the whole Church of the baptized must become: holy, victorious...

For Fr. Chaminade, the Immaculate Conception of Mary was the sure pledge of her strength against the Tempter, of her **victory** over the Dragon (Rev 12). He gave his Congregation (FMI) the name of the Immaculate to stimulate its members to proclaim Jesus the Savior to all people, in a *world closed* to the Good News, lost in heresies, cooled by religious indifference, hardened by militant atheism...

It was also with the Immaculate that Chaminade found patience and firmness to get through the internal trials of his groups of congregants; the conflicts of persons or ideas. In front of the statue of the Immaculate, with his hand on the serpent's head, he cried out, according to witnesses: “She crushed your head; she will crush you again!”

Like all Christians, Marianist religious often need to receive from the Crucified, through the sign of the cross, the **forgiveness** and healing of their sins, the strength of the sacrament, in order to overcome evil, to practice reconciliation and to allow themselves to be sanctified...

Dedicating oneself to Mary...

"A sincere consecration to the cult of the most pure Mary form between the person consecrated to himself and the Immaculate Virgin who receives this consecration a true covenant.

On the one hand, the august Mary receives under her powerful protection this faithful who throws himself into the arms of his maternal tenderness and adopts him for his child.

On the other hand, Mary's new child contracts with his august Mother the sweetest and most amiable obligations. »

(G.J. Chaminade)

Renewal of the covenant with Mary

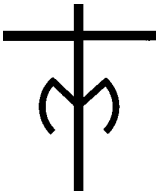
O Lord our God,
in order to redeem us all and lead us to yourself,
you sent us your beloved Son,
who was made flesh and born of the Virgin Mary.

Grant that we may be formed by her in the image of her Son
and help us participate in the love of Christ for his Mother.

You associated Mary in the mysteries of her Son
so that she might be the new Eve, Mother of the living.

Confirm the alliance that we have made with her.
May our devotedness extend her maternal charity on earth,
and promote the growth of the Church,
the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

8. In the Marianist insignia, the M under the cross recalls Mary at Calvary, at the Hour when Jesus, *passing from this world to her Father*, proclaimed Mary our Mother.
(Jn 19:27)



Calvary is the hour of *the extreme abasement* of *Jesus* the servant, but also the hour of the greatest love...

Good Friday leads to Easter... Death is conquered in the Resurrection: it is the Hour of *Christ's glory*. There he does his work in the world. It *empties itself*, like the grain of wheat that yields a *great harvest*.

Mary is not only *a witness* to this glory, but she actively *participates in* the gift of the life of the Kingdom to humankind.

At **Cana**, attentive to the lack from which they suffered, she hastened the arrival of the Hour of Jesus, of his glorification. The first "sign" of Jesus is to give an abundance of good, new wine, a symbol of the Good News of the Gospel, which completes and perfects the Old Covenant, symbolized by water.

The Marianist religious, like the **servants of Cana**, want to invite the people to taste the good wine of the Gospel, to quench their thirst for life, love, happiness... They have always been educators *of Christian life*, with young people - especially through schools - with adults, in Sodalities and other groups of Christian life.

Mary's words to the servants of Cana: ***"Do whatever He tells you!*** *became* the missionary **motto** of the Marianists. They want to be available to go everywhere, to people of all ages, of all conditions, of all countries and especially to the hungriest and thirstiest, the poor. To manifest the glory of Jesus is to " sow, cultivate, and strengthen the Christian spirit and help it flourish in the human race." (*Rule of Life*, art. 74).

That Mary, the Promised Woman, the New Eve, should be the Mother of a *great family* of disciples, is the goal of the Marianist apostolate.

Rule of the Society of Mary (Marianists) - 1983

Art. 5 :

By the gift of faith, the Virgin Mary totally opened herself to the mission the Father gave her in his plan of salvation.
Jesus was formed in her by the Holy Spirit.
He willed her to be the promised Woman, sharing in all his mysteries.
When his hour had come,he proclaimed her our Mother.

Art 6.

Like the beloved disciple, we accept Mary as a precious gift of God.
Moved by Jesus' love for his Mother, we dedicate ourselves to her so that the Holy Spirit, in whose action she cooperates with a mother's love, may form us more fully to the image of her Son.
By our alliance with Mary, we seek to assist her in her mission of forming in faith a multitude of brothers for her first-born Son.

Art. 7. […]

She is the first among those who believe in Jesus Christ and the first to be saved from evil and death.

Art. 8.

She shows us the way of true Christian life.
Following her example of faith, poverty of spirit, and attentiveness to the Lord, we hope to reflect to those around us Mary's warmth of welcome to God and to others.
Like her, we wholly commit ourselves to the mystery of our vocation.

Art 57.

Mary was continually attentive to the Lord, contemplating his words and actions in her heart.
In union with her we meditate on the mysteries of Christ, who was born and lived, died and rose for the salvation of the world and the glory of his Father.
Each day we renew our consecration to her; we honor her with acts of filial piety and with joy we celebrate her feasts.

"You are all missionaries!"

Blessed Chaminade addresses this challenge to every Christian, and even more strongly to every member of the Marianist Family.

This can mean:

- Go to others like and with Mary of the Visitation.
- Share their sufferings and trials with Mary of Calvary.
- Lead men to Christ with Mary of Cana.
- To every Christian, to every person of good will, show Mary and say to her, as Jesus did to his beloved disciple, from the height of the cross: *"Behold your mother!"*

Elements of a charter of Christian life:

- Cultivate in yourself concern for your neighbor – in your family, in the neighborhood, among colleagues – of study, work, leisure...
- Develops a sense of welcome, benevolence a priori, helpfulness, etc.
- Be serious in your commitments - apostolic or otherwise - faithful, punctual, frank – no false excuses-...
- Seek to balance prayer and interior life in your life with your various activities.
- Dare to show your faith, especially to your colleagues...
- Know how to say no to certain solicitations of the world – to vanity that is expensive, to false virility, to resourcefulness that deviates into cheating, to racist behavior...
- Talk regularly to your spiritual guide about your journey, your difficulties and your progress.
- Welcomes the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name," says the Lord, "I am in the midst of them." It is Christ, present among us, who gives inspiration and strength to community life and makes it a sign for those around us. *" By this shall all know that you are my disciples, that you love one another."* (Rule of Life, Art. 37)