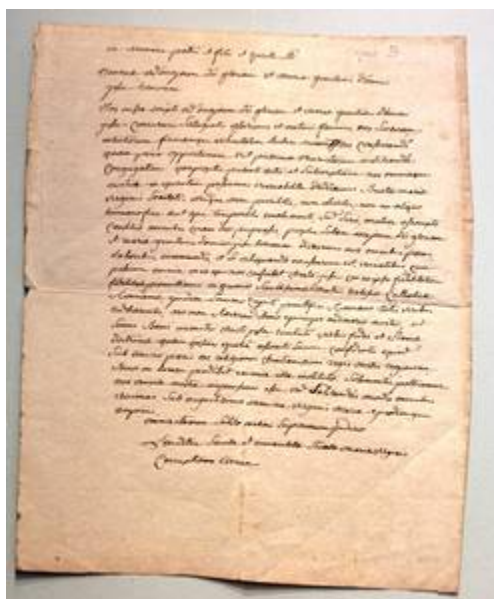


23 July 1816 – 23 July 2016: Bi-Centenary of the Fourvière-Pledge A Dossier



The original copy of the so-called Fourvière Pledge with around twelve signatures of priests ordained the day before, among those Courveille, Colin, Champagnat, Terrailon and Déclas, and seminarians, probably stayed with the man who initiated the project, Jean-Claude Courveille. This original copy is lost. Four copies of the text with no signatures came down to us, all in the handwriting of Pierre Colin. One of the copies is kept in the archives of the Marist Brothers, two in the archives of the Marist Fathers (cf illustration), and one in the archives of the diocese of Pinerolo, Italy. One of the copies was found in the papers of Jean-Claude Colin. Colin had destroyed many of his papers from the Marist origins in June 1841 but kept this document. On the other hand, Colin never mentions the Fourvière-pledge.

Prepared during their time in the major seminary and signed there, the promise was pronounced on 23 July 1816, the day after the priestly ordination of some who had signed. As it was customary for newly ordained priests, they made a pilgrimage up to the Fourvière-Chapel. The pledge was placed on the altar during the mass celebrated by Courveille. It is about the promise to work for a society of Mary as imagined by Courveille, based on his inspiration from Le Puy and marked by expressions typical for him. This was one of the many societies of Mary started around the turn of the century. The Society of Mary of Le Puy saw some small foundations but finally disappeared like many other new foundations. Courveille himself joined the Benedictines at Solesmes in 1836.

Like with many other founders, Colin and Champagnat had had their own intention for a project in mind before July 1816 but in an intermediary phase joined the Courveille-project. From this, both separated after some years. Champagnat founded the Institute of the Marist Brothers of the Schools. Colin founded the Society of Mary based on his own vocation, the early ideas of Cerdon, and the further work done. The name came from the Courveille-project.

The major biography of Colin by Jean Jeantin published the French version of the pledge in 1895. The Centenary could not be celebrated in 1916 because of the War. Superior General Raffin commemorates the centenary in his circular of 1922. In 1966, Superior General Buckley recalled the meaning of the pledge 150 years after it was taken. He could base himself on the work of Fathers Jean Coste and Gaston Lessard for the *Origines maristes*. The draft constitutions for the 1985 chapter included Fourvière, Cerdon, and the Bugey as symbolic references for becoming a Marist and so the constitutions approved in 1987 contain

Fourvière. The generals of the four Marist branches decided to celebrate the bi-centenary in 2016.

Colin's constitutions of 1872 do not mention Fourvière. The constitutions of 1987 refer to it in numbers 2, 51, 52, and 92. In 2016, it will be two hundred years of the pledge. Because the pledge referred to the original idea of a congregation with many branches (*Summarium* of 1833, no 1) it became the symbolic date for Marist family gatherings.

Jean Coste and Gaston Lessard have published a critical edition in *Origines Maristes*, volume 1, document 50. The original text was in Latin.

Here we present the following translations: English, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese.

At the end, a selected bibliography offers further reading to this historical document.

Constitutions 1987

2 On July 23, 1816, at the shrine of Our Lady of Fourvière, Lyon, twelve priests and seminarians pledged themselves to found a congregation bearing the name of Mary. Those who worked for the next twenty years to carry out this promise were convinced that they were responding to a wish of the Mother of Mercy, which found expression for them in the following words: "I supported the Church at its birth; I shall do so again at the end of time".

51 The foundational Marist experience can be seen as symbolized in the promise made at Fourvière, the spiritual experience lived by Jean-Claude Colin at Cerdon, and the missions of the first Marists in Bugey.

52 At the shrine of Fourvière twelve companions promised before the image of the Blessed Virgin to express their love for God and their neighbour by founding the Congregation of Marists.

92 Marists are called, above all, to make their own a Marian vision of the Church. To achieve this, nothing will be as effective as a re-living of the founding experience of the Society. Like the twelve young men at Fourvière they respond to a special call. By 'tasting God' as Father Colin did at Cerdon, they realise the radical opposition between the spirit of Mary and the spirit of ambition, covetousness, and the lust for power. Like the first missionaries in Bugey they proclaim the Good News of God's mercy to those most in need. Thus in continuity with the experience of the first Marists, the Society of Mary, generation by generation, becomes a reality in the world and its members know the joy that comes from a whole-hearted response to their vocation.

Critical edition in *Origines maristes*, OM, Document 50

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus S(anc)ti.

Omnia ad majorera Dei gloriam et Mariae Genitricis Domini Jesu honorem.

Nos infra scripti ad majorera Dei gloriam et Mariae Genitricis Domini Jesu concurrere satagentes, asserimus et notum facimus, nos sinceram intentionem firmamque voluntatem habere nosmet ipsos consecrandi, quam prius opportunum erit, piissimae Mariistarum instituendae Congregationi: quapropter praesenti actu et subscriptione nos omniaque nostra in quantum possumus irrevocabiliter dedicamus Beatae Virginis Societati: illudque non pueriliter, non leviter, non ex aliquo humano fine aut spe temporalis emolumenti, sed serio, mature, assumpto consilio, omnibus coram Deo perpensis, propter solam majorem Dei gloriam et Marae Genitricis Domini Jesu honorem: devovemus nos omnibus poenis, laboribus, incommodas, et, si aliquando necessarium est, cruciatibus, cura possimus omnia in eo qui nos confortat Christo Jesu: cui eo ipso fidelitatem promittitans, in gremio Sanctissimae Matris Ecclesiae catholicae Romaniae, ejusdem

Summo capiti Pontifici Romano totis viribus adhaerentes, necnon Reverendissimo Episcopo ordinario nostro, ut simus boni ministri Christi Jesu, enutriti verbis fidei et bonæ doctrinae quam ipsius gratia assecuti sumus: confidentes quod, sub amico pacis ac religionis Christianissimi Regis nostri regimine, brevi in lucem prodibit illa institutio, solemniter pollicemur nos omnia nostra impensuros esse ad salvandas modis omnibus animas sub augustissimo nomine Virginis Marice ejusdemque auspiciis.

Omnia tamen salvo meliori Superiorum judicio. Laudetur sancta et immaculata Beatae Mariae Virginis Conceptio. Amen.

The Fourvière-Pledge (Donal Kerr, *Colin*, Dublin, 2000, S. 140)

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. All for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus.

We the undersigned, striving to work together for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus, assert and make known our sincere intention and firm will of consecrating ourselves, as soon as ever it is opportune, to founding the most holy congregation of Mariists. That is why by this present act and our signatures we irrevocably dedicated ourselves and all we have, insofar as we are able, to the society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and we do this neither childishly nor lightly, nor from any human motive or hope of temporal gain; but seriously, having taken timely counsel and weighed all before God, solely for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary, mother of the Lord Jesus. We pledge ourselves to endure all sufferings, labours, inconveniences, and, if needs be, torture because we can do all things in him who strengthens us, Jesus Christ: to him we promise faithfulness in the bosom of our most holy mother, the Roman Catholic Church, and adhering to its supreme head the Roman pontiff with all our force; also to our very reverend bishop, our ordinary; that we may be good ministers of Jesus Christ, nourished by words of faith and wholesome doctrines which, by his grace, we have received; confident that under the reign of our most Christian king, which is favourable to peace and to religion, this special institute will see the light of day. We solemnly promise that, under the most august name of Mary and with her help, we shall spend ourselves and all we have in saving souls by whatever way possible; all this is, however, subject to the wiser judgment of our superiors. Praised be the holy and immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Amen.

L'engagement de Fourvière (Donal Kerr, *Colin*, Paris, 2010, S. 164)

Au nom du Père, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit. Tout pour une plus grande gloire de Dieu et l'honneur de Marie, Mère du Seigneur Jésus.

Nous soussignés, désireux de contribuer à une plus grande gloire de Dieu et à l'honneur de Marie, Mère du Seigneur Jésus, affirmons et manifestons notre intention sincère et notre ferme volonté de nous consacrer, dès qu'il sera possible, à fonder la très pieuse Congrégation de Mariistes. C'est pourquoi par le présent acte que nous souscrivons, nous et tous nos biens, pour autant que nous le pouvons, nous nous vouons irrévocablement à la Société de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie. Ce que nous faisons, non en enfants ni à la légère, non dans un quelque but humain ou par l'espoir de gain temporel, mais avec sérieux, maturité, après avoir pris conseil et tout pesé devant Dieu, uniquement en vue d'une plus grande gloire de Dieu et l'honneur de la Vierge Marie, Mère du Seigneur Jésus. Nous nous offrons à toutes les peines, travaux, embarras et même s'il le faut un jour aux tortures, convaincus que nous pouvons tout en celui qui nous rend forts, le Christ Jésus. C'est à lui que, par cet acte, nous promettons fidélité au sein de notre sainte mère, l'Église catholique romaine, nous attachant de toutes nos forces à son chef suprême, le pontife romain, ainsi qu'au révérendissime évêque notre ordinaire, afin d'être de bons serviteurs du Christ Jésus, nourris des paroles de la foi et de la bonne doctrine à laquelle nous avons eu accès par sa grâce. Confiants que nous sommes que sous le règne de notre roi très chrétien, ami de la paix et de la religion, cette excellente institution viendra prochainement au jour, nous nous engageons

solennellement nous-mêmes et tous nos biens à nous dépenser pour le salut des âmes par tous les moyens sous le nom très auguste et avec l'appui de la Vierge Marie.
 Tout cela cependant, sous réserve d'un meilleur jugement des supérieurs. Loué soit la sainte et immaculée conception de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie. Amen.

Das Versprechen von Fourvière (Franz Wieschemeyer sm)

Im Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes.

Alles zur größeren Verherrlichung Gottes und zur Ehre Mariens, der Mutter des Herrn Jesus.

Wir, die wir dieses Dokument eigenhändig unterschreiben und zur größeren Verherrlichung Gottes und zur Ehre Mariens, der Mutter des Herrn Jesus, unseren Beitrag zu leisten bestrebt sind, betonen und bekunden, dass wir die aufrichtige Absicht und den festen Willen haben, uns sobald wie möglich der Gründung der frommen Kongregation der Mariisten zu weihen. Deshalb übergeben wir, soweit wir es vermögen, durch diesen Akt und durch die Unterschrift uns und alles, was uns gehört, der Gesellschaft der seligen Jungfrau; und das gewiss nicht aus einem kindlichen Verlangen, nicht leichtsinnig, nicht irgendeines menschlichen Zweckes willen und nicht in der Hoffnung auf irgendeinen irdischen Vorteil, sondern ernsthaft, überlegt, nachdem wir Rat eingeholt und alles vor Gott erwogen haben, also allein wegen der größeren Verherrlichung Gottes und zur Ehre Mariens, der Mutter des Herrn Jesus. Wir weihen uns mit allen Schmerzen, Mühen, Unannehmlichkeiten und, falls notwendig, sogar äußerstem Leiden, denn wir vermögen alles in dem, der uns stärkt, Jesus Christus (Philipp 4, 13). Ihm versprechen wir Treue im Schoß der heiligsten Mutter, der römisch-katholischen Kirche, indem wir ihrem höchsten Oberhirten, dem römischen Papst, mit allen Kräften anhängen wie auch unserm hochwürdigsten Bischof, damit wir gute Diener Jesu Christi sind, genährt mit den Worten des Glaubens und der guten Lehre, deren wir durch seine Gnade teilhaftig geworden sind (1 Timotheus 4, 16). In dem Vertrauen, dass unter der Regierung des allerchristlichsten Königs, dem Freund des Friedens und der Religion, die genannte Institution bald ins Leben gerufen wird, geloben wir feierlich, dass wir uns und alles, was uns gehört, einsetzen werden, um unter dem hehren Namen der Jungfrau Maria und unter ihrem Schutz auf jede nur mögliche Weise Seelen zu retten.

Alles jedoch gemäß dem besseren Urteil der Oberen.

Gelobt sei die heilige und unbefleckte Empfängnis der seligen Jungfrau Maria. Amen.

La promessa di Fourvière

Nel nome del Padre, del Figlio e dello Spirito Santo. Amen.

Noi sottoscritti, desiderosi di unire i nostri sforzi per la maggior gloria di Dio e l'onore di Maria, Madre del Signore Gesù, affermiamo e rendiamo nota la nostra sincera intenzione e la nostra ferma volontà di consacrarci, appena possibile, alla fondazione della pia Congregazione dei Mariisti.

Perciò, con il presente atto e la nostra firma, dedichiamo irrevocabilmente, per quanto è in nostro potere, noi stessi e tutto quello che abbiamo, alla Società della Beata Vergine Maria.

Questo non lo facciamo con superficialità o con leggerezza, né per scopi puramente umani, né per trarne alcun vantaggio materiale, ma con serietà, maturità, dopo aver riflettuto e pesato tutto davanti a Dio, poiché abbiamo come fine soltanto la maggior gloria di Dio e l'onore di Maria, Madre del Signore Gesù.

Accettiamo dunque i lavori, le pene, gli inconvenienti di ogni genere e, se ve ne fosse bisogno, anche i supplizi dato che tutto possiamo in virtù di colui che ci conforta, il Signore Gesù.

A Lui promettiamo fedeltà nel seno della nostra Santa Madre, la Chiesa cattolica romana.

Ci stringiamo con tutte le nostre forze attorno al Capo supremo della Chiesa, il Pontefice romano e al nostro vescovo ordinario.

Così saremo buoni ministri di Gesù Cristo, nutriti delle parole della fede e della vera dottrina, che per sua grazia abbiamo ricevuto.

Infine, nella fiducia che sotto il regno del nostro re cristianissimo, amante della pace e della religione, questa istituzione vedrà presto la luce. Promettiamo solennemente di spendere noi stessi e tutto quel che abbiamo, senza escludere alcun mezzo, per la salvezza delle anime, sotto il nome di Maria e sotto i suoi auspici. Il tutto, però, è rimesso al giudizio dei superiori. Sia lodata la Santa e Immacolata Concezione della Beata Vergine Maria. Amen.

Fourvière-løftet (Erik Ruud sm)

Alt til Guds større ære og større heder for Herren Jesu Mor, Maria.

Vi, underskriverne,
som streber etter å arbeide sammen til Guds større ære
og større heder for Maria, Herren Jesu Mor,
stadfester og erklærer vår inderlige hensikt og faste vilje
til, ved første anledning, å vie oss til
å grunnlegge Maria-istenes fromme kongregasjon.

Derfor er det at vi, ved denne akt og våre underskrifter,
i den grad vi kan, ugjenkallelig vier oss selv og alt vårt gods
til den Salige jomfrus Selskap.

Vi gjør dette,
ikke barnslig eller lett eller av menneskelig grunn,
eller i håp om materiell vinning,
men oppriktig, veloverveid, etter å ha mottatt råd
og vurdert alt foran Gud,
ene og alene til Guds større ære
og til heder for Maria, Herren Jesu Mor. ...

Vi forplikter oss til å ta imot
all lidelse, motgang, alt ubehag,
og, om nødvendig, tortur, fordi vi kan gjøre alt
i Kristus Jesus, som styrker oss,
og som vi herved lover trofasthet til
i vår hellige mors, Den Romersk Katolske Kirkes skjød,
mens vi, med all kraft, holder fast i hennes ypperste hode,
den Romerske Yppersteprest
og vår mest ærverdige biskop, ordinarius,
så vi kan være gode tjenere av Jesus Kristus,
næret av troens ord
og av den sunne lære som vi, ved hans nåde, har mottatt.

Vi stoler på at under vår mest kristne Konges styre,
fredens og religionens venn, vil dette institutt snart se dagens lys
og vi lover høytidelig at vi skal overgi oss selv
og alt vi har til å redde sjeler på alle måter
under Jomfru Marias mest opphøyede navn og med hennes hjelp.

Og måtte den hellige Jomfru Marias
hellige og ubesmittede unnfangelse bli prisert. Amen

De Belofte van Fourvière (Jan Hulshof sm, Onze Constituties. Uitnodiging tot creative trouw, Utrecht, 1991)

In de naam van de Vader en de Zoon en de Heilige Geest. Alles tot grotere glorie van God en ter ere van Maria, de Moeder van onze Heer Jezus Christus.

Wij ondergetekenden, alleen bekommerd om onze gezamenlijke inzet ter meerdere glorie van God en ter ere van Maria, de moeder van de Heer Jezus, betuigen en geven te kennen dat wij de oprechte bedoeling en de vaste will hebben onszelf, zodra het geschikte moment gekomen is, te wijden aan de stichting van de zeer godsvruchtige congregatie van de mariïsten: daarom stellen wij door deze handeling en deze handtekening onszelf en al het onze voor zover mogelijk op onherroepelijke wijze ter beschikking van de sociëteit van de heilige Maagd. Wij doen dat niet op kinderlijke wijze, ondoordacht, niet met een of ander menselijk doel voor ogen of in de hoop op tijdelijk voordeel, maar serieus, na rijp overleg en na het nodige advies ingewonnen en alles voor God overwogen te hebben, enkel en alleen tot meerdere glorie van God en ter ere van Maria, de moeder van de Heer Jezus. Wij nehmen alle lijden en zwoegen, ongemakken, en zo dit eventueel nodig mocht zijn, martelingen, op ons, daar wij alles vermogen in Hem die ons sterkt, Christus Jezus. Hem beloven wij trouw in de schoot van de Allerheiligste Moeder, de katholieke kerk van Rome, van ganser harte onze aanhankelijkheid betuigend jegens haar opperhoofd, de paus van Rome, en jegens de hoogerwaarde bisschop, onze ordinarius, opdat wij goede dienaren van Jezus Christus mogen zijn, gevoed met de woorden van het geloof en van de goede leer die wij door zijn genade ontvangen hebben. In de hoop dat genoemde institutie onder het bestuur van onze allerchristlijkste koning, de vriend van de vrede en van de religie, spoedig het licht zal zien, beloven wij plechtig onszelf en al het onze in te zetten om op alle mogelijke manieren onder de verheven naam van de maagd Maria en onder haar bescherming de zielen te redden. Dit alles echter onder voorbehoud van het oordeel van onze oversten. Geloofd zij de heilige en onbevleete ontvangenis van de heilige maagd Maria. Amen.

La promesa de Fourvière

En el nombre del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo.

Todo para la mayor gloria de Dios y el honor de María, madre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

Nosotros, los abajo firmantes, deseando trabajar juntos para la mayor gloria de Dios y el honor de María, Madre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, afirmamos y declaramos nuestra sincera intención y firme voluntad de consagrarnos lo más pronto posible a la piadosa fundación de la congregación de los Maristas.

Por consiguiente y en la medida de lo posible, por el presente acto y con nuestras firmas, irrevocablemente dedicamos todo lo que somos y lo que tenemos a la Sociedad de la Santísima Virgen María.

Tomamos este compromiso no movidos por un fervor juvenil, ni a la ligera, ni por algún motivo humano, ni con la esperanza de algún beneficio material, sino seriamente, después de haber reflexionado, de haber pedido consejo y de haber juzgado todo esto ante Dios; lo hacemos únicamente para la mayor gloria de Dios y el honor de María, Madre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

Prometemos soportar los sufrimientos, las dificultades y, si fuera necesario, las torturas, sabedores de que todo lo podemos en aquel que nos conforta, nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

Por medio de este acto prometemos fidelidad a El en el seno de nuestra Santísima Madre, la Iglesia Católica Romana, adhiriéndonos con todas nuestras fuerzas a la suprema Cabeza, el Pontífice Romano, y a nuestro Excelentísimo Señor Obispo, para que seamos buenos ministros de Jesucristo, alimentados por los principios de la fe y por la santa doctrina que por su gracia hemos seguido.

Esperando que bajo el régimen de nuestro cristianísimo Rey, amigo de la paz y de la religión, verá pronto la luz dicha Institución, prometemos solemnemente dedicarnos plenamente a la salvación

de las almas por todos los medios posibles y bajo el augusto nombre de María Virgen y su protección.

De todos modos, esto queda reservado al mejor juicio de los Superiores.

Sea alabada la santa e Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima Virgen María. Amén.

A promessa de Fourvière

Em nome do Pai e do Filho e do Espírito Santo. Tudo para a maior glória de Deus, e para a honra de Maria, Mãe de nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo!

Nós, abaixo assinados, queremos trabalhar para a maior glória de Deus e de Maria, mãe de nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo, afirmamos que temos a sincera intenção e a firme vontade de nos consagrar, logo que surgir oportunidade, à instituição da piedosíssima Congregação dos Maristas. Eis porque, pelo presente ato, que leva nossas assinaturas, dedicamo-nos irrevogavelmente, nós e tudo o que temos, tanto quanto possível, à Sociedade da Bem-aventurada Virgem Maria.

Este compromisso nós o assumimos, não levemente como crianças, nem por razões humanas ou por algum interesse

temporal, mas com toda a sinceridade, após o termo refletido seriamente, tomado conselho e pesado tudo diante de Deus, unicamente para a glória de Deus e honra de Maria, mãe de nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo.

Para atingirmos este objetivo, dispomo-nos a assumir quaisquer contrariedades, trabalhos, sofrimentos e, se preciso, todos os tormentos; tudo podendo naquele que nos dá forças, nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo, a quem, por isso mesmo, prometemos fidelidade, no seio de nossa Mãe, a santa Igreja Católica e Romana; unindo-nos com todas as nossas energias, ao chefe santíssimo desta mesma Igreja, o romano pontífice, e também ao nosso reverendíssimo bispo, para, deste modo, sermos bons ministros de Jesus Cristo, nutridos pelas palavras da fé e da sã doutrina que recebemos por sua graça; confiamos que, sob o governo pacífico e religioso de nosso rei cristianíssimo, esta maravilhosa instituição será fundada.

Prometemos solenemente nos doar, nós e tudo que temos, para salvarmos as almas por todos os meios, sob o nome augustíssimo de Virgem Maria e sob seus auspícios. Respeitamos, entretanto, em tudo, o parecer dos superiores.

“Louvada seja a santa e imaculada Conceição da Bem-aventurada Virgem Maria!

Assim seja!”

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