

Reflection from the Superior General

Many of the highlights of my visit last week to Cameroon in Africa centered around celebrations of the Eucharist. There was the Anniversary celebration of Fathers Raymond Pelletier and Modeste Azounéde when the newly ordained Fr. Stev Youm preached powerfully about the call to Marist mission. We celebrated the Mass of First Professions of four of our young confreres. As well as the daily celebration of the Eucharist during the Chapter, I participated in a vibrant dynamic Sunday liturgy in our Marist parish. Next Sunday here in Rome we will be celebrating the golden ordination Anniversary of Fr. Pat Devlin. Many other confreres are celebrating anniversaries about now, too.

It's a good time to reflect, each of us, on the role of the Eucharist in our personal, community and missionary lives. As Marists, how is the Eucharist "the source and summit of our whole Christian lives"? (Lumen Gentium, 11)



Covid-times have certainly been challenging. It has often been difficult to celebrate the Eucharist in our churches. On-line Masses have helped many people through these times of Eucharistic drought. People have been able to select a favorite Mass on-line from anywhere in the world. However, this may mean that it is difficult to return to regular local community celebrations. Many people question the relevance of the Eucharist in their lives. Large areas of our world simply do not have enough priests. There are some discussions, too, about the guest list for the Eucharistic table – is everyone welcome? Pope Francis reminds us: "the Eucharist is bread of sinners, not reward of saints".

From the earliest times of our Society the Eucharist has been at the heart of our contemplative prayer. Father Jean-Claude considered starting another Congregation along the lines that our former confrere Saint Peter Julian Eymard eventually proposed and implemented. Our 2017 Chapter Mission Statement includes: "As Mary pondered the Word, so are we called to a life of contemplation, centered on the Eucharist, bearing fruit in service within the Church and beyond". This contemplative dimension of the Eucharistic prayer is at the heart of our mission and for many of our more senior confreres this is the principal expression of mission. Thank God for their faithfulness and generosity.

The Eucharist is a principal means of gathering our communities together around the living presence of Christ in Word and Sacrament. Whether it is the daily quiet local community Mass or the wonderful celebrations of faith in lively eucharistic gatherings, Christ is always truly present, and the community gathers to rejoice and give thanks to God through the work of the Holy Spirit. Gathering as a Eucharistic community we are reconciled with each other, we pray with all people who are rejoicing or suffering and we are nourished in our everyday lives.

The Eucharist also sends us out on mission. The last phrase of the Liturgy is "Go!". We give expression to the dynamic presence of Christ in the Word and Sacrament by our lives of committed service to each other. We are nourished by Christ in the Word and the Eucharist and he sends us forth to nourish those who hunger and thirst in so many ways.

Last Sunday evening here in Rome we rejoiced with some of our young confreres who received the Ministries of Lector and Acolyte. These ministries, at present being renewed in our Church, invite each of us to celebrate the source of our Marist community and missionary lives in the Word and the Eucharist.

Fraternally,

John Larsen s.m.