

CELEBRATE LIFE



Motto 2025/2026
MOTIVATION



INTRODUCTION TO THE MOTTO “CELEBRATE LIFE”

At the outset, it may seem unnecessary to explain the meaning of the motto “Let’s celebrate life”. In fact, one of the reasons we chose it is precisely because celebrations are so natural to us that they scarcely need be explained. Even the youngest of children know what a party is. Celebrating is part of our make-up as human beings.

But some aspects require greater attention. What we are celebrating is Life. And because there are many ways to celebrate, we want to do so with the values and style of Marcellin Champagnat, who looked at how Jesus and Mary did it. For this reason, we are going to focus on the following aspects:

- The idea of celebrating is closely linked to the concept of community or family. We always celebrate with someone. We invite or are invited to a birthday party, a wedding or an academic graduation. We fill village streets during Carnival and gather in dining rooms for Christmas dinner. Family spirit is precisely one of the Marist values that we can highlight this year, reinforcing the sense of community and brotherhood that is fundamental in our educational endeavours. The image of the table at La Valla or the house at the Hermitage, whose 200th anniversary of construction we are celebrating, can serve as inspiration. The mottos of the past two years (“You Are at Home” and “Count on Me”) were a wonderful prelude to fostering fraternity. This year’s motto invites us once again, as Marists, to focus on the family spirit that is lived out in our communities and educational works. Let’s Celebrate Life to recognise and value each moment, to strengthen community bonds and to promote the holistic well-being of all members.
- The motto “Let’s Celebrate Life” invites the entire educational community to focus on the positive and joyful aspects of life. In a world where negative news and challenges can be overwhelming, this motto promotes an optimistic and hopeful attitude, with joy as a testimony that another Life and another world are possible (Philippians 4:4-5). After recent global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple wars around the world, hope in the God of Life is a fundamental virtue that we must once again offer. Celebrating Life involves acknowledging the difficulties overcome, and the lessons learned, promoting resilience as a crucial skill for students and educators. This motto can help us see each day as an opportunity to grow and learn, despite adversity.
- Every celebration is usually preceded by an invitation. When we prepare for a wedding or an anniversary, the first questions we ask are: Who do we want to celebrate with? Who are we going to invite? In Marist educational endeavours, the criterion of Jesus must prevail. Pope Francis explained it well during World Youth Day in Lisbon: “In the Church, no one is superfluous, no one is left out, there is room for everyone just as we are—everyone. And Jesus says this clearly when he sends the apostles to call people to the banquet prepared by that man. He says: go and bring everyone, young and old, healthy and sick, righteous and sinners, everyone. In the Church, there is room for everyone, everyone, everyone.” Therefore, celebrating Life also means celebrating diversity and the different experiences and perspectives each person brings to our society. This motto can foster a culture of encounter, inclusion, and respect, where every member of the educational community feels valued and appreciated for their uniqueness.
- Even more so, Jesus used the image of the banquet to speak of the Kingdom of God. In the parable, when the first invited guests reject the invitation, the king tells his servant: “Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame” (Luke 14:21). That is, everyone—but especially those

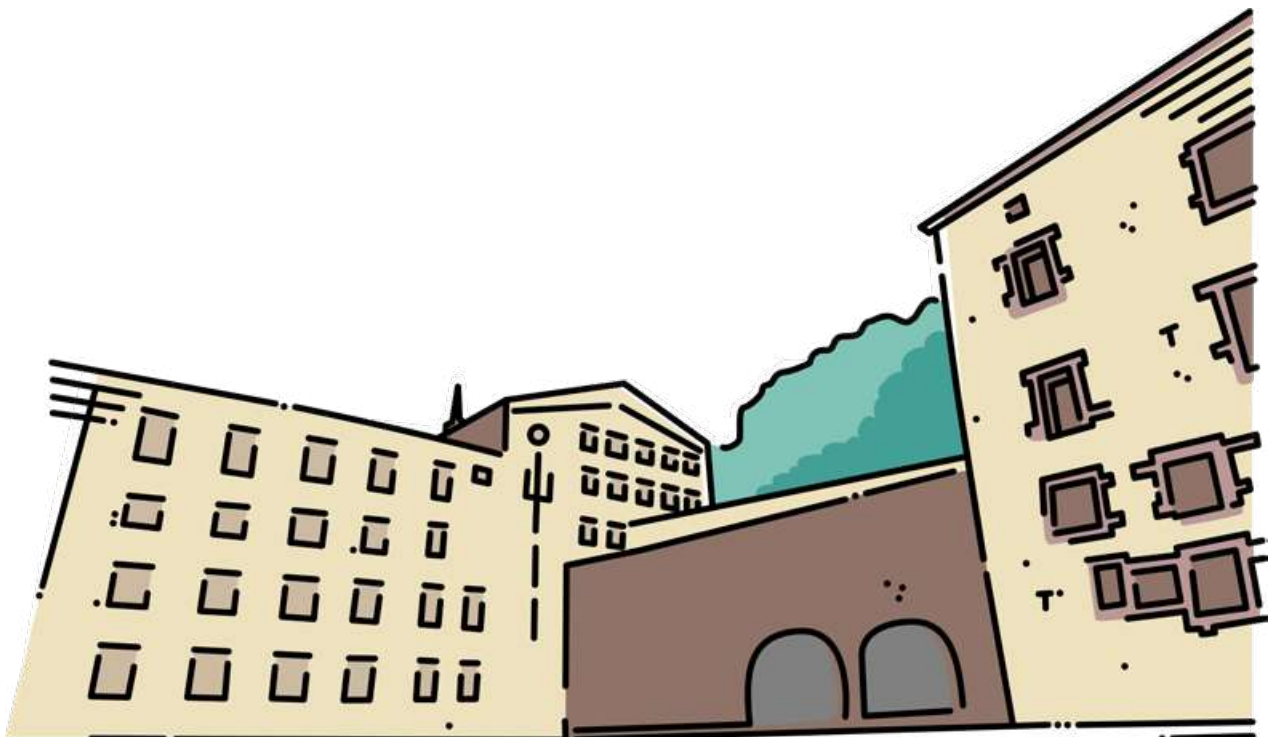




most in need, those who feel excluded, those who need spaces to celebrate Life because, all too often, they cannot or do not see its meaning. Marcellin began his mission for everyone, but it was born from his experience with the young Montagne. Let us not forget, then, all those who are marginalised and those who suffer; let us place them at the centre of our celebration. Let this motto not be an excuse to escape reality but a reason for deeper commitment to Life and, consequently, to peace, solidarity and justice.

- The motto "Let's Celebrate Life" also invites us to question what kind of life we are celebrating. In our society, models of life marked by individualism, hedonism and consumerism are promoted. Pope Francis warns us in *Evangelii Gaudium*: "The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. When the interior life becomes caught up in its own interests, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades." When we write Life with a capital "L," it is because we want to propose an authentic, true life—a life on a journey. A life that is neither prefabricated nor boxed in. A life open to each person discovering their gifts and developing their vocation. A life that has been gifted to us and is Life in abundance (John 10:10). A life worth celebrating despite all the mistakes we may make.

In conclusion, celebrating Life is much more than a simple motto. It is a commitment to the community, an invitation to hope, a call to inclusion, and a continuous pursuit of an authentic and fulfilling life. By celebrating Life, we uphold Marist values and collectively build a future that is more just, compassionate, and full of hope. Let us invite the entire community to join this celebration, live it intensely and share this spirit with those around us.





IN THE GOSPEL: Jesus celebrates life and his life is a reason for celebration

Jesus would embrace the motto «Celebrate Life.» As a devout Jew, He participated in the religious celebrations of His people. In the New Testament, we see Him attending the Feast of Tabernacles or Sukkot (John 7:2), the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah (John 10:22), the celebration of Pentecost or Shavuot (Acts 2:1), and, of course, the Jewish Passover or Pesach (Luke 2:41). He also prayed using the Psalms. How often His lips must have recited these beautiful verses from the psalmist!

Psalm 63 (62)

*My lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.*



Jesus did not practice His faith in an ascetic manner, removed from the world. His way of living in God was rooted in human experience and community. He was critical and demanding, yet He also enjoyed sharing joy with those around Him. In fact, in the Gospel of John, Jesus' first public act was at the Wedding at Cana, where He turned water into wine to prevent the celebration from faltering.

The Wedding at Cana (John 2, 1-11)

On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Throughout the Gospels, we often see Jesus at the table, eating and celebrating. Breaking with the exclusionary norms of His time, Jesus enjoyed meals with all kinds of people. His enemies even called Him a glutton and a drunkard.

Matthew 11, 16-19

"To what shall I compare the people of this time? They are like children who sit and play in the streets, calling out to their friends, 'We played the flute, and you did not dance; we sang sad songs, and you did not cry.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say that he has a demon. Then the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say that he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of disreputable people and tax collectors for Rome. But the wisdom of God is demonstrated by what he does."

In Jewish tradition, the banquet symbolised life in God's fullness. The enslaved Hebrews in Egypt were promised freedom in "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:17). Jesus' participation in meals and celebrations was a visible sign of this promise. He often used the



image of a banquet in His parables, giving it a special nuance: this banquet was especially for those who are usually excluded.

Parable of the banquet (Luke 14:15, -24)

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

"Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

"Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' The servant came back and said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'

The Kingdom of God—the fullness of life in God—is for everyone. We are all invited, even when we feel undeserving. The God of Jesus is not a strict accountant keeping track of our failures but the God of Life and Mercy, eager for us to return to Him so we can celebrate together.

Parable of the father who recovers his son (Luke 15, 11-32)

Jesus told another parable: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So, he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your



brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

"The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

"My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

We have received the promise of a life in fullness. To attain it, we must choose it freely and nurture it within ourselves. The Word and Spirit of Jesus have been given to us freely to make this possible.

The Sower (Matthew 13, 3-18)

He said to them: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Galatians 6.8

He who sows the seed of his evil desires, from his evil desires will reap a harvest of death; he who sows the seed of the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap a harvest of eternal life.

Even if we cannot achieve this on our own, the God of Life and mercy works so that all may reach Him. We were not created to suffer, but to find abundant life. Let this message inspire gratitude and celebration for the great gift of life.

Life in Abundance (John 10, 7-11)

Jesus said to them again, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."





IN THE CHURCH: Pope Francis invites us to celebrate life

We need a vision of a different kind of Church because too often it seems sombre and severe. Pope Francis emphasises that the life and mission of the Church are fundamentally rooted in joy, passion, and celebration. His pontificate began with a powerful missionary exhortation titled *Evangelii Gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel," 2013).

Evangelii Gaudium 1

The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew.

In this exhortation, Francis stresses that the joy born from an encounter with Jesus sparks in us a desire to share and give thanks for this gift with the world and to celebrate it as a community.

Evangelii Gaudium 24

The joyful evangelising community knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates at every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelisation. Evangelisation with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelises and is herself evangelised through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelisation and the source of her renewed self-giving.

This emphasis on joy is a recurring theme in his teachings. For example, in 2016, Francis wrote *Amoris Laetitia* ("The Joy of Love"), following the Synod on the Family, describing the family as a central space for celebrating life.

Amoris Laetitia 226

Yet, it also helps to break the routine with a party, and to enjoy family celebrations of anniversaries and special events. We need these moments of cherishing God's gifts and renewing our zest for life. As long as we can celebrate, we are able to rekindle our love, to free it from monotony and to colour our daily routine with hope.

Amoris Laetitia 110

Our Lord especially appreciates those who find joy in the happiness of others. If we fail to learn how to rejoice in the well-being of others, and focus primarily on our own needs, we condemn our selves to a joyless existence, for, as Jesus said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The family must always be a place where, when something good happens to one of its members, they know that others will be there to celebrate it with them.

In 2018, Pope Francis released *Gaudete et Exsultate* ("Rejoice and Be Glad"), an apostolic exhortation on holiness. Far from promoting an austere, ascetic view of holiness, Francis frames it as a path marked by joy and celebration as signs of a genuine relationship with God.

Gaudete et Exsultate 122

Far from being timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy, or putting on a dreary face, the saints are joyful and full of good humour. Though completely realistic, they radiate a positive and hopeful spirit. The Christian life is "joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17), for "the necessary result of the love of charity is joy; since every lover rejoices at being united to the beloved... the effect of charity is joy". Having received the beautiful gift of God's word, we embrace it "in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess 1:6). If we allow the Lord to draw us out of our shell and change our lives, then we can do as Saint Paul tells us: "Rejoice in the Lord always; I say it again, rejoice!" (Phil 4:4).



So far, we have seen that Pope Francis understands Christian spirituality as being directly tied to joy and celebration. While maintaining the necessary rigour, his message carries a vital dose of flexibility when it comes to norms, essential for ensuring that the heart remains open and generous rather than becoming a heart of stone closed off to Life. This reflects the spirituality of Jesus, who, despite being a demanding believer, always focused on the ultimate purpose of God's will: "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). That is Life with a capital "L"—true life.

Gaudete et Exsultate 1

The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created.

This is why it is essential to differentiate between superficial joy and the authentic joy that comes from God. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis already outlined a basic criterion for discernment: is this a joy that turns inward and isolates us, or is it a joy that opens itself up to others?

Evangelii Gaudium 2

The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades.

Indeed, the life worth celebrating is the life we share with others. Pope Francis devoted his 2020 encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, to the themes of fraternity and social friendship. The life truly worth living and celebrating is one that we do not keep for ourselves, but instead dedicate wholeheartedly to others.

Fratelli Tutti 87

This explains why no one can experience the true beauty of life without relating to others, without having real faces to love. This is part of the mystery of authentic human existence. "Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity."

Fratelli Tutti 215

"Life, for all its confrontations, is the art of encounter". I have frequently called for the growth of a culture of encounter capable of transcending our differences and divisions. This means working to create a many-faceted polyhedron whose different sides form a variegated unity, in which "the whole is greater than the part". The image of a polyhedron can represent a society where differences coexist, complementing, enriching and reciprocally illuminating one another, even amid disagreements and reservations.

And who are the others? Who is the neighbour I must care for? We know the answer well enough, even if it is challenging to put into practice. Once, someone asked Jesus this question, and He responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Pope Francis emphasised in his welcome speech at World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon that the Church must be an open house for everyone:

"Friends, I would like to be clear with you who are allergic to falsehood and empty words: In the Church, there is room for everyone, for everyone. In the Church no one is surplus, no one is surplus, there is room for everyone. Just as we are. All of us. And Jesus says this clearly when he sends the apostles to call us to the banquet of the Lord, who prepared it. He says: go and take everyone: young and old, healthy and sick, righteous and sinners. All of them. All. Everyone. In the Church, there is room for everyone. Father, but today I am a



wretch. Is there room for me? There is room for everyone. Everyone together, each one in his own language... each one in his own language. Repeat after me: everyone! Everyone! Everyone! I can't hear you. Again: everyone! Everyone! Everyone! And that is the Church, the mother of all. There is room for everyone!"

Finally, a note on the celebratory style. When Francis speaks of celebrating life, he does not refer to extravagance or showmanship. True life is shared through simplicity, authenticity, and sobriety. In the 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'*, dedicated to caring for our common home, Francis reminds us that there is an alternative to the consumerist model of happiness.

Laudate Si' 223

Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full. In reality, those who enjoy more and live better each moment are those who have given up dipping here and there, always on the look-out for what they do not have. They experience what it means to appreciate each person and each thing, learning familiarity with the simplest things and how to enjoy them. So they are able to shed unsatisfied needs, reducing their obsessiveness and weariness. Even living on little, they can live a lot, above all when they cultivate other pleasures and find satisfaction in fraternal encounters, in service, in developing their gifts, in music and art, in contact with nature, in prayer. Happiness means knowing how to limit some needs which only diminish us and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer.





IN THE MARIST TRADITION: Celebrating life is a sign of fraternity

Marist life was born around the table at La Valla. What was shared at that table provided the strength to continue the mission, both physically and spiritually. Marcellin and the first brothers found in the joy of fraternity a reason to celebrate Life—a joy that was a gift and, as such, had to be shared with all the dioceses of the world. This is reflected in the Constitutions of the brothers.

Constitutions and Statutes 36

We live our brotherhood inspired by the family spirit of the Founder and the first brothers, thereby fulfilling his wish: "Love one another as Jesus Christ has loved you. May there be among you but one heart and one mind." As in La Valla, our communities are homes where each one is helped to centre his life on Jesus and to grow in fraternal love for one another. In this way, the Marist community is continually transformed into a place of companionship, simplicity, hospitality and a Gospel-based life, in the service of our mission.

Brother Ernesto, Superior General, also expressed this in the **circular announcing the 23rd General Chapter "Home for All, River of Life"**, held in the Philippines in September 2025:

As in N.D. de l'Hermitage, a house with open windows, we seek the light of the Spirit to touch our hearts, foster our conversion and encourage us to live the gift of Brotherhood joyfully in order to make each of our Marist communities and ministries a "home for all": Brothers, lay men and women, boys, girls, young people, families, visitors... It is an appropriate occasion to imagine building a "New Hermitage" in our day.

The joy and spirit of family, characteristic of the Marist style, are inherited from the experiences of the first brothers with Marcellin. In *Father of the Brothers*, Federico-Andrés Carpintero recounts some of these stories, such as that of Brother Sylvester, depicted being carried on Marcellin's back in the poster for this course—a true declaration of vitality. Brother Sylvester, mischievous, playful, a friend of jokes and celebrations, stood in stark contrast to a strict, serious society in which a "good religious person" was expected to maintain decorum and suppress emotions, even when they led to celebrating life. Marcellin had a clear perspective and advised his brothers that to be a good religious person, one must be positive, cheerful, good-humoured, and empathetic.

MISCHIEF (pp. 138–140)

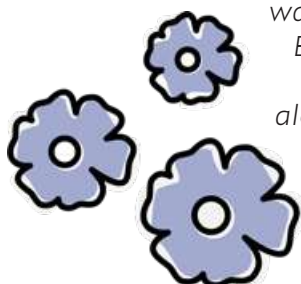
Brother Silvestre was very mischievous (as his name suggests). Small in stature, he was lively and kind. Marcellin was fond of him. Silvestre joined the community of the Little Brothers of Mary at age 12.

With an energetic and restless temperament, he could not remain still or avoid causing some trouble. While he behaved well in important matters, in others...

One day, he grabbed a wheelbarrow and began wheeling it around the yard. Finding this too dull, he brought it into the kitchen, then into the classrooms, and eventually hauled it into the study hall.

When some brothers told Marcellin about this, knowing Silvestre well, Marcellin said:

"I only regret he stopped at the first floor. If he had taken it to the attic, I would have rewarded him. I'd rather see him entertain himself like this than be bored. Besides, I don't see any harm in this prank. You also played as young men. It's your fault for not playing with him and leaving him alone. All you talk about are studies and serious matters. How can the little brother have any fun?"



Even though Marcellin defended him, Brother Silvestre remained restless and continued his antics. One afternoon, he hid by the staircase, waiting for someone to pass. The staircase, with its 40 wooden



steps, began to shake as Silvestre moved it side to side. The poor man climbing it could only gasp in alarm. Silvestre turned to see his victim and was shocked to find it was Marcellin.

Another story reminds us of the importance of celebrating life—Brother Stanislaus and Father Champagnat's ordeal in the snow, where their lives were at risk. With unwavering faith, Marcellin entrusted their fate to the Good Mother, confident that filial devotion would ensure her help and protection. The happy ending to this episode teaches that to celebrate Life is to place oneself in God's hands and thank Him for His abundant gifts.

REMEMBER (pp. 92–93)

Brother Jean-Baptiste was ill in Bourg-Argental. Marcellin decided to visit him, even though it was deep winter and snowing heavily. After the visit, Marcellin wanted to return to La Valla. Accompanied by Brother Stanislaus, who cared for the young members of the community, he set out to cross Mount Pilat, 1,434 meters high.

After two hours of climbing, they lost their way.

It was impossible to find the path, and a strong blizzard lashed their faces. Brother Stanislaus could no longer walk. Marcellin supported him by the arm, saying: "Courage! The Virgin will help us."

After a while, Brother Stanislaus lost consciousness. Gently, Marcellin laid him on the ground and prayed to Mary: "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession, was left unaided."

After praying, he lifted Brother Stanislaus and tried to walk, though his own legs barely responded. After only ten steps, they saw a nearby light and made their way toward it, finding a house.

(That very night, the owner had decided to check on his livestock by crossing the barnyard instead of using the interior door).

Marcellin and Brother Stanislaus spent the night with the family. They were saved.

Celebrating Life and Community

Perhaps the *Water from the Rock* document expresses most clearly the importance of fostering spirituality to nurture fraternity, while also showing how attention to fraternity strengthens spirituality. Community and spirituality reinforce each other to generate Life.

Water from the Rock, §118

Sharing and celebrating our faith through communal prayer is a powerful means of building communion. Every time we gather to pray or celebrate the Eucharist, our union with Jesus drives us toward full communion—with ourselves, others, creation, and God. The deeper our daily lives and relationships, the more meaningful our prayer and liturgical celebrations will become.

To celebrate Life maturely and profoundly, it is essential not to celebrate superficially or forcefully. Our world is complex, full of pain, and to truly celebrate Life, we must not ignore its darker aspects.

Water from the Rock, §125

The world astonishes and disconcerts us. On one hand, we celebrate nature's beauty and harmony and rejoice in humanity's rich cultural diversity. On the other, we face violence, insecurity, poverty, despair, AIDS, child abuse, ecological degradation, hunger, illiteracy, and ignorance.

Rooted in Marist and Christian spirituality, we can fulfil our mission in community, focusing on those most in need and witnessing to the abundant Life that God offers us—a profound reason to celebrate Life.



Water from the Rock, §110

As Marist brothers and laypeople, we strive to cultivate a spirit of communion that enables families, religious communities, and other communal forms of life to become homes where young people grow, the elderly are cared for, the weak receive special attention, and forgiveness heals wounds. This is where the wine of celebration flows to mark so much shared life.

Water from the Rock, §121

Multicultural communities invite us to partake in the richness of other traditions and beliefs, to grow in respect and tolerance, and to celebrate the abundance of God's loving presence. These communities bear witness against tendencies toward fundamentalism, xenophobia, and exclusion.





A journey through a poster

The poster for this year is rich in symbolism and meaning, with each element conveying a profound message about Marist life.

The Cycle of Life

The circular motif in the poster symbolises the cycle of life, representing continuity. The circle serves as a reminder that life is an endless journey filled with moments of joy, learning, and growth.

Spirit of Family

At the bottom of the poster, there is an image symbolising the spirit of family. This is not a typical family, but one characterised by inclusion and integration. Here, everyone is welcome, reflecting the Marist values of love and acceptance.

The Shared Table: A Link to La Valla

The image of a family gathered around a table evokes the way the first Marist brothers shared life in La Valla—not just food, but also experiences and faith.

The Candle: Light and Shared Time

The candle at the centre of the table carries dual symbolism. In Christian faith, it represents Jesus as the guiding light in darkness. Additionally, the candle signifies the passage of time and life—a time and life shared in community.

The Three Violets: Spirit of Mary

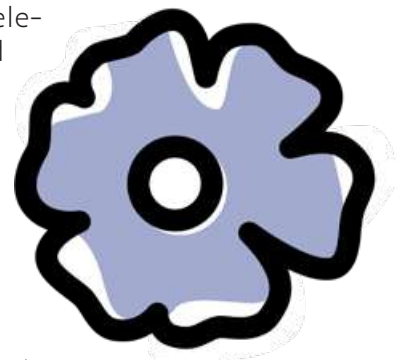
The spirit of Mary is represented by three violets adorning the poster. These flowers symbolise humility, modesty, and simplicity—virtues embodied by Mary and cherished by the Marists in their daily lives.

Marcellin Champagnat

At the centre of the poster is Marcellin Champagnat, founder of the Marist Brothers. His presence serves as a constant reminder of his legacy and foundational teaching: *"To educate, one must love."* This message is highlighted with an icon of a speech bubble and a heart, symbolising love and communication.

Celebrating Brotherhood and Simplicity

The slogan *"Let us celebrate life"* invites the community to celebrate brotherhood and simplicity. Marcellin Champagnat lived and promoted a life of simple, authentic, and unexpected acts. This spirit is reflected in the poster, particularly in the scene of Marcellin Champagnat and Brother Sylvester. The celebration doesn't need to be grand; it is the small daily gestures that give life true meaning.



The Hermitage: 200 Years of History

The image of the Hermitage at the top of the poster commemorates the 200th anniversary of its construction. In 1824, Marcellin and the first



brothers began building this house, which has since become a significant symbol for the entire Marist Institute.

Symbols of Peace: A Message of Hope

In a world often marked by conflict, the poster includes symbols of peace, such as the peace sign made by the young person on the left and other iconic peace imagery.

Spirit of Joy: Confetti and Celebration

The spirit of joy and celebration is represented by confetti and festive elements like the drums on the right. These features capture the energy and enthusiasm of a community that celebrates life with joy and gratitude.

Structure of the Poster

The poster is divided into three main sections:

- **Bottom Section:** Highlighting the celebration around La Valla, symbolising the foundation and origins of the Marist community.
- **Top Section:** Features the Hermitage, linking the present to the rich history of the Marists.
- **Central Section:** Marcellin Champagnat, the heart of the poster, uniting the past, present, and future of the Marist community.



MONTHLY RESOURCES TO WORK ON THE MOTTO

September: Party preparations

Any celebration requires preparations that allow us to celebrate it in a more special and meaningful way. In this new school year, in which we want to celebrate Life, we can begin by asking ourselves what makes our life unique, authentic and full of meaning.

October: Any excuse is good to celebrate life in capital letters

Life is full of opportunities to celebrate, and we don't need a special reason to do so. We are used to always looking for a good reason, without stopping to think that our life itself, and that of our loved ones, is the greatest reason to celebrate. This month, let's invite everyone to find joy in the small, everyday moments and to celebrate achievements, whether big or small.

November: Everyone has a place at this table

What would life be like if we all lived and were the same? Finding beauty in difference is a sign of Marist fraternity. Just like in a big family, we all have a place in this world and should celebrate our diversity. Let us pay attention to those who need it most, especially those children whose rights are still not respected.

December: Wait and celebrate the new life that is coming

The nine months of pregnancy teach us to wait. We are eagerly awaiting the Good News and to celebrate it. Learning to wait helps us to value life, not to take it for granted. This Advent, we prepare for Christmas and look forward with hope, expecting new beginnings and opportunities.



January: Give life where peace is missing

Giving life where peace is absent is celebrating life through service to others. Our commitment to help others and to work for a better future is the greatest celebration. In this month of January, in this year that is beginning, we are called to be agents of change and to contribute to a more just and peaceful world.

February: Take care of life so it is not lost

Every time we take care of ourselves and those around us, we are contributing to the continuation of life. This month, we propose a moment to stop and reflect on how we take care of the lives of the people around us, those who truly commit to us. Because Life is a gift that has been given to us, and we are responsible for taking care of it.

March: Life always offers a new opportunity to celebrate

Sometimes we may feel discouraged, undervalued, or guilty. Lent is an invitation to get back on our feet, to remember that we can always find beauty and joy, and to recognise the opportunities that life offers us and all that we can offer to life.

April: Life that overflows, life that becomes celebration

Spring arrives and life overflows. A walk in the countryside allows us to see the exuberance of nature and experience a true celebration. Life is truly a gift, a treasure. This month we will



also celebrate the Easter of Jesus: abundant life shared in community and the promise of Life for everyone.

May: Celebrate the everyday things in life

A caress, a kind word, a knowing smile... these small things that often go unnoticed but make our lives happier and more enjoyable. Attention to detail and the ability to find beauty in simplicity are values that are very present in Marist spirituality. By celebrating the everyday, we are cultivating an attitude of gratitude and wonder. Let us keep in mind Mary, the teacher in caring for details and celebrating everyday things.

June: Be grateful for what you have lived in order to celebrate it

We celebrate life by recognising all that has been given to us. As Marists, we celebrate what we have received from so many educators, brothers, and lay Marists who have given everything and continue to do so. How fortunate we feel for this! We thank God and feel grateful for the fact that we can live a full and authentic life. And in this year, as we are closing, what do we give thanks for?

