



Reflecting on Champagnat Marist Spirituality

Champagnat Marist Spirituality: Reflections

These resources are designed to provide an opportunity for groups or individuals to reflect on elements of Marist Spirituality. They draw on sections of *Water from the Rock* and a number of prayers by Br Romuald Gibson FMS and revised by Br Kevin Wanden FMS.

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1. Marist Spirituality

Opening Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you have drawn us to yourself
and to the service of others,
by the attraction that we find
in Mary, your Mother, and in Marcellin Champagnat.

In this way, your Spirit has shaped in us
a particular way of responding to you,
a particular way of being and of living.

Mary, this Marist spirituality is your gift to us,
enabling us to share in your own ways of living and loving.
Be with us as we reflect on this gift today.
Amen.

Introduction:

This reflection focuses on our understanding of spirituality and of Marist Spirituality in particular.

Water from the Rock:

Throughout life, our inner spiritual reality interacts dynamically with the experiences we undergo. On the one hand, what we term our *spirituality* is moulded as we embrace the experiences of our lives. On the other, this spirituality shapes the way we understand and relate to the world, to people and to God.

When we speak of Christian spirituality we refer to that unquenchable fire that burns within, filling us with passion for the building of the Kingdom of God. This becomes the driving force of our lives as we allow the Spirit of Christ to lead us. Any Christian living this way grows in holiness.

We live out this Christian spirituality in a distinctive *Marial* and *apostolic* way. It is an incarnated spirituality springing up in Marcellin Champagnat. It developed with the first Brothers who handed it on to us as a precious heritage. (Introduction, pp. 14-15)

42. Our present age is characterized by a thirst for spirituality. We, disciples of Marcellin believe that our way to God is a gift to be shared with the Church and the world. We are invited to join with Mary in a journey of faith. If we are able to give witness in our daily lives to the vitality of this spirituality, people - particularly youth and children - will feel themselves attracted and invited to take it up as their own way to become “living water.”

Sharing:

Spend some time reflecting on the quotes from *Water from the Rock*.

Highlight or underline any words that strike you.

What do these words or phrases mean to you?

Share what is emerging for you from these quotes.

Concluding Prayer:

Gracious and loving Father,
may your Spirit bring to fullness in us,
the Marist spirituality that you have given us
through Mary and through Marcellin, our Founder.

Teach us to understand and appreciate more and more
this unique gift, the heart of our Marist charism.
Show us how to live out this spirituality
in the circumstances of our days
and amid the needs of our times.

Help us to develop our spirituality
to take in all that is best in the spiritual currents
of our day so that it becomes radiant
and attractive to the people of our times. Amen.

2. Spirituality of St Marcellin Champagnat

Opening Prayer:

Lord, in experiencing your loving presence,
Marcellin felt a powerful urge to live
the way of the Gospel as Mary did.
Through the 'Montagne experience' you moved him
to respond to the crying needs of his times
by gathering together the first Brothers
to evangelise young people in need.

May we, too, feel the power of your loving presence,
may we too know the call to live as Mary did,
may we learn from our Founder
to think as Mary thinks, feel as she does,
love with her and do as she would have us do.

Marcellin, we ask you, to refresh in our hearts
the spirituality that was given you, the charism
that inspired you, so that we may find
the 'lamp of our vocation' not steadily diminishing,
but burning with the light and radiance of Jesus.
Amen.

Introduction:

This reflection focus on two events in the life of Marcellin Champagnat that had a significant influence on his spirituality: the Montagne incident and the Memorare in the Snow.

Water from the Rock:

6. The group's way of living the Gospel was a reflection of the character, values, and spirituality of its leader, Marcellin Champagnat. His spirituality was deeply influenced by his own personality. His first disciples remembered with affection the Marcellin they knew: open, frank, resolute, courageous, enthusiastic,

constant and equable. His whole life gave witness of a person with a practical disposition, a man of action, and of humility. This enabled him to draw together from various sources a simple and down-to-earth spirituality.

7. Key among the formative influences that shaped his spirituality was Marcellin's personal experience of being loved intensely by Jesus and called by Mary. An incident early in 1823 ("Memorare in the Snow") was understood by Marcellin and his Brothers as highly significant. Marcellin and Stanislaus were lost in a snow storm. With his companion unconscious at his feet, Marcellin believed that *if Mary does not come to our aid, we are lost*. Placing his life in God's hands, he prayed the *Memorare*. His prayer to Mary was miraculously answered. Marcellin and his first Brothers saw in this incident a deeper reality: God's choice of them to share in the same mission that was entrusted to Mary.

8. Marcellin was also deeply aware of the love of Jesus and Mary for others. This inspired in him the passion of an apostle. He dedicated his life to sharing this love. In Marcellin's encounter with the dying young man, Jean-Baptiste Montagne, we see how disturbed Marcellin was to meet a boy facing the end of his life without knowing the love God had for him.

Sharing:

Spend some time reflecting on the quotes from *Water from the Rock*.

Highlight or underline any words that strike you.

What do these words or phrases mean to you?

Share what is emerging for you from these quotes.

Concluding Prayer:

Marcellin, you were chosen by God
to be completely His,
and, like Mary, you welcomed His call
in faith and courage,
setting aside your own plans to follow Him.

We ask you to teach us how to respond
to the call that God and Mary make to us today,
so that, in these times, we may provide
a Marist mission fitted to modern needs,
that answers the cries of today's people,
especially those of the young people who are in need.

Deepen in us the charism that you have passed on to us,
the spirituality and vision that inspired you;
help us to develop the aspects of that spirituality
that will present Jesus and His message most attractively
to the people of today.
Amen.

3. Symbols of Our Marist Spirituality

Preparation:

In preparation for the meeting, each participant selects something that symbolizes some element of our Marist Spirituality and brings this to the meeting. Have a focal point on the table with a candle, Bible, an image of Mary and St Marcellin, the Constitutions etc.

Examples of symbols could include:

- A piece of rock that recalls the Hermitage
- A nail that brings to mind the community at La Valla and its work
- A picture that expresses something of the Marist spirit
- A word, saying, Scripture text, poem

Opening Prayer:

We thank you, our Creator,
that in revealing yourself to us,
in revealing your Son and your Spirit to us,
you use the power of image and symbol
to help us understand and to respond to you.

So we can speak of you as Father, as Mother,
as Burning Bush and Pillar of Cloud and Fire,
as Gentle Breeze, as Shepherd and Vinedresser;
as Lamb of God and Light and Word and Way,
as Bread of Life and Fountain of Living Water,
as Mighty Wind and Tongues of Fire and Gentle Dove.

Help us now to gain from the power of symbol
to reach a deeper understanding and love
of your gift of Marist spirituality.

Mary, we speak of you in symbol as we consider
your faithfulness and beauty and care for us –

Morning Star, Queen and Mother of Mercy,
Ark of the Covenant, Refuge, Advocate;
be with us now as we work to appreciate more and more
the spirituality that you have given us, through Marcellin.
Amen.

Introduction:

Spirituality touches us at the symbolic level and not just at the conceptual level. As Marists we have a number of powerful symbols:

- The crib, the cross, the altar
- Three violets
- The Annunciation – Mary’s ‘Yes’
- The marriage at Cana – ‘Do whatever he tells you’
- Fouvriere pledge
- The Montange incident
- The ‘Memorare’ in the snow
- Building the Hermitage

Water from the Rock:

The Crib:

21. *At the Crib we find the innocence, simplicity, gentleness and even weakness of a God who is capable of touching the hardest of hearts. ... There is no room for fear of a God who became a child. We come to know a God who has pitched his tent in our midst, and whom we call “brother.”*

The Cross:

22. At the foot of the Cross, we are in awe of a God who loves us without reserve. We find a God who shares the physical and psychological suffering, betrayal, abandonment and violence experienced by humanity, and transforms these experiences. There we enter the mystery of redemptive suffering and learn humble fidelity in love. The crucified Christ is the sign and deepest expression of a God who is love.

The Altar:

23. At the Altar, the Eucharist, we find a privileged place to enter into communion with the Body of Christ: to stand as one with all who are members and to deepen our relationship with the living presence of Jesus in our lives. The celebration of the Eucharist, and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, were intense experiences of God for Marcellin. Experiencing the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Christian life leads us to the heart of the Marist's spirituality.

Application:

24. These special Marist places, where we encounter the love of Jesus, are also meeting spaces with the poor. At the Crib, we are deeply touched by the situation of poverty and fragility of children and young people, especially the least favoured. At the Cross, we associate ourselves with people affected by failure and suffering, and with those who struggle for bread, justice and peace. At the Altar, we enter into communion with the love of Jesus, which leads us into a deep relationship with the poor. Our hearts go out to them and they become our brothers and sisters, and truly our friends. We open our homes to the poor and we share with them our presence, time and resources.

Sharing:

Each participant is invited to share their symbol(s) of Marist spirituality with the community and commenting on why the symbol was chosen and its meaning.

Place the symbols around the focus.

Invite participants to share a prayer based on their symbol and directed towards a deepening of some aspect of our Marist spirituality.

Concluding Prayer:

God of the journey,
You have pitched your tent in our midst,
You have gifted us with the spirituality
of Marcellin Champagnat,
your servant and our brother.

You continually call people to experience
the richness of Marcellin's spirituality
and to be of service to young people
particularly the marginalised.

You call us forward in hope
as we, Brothers and Lay Marists
together seek new ways to live out
Marcellin's vision in our world.

As we explore the richness of Marist spirituality,
help us to respond to the promptings of your Holy Spirit,
to be faithful to the vision
we have received from Marcellin
and to respond with audacity and creativity
to your call to us today.
Amen.

4. God's Presence and Love

Opening Prayer:

God of love,
you inspired Marcellin Champagnat
to trust you in all things.
Strengthen us who follow in his footsteps
that we may grow in openness to you
and a deeper awareness of your presence in our lives.

Enable us to drink more consciously
from the "Water of the Rock",
and the charism that you have gifted to the Church.

Continue to inspire us to be faithful to
your evolving mystery within our lives,
your evolving presence within our world,
your promise of the fullness of life and resurrection.

We ask this in confidence through
Jesus our brother,
Amen.

Introduction:

The two of the elements of Marist Spirituality:

- 1) God's Presence and Love,
- 2) Trust in God,

form the foundation of Marcellin's spirituality. Marcellin had a profound sense of the unconditional love of God.

Water from the Rock:

15. We are inspired by the vision and lives of Marcellin and his first disciples as we journey to God. While we share such a pilgrimage with many, we are conscious of our own distinctive style. We are gifted to share in that transforming experience of being, with Mary, loved unconditionally by Jesus. From this flow the particular characteristics of our manner of being followers of Champagnat.

God's Presence and Love:

16. Today, those of us who follow in the footsteps of Marcellin and his first disciples are seized by the same inner dynamism. We develop a way of being, loving and doing, in the spirit of our origins. Gradually, day by day, we deepen our experience of the loving presence of God within ourselves and in others. This presence of God is a profound experience of being personally loved by God, and the conviction that he is close to us in our daily human experiences.

Sharing:

Spend a period of time reflecting on the readings.

Share your thoughts about what you see as the underlying ideas in each paragraph.

Concluding Prayer:

Father, everything that we have is your gift,
and everything that has been a part of our lives,
everything that has formed us and inspired us
has been a part of your plan
to make us what we are.
Touch us with your love,
so that like Mary and Marcellin,
we can realise clearly that you are present
in every aspect of our living,

that everything is 'spiritual',
everything is part of our 'spirituality'.

May your Spirit bring us to the awareness
that every moment,
in all things,
we really live and move
and have our being in you.
Amen.

5. Trust in God

Opening Prayer:

Creator God, we pray that,
like Marcellin, we may have the faith
that Jesus tells us about in the Gospels.
The faith that is necessary before any healing can take place,
the faith that can 'move mountains'.

We are aware of our own limitations,
and that unless you build the house,
we labour in vain.

You called Marcellin to see, judge and act.
He responded to your call in faith,
relying on your providence
to provide the resources necessary
to accomplish the task.
Increase our faith that we may respond
to your call in our lives
with the same courage and audacity that Marcellin did.
Amen.

Introduction:

The two of the elements of Marist Spirituality:

- 1) God's Presence and Love,
- 2) Trust in God,

form the foundation of Marcellin's spirituality. Marcellin had a profound sense of trust in God's providence.

Trust in God:

17. Marcellin's relationship with God, combined with knowledge of his limitations, explains his unbounded confidence in God. The depth of this trust amazed those who worked with him, and

scandalized some who judged his actions as reckless. In his humble way, Marcellin saw God at work, and so acted with courage and commitment. *Let us not offend God, asking him very little. The bigger is our demand, the more we will be pleasing to God.* Marcellin's oft-expressed invocations, *If the Lord does not build the house* and *You know my God* were the spontaneous expressions of this confident trust.

18. We endeavour to develop our relationship with God so that, just as for Marcellin, it is our daily source of renewed spiritual and apostolic dynamism. This vitality makes us daring, despite our shortcomings and limited resources. Drawing from Marcellin's experience we embrace the mysteries of our life with confidence, openness and self-giving.

Sharing:

Spend a period of time reflecting on the readings.

Share your thoughts about what you see as the underlying ideas in each paragraph.

Concluding Prayer:

God of surprises,
you enter our lives in unexpected ways,
as you did at the Annunciation.

We pray that at such times of unusual, unexpected encounters,
we may act as Mary did and embrace them fully.

We ask for the same trust that Mary had.

We know that you will support us totally

in the opportunities and challenges that come our way.

We ask this in union with Mary who accepted all of your opportunities with great equanimity. Amen.

6. Love of Jesus and His Gospel

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God,
give us a deep love of your Word
that it may become for us,
food for our heart.

Your loving presence in Mary and Marcellin
made them open to You in the experiences of their lives.
This awareness allowed them to find you
always and everywhere.
All events for them became divine events,
revealing your presence, grace and love.

As with Mary and Marcellin,
allow us to listen attentively to your Word
and be aware of the signs of our times,
so that we can make you present in the world.
Amen.

Introduction:

This reflection focuses on the key element of Marist Spirituality: the love of Jesus and His Gospel.

Water from the Rock:

19. Marcellin taught the first Brothers: *To make Jesus known and loved is the aim of our vocation and the whole purpose of the Institute. If we were to fail in this purpose, our congregation would be useless.* In saying this, Marcellin clearly expressed his conviction, and a growing conviction for Marists today – the centrality of Jesus in our life and mission.

20. For us Jesus is the human face of God. In a privileged way we encounter him in the three special Marist places [the crib, the cross and the altar], where Jesus reveals God to us.

80. Daily contact with the Word of God allows us to connect with our personal journey from the perspective of the History of Salvation. It takes us beyond our personal window on life to the larger window of the journey of the People of God.

90. Day after day, we feel called to commit ourselves to the world; to contemplate the world with the eyes and the heart of God. Our spirituality draws us to deepen our relationship with Christ and in trust to give ourselves in service in community living and mission.

103. Marist spirituality inspires our understanding of how we are to live what Jesus commands us and what Champagnat dreams for us. At the same time it grows and develops as we love one another, honestly and simply, in our families and communities.

Sharing:

Spend some time reflecting on the quotes from *Water from the Rock*.

Highlight or underline any words that strike you.

What do these words or phrases mean to you?

Share what is emerging for you from these quotes.

Concluding Prayer:

Loving Father,
Give us a deep love for your Word
that it may become for us
food for our hearts.

Help us to know and to welcome
your Word in our lives,
so that we may treasure the gift
of Marcellin's spirituality
we have been entrusted with.

Make us more loving and daring
to use the resources you have
so abundantly blessed us with
to build up your Kingdom.
A kingdom of truth and love,
of justice and of peace.
Amen.

7. Marian Spirituality: In the Way of Mary

Opening Prayer:

We thank you, gracious Father,
we thank you, Jesus our Lord,
that in calling us to come to you
as beloved sons and disciple companions.

You have given us Mary as Good Mother,
Ordinary Resource, First Superior,
the woman who would inspire our response to you,
who would lead us to you.

We thank you, Good Mother,
that you have chosen us
you have given us your name,
have made us your own
in order that we might be,
like you, wholly given to the Lord,
in faith and love and trust.

Share your spirit with us;
inspire us with your ways of being and acting,
that we might come to see as you see,
to feel as you feel,
to judge as you judge,
to love as you love,
with your discretion, your sensitivity
and respect for each person.

As Jesus was the whole focus of your life,
help us to make Him,
and the spreading of His Gospel
the centre-point of our entire lives.
Amen

Introduction:

The spirituality bequeathed to us by Marcellin Champagnat is **marial** and apostolic. It flows from God's love for us, gains strength as we give ourselves to others and leads us to the Father.

(Constitutions, #7)

Water from the Rock:

25. The relationship of Marcellin to Mary was deeply marked by an affective and total trust in her, as the "Good Mother," because it was her work that he undertook. He wrote once: *Without Mary we are nothing and with Mary we have everything, because Mary always has her adorable Son within her arms or in her heart.* This belief remained constant all through his life. Jesus and Mary were the treasure on which Marcellin had learned to place his own heart. This intimate relationship helped shape the Marial dimension of our spirituality. In our tradition, the phrase "Ordinary Resource" has come to encapsulate our constant reliance on Mary. The motto attributed to Champagnat by his biographer, *All to Jesus through Mary, all to Mary for Jesus,* captures this close relationship between the Son and the Mother and our Founder's attitude of confidence in Mary, which we are invited to live.

151. Our spirituality, Marial and apostolic, invites us to look to Mary as Jesus' First Disciple for our response. She is for us a model of listening, of love for poor people, and of welcoming the message of God. Her way of living the Word of God inspires us and directs us along the way we should go. Like Mary, we not only magnify the Lord with our lips, but commit ourselves to serve God's justice with our lives.

Sharing:

Spend some time reflecting on the quotes from *Water from the Rock*.

Highlight or underline any words that strike you.

What do these words or phrases mean to you?

Share what is emerging for you from these quotes.

Concluding Prayer:

Mary, the coming of Jesus into your life
sent you out on service
to your cousin Elizabeth in her time of need.

At Pentecost, you drew the disciples
together in patient hope,
waiting expectantly for the Spirit's coming.
With them, you received the outpouring of
courage and clarity.

You chose Marcellin as your disciple
and you choose us now
to carry the message of Jesus to our
schools, families and community.

You give us your name,
to show us that you walk the path with us,
and share with us your concern for those in need.

Be present to us,
active with us.
Led us to Jesus
in whom we place our trust
and can dream our dreams.
Amen.

8. A Family Spirit

Opening Prayer:

Lord God you show yourself to us as a Trinity,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
different yet one,
living the fullness of life and love,
beauty and power together,
in-pouring and out-pouring,
creative, redeeming, sanctifying in communion.

You want to draw all people to form one single family
where all will be loved as brothers and sisters;
we thank you for your Son, Jesus,
established a community with the apostles,
and prayed that we might all be one in heart and mind,
as You, Holy Trinity, are one.

Help us to work towards that union
of minds and hearts,
so that we can live in communion,
and spread that communion in our world,
making it a place of friendship,
of life shared,
where the human qualities and spiritual gifts
of each may be free to flourish for the good of all.
Amen.

Introduction:

There has been in our Champagnat tradition, from the very beginning, a great 'family spirit' – the Founder urging us to 'love one another as Jesus Christ has loved you'. Let us explore this aspect of our spirituality which is at the heart of our sense of unity as Marists.

Water from the Rock:

30. Marcellin and the first Brothers were united in heart and mind. Their relationships were marked by warmth and tenderness. In their discussions about living together as Brothers they found it useful to compare the spirit of their community life to that of a family. Like our early communities, we are inspired by the home of Nazareth to develop those attitudes that make family spirit a reality: *love and forgiveness, support and help, forgetfulness of self, openness to others, and joy*. This style of relating has become a characteristic of our way of being Marist.

98. Marcellin shows us how we are to form and live in communities of mission. In the very name he chose, *Little Brothers of Mary*, Marcellin summarises the fundamental identity of his community: the gospel virtue of simplicity, the call to fraternity, and the contemplation of the person of Mary.

117. Shared faith enables us to see beyond problems and differences. Community is a gift of the Spirit. To nurture this life in the Spirit, and to encourage and support each other, we endeavour to make our communities schools of faith for ourselves, for young people and for all who hunger for God. Our experience of God becomes bread to be shared.

Sharing:

Spend some time reflecting on the quotes from *Water from the Rock*.

Highlight or underline any words that strike you.

What do these words or phrases mean to you?

Share what is emerging for you from these quotes.

Concluding Prayer:

Gracious God,
once more we remind ourselves
of your wish to draw us together,
one family, one flock, one people
around your Son, Jesus,
supporting, sustaining and helping
each other to grow.

You have brought us together, Mary,
in this Marist family,
that we may make your Son, known and loved,
to be like you, Christ-bringers,
drawing others to join with us
in our communion with Jesus
and our union with each other.

Be with us now, Mary,
as you were with the first Christian community,
that we may live in love and harmony,
in mutual support and challenge,
in union with all the saints.
Amen.

9. A Spirituality of Simplicity

Opening Prayer:

Creator God,
you inspired Marcellin Champagnat
to trust you in all things.
Strengthen us who follow in his footsteps
that we may grow in openness to you
and in acceptance of ourselves and others.

Enable us to drink more consciously
from the “Water of the Rock”,
and the charism that you have gifted to the Church.

Continue to inspire us to be faithful to
your evolving mystery within our lives,
your evolving presence within our world,
your promise of the fullness of life and resurrection.

Gift each one of us
to share your Good News
with the people who come into our lives,
and may we continue to experience your
Good News in and through them.

We ask this in confidence through
Jesus our brother,
Amen.

Introduction:

Simplicity is at the heart of our Marist Spirituality.

Water from the Rock:

33. At the heart of Marist spirituality coming from Marcellin and the first Brothers is humility. It expresses itself in simplicity of behaviour, most especially in our way of relating to God and to others. We strive to be persons of integrity - truthful, open-hearted and transparent in our relationships.

36. This spirituality of simplicity shapes the whole life of the disciples of Marcellin. In humility, we seek to know ourselves in our strengths and weaknesses and readily accept the help we may need. We grow to be at peace with the person God has created.

37. Approaching others with openness and gratitude, we accept them as they are, and readily listen to how they experience us. We willingly offer forgiveness and take the first step toward reconciliation.

41. All of this ensures that, like Marcellin, our journey with God is also one of simplicity. We approach God with transparency, honesty, openness and trust. We consciously seek uncomplicated ways to help us in this journey.

43. The story of our spirituality is indeed a simple one. It is a story of women and men who find within a thirst that only God can quench. Having drunk deeply, they find themselves filled with Jesus' own desire – to give flesh to God's Good News. Moved by the Spirit, urged by God's own longing to bring life to the world, we become streams of living water, flowing through the personal, communal, and ministry aspects of our lives.

Sharing:

Spend some time reflecting on the quotes from *Water from the Rock*.

Highlight or underline any words that strike you.

What do these words or phrases mean to you?

Share what is emerging for you from these quotes.

Concluding Prayer:

Creator God,
we acknowledge your care for us
as we walk in the way of Mary,
following in the footsteps of
Marcellin Champagnat,
who walked in the footsteps of Jesus.

Marcellin was gifted with a dream
of living in the midst of people.
In and through the events of ordinary life
Marcellin discovered the presence
of a loving and faithful God
and a greater awareness of what it meant
to be of service to one another.

Through Marcellin's Charism
we are invited today,
to bring the goodness of Jesus to people
on the margins of the Church and society.
Amen.

10. An Apostolic Spirituality

Opening Prayer:

Lord, you choose each of us individually,
calling each of us by name.
You have led us into the desert
and made us your own,
speaking to our hearts.

When we look back over our lives,
we can see how your Spirit
has been constantly at work
to transform us,
to help us grow and develop,
so that we can give ourselves
whole-heartedly to You.

All this, your consecrating action within us,
shapes us to be sent on mission to others,
a natural outcome of the covenant of love
that you make with us.
We are sent as your messengers.

As we come together now,
help us to appreciate more deeply
this call to mission,
this need to be apostolic,
which Marcellin gave us from the very start.
Amen.

Introduction:

The spirituality bequeathed to us by Marcellin Champagnat is marial and **apostolic**. It flows from God's love for us, gains strength as we give ourselves to others and leads us to the Father.
(Constitutions, #7)

Water from the Rock:

124. Marist spirituality, being apostolic, is lived out on mission. The mission of Marist apostles is born of the experience of being loved by God and of our desire to actively participate in the mission of Jesus. God is passionate about the world and its people, and Jesus expresses this love by a ministry of teaching and healing. *I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly.* Like Jesus we recognise the urgings of the Spirit within, calling us to witness to this Good News. Out of these inner promptings, the mission of the Church is born: to proclaim the Kingdom of God as a new way of living for humanity, a new way to relate with God. We join in this mission of the Church as we look upon the world with compassion.

148. The Spirit speaks God's love ever afresh into our world. Like Champagnat we desire to be continually open to its movement and urgings. The dying Jean-Baptiste Montagne impelled Marcellin to begin his project of having Brothers to teach the deprived children of the rural areas. Who are *our* Montagnes? Who today compels in us an apostolic response? These are leading questions in our ongoing discernment.

149. So we direct our journey to those places where others would prefer not to go, to enter into the suffering there, like Mary at the foot of the Cross, and to be a presence and service that remains faithful, despite its risks. *This experience urges us to move ahead, with courage and apostolic zeal to difficult missions, to marginalised areas, and unexplored surroundings, where the seed of the kingdom has not yet taken root.* When our mission is concluded, we move on to new places that require our presence.

Sharing:

Spend some time reflecting on the quotes from *Water from the Rock*.

Highlight or underline any words that strike you.

What do these words or phrases mean to you?

Share what is emerging for you from these quotes.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Marist Spirituality has its basis
in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel, calls us to
that wholeness that God wants
for all people.

In Marcellin we are inspired by
a man of faith, a man of action
with a preference for the poor.
A man who relied deeply on the
Providence of God,
a man who was innovative, collaborative, inclusive.

Our mission is that of Jesus
the one who listened, touched, healed
and restored.

Gracious God bless us as we continue to explore
the apostolic dimension of our Spirituality.
Fill us with your creative energy.
Hear us. Guide us. Shape us.

We ask this in the name of Marcellin
Your faithful servant and Jesus our brother.
Amen.

11. A Mystic Spirituality

Opening Prayer:

We believe
that we are people gathered together in love.
That God is present,
and with Mary and Marcellin
continually speaks to us through our Marist charism.

We know
that we are immersed in mystery.
That our lives are more than they seem
that we need each other and belong to each other
and to the universe of great creative energies
whose source and whose destiny is God.

We believe
that our God has risked self
and become one with us in Jesus.
In and with Jesus,
we believe that each of us is cherished in God's love,
and that the pattern of our lives
will be the pattern of Jesus -
through suffering and death to resurrection.

And so, aware of mystery and wonder,
we come at this time to enter more deeply
into the sacredness of our lives
and the glory of our callings.
Amen.

Introduction:

A mystic person is one who, through a loving prayerful and contemplation, wants a deeper communion with God and has allowed God to take over their life.

Water from the Rock:

71. Today's world deeply needs men and women who are mystics – people who are able to touch the mystery of all life, in an attitude of openness and surrender. Having experienced the love of God, they are witnesses of light among their fellow pilgrims, inspiring them to seek God.

72. The mystic believes that the Holy Spirit is always present and at work in the world. The Spirit gives meaning to life and our participation in the mission of Jesus.

73. As mystics we perceive “the footprints of God” in all the events of life. Through a reading of our reality in faith, we are taken beyond appearances and surface meanings, and brought into the depths of each situation. Our prayer becomes, *Oh Lord, how great is your love!* And with a deep trust that comes from knowing we are profoundly loved, we confidently open our hearts to God's will.

74. To welcome God in this way, we need to develop an attitude of openness. With God's help we grow into being an attentive listener to life, reflective and perceptive when reviewing the events of our life, and generous in responding to the invitations of the Spirit contained within the substance of our days.

Sharing:

Spend some time reflecting on the quotes from *Water from the Rock*.

Highlight or underline any words that strike you.

What do these words or phrases mean to you?

Share what is emerging for you from these quotes.

Concluding Prayer:

Jesus, draw us into your prayer to the Father;
draw us deeper into the intimate life of the Trinity,
and into your work to open out to everyone,
fullness of life in the Father and the Spirit.

Teach us, like Mary and Marcellin
in our times of prayer and reflection,
to see life, events and people as You see them.

Inspire and strengthen us to continue
the work that you give us.
May our mission lead us back to prayer,
embracing all those you bring into our lives.
Amen.

Water from the Rock — Paragraph Matrix

Introduction to Marist Spirituality: paragraphs 1-15

	God's Presence and Love	Trust in God	Love of Jesus and His Gospel	In Mary's Way	Family Spirit	Spirituality of Simplicity
Essence	16	17, 18	19-24	25-29	30-32	33-43
For Me	44-52	53-70	71-79 How: 80-90	71, 88	73, 83, 87	89, 90
For Us	91-97	107	103-112	99, 113, 114	98, 100-103, 115-118	119-123
For Mission	124, 126, 128	130, 135, 136	125, 127, 129, 130	131-134 151, 152	140-150	135, 137-139
Where to Now?	153-156					