



Family Spirit

08

In 1817 Father Champagnat made the decision to buy a small house in the hamlet of LaValla, next to his Parish presbytery, where his first Brothers could live and work. In time more young men came to live in this house and Marcellin made the decision to join them. This became the first Marist Brothers community.

A central Marist symbol of the table was built by Marcellin and the Brothers in this house. Around this table Marcellin gathered with these young men to eat, pray and study, and also to teach and guide them.

In essence he became their big brother figure, and they his 'little brothers'; the spirit of family developed around this table in this small house that still exists today in the beautiful and rugged French countryside.

CONTENT

Family Spirit has become so central to the Champagnat story and tradition it is now universally identified as one of the five core Marist characteristics that define and help explain the charism and teachings of Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

The notion of the spirit that flows from the LaValla family and continues today within our Marist family communities, is grounded in the story of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The Holy Family helps inspire us. United in Christ's love, and the love of Mary and Joseph for their child Jesus, we build Marist communities that foster a spirit of friendliness, hospitality, compassion and care.

Marcellin invites us into a relationship with a God who loves us.

QUOTATIONS

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT (Marist Education Document)

https://www.champagnat.org/e_maristas/Documentos/missaoEducativaMarista_EN.pdf

107. Father Champagnat's great desire and legacy is that we relate to each other and to the young people in our care as the members of a loving family would intuitively do. We seek to make this a reality even in our more complex educational works.
109. Our way of relating to young people is to be a brother or sister to them. As in a good family, with them we share life with its successes and failures, we set clear standards of honesty, mutual respect and tolerance, and we show them that we believe in their goodness, not confusing the person with their actions when mistakes are made. We are ready to trust each other, forgive each other, reconcile with each other.

WATER FROM THE ROCK (Marist Spirituality Document)

https://www.champagnat.org/shared/documenti_maristi/AcquaRoccia_EN.pdf

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.
101. In a world thirsty for connection and belonging, home is such a powerful symbol. Families and communities become a crucial place for each one to grow, be sustained, healed and encouraged.

REFLECTION

SHARE YOUR REFLECTIONS OR REACTIONS TO THESE READINGS

- A word or a phrase from the readings that resonated with you.
- A learning about Marcellin and the importance of family spirit after reflecting on the texts.

PRAYER

God of love, we come together as a Marist family united in faith, hope and love.
We pray that you help guide each one of us in our responsibility for continuing to share Marcellin Champagnat's charism and vision.

Help us to deepen our relationship with Jesus.
May we model for the young people in our care the love that Marcellin had for the Holy Family.

Mary, accept our love, Good Mother,
as we ask that by your example you lead us to discover the radiant joy of Christ.
Amen.

Mary Our Good Mother, *pray for us*
St Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us*