



We also express love for a young person by showing trust. The most concrete way to give today's young people confidence is by returning to them a leadership role often denied to them in society. For one thing we specifically do this in the sphere of the individual by helping personalise the process of human development (feelings and will), and for another, in the sphere of society, by actively assisting him or her to assume responsibilities with peers and their society (commitment and participation)
Evangelisers in the midst of youth, number 94

*and behold, a voice from heaven said,
"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
Matthew 3, 17*

COUNT ON ME

Welcome to the 2024/25 school year. What you have below is the educational proposal that the Marists of Europe offer as a common theme to work on during this course. During the next 12 months, we want this course to be centred on the promotion of youth participation, making children and young people not only the recipients of our activities, but also the driving force of all our actions, just as God wishes.

From the earliest days of his work, Marcellin Champagnat was creative and bold in engaging with the reality of the young people of his time. He had only been a curate at La Valla for a few months when he was called to assist a dying young man who had never heard of God. Champagnat did so leaving behind all the prejudices of the time, placing the person at the centre. The Montagne experience touched his heart so deeply that he dedicated his entire life to a single mission: to make Jesus Christ known and loved by all young people, especially those most in need. The vision of a young man would forever change his sense of mission, which he would also undertake hand in hand with two young men on 2 January 1817.

From then on, the story has been known to all Marists to this day, heirs to his charism. Yet there is one element that has perhaps been overlooked. For his first community, the forerunner of so many communities of educators, he did not call on experienced teachers or senior religious figures. As we mentioned earlier, he called on two young men, one 22 years old and the other 16 years old. Young people who were given an unusual leading role for the time, whom he placed at the centre of his educational and evangelising mission, and whose work continues to bear fruit more than two hundred years later.

The evolution of society, and with it the evolution of educational institutions, relegated young people to mere recipients of educational processes. However, for some time now, young people have been letting us know their desire to participate in shaping their reality. Young people seek a sustainable society, based on respect for nature, universal human rights, the efficiency of economic justice and a culture of peace from an integral ecological perspective. Some of them try to promote change through their involvement in non-governmental or political organizations, concerned also that issues relevant to youth are discussed, and that they can actively participate in these discussions. We must take up these concerns and offer our support so that they continue to grow, so that more and more are involved.

With the motto “Count on me” we want to return to the origins of the Marist tradition, to place children and young people not only at the heart of our educational action, but also as the driving force behind it. This is our way of helping each person to become aware of his or her own identity, of the freedom to look to the future with hope, of the capacity to recognize himself or herself as a protagonist in the complex fabric of personal and collective existence, of being an agent of change in his or her own reality and of integrating faith and life, and all from a strong experience of feeling deeply loved by God.

When the team that developed the motivation behind this course began its work, they themselves were aware that care had to be taken when defining the objective sought with this motto. The main risk is to interpret the slogan as a condescending and patronizing handover of responsibility to the young in order to let them participate in our projects. Nothing could be further from the truth. Developing this “count on me” implies becoming aware that it is them, the children and young people, who are asking us to assume this responsibility and all that it entails. With learning and training needs, obviously, but with a desire to feel that they are being counted on, with all the implications.

We also believe it is necessary to define what kind of leadership role we are looking for in our young people. We are not talking about social media prominence, about influencer posturing that only seeks the easy acceptance of others. We are talking about genuine involvement in the search for meaning, which helps them in their growth, which makes them discern how to live in today's society from the perspective of a relationship with oneself, with others and with God.

Accepting this call from young people must lead us to rethink many aspects of our daily life in the educational setting and in our social work. This course is an exceptional opportunity to ask ourselves the questions that may be uncomfortable, but the answer to which is the answer to their call:

- Does our school structure facilitate the involvement of students, are the timetables, the spaces etc. adequate?
- Do we focus on issues that are relevant to the growth of young people, that make them question and reflect? Do we provide them with spaces and resources so that they can raise these issues and develop their concerns?
- Do we try to understand their language and their way of expressing themselves in the areas where we interact with them? Do we make the effort to go to where the young people are during academic periods, sport, in their leisure and free time?



- Are they the protagonists of their own evangelisation processes, and do we really believe that no one evangelises young people better than they do?
- In short, are we willing to change our teacher-centric educational processes for paidocentric ones, with young people at the core?

At this point we cannot forget the figure of Mary. That simple but at the same time strong woman, who was able to say to the Father: *here I am*. Even the Lord himself was able to adapt to her reality and to count on her for the most confounding of missions: to convert God into a human reality. His "count on me" should be the inspiration for all of us during this course.

This year's motto is the response we can give to the call made in number 83 of our Marist Constitutions: *"We are close to young people in their actual life-situations, taking the risk of going into what may be unexplored areas where those in material and spiritual poverty await the revelation of Christ"*. This year, may we not fail to listen to this call which, today more than ever, is made to us by each of the children and young people with whom we work: *Count on me*. Happy school year!

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION AND GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS

What kind of leadership role are we looking for? One of posturing or one that is committed from the heart? The importance of a "like" or one that involves giving life? Our aim is to be the protagonist of a profound message, one that is engaging, one that involves going against the tide, one that seeks to be the continuation of the message of Jesus of Nazareth.

Our message is based on the Biblical account of the origin of the Eucharist, which we present together with some proposals for working on it in the classroom or in discussion groups.

Peter, or the desire for the spotlight

Peter, too impulsive, unreasoning, and intellectually limited, steals the spotlight from Jesus within the group of disciples. He is convinced that his violent reformist strategy, which involves taking power by force, is more effective than Jesus' message of universal brotherhood, which calls for a peaceful strategy and open-mindedness. He does not have the qualities; but from his ignorance, he feels smarter than Jesus. Moreover, because he defends the politically correct discourse of the triumphant messiah, he has gained the support of an important sector of the disciples, undermining the authority of Jesus himself.

The Word inspires us: Matthew 26, 31–35

Then Jesus told them:

– *This very night you will fall away on account of me, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered'. But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."*

Peter replied:

– *"Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."*

– *"Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times."*

But Peter declared:

– *"Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."*

And all the other disciples said the same.

A brief interpretation

On the way to the Mount of Olives, where he announced to them the destruction of Jerusalem, he tells them:

– Your fanaticism prevents you from opening yourselves to God's plan. An ambitious, silver-tongued power-hungry man seduces with his verbosity people predisposed to believe him, and we already have a new generation ready to throw themselves on the Roman arms. It already happened with Judas of Galilee at Sepphoris. In the end, all were dead and the country destroyed. Maybe you have a better messiah in the group than me. Ask him to lead you to military victory.

Peter, taking the blame, defends himself against Jesus' accusation, but without abandoning his arrogant attitude:

– Jesus, you are wrong. I am your most loyal collaborator. If I criticise you, it is out of affection. But, even if all these abandon you, I am not afraid of anything or anyone. I will die with you if necessary, Lord forbid.

Jesus tells him:

– You cannot betray me every day and then be willing to die for me. Peter, your brothers will flee; but you will totally disown me. I will tell you who you are Peter: you resemble the fanatic

ics who in the past stirred up the people to take up arms against an empire. Power-hungry cretins, who used the desperation of the unfortunate to sacrifice them in a war they could not win. That is your messianic plan, Peter.

Peter replies:

– No, Jesus, not at all. I am better than the others. Braver, tougher. I will die with you without hesitation.

Jesus says:

– When you abandon nationalist fanaticism and open your minds and hearts to the rest of humanity, the Holy Spirit will give you the strength to love to the point of surrender; so long as you follow the dictates of narrow-minded bullies, you stand alone (because you want to) against the repressive apparatus of the powerful. You are not prepared to resist their cruelty.

Yet they all said the same as Peter, their manipulative tough guy.

Questions for reflection

- Two leaders in the same movement: Jesus and Peter. Who has more support within the group of nationalist disciples?
- What are Peter's qualities, strategic views?
- What values and interests drive Jesus' strategic decisions? Why does he fail to convince his disciples?

Freedom of expression: a threat to structures

There was a time when the oppressors did not cancel the free thinkers, the defenders of human dignity, closing their accounts and persecuting them through social networks. The tyrants of the past sent their hitmen to arrest you, torture you and execute you without further ado. The crime is always the same: questioning the propagandistic discourse of the elites and promoting freedom of thought and the implementation of fairer laws.

Today we would speak of a free-thinking channel, starring brave people, committed to truth and fraternity, unafraid to say what few dare to say, because they don't care about public validation. These communicators serve God and truth. They marry no one. They fear no one. What topics are dangerous to talk about? What things cannot be said? What would you not dare to defend in public?

JESUS OF NAZARETH was threatened with having his channel shut down if he did not abandon his message of free-thinking and universal brotherhood. It was treason not to repeat the slogans of the elites and to deny the moral and racial superiority of Jews over pagans.





The Word inspires us: Matthew 26, 26–30

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

— “Take and eat; this is my body.”

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying:

— “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

A brief interpretation

Historical context of the supper:

Jesus was aware that the repressive apparatus of the regime would come down on him at any moment. His courageous denunciation of the corruption of the high priests and his activity on behalf of women and the marginalised was destabilising the social order and threatening the privileges of the Jewish rulers. On the other hand, his more nationalistic disciples dreamed of Jesus’ seizure of power, even by violent means. They almost wished for an open confrontation with the high priests and their Roman masters to restore who knows what dynasty of King David or Che Guevara. Who knows.

In the sacred space of the table, where words are witnessed by God, Jesus spoke from the heart:

- > I know that ideology prevents you from understanding reality. I am a threat to the regime, and they will want to get rid of me. All of you who are close to me are in danger.
- > They instilled in you a hatred of Rome and put into your heads the fantasy of God’s warrior who would defeat foreign peoples by force of arms and restore a Jewish dynasty at the head of the nation. Do not count on me to bring ruin to my people. The Father’s design is universal brotherhood, the prosperity of peoples and personal freedom. None of these goals can be achieved by war.
- > I will not provoke an armed conflict, I will not negotiate with the oppressors, I will not abandon those who dared to break with the fanatical religious ideology that made them live in subjugation. I have run out of options, and I have decided to persevere in love.

> The disciples were disappointed rather than moved, but Jesus' gestures during his historic last supper stuck with them. After the resurrection, they began to understand.

Jesus took the loaf of bread and tore it with his hands and said:

> This is me and the liberation I am carrying out. Are you with me or not?

Then he took the glass of wine and said:

> This is my life, which I lay down for love; are you with me and my liberation, even unto death?

With the gesture of drinking from the same cup as Jesus, they renewed their loyalty to his project of GIVING LIFE and committed themselves to follow him until death. A few hours later they would disown him. His death on the cross signified their historical failure and the triumph of their enemies. The end?

God is Love. Love is the most powerful creative force in life; but it has a weakness: it cannot be imposed through power. Love must be freely accepted and communicated. The historical rejection of Jesus' peaceful strategy had its first consequence: the Jewish people, manipulated by their elites, embraced the path of war and would end up annihilated by Rome. The rejection of the brotherhood and lordship of God leads to ruin, not as divine punishment, but as a consequence of evil decisions.

Yet Jesus' steadfast, loyal, persevering, undaunted love opened the way to eternity. Raised to the divine sphere, he showed himself to his disciples and they changed the end of the story. The evangelists completed the historical memory of the Last Supper with the voice of the Risen Christ. This is the memorial (what happened then is still happening now, each time the people who continue his message gather to renew their love).

Questions for reflection

- Why does Jesus refuse to change the content of his "channel"?
- Why does he not apologise to those who may have been offended by his freedom of opinion?
- Where is Jesus going wrong, leading him to lose the support of his disciples? Where should he give in, open up to dialogue, lower his values?
- Why does he persist in his peaceful messianism, if it leads to the rejection and failure of his project?
- What image of God is in the background of the ideology of the nationalist disciples?
- What image of God animates Jesus' decision to put love at the centre of his decision-making?

The Jesus of Nazareth channel has been closed for breaking community rules (and nobody cares).

The Word inspires us: Matthew 26, 36-46

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them:

—"Sit here while I go over there and pray."



And he took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them:

—“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

Going a little farther, he fell with his face on the ground and prayed:

—“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.

—“Couldn’t you men keep watch with me one hour?” he asked Peter. “Watch and pray, so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

He went away again a second time and prayed:

—“My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

When he came back he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, the same thing.

Then he returned to the disciples and said to them:

—“Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

A brief interpretation

Jesus spent the night with the disciples at the Last Supper in an area known as the “mill” or the “oil press”, which had a hollow where they could sleep protected from the cold. Jesus sought intimacy with the Father to ask for strength to face persecution and invited his disciples who were most opposed to his peaceful messianism, Peter, James and John, to do the same.

True to his mission, Jesus had tried to lead the people out of the ideological manipulation of the regime; but the fact that the virus of nationalist fanaticism was more deeply rooted in his closest collaborators than his own message of universal brotherhood, plunged Jesus into great sadness:

—It pains me to see how little your objectives differ from those of the oppressors. Overcome nationalist, narrow-minded religious fanaticism and invoke God’s strength to face the reprisals of the regime. I need you on my side, with me.

A silence louder than words. They have never seen Jesus so defeated. Is he losing faith?

Jesus, out of sight of his disciples, collapses in despondency and pleads with God:

—When I accepted your mission at the Jordan River, I knew that my life was at stake. From the beginning I contemplated the possibility of dying a violent death. But now that I see my end near, I have no illusions. My death will not provoke any reaction, any change. No one will care.

The consequence of rejecting the peaceful messiah will be a war that will devastate Israel. I cannot bear the thought. Father, do some miracle that will open the eyes of the people. (God’s silence is not empty of content: “You know I cannot do that. I cannot take away their freedom to decide their destiny”). Jesus continued:

—I have done the job; but the people did not listen to me. I feel free to leave the mission and go to safety. I know that I am also free to leave. But... how can I make myself safe without discrediting the holiness, the meaning of my message? I choose to go on. I place everything in your hands. May your plan be fulfilled in spite of everything.

He went to his disciples, but found neither understanding nor support from them. Their loyalty was to a triumphant messiah, not a failed messiah. They did not even consider that Jesus might die. Their nationalistic fanaticism had them blinded by a fantasy and blinded to reality.

Jesus spoke plainly to them again:

—Calling upon the power of the Spirit does not put you in danger and you do not even do that. Join me in prayer that you may not fail in the moment of trial, for to make speeches about noble ideals is all very well; but it is very different when you are faced with the real danger of armed assassins and instruments of torture.

And turning away for the second time, he prayed:

—Father, I have decided to go forward. Give me the strength to love to the point of giving my life. I KNOW THAT YOU ARE COUNTING ON ME. And despite my possible failure, may your plan of universal brotherhood be fulfilled.

He came back again and the disciples were still asleep, closed off to reality. He left them alone and prayed a third time with the same words. Jesus will no longer hesitate. He will face death with a serenity and courage as unshakeable as his love. He no longer feared death, he no longer feared any man. His life was in the hands of the Father, who gave him the strength to love God.

No reproaches, no sermons, serene in the face of danger. The time has come for this free man to be placed at the hands of the oppressive elites and their repressive apparatus. Before the tribunal of a dictatorship there is no defence but to persevere in love. These are the voices of the hitmen who are coming for me.

Questions for reflection

- Describe loyal love from the story. Why does Jesus decide to persevere in love when everyone turns their back on him?
- Explain the “silence of God” in the story. Why does the Father not intervene miraculously to prevent Jesus’ death?
- How does Jesus experience the closeness of God’s love?

We return to the story of the Eucharist. We reread the events of the Last Supper from the encounter with the Risen Christ, vindicated by God and elevated to the divine sphere. Jesus, who did not seek validation from the powerful, the people or the disciples, finds validation from the Father, by persevering in love. This path is open to all those who want to continue his act of liberation.

What kind of leadership do we want?

Today. Now. At every Eucharist

The Risen Jesus: This is me and my act of liberation (bread-body). Do you want to continue this process of liberation that I started... Until I give my life (wine-blood)?

Disciple: I accept you and I give my commitment to your project of GIVING LIFE, and like you, when things get dangerous, I don’t want to back out.

The voice of the Risen One, alive in the community of continuers

—I went through this world doing good, defending human dignity against totalitarians and fanatics. My dream was to anticipate here on earth the fraternal banquet of heaven. My commitment led me to die on the cross and my love to the point of surrender culminated in my divinisation. But there are still many hatreds to overcome, many hungers for justice to satisfy, many truths to cry out, many totalitarian regimes to overthrow. That is no longer up to me, but in the hands of the continuers of my mission. I opened the way to eternity, for the sake of all mankind, others must continue it.

But you are not alone. To all those who continue my project to create in this world the conditions for every human being to develop his or her full potential in freedom, I communicate divinity (wine = life in the Spirit). Sit at the Eucharistic table with practised love, invoke the

power of the Holy Spirit, the power to love to the point of giving life; renew your commitment to human dignity, persevere in love and attain divinity, rising to an eternal life like that of God.

Final conclusions

- > Don't look to other people for validation. Focus on increasing your personal value.
- > Resurrection is the validation of a fruitful life by the Father of Jesus. A fruitful life is one that perseveres in love. It describes the qualities of loyal love, which God grants to those who genuinely ask for it.
- > Differentiate between admirers, imitators, followers, and continuers.
- > The disciples didn't measure up the first time; but God's offer still stood. Jesus did not write them off. He knew their potential. Who are the people with the most potential in your class? You can only trust those who persevere in love. Who of your classmates have the most potential?

MARIST FOUNDATION

In 2017, the Marist Institute celebrated two hundred years of life. In that year, the Marists of the world gathered at the XXII General Chapter and made some commitments, one of which was to “develop initiatives for the empowerment of children and young people in all the mission realities” wherever we are.

The empowerment of children and young people is only possible through the exercise of the right to participation, a guiding principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, approved by the UN General Assembly in 1989. The Convention has also had an impact on the Marist Institute and during this period the exercises and spaces for child and youth participation at different levels of animation and government have multiplied.

To continue promoting this agenda and in the context of the 30th anniversary of the Convention, at the end of 2019 the Institute’s Secretariat for Education and Evangelisation launched the “Stand up, Speak out and Participate” Project, which among its objectives established the elaboration of a guide on child and youth participation and a leadership role from the perspective of the Marist charism, which would propose axes and guidelines for participation in schools, community and social centres, hostels, apostolates and all Marist spaces that work with children, adolescents and young people.

All educational practices that are part of our performance as teachers, facilitators, guides, or educators, must be accompanied by a series of principles that guide our actions. These principles function as a road map from which we cannot deviate, as we would be acting in a dysfunctional way in our work as educators.

1. Progressive autonomy

Progressive autonomy indicates that the direction and guidance of adults towards children and adolescents is directly related to their evolving capacities. This implies recognising that they are gradually acquiring greater cognitive, physical, social, and emotional capacities. As this happens, the role of adults must become more egalitarian and horizontal, so that children and young people can assume increasing responsibilities and exercise their rights and freedoms in more autonomous ways.

Examples of how we can put the progressive autonomy of children and young people into practice:

- Explore solutions with them that are appropriate to their age, capacities and maturity
- Ask them, how do you think I can help you?
- Do things for a child and let him/her try them the next time on his/her own (e.g., tying shoelaces)

2. Gender perspective

The construction of gender roles accompanies the development of girls and boys as part of their socialisation process. These gender roles are social and cultural constructs, acquired over time, that dictate what each society expects of men and women’s behaviour, i.e. they are roles linked to biological sex. If we do not question the gender roles in our society, these ideas become more complex and limiting, exclusive, or even discriminatory, to the point of establishing, for example, that women should not study but stay at home to take care of their children, or that men are solely responsible for the family’s sustenance.

Examples of how to put the gender perspective into practice:

- Do not divide recreational and sporting activities between girls and boys; e.g. at break/play-time girls and boys can play football
- Protecting girls and adolescents from child marriage
- Providing science education for girls and adolescents

- Promoting sexual and reproductive health, as well as the prevention of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases
- Having protocols for responding to gender-based violence within the population we serve

3. Equality and non-discrimination

Article 2 of the Convention mentions that all rights must be guaranteed to children and adolescents, regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, economic status, disability, birth or other status. This brings us back to the right to equality and non-discrimination.

Examples of how we can put the principle of equality and non-discrimination into practice:

- Raise awareness and educate the entire school and social work community about the negative effects that discriminatory attitudes and practices have on individuals
- Use materials such as documentaries, films, short stories, short essays, lectures, etc. to discuss discrimination, racism, xenophobia, misogyny, homophobia, lesbophobia, and other discriminatory practices
- Ensure the necessary equipment and resources so that children and young people with disabilities can express their views freely and their opinions are given due consideration
- Establish “zero tolerance” policies for discriminatory practices among the education community

4. Educational equity

As part of the Marist community, one of our goals as schools and our social work must surely be educational equity. Here it is necessary to identify the differences between equality and equity. Equal education refers to providing the same resources for all, even though we know that each child and teenager is different. The notion of equity renounces the idea that we all deserve the same, and instead proposes to provide more support to those who have less in order to compensate for their social and economic differences. The concept of equality does not necessarily imply justice; equity does.

Examples of how we can put the principle of educational equity into practice:

- Generate collaborative strategies to help reduce the gaps between high and low achievers
- Generate actions, at school or social work level, aimed at recognising the efforts made by each student, and not only the most outstanding ones
- Spaces for reflection and discussion among teachers to devise creative ways of addressing the specific needs of children and teenagers
- Support parents in accessing external institutions that address the specific needs of children and young people (e.g. school support, medical and psychological care, sports, social work, social programmes, etc.).

MONTHLY MOTTOS

September: this is our moment

A new school year begins, and from the first day the young people want to be protagonists. In welcoming new students. In beginning to set the objectives for the year. In discovering the changes we encounter. In planning the time and selecting what is most important. In asking questions and making proposals. And yes, sometimes also in complaining if we are not comfortable with something. In dreaming of a school year in which they feel they are the protagonists, in which they are the protagonists.

October: we don't give up

The initial difficulties also bring the first doubts. If there is one thing about youth, it is that fears look different. Or they are not seen at all. That is why giving up is never part of the plan for young people. Just as the Bugobe brothers fought to the end for their mission, let us take their example not to give up when it appears that we have not succeeded. Not giving up is about knowing who we can rely on.

November: building our future

The right to participation asks us to guarantee that the child is in a position to form their own judgement, as well as the right to freely express their opinion on situations that affect them, taking into account the child's opinions according to their age and maturity. The right to participation speaks to us of respect for young people to have a voice and a vote in the building of their future.

December: ready to welcome you

Advent, a time of waiting and preparation. The arrival of a child is not something to be improvised, especially when it is a Child who is going to tell us loud and clear: "Count on me". We have to make room in our home and in our lives. We must allow joy to overcome us, and we must know how to transmit it to those around us. And to be ready, when the good news arrives, to run to welcome the newcomer. It is a time to place ourselves, as Marcellin asked us to do, first before the crib.

January: we take responsibility

The new year is full of resolutions, but it is not enough just to make them. We have to take responsibility for carrying them out. And along with personal resolutions, this month reminds us of the need to fight for peace. Peace as the only way towards real equality for all, as the only way to ensure a future for all. Working for peace depends on each one of us, it is necessary to take on that responsibility, and that is why we dare to say together: "Count on me".

February: we have a lot to say

It is difficult to find young people who have nothing to say. What varies are the media, the languages, the technologies. Young people have a permanent presence in the digital world. They use all kinds of languages to communicate: graphic, visual, musical, gestural, stylistic languages. It is a field to explore, to make everyone feel part of their growth. And a time to adapt, as a first step to understanding.

March: we accompany you on your way

Lent is the path that leads us to the supreme gesture of love that Jesus had for all of us. It is forty days of looking inward, of preparing our hearts for what is to come. These are days of the desert, but they are also days to accompany those we love on this journey. To look at those

close to us, to be guides and references for our friends, to be willing to leave our tasks so that they feel close to us.

April: we want to announce you

Those who live Easter cannot keep quiet about it. It is so intense that it stirs our hearts and changes our foundations. How can we keep quiet about it? There is no important event in the lives of young people that is not accompanied by countless phone calls and messages about it, analysing every little element. There is no joy that one wants to keep secret. And the Easter of Jesus is the greatest of joys.

May: here we are

Asking to be counted on implies an attitude of availability and service. The best example is found in the figure of Mary. Open to God's call without reservation, and at the same time, taking the initiative when necessary, as she did at Cana. At a time when the course is coming to an end, it is important not to lose the initiative, to pull up our sleeves and to place our gifts at the service of others and to say like Mary: "Count on me".

June: to the end of the world

All the dioceses of the world were part of Marcellin Champagnat's plans. That world of 200 years ago is much smaller today thanks to globalisation and the digital world. It is in that world that young people were born, and where they thrive best. It is time to broaden our mission horizons by letting them guide us into the new confines of the world.

PRESENTATION OF THE POSTER

This year's poster shows young people asking to take up the baton of Marist tradition. Breaking with the traditional approach of showing an image to the viewer, it integrates the observer into the poster itself. All that can be seen of the observer is their hand, in the style of the video games so widespread among young people, but it is a hand full of will, of availability, of service. Together with that hand, the offer that everyone who looks at the poster makes: "Count on me". The different elements of the poster help us to understand the motto of this year's course in full.

The Hermitage: it marks the beginning of the adventure, the beginning of the Marist tradition that has been in mission for more than 200 years. A mission that began with a group of young people who walked alongside Marcellin, and which is now put into practice by so many brothers and lay people throughout the world. A beginning among young people and which now receives the call of so many other young people to continue that mission.

The Road/Path: Marist history is alive, dynamic, and moves forward in time. Just as the roads adapt to the mountains, the Marist world has known how to adapt to the social reality of each moment. And this is the moment in which young people are demanding to be first-person protagonists of their education and their growth as people and as Christians.

The Boy: the history of the Marist tradition began with two young men, the two whom Marcellin called on first. And it was the young brothers who opened the first schools. From the Hermitage, they went to so many villages to make Champagnat's dream come true. They were the first to take on the Marist baton.

Map of Europe T-shirt: in recent years we have learned to walk together as a Marist region. With the unique characteristics of each one of us, we have learned to collaborate and to support one another. We want to continue to move forward together, to form a new dimension in the Marist mission among our centres.

The Baton: represents the Marist mission and tradition, which is looking to take on new relays to continue to make Champagnat's dream come true.

The Trainers: they invite us to be on the move, to seek new horizons for our mission. The trainers that are necessary to protect our feet, to leave the snowy Mont Pilat behind us and to reach every corner of the European region with energy.

The Hand: this is us, the representation of each person looking at the poster. An outstretched hand that brings us into the image, that makes us the protagonist of the image. It is our hand that is offered. The hand of so many young people who, when they look at the poster, will be saying to more than 200 years of Marist tradition: "Count on me".



PRESENTATION OF THE SONGS

A song for little ones: count on me

Count on me, count on me
And on my friends
Give me the baton
Count on me, count on me

We are small, but very important
We are happy and interesting
I will be an astronaut, an actress, an engineer
Being good is what I want most
I cut the rock with Marcellin
Together with Mary I walk the Way
Whatever I am today, I am already a lot
Count on me... I love you and I hear you.

Count on me, count on me
And on my friends
Give me the baton
Count on me, count on me

Count on me, don't miss out
You're an adult and you don't remember

You were small and at once big
Looking back and looking forward,
We don't get tired, we don't give up
A little naughty, but lots of fun
we are with you to the end of the world
and we are the best... if we're together

Count on me, count on me
And on my friends
Give me the baton
Count on me, count on me

How do we want to make our life
More enjoyable and entertaining
If we don't count on the little ones
Whom we've given life, and who move us
We will welcome with our grace
Any child in need
Our entire family is
Around the table ... of La Valla.



Song for older students: count on me

We are happy and non-conformists
We are subtle we are artists
Sometimes we get mixed up
But other times we get it right

Count on me, give me confidence
I'll give you back peace and hope
Between a good look and reggaeton
We are the message, all passion

We are a people in the making
that keeps the world smiling
count on me to the end of the world
our answer is a resounding Yes

Count on me, I want to shout it out
Online on socials, in nearby shop windows
Cutting the rock with Marcellin
Makes me live like a whirlwind

(Chorus)
Count on me count on me
I am not the end-goal, I am the engine
The star of this song
Count on me count on me
Count on me and my friends
It's our time we don't give up
Count on me,
Count on me, it will all work out!

Young and always the star
I have too much art, too much charisma
What I lack in experience
I make up for in love, art and madness

Count on me, this is our moment
Why wait to be older

New dreams will be forged
Around the table at La Valla

(Chorus)
Count on me count on me
I am not the end-goal, I am the engine
The star of this song
Count on me count on me
Count on me and my friends
It's our time we don't give up
Count on me,
Count on me, it will all work out!

(You better count me
If you don't, I know you'll be lost).

Count on me, I want to shout it out
Online on socials and in nearby shop win-
dows
On the corners, on the covers
In caresses and glances
Long distances, short distances
In the wild crashing of the waves
On journeys, at stops
When I do everything, when I do nothing.
Count on me, I'm with you
Educator, rich or beggar *
With God above, Jesus beside
What a gang that's here with us
This energy that overflows
It will change more than a few things
count on me, I multiply
bread and fish, hot and cold
Mary asks and from water I make wine
and a thousand smiles for the road

Anyway, anyway, what I want to say,