

Intercessions:

In highlighting the dedication of consecrated women and men throughout the world, may we embrace Pope Francis' call to 'Wake up the World', by *keeping watch ... and remaining, with resolute hearts, faithful to the Lord continuing on this journey of grace.* We pray to the Lord....

In this Advent time of waiting and keeping watch, may we listen as our frailty and 'rough edges' call us to a deeper fidelity, from out of darkness to light and true joy. We pray to the Lord....

For those Sisters, Brothers and Priests in the world-wide Marist family, consecrated by their vows of chastity, poverty and obedience ... May they seek to live their baptismal promises more intensely and have the grace to persevere in serving Christ and His Church. We pray to the Lord....

In our Brotherhood we feel supported especially by Lay Marists and others who work alongside us, with our prayer and ministry together. May their support of us enable us to more joyfully live out our vocation as consecrated religious, enabling us to wake up the world. We pray to the Lord....

Let us pray that this special year will indeed be a time of renewal, ever deeper commitment, witness, thanksgiving and new life for religious men and women, and that young people feeling called to this life, be courageous in discerning the Lord's invitation. We pray to the Lord....

(and for what else shall we pray ...)

Our Father:

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, as we begin this Advent, we, your brothers, welcome the Year of Consecrated Life and resolve to prepare fervently for the coming of Christ your Son. May he find us waiting with eager and joyful hearts.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

St Marcellin Champagnat ... Pray for us

Mary our Good Mother ... Pray for us

And may we always remember ... To pray for one another.

"Keep watch!"

**Marist Community Prayer to begin the
Year of Consecrated Life**



Invocation of the Light:

L: Glory be to God who has shown us the light!

All: Lead us from darkness to light,

L: Lead us from sadness to joy,

All: Lead us from despair to radiant hope.

L: Glory be to God who has shown us the light!



Introduction: Pope Francis has announced that 2015 will be a year dedicated to the promotion of consecrated life, and is asking the church's religious to "wake up the world" with their testimony of faith, holiness and hope. The Year began on 30th November 2014, the first Sunday of Advent, and will finish on February 2nd 2016, the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life. During this time, celebrations and meetings will take place, highlighting the various dimensions of consecrated life. These months present us Brothers with a unique opportunity to highlight our particular way of living the gospel and the Marist charism.

Opening Prayer: O God, throughout the ages you have called women and men to search and stand for truth and life, through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. During this Year of Consecrated Life, we give you thanks for these courageous witnesses of faith and models of inspiration who surround us. Their pursuit of holiness teaches us to make a more perfect offering of ourselves to you. Continue to enrich your Church by calling forth sons and daughters who, having found the pearl of great price, feel called to treasure the Kingdom of Heaven by embodying your love and service to all, in the Consecrated Life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading: (for the 1st Sunday of Advent, Mark 13:33-37)

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!' (Pause)

Reflection:

Reader 1: Each Season of Advent leads us to light in the midst of darkness, hope in the midst of despair, liberty in the midst of captivity, and peace in the midst of war or conflict. The key to a grace filled Advent is to begin by identifying where I am experiencing "darkness, despair, captivity and war". Recognising our own unique version of these struggles is the first grace of Advent. We can't say "Come, Lord Jesus" with any real meaning unless we have a felt experience of waiting with what it is we need. Once we experience our need, then the desire can formulate in our heart to ask and seek for what we truly need. **Leader:** *In my moments of waiting, my everyday tasks, and in my prayer times this week, am I able to sit with my needs, identifying where I am experiencing "darkness, despair, captivity and war"?* (pause)

Reader 2: This Advent, by getting in touch with our deeper desires and ultimately our need for a Saviour, we Brothers are invited by Pope Francis, in this Year of Consecrated Life, to "keep watch ... and to remain, with resolute hearts, faithful to the Lord and to continue on this journey of grace." And so, as I keep watch, aiming to be faithful in my life of consecration, where are the rough edges nagging at me, where is the focus of my struggle or my shame? What is it beneath my moments of despair and occasional inertia, that point to what I truly desire? The point that, once named, will indicate how I am to move forward? **Leader:** *In my moments of waiting, my everyday tasks, and in my prayer times this week, am I able to 'keep watch', becoming aware of my rough edges, and their call to me to be faithful to the Lord?* (pause)

Reader 3: As Brothers moving towards our Bicentenary in this "Montagne Year", how are we to keep watch together? How are we to be faithful to the Lord, and keep watch with young people in need of the gospel. How are we to find renewed ways to share with them our presence, words and deeds, that they might come nearer to life and faith? **Leader:** *In our moments of waiting, our everyday tasks, and in our prayer times this week, how might we listen to the desperate needs of young people, both near and far, who call us forward, as Brothers and Lay Marists together?* (pause)

