

MARELLIAN PATHWAYS



Preface

We enjoy finding time to gaze deeply at a flower, a tree, at a beach, or a rugged mountain. Some moments enkindle the presence of God within us; the text of Fr. Mario Guinzoni begins by expressing our inner silence and the possibility to be one with God, totally wrapped in the divine presence. He has been a missionary, spending his life in the enormity of Brazil: being with the poor in the Mato Grosso, in São Paulo, and the state of Paraná. He has been very near to the heart and mind of the Brazilian Youth. He has, therefore, something to share with us all.

His Marellian Pathways are a living message. The ten pathways make for a special journey for our soul. The text he offers needs to be reflected upon to find serenity and joy, meaning and life. It is useful for young people who wish to experience joy, as a roadmap to help them have some valuable and profound insights; a satellite guide for adults to reproduce and revise their experiences. Here we meet the spirituality of St. Joseph Marello, which is an ethic of happiness coming from God, He who alone can give it to us, through the little things.

That which inspired the author is the words of St. Joseph Marello, found in three sources: his Letters, his Writings and “Brief Memories”, a biography written by Fr. J.B. Cortona.

Introduction

A Special Invitation: let us walk in *the pathways of the Lord!* Paths, as you know, at times can be difficult and tiring. But these are pathways that lead to a special goal: Jesus. You will see that it is worth it, and I guarantee that it is a wonderful adventure for you, if you want to be involved in life and not just an angry or bored spectator, standing on the sidelines of life.

There are ten pathways and each one leads to Jesus, but you will see that they all together arrive at the same point though from different points of view.

Who is invited?

This adventure is for you, *boys and girls*, searching for happiness and for deeper and more certain answers to your questions. It is for you, young men and women of today who would like something clearer and more solid in this “fluid” world in which we are living. But, in the end, all of

us can start out on these pathways of faith, be open to God and faithful in prayer.

The guide

A guide is very important, whether one is climbing precipitous mountains or journeying in a forest full of all types of danger. The guide for this fascinating journey is *St. Joseph Marello*: the restless young Christian, priest, bishop, founder of the Oblates of St. Joseph, explorer of the Spirit, who is a man of God for our time as well. These are the pathways that he laid out for us so that we could reach Christ and holiness.

Why start this journey?



The Christian vocation is a way of holiness for everyone, but often this word seems to us to be both demanding and distant. Here, instead, you will find ten simple and easy routes which are possible to walk even for our feet, which are not used to walking! But listen up: **they are routes that have just**

been outlined. You will have to cut them out, and discover in your life how to live this experience of God in an extraordinarily normal way, on a daily basis.

It could also be that the journey makes you realize that you could do more. Perhaps you will begin to enjoy the adventure and discover that He loves you and calls you in love to other pathways and journeys as a true climber and explorer in the Spirit. You will see, then, that *the religious and priestly vocation* is always something surprising from God.

Recommendations

You will notice that each pathway is divided into four little sections:

- a brief look at an aspect of life;
- a meditation-contemplation on the Word of God to shed light on our life;
- Some proposals on how to live and put into practice: to try and to see that the way is simple and manageable;
- Times of prayer to give you strength along the way.

Your guide is always with you, with his words and teachings, to lead you to Christ, the true goal.

You can journey as you like: once a week, once a month according to your possibilities and abilities. Do not get discouraged. Seek to put it into practice and you will discover new horizons little by little that will lead you up the mountain, or take you into the forest...of your heart. Seek help from someone, and journey together with others because, if you want to go far, it is always better to walk as a group!

So, what are you waiting for? Get going, and do not lose heart!

Bon voyage!

Fr. Mario Guinzoni, OSJ

“When the goal has been set... we must keep our eyes on our goal always.” St. Joseph Marelllo

1. Now I Begin

“Now I begin, said our great masters who preceded us: let us repeat it sincerely and firmly before the presence of God” St. Joseph Marelllo, Letter 36



1) Consider

This was the starting point for Marelllo at the beginning of his journey to holiness. He followed this path for his entire life,

and he found God! Right now (not in a little while or tomorrow)! To live the present moment well is how to put our hand in God's hand like “a little child playing under its mother's gaze” (Letter 23). “So my dear friend when will we truly begin? *In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ: right now*” (Letter 24).

Consider: if you live only thinking of the future or take refuge in the past, you are living in a fantasy world, not in the real world.

Listen up: each day begins with a first step, the one I take right now! Life is not a training exercise or much less a preliminary draft!

I begin: to be a complete human person open to others, to live with dignity my human situation, to live like a Child of God, to love, to be holy, to center my life in Christ and to live my adventure.

Nunc coepi (now I begin): I'll set myself walking along the path to Heaven following the inspirations which you will send down to illumine me” (Scritti, p. 19). Beginning again is always wise, it is

allowing you to be caught up in a God who is always new, and it is humility, capable of living freely in God's arms.

2) Meditate on the Word



a) Live for today, for the word is to decide, to convert, to be in God, because God is only in the “now”, without past or future (2Cor. 6:2; Dt. 26:16-18).

b) Today is pure grace that is Kairós! (Lk. 2:11; 4:21; 19:9; 19:42; 23:43).

This could be the last chance to live, to love, to pray, to be in God. What if it were truly the last chance?

c) To do as Paul of Tarsus did: to run toward the goal (Phil. 3:13-14).

d) To live in the present moment is to create “a new heaven and a new earth” (Is. 65:17; Rev. 21:1-5; 2Pt. 3:13), because the past does not count and God loves you “only” right now! And he will always love you **only** in the now!

e) Now is the time “to wake from sleep”, get rid of our numbing lukewarmness of the past and of the future; “the day draws near” (Rm. 13:11-12). He is the day, Jesus is the Life!

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marelllo

- Consider well: now is the most important moment of your life!
- Do you want to learn to love God? Love now!
- What was it that Jesus, Mary and Joseph did for thirty years? They lived every moment in God: in silence and love!
- God does not keep a list of our sins: allow yourself to contemplate Him who is mercy, right now.
- Throw yourself into the now. To live in the past or future is like being dead. The past could have been important, but it is not real. We live thinking: “Tomorrow I will do this”. But will there be a tomorrow?



4) Pray

“Nunc coepi: *now I begin, my God, my Jesus, my Mother, my protector Joseph, my Angel. Nunc coepi, I'll listen to you always*” (Scritti, pg. 19).

- **“Lord I know now that you guide my future with love. I will do everything possible to live my future well, but I leave the results in your hands”.**
- In the Haily Mary we say: **“now and at the hour of my death”**. These are the most important moments of our lives! And in the Our Father: **“Give us this day our daily bread”**. We ask for the bread for today, not in surplus!

“Time is a jewel that is of incalculable worth today only, not tomorrow. Its value must be redeemed immediately in the precious currency of good actions. Are we masters of past time? No. Of future time? No. Of present time? Yes, but with one condition: that we take possession of it immediately” (Scritti, pg. 28)

2. Joseph of Nazareth

“You, O Joseph, show us the way, protect our steps and lead us where Divine Providence directs us.” St. Joseph Marello, Letter 208



1) Consider

- A paradox: St. Joseph: a popular saint yet...still unknown!
- And still a saint who is tremendously

relevant for the Church today: Patron of the Universal Church!

- And remember: one cannot separate Joseph from Mary and Mary from Joseph, because they are each unique recipients of the “the mystery hidden from ages past in God who created all things” (Eph. 3:9). Yet, “St. Joseph was always so humble and wanted no praise, went his way quietly and unobserved, giving all the praise to Mary, his most Holy Virginal Spouse” (Scritti, pg. 327).
- Joseph, the carpenter, is also the special minister of the economy of salvation (cfr. *Redemptoris Custos*, 32), the man of an unequalled interior life, personification and figure of the Heavenly Father.
- And for us Oblates, Joseph is not only an important saint, but he is the soul, the life of our Charism. Because we are called to “live the Christian mystery as lived by St. Joseph”.

- To discover how to live like Joseph today is a splendid adventure that will challenge us for all our lives and for all of our life! “Be of good spirit under the paternal mantle of St. Joseph” (Letter 278).

2) Meditate on the Word



Joseph is the “son of David” (Mt. 1:20; Lk. 1:27; 1:69; 1:32; Rm. 1:3; 2Tim. 2:8). Jesus will always be remembered as the “Son of David”, an indispensable title for the messianic identity of Christ.

Joseph is the husband of Mary (Lk. 1:27; Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 2:5). A true marriage: “In Christ's parents all the goods of marriage were realized- offspring, fidelity, and the sacrament: the offspring being the Lord Jesus himself; fidelity, since there was no adultery: the sacrament, since there was no divorce.” (*Redemptoris Custos*, 7)

Joseph is the “just man” (Mt. 1:19). He reverences the presence of God. He lives with the “fear of the Lord” in his heart. A live centered in Christ and his interests.

Joseph is the father of Jesus (Lk. 2:48; 3:23). His is not an apparent fatherhood but true, authentic, deriving from the marriage. Jesus is not born from the marriage, but in the marriage. Fatherhood in Joseph becomes a ministry of salvation, which is why Joseph becomes a cooperator in the mystery of redemption.

Joseph is a disciple of Jesus

- A man of faith and discernment (Mt. 1:20).
- A man docile before God (Mt. 1:19).
- A man obedient and available (Mt. 1:24).
- A man of courage and prudence (Mt. 2:13-14; 2:19-23).

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marello

The founder has left us this inheritance: “Joseph is a growing son and the sons of St. Joseph must grow too, at least in their devotion to their Patron Saint” (Letter 210). So we are called to have in our lives the experience of being a disciple like Joseph. Our lives as well present us with difficult moments and easy moments. We need to ask ourselves always: what would Joseph do in my place? In our DNA as Oblates we have this question which requires a daily response.

Concretely:

- Never impose conditions on God.
- Know how to discern the will of God without being anxious.
- Being available for and accepting even delicate tasks.
- Know how to walk in faith and in the obscurity of the presence of God.
- Listen to God's word and receive it into my heart and my life.
- "May God fill our hearts with that same faith that sustained our Patron Saint along every step of his way" (Letter 59).



4) Pray

"You, O Joseph, show us the way, protect our steps and lead us where Divine Providence directs us. Be the way long or short, easy or difficult; be the end known or hidden to human sight; whether we walk or run, O Joseph, we are sure

to be safe with you" (Letter 208)

"O Joseph, teach us, assist us, and make us worthy members of the Holy Family" (Letter 35).

"If St. Joseph did not grant graces, he would not be St. Joseph." (Scritti, p. 173).

3. Hidden Life

"St. Joseph practiced the humble, hidden virtues; always calm, peaceful, serene, in perfect observance of the will of God" St. Joseph Marello, Scritti, pg. 228



1) Consider

The **hidden life** is truly to go countercultural today. The culture, the mentality, the desire for the limelight, or praise from the

world demonstrate in an exasperating way that what is of value is a title, a name, the appearance, and to

always be recognized by others. Society values the exterior.

The hidden life, if understood and lived correctly, is not a lessening of one's personality, or a rejecting of the advances of modern society. A human being reaches fulfilment in loving and being loved, and this is equally true for Christ. The hidden life, then, *is to live in Christ, to live like Christ, allowing Him to guide our existence; this means to center our lives in Christ.* And living our baptism is precisely this.

Joseph and Mary were the first ones to adore Jesus in the hidden life of Nazareth. St. Joseph Marello invites us as well to discover this treasure within ourselves, having St. Joseph as our model.

2) Meditate on the Word

Letter to the Colossians, 3:1-3

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is

hidden with Christ in God."

The Bible uses the expression *hidden life* very little, instead adopting other expressions, that can be summed up in the word humility. But, *hidden life* is a more complete expression, and serves better to identify the interior disposition of the Christian life and of the charism of the Oblates.

- The Letter to the Colossians puts Christ as *the center of life and of the entire Christian experience.*
- This centrality is fulfilled in Christ's death and Resurrection. If the Christians are raised in Christ, he allows Christ to shine forth in his life and seeks the things that are above. These things are listed in Philippians 3:12-17: compassion, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, love.
- The expression "hidden in Christ" is, therefore, relative to the Christian life. The central idea is that of dying and rising in Christ. The hidden life is a direct consequence of this reality.
- So, the Christian has this new life within him (Rm. 6) and cannot allow himself the luxury of wasting time, being attached to the things of this world: this would be a return to slavery. Now the life of the Christian is "to search for the things of heaven", "desire the things that are above", because "we have died to sin" (Rm. 6:2) and we

live “HIDDEN IN CHRIST” which, in other words, means: Loved by Christ, abandoned in Christ. It is to live in Christ, the profound life of sanctifying grace.

Other texts. The Infancy Narratives; Mk. 12:41-44; Lk. 10:21-22; Mk. 3:13-19

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marelo

The aspect of St. Joseph’s life that Marelo presented the most to his beloved sons was the hidden life of this great patriarch with his most beloved Jesus. Here is contained all of his greatness and merits, his true life. And it is in this that God presents him as model for his whole Church, but more so to devout souls, of whom he established him as patron and father, and entering ever more into the hidden life, he said of him: “St. Joseph lived for many years unknown in Egypt and then hidden in Nazareth. His life was continual solitude, and even after death he remained unknown, while God determined that only after fifteen centuries would he be given solemn honor. So let us too, he would conclude with saintly fervor, be hidden from men, but under the eyes of God; unknown to men, yet dear and beloved to God; if we are truly humble, being despised by others will be to our advantage” (J.B. Cortona, *Brief Memories*, pg. 24).

Ask yourself this question: What am I really looking for in my Christian life? Service, glory, titles, status?

- Get it firmly in your head that all that we succeed in doing that is good, all of our gifts, all that we do that is beautiful, is always and only by the grace of God. This thought will make us humble, with our feet on the ground, avoiding the exaltation of the “I”.
- Have you ever thought of doing something – some work, act of charity, prayer, even just studying – only for Jesus, without being noticed by others?
- Why do we seek to be noticed, seen, observed, applause, honors? My happiness does not depend on what others think of me, or say about me, but on what God thinks of me! My happiness depends on me not on others. Before the eyes of the world Joseph was a poor man, and before God’s eyes?



4) Pray

Read. Meditate. Interiorize. Learn **Psalm 130** by heart. It is very beautiful and profound. Try

to make this psalm one of your daily prayers! **“He must increase; I must decrease”** (Jn. 3:30). This could be another prayer for you in the pilgrimage of your life.

“There is no act of virtue that cannot be traced to the Holy Spirit” (Scritti, pg. 345)

4. Divine Providence

“God watches over us with the most loving solicitude.” St. Joseph Marelo, Scritti, pg. 212

1) Consider

Divine providence is the supreme wisdom by which God leads (and provides for) all things, and



sees the future before him. It is always attributed to God because only He has a clear vision of the future. A profound spiritual experience is

born from this fact: I abandon myself totally to God’s Providence, with the certainty that what will happen to me is best for me. God makes all things go in my favour. This was the path of the saints of the Church.

Be careful, however: Providence does not mean to cross my arms across my chest, and wait for God to resolve my problems. It does not mean to forget my part and not be concerned about my life, adopting a passive disposition. Instead, it means to make an effort to resolve my problems, taking advantage of my gifts and capabilities, of the means at my disposal, and which are the graces that He gives me. In this way, we will not need to worry ourselves because everything will be in the hands of God and he will certainly not allow anything to happen outside of his will. Trusting in God and personal effort are the best ways to live the Christian life.

2) Meditate on the Word

The whole Bible shows the provident love of God who creates, nourishes, and loves every human being. But it is above all in the Gospel where we find the most beautiful and well-known passages. Jesus presents Providence as the infinite goodness of the Father (*Lk.* 6:36; 15:1-31; *Mt.* 4:43-48,



20:1ff), to which the human person abandons himself with complete trust (Mt. 6:25-34). The Father concerns himself lovingly of all his creatures (Mt. 6:25-31; Lk. 12:22-29; Mt. 10:29) and Jesus makes concrete in himself his mercy toward sinners, which is the most

perfect expression of the Father's love (Mt. 5:45; Lk. 6:35; 7:36ff; Mk. 2:17; Mt. 18:11; Lk. 19:10). Jesus speaks lovingly also of the Goodness and Providence of God the Father, and asks us to submit ourselves to it in true abandonment as children. We have only to read Mt. 5-7: "Consider the lilies of the field" (6:26ff), "Ask and you shall receive" (7:7ff). Read as well Lk 11:1-4; 12:22-34; 6:31-46. This theme of the Goodness of God continues in the parables, like the parable of the Prodigal Son which is almost like a first work of Jesus which goes all the way to his Passion and Resurrection. These are the teachings of Jesus, which have inspired so many saints on their way of "homo viator", a pilgrim on the way to heaven.

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marello

St. Joseph Marello offers us some true life lessons. Here are some of the more beautiful ones.

No exaggerated worry! "And then...that which Providence desires because with these blessed "what thens?" and with that blessed mania of making things bigger than they are when we write, we end up doing violence to the laws of Providence which regulate events; and that, even as a way to pass the time, is not good" (Letter 53).

Complete faith in Divine Providence but alone and without any human worry (Letter 76). "We know by faith that all is providential here on earth and this faith is the victory that conquers the world" (Letter 64).

Faith works miracles everyday: "Faith works daily in souls the greatest miracles" (Letter 19).

Complete abandonment to Divine Providence: "Complete abandonment to Divine Providence constitutes the highest level of perfection" (Scritti, pg. 187). Always do that which "Divine Providence point out to us from time to time" (Scritti, pg. 132). "There is no doubt that Jesus loves us; therefore, let us have trust in Him" (Scritti, pg. 359).

4) Pray



"Say to the Lord: I am all yours and desire nothing that is not in conformity with your holy will: even at the cost of sacrifices, even deprived of consolation, even full with afflictions, I am ready for everything, Lord: do with me what you will" (Scritti, pg. 237).

Let us with one voice exclaim: Fiat voluntas Dei in omnibus- "May God's will be done in everything", and meanwhile let us meditate on the events taking place with divine permission" (Letter 234)

"He who is worried and full of anxiety in his work does an offense to God and does not say the Our Father from the heart." (Letter 23).

Now are you able to pray the Our Father in perfect abandonment to Divine Providence?

5. The Will of God

"Work with purity of intention. Confident and persevering prayer – complete uniformity to God's wishes: this is our motto" St. Joseph Marello, Letter 41

1) Consider



"God's will be done". This is a popular expression that perhaps even we have said at times. In certain difficult moments, problems,

limited situations, we end up accepting the will of God, though maybe understanding little what we are saying. But we need to ask ourselves if we are saying, "Yes" to the will of God or merely resigning ourselves to the situation and giving it a Christian spin.

"God willing": Here is another common phrase, more a pious desire than embracing the will of God. Accepting in fate that which is inevitable, could be common sense, or a philosophy of life, but it is not embracing the will of God.

At the root of the will of God there is a deep faith in God who is the Father, and not an absolute monarch who enslaves his subjects. And, if he is a Father, then we are his children, and this completely changes the vision of our life, because now, it is not all predetermined and envisioned, but a plan of the God of Love, which is new every day, with our collaboration. Seen like this, life is a human and divine adventure, full of the infinite. It is a harmony that contrasts neither with God nor with humanity. The human person becomes an active participant in the Kingdom, freely connected to the grace of God. To live in this way is to live Christian fulfilment.



2) Meditate on the Word

Matthew and Mark present the new family of Jesus (mother and brothers) as those who do “the will of my heavenly Father” (Mt. 12:50; Mk. 3:32-35). Matthew, on his part, shows as well in 26:39, 42, Jesus living this, when fulfills the Father’s will, and drinks

the cup to the dregs. Then, let us not forget, in Matthew, the example of Joseph as well (1:18-25), the just man of Nazareth who in his silence shouts his yes to the will of God by the witness of his life.

Luke is the evangelist of Mary: “May it be done to me according to your word” (1:38), the obedient disciple. He tells the parable of the house built on sand and that on the rock (6:47-49), and has the text regarding the new family (8:19-21), and even though he uses the expression “the Word”, we can understand that to mean the will of God. For Luke, to live in love and mercy is to do the will of God (see the Good Samaritan: 10:25-37).

John presents the will of God starting from the witness of Jesus. Jesus fulfills the will of God, the Work, and the Glory of the Father. In 4:34, in the text about the Samaritan woman, we read: “My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to finish his work”. “And this is the will of the One who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day” (6:39-40). This is a Jesus directed toward the Father, completely ready to do his will. Still, the passages that show Jesus as a passionate love of the will of the Father are in chapters 15-17, most of all in the priestly prayer. And, at the end of the Passion, we read: “It is finished.” (19:30), the work that the Father has given me to fulfill is finished.

The Letters of St. Paul: In several letters, Paul begins by affirming that he is an apostle “by the will of God” (1Cor. 1:1; 2Cor 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1Tim. 1:1; 2Tim. 1:1). In fact, he received his vocation in an extraordinary manner (Acts 9:1-21; 22:4-16; Gal. 1:11-16; 1Cor. 15:8-10; Phil. 3:6-8), and it is for him the explicit will of God and is part of God’s overall plan for humanity (Eph. 1:3-14).

That which Christians ought to do is: “discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Rm. 12:2), in order to live in newness of life, and the Christian “is a child and an heir, through God” (Gal. 4:7). Paul reminds us: do not be imprudent, but do “the will of God from the heart” (Eph. 6:6). And this because: “This is the will of God, your holiness” (1Thess. 4:3).

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marelo

How to live the will of God day by day?

1) Live the will of God, not sentimentality. **Love** is the secret to the will of God. “*Let us in every moment do the will of God, following faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus*” (Scritti, p. 207); “*Live day by day, striving to recognize in every event the will of God*” (Letter 68).

2) The will of God must not be tolerated, but loved, because it is that which God **has chosen for us in love**. Marelo teaches: “*When it happens that we are overwhelmed with many thoughts and worries that get in the way of our recollection, let us remain calm all the same, with our soul abandoned to the will of God; -Today I will do what you will, my God, and tomorrow again, in the time, in the way and in the circumstances that you wish for me*” (Scritti, p. 228).

3) And God can show his will even in **spiritual direction**. “*Obey, obey blindly; do not rely on your own judgment in matters concerning yourself: there you have the secret of Christian living, the touchstone of sanctity*” (Letter 19); “*Obedience...can take the place of everything, with unfailing success*” (Letter 76).

4) The will of God is already found in our daily duties. Marelo offers some precious directions, teaching us to offer all of our actions to God, like Joseph and Mary did in Nazareth, in the normal life of every day: “*We are not speaking then of doing great and extraordinary things but of doing in everything the will of God. Whether they be small or great tasks that are given to us, it is enough for us the do them out of obedience to God’s will and we will acquire great merit through them*” (Scritti, pg. 247).

5) In our conscience there is a sort of a compass that orients us to that which we ought to do. It is important **to listen to that voice** that speaks within us. This is the grace of God, the voice of the Spirit who enlightens us. *“Let us not listen to the voice of self-love or of the devil. Instead, let us strive to always listen to the voice of Jesus. He speaks to us in various ways: indirectly through his ministers, directly by means of inspirations. Let us always listen to him attentively and strive to answer his invitations”* (Scritti, pg. 279).

6) Living the will of God we can obtain a new and better understanding of Joseph of Nazareth, the most perfect creature to ever live on earth after Mary. He lived totally open to the will of God. And *“Joseph... did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him”* (Mt. 1:24; 2:14, 19, 22-23). How do these teachings of Marello help me in my daily Christian living?



4) Pray

“O Lord...give us the grace always to adore the decrees of Your will” (Letter 183).

“Say to the Lord: I am all for you and I want nothing other than that your holy will be fulfilled in me, even at the cost of sacrifices,

even deprived of consolations, even full of afflictions. I am ready for everything, O Lord: do with me what you will” (Scritti, pg. 237).

“Let us say to the Lord then like St. Paul: Lord, what do you want me to do? Let us be disposed to do whatever the Lord wants without reservations” (Scritti, pg. 241).

“Let us always exclaim together: Fiat voluntas Dei in omnibus, and meditate on the things that happen by divine permission. (Scritti, pg. 228).

“The Lord always does what is for our greater good” (Scritti, pg. 176).

6. Silence

“In silence are men of great character formed, just as in the humble sea shell is hardened the dewdrop that is changed into a precious stone that shall adorn the brow of the daughter of the king” St. Joseph Marello, Letter 23

1) Consider



Okenfuss, a German naturalist (1779-1851), wrote: *“The eye brings man into the world, but the ear brings the world into man.”*

Noise, today, gets in the way of our “listening” to the secret melody of a flower, “listening” to the beauty of the stars, or of the wind that caresses the leaves of the trees in the forest. We lose our sense of God, because in order to listen to God we need silence. Listening is like entering within our interior self; it is to contemplate, meditate, love. Listening is spirituality; it is tenderness and respect for the other. Most of all it is to listen to the OTHER: God. Silence is God’s presence within us; the Ineffable in us, the Being who reveals himself as simply “is”. The Essence of God is love. Silence and love, then, meet.

St. Joseph knew how to live in silence, to be a contemplative of the Word incarnate. *Redemptoris Custos* states: *“The Gospels speak exclusively of what Joseph ‘did.’ Still, they allow us to discover in his ‘actions’, shrouded in silence as they are, an aura of deep contemplation”* (25). Joseph Marello, fascinated by St. Joseph, by his silence and interior life, wanted his Oblates to live *“hidden and silently active, in imitation of that great Model of the poor and obscure life”* (Letter 95). Silence, then, for us, is an extremely important element of our charism, which brings us closer to God and prepares our hearts for God’s works.



2) Meditate on the Word

Silence as the experience of God

It is the experience of man and woman in the desert, who in their tents live in contact with God. It is the shout of those who are being persecuted who

ask for God's presence and salvation (Ps. 21). It is the psalmist who laments the silence of God, who is thirsting for God; who "breathes", "longs for", "remembers", "waits" and "desires" (Ps. 41). It is the hope for the Messiah maintained in the heart for centuries, which flows into the fulfilment of the Promise (Ps. 71; 88; 97; 109). It is contemplation of the Word (Ps. 118). It is the prayer of the Hebrew, lived in the prayerful silence of one who knows that God is always faithful.

One prophet among many: Elijah on Mount Horeb

Horeb, God's sacred mountain, is the stage for one of the most forceful experiences of God that the Bible relates. The great prophet, Elijah, is the man of the gentle wind, of the encounter with God on the mountain. Elijah covers his face (1Kgs. 19:13). In this gentle wind, in the silence, Elijah meets God. God is present in the gentle wind. Elijah closes his eyes and feels the touch of God's hand caress him. The experience of God happens in the silence. Elijah accepts the unfathomable.

The silence of the humble

The humble of the Bible, the "anawim" are those who abandon themselves in God, have complete trust in Him, and have neither voice nor power to defend themselves, because God is their defender. They are the poor of Yahweh, living in anonymity, in silence, and in simplicity. They are the ones who pray par excellence!

They are rich in God! There is Hagar, mistreated by Sarah (Gn. 16:6-8); Joseph in Egypt (Gn. 37-49); Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1Sam. 1:10-15); Judith (Jdt. 9); Queen Esther, John the Baptist. But the greatest figures of this spirituality are Jesus, Mary and Joseph of Nazareth! Joseph certainly embodies, with Jesus and Mary, interior and exterior silence, peaceful docility, complete obedience, availability, and abandonment. The silence of Mary and Joseph, the silence of Nazareth, still "speaks" today. And the Eternal Word also maintained silence for many years, and even during his public ministry, for example, when Jesus spent the night in prayer (Mk. 6:48), went away with his apostles to be alone with them and rest awhile (for example, Mk. 6:31). Even the greatest event in history, the Resurrection, happened in the silence of God!

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marelo

Educate yourself in silence. We need to find moments to hear the cosmic silence, in which we sense the presence of God in the heavens, in flowers, in creatures. We need to see the inner beauty of all things. We need to find time to "look" deep into a flower, a tree, the pattern of the stars and heavenly bodies, to be enchanted by the stars or the beach or a desert mountain or the sunset. These are magical moments that place the soul in the presence of God. *"Let us remain recollected in spirit and in union with God while we carry out our tasks" (Scritti, pg. 218).*

Fill yourself with silence, fill yourself with the Word. The silence lived within the "interior" cell is the soil for the Christian, for discerning the will of God in his life as Mary and Joseph did. The Christian can only live in a state of silence, just like he must live in a state of service and faithfulness.

Be silent before your brother: give space to the other, so that he can be that which he is, and become more and more that which he is called to be. We must listen to the other completely; empty ourselves before our brother, "listen actively", in order to respond in depth. To love means to listen to the other without other voices getting in the way

Live in union with God, like Mary and Joseph: We must be united to God who is before me and loves me, and to be one with God who is within me. Silence gives us this possibility of fully uniting ourselves with God, to allow ourselves to be loved by him, to wrap ourselves in his presence, like Mary. *"Let us imitate Mary in her love of silence, speaking no more than necessary" (Scritti, pg. 198).*

4) Pray



"Pray very much. These are days of recollection. Let us prepare ourselves in silence as we await God's signal" (Letter 25).

"As for the rest, St. Joseph who has provided for us so far will certainly provide for us also in the future; he always says to his children: In silence and in hope is your strength. Alleluia" (Letter 211).

"Let us provide a little room in our heart, a beautiful little place, where Jesus can always abide,

and where we, even in the midst of the turmoil and disturbances of the world, can be recollected in God and from time to time can retreat in spirit” (Scritti, pg. 209).

“Let us often pray these words: ‘Lord, I prefer you to all the great and joyful things of this world. You are all I need in this world and the next: if I did not have you it would seem like I have nothing” (Scritti, pg. 225).

“Let us be silent before listening to the Word, so that our thoughts are already directed to the Word... Let us be silent after listening to the Word, so that it might continue speaking to us, living and abiding in us...

Let us be silent early in the morning, because God should have the first Word, and let us be silent before taking our rest, so that God has the last Word.

Let us be silent only out of love for the Word” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer).

7. The Interests of Jesus

“Each member draws his own inspiration from his exemplar St Joseph, who was the first on earth to look after the interests of Jesus.” St. Joseph Marelllo, Letter 76



1) Consider

To take an interest in something means to participate, take up, embrace, to be concerned about. The interests of Jesus

center our whole life in Christ. How many of these interests of Jesus are in the world today! To take an interest in Jesus is to be directed toward the values of his Kingdom, to evangelize, to be for the Church. It means to defend life, justice, truth, the dignity of the human person. Like Jesus, it means to speak out against hypocrisy, phariseism and to stand up for the smallest and the marginalized in the world. It means to have passion for Christ and for humanity. It means to dream: “a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1), to bring about the globalization of love. Clearly these values go counter to selfishness, individualism and self-centeredness which thinks only of the self and looks after its own interests. And then, let’s be honest, the interests of Jesus conflict as well, many times, with our personal interests, or with groups closed in a world enslaved by money. In the end, it will always be about a

utopia, a dream, but this was the dream of the MAN-GOD.

2) Meditate on the Word



Only three texts among many:

• Ez. 34:1ff: **The betrayal of the shepherds**

This is paradigm and well-known which caused St. Augustine to write a famous commentary. These are the shepherds who “think only of

pasturing themselves” and completely abandon their sheep. We can contrast this Old Testament text with the New Testament text which describes the great shepherd, Jesus, “the Good Shepherd” (Jn. 10), who gives his life and serves the interests of the Father and the world. Clearly, we can also remember Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, who cared for the interests of Jesus for their entire lives.

• Phil. 2:20-21: **Timothy takes care of the interests of Jesus**

This Pauline text to the Philippians is “fundamental” to our charism. Timothy, a co-worker with Paul, is presented as an example of a shepherd who cares for the interests of his flock. Timothy and Paul are examples of the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep. That which is surprising, though not really that much, is the passage that the texts make from being concerned for the community at Philippi to the interests of Jesus. The interests of the community and the interests of Jesus come together, and to work for Christ and for the Church is the same thing in the end.

• Phil. 2:3-4: **No one looking out for his own interests**

This text serves as an introduction to the famous hymn about Christ: “Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but everyone for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus”. Paul from the beginning of this chapter is writing on charity and humility. It is essential to serve the interests of our brothers and require, according to Paul, humility, charity and to flee from selfish ambitions following the example of Jesus Christ.

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marelo

Joseph Marelo:

- Understood the needs of the Church in his time;
- He considered them in the light of prayer and discernment;
- He responded to them in a creative and original way: he founded the Congregation of the Oblates of St. Joseph to “promote the interests of Jesus” (*Letter 76*), taking care of parishes without a pastor, catechesis, youth, lay people, renewal of religious life, and the abandoned poor.

Here are a few passages in concrete of this spirituality;

Love for the Church: “*Individual and particular interests must make room for the general interests of Mother Church*” (*Letter 31*). This is not a sentimental love, but concrete, practical which leads us to love and accept the Church as it is.

In the style of St. Joseph: “*Each member draws his own inspiration from his exemplar St Joseph, who was the first on earth to look after the interests of Jesus*” (*Letter 76*).

Personal and communal commitment: “*Every word, every step, every wish, can be the raw material for serving the interests of Jesus*” (*Letter 76*). Each vocation is open to service, every ministry, every creative pastoral plan, every little gesture, even simple and humble, like an e-mail, a telephone call...is always a gesture made for “these least ones” (Mt. 25:40). There are always “*so many spheres of action to be explored*” (*Letter 18*). But nothing is lost when we are about the building of God’s kingdom.



4) Pray

“Everything always for the glory of our blessed God” (*Letter 18*).

“Yes, from now on I want to love only you, oh Lord, source of all love” (*Scritti*, pg. 18).

“O glorious patriarch St Joseph...next to the Blessed Virgin you were the first one to enfold in your arms the Redeemer. Be our exemplar in our ministry, which, like your own, is a ministry of intimate relationship with the Divine Word” (*Letter 35*).

“O Mary, make me yours that I may belong to Jesus, body and soul” (*Scritti*, pg. 233)

8. Do the Ordinary in an Extraordinary Way

“Be extraordinary in ordinary things.” St. Joseph Marelo



1) Consider

“God tires of great kingdoms, but never of little flowers.” (Tagore, 1861-1941) Our world exalts the grandiose, the appearance, and

is not capable of admiring that which is simple and small; and, even in spirituality, we find this in religions which get excited about visions, miracles, and external experiences. And yet the most arduous mission for the Christian is striving to be faithful in a life made up of simple and little things, the heroism of the everyday. This is the heroism that feeds the world, whether in religion, in the family, or in society. Holiness today is expected of all people and all vocations, and without requiring miracles or extraordinary penances. This is the holiness exactly of the day-to-day, of simplicity and little things, which requires being extraordinary bricks every day in the building up of the Kingdom and of the Church, by our little contribution, given with extraordinary love.



2) Meditate on the Word

In the Bible are found great personages, but also the humble and the simple, or even the “anonymous”. The Bible gives us above all Jesus, who lived an extraordinary ordinary life for thirty years in the anonymity of Nazareth (Jn. 1:46), with Mary and Joseph. The Holy Family is the brightest example of the possibility of being extraordinary in ordinary things: home, work, family, prayer in the Synagogue, sharing of life, fidelity to the Law, poverty, refuge, anguish, the

son who grows in “wisdom and age and favor” (Lk. 2:52).

The experience at Nazareth is that of the Lord in the little things. Afterwards in his public ministry, Jesus would go in search of the little ones, the humble, fishermen, sinners, foreigners, women and children: a mass of people with no name, at the margins of society and of the capital Jerusalem. He chose among his collaborators a simple group, that of the apostles, and gave them an almost impossible mission. He taught them to be “salt of the earth and light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16); he taught them that “even all the hairs of your head are counted” (Mt. 10:29-31; to love and welcome children (Mt. 18:1-5), to accept the “daily” cross (Lk. 9:23-27); to call God *Father* and to ask him for “our daily bread” (Lk. 11:1-4). He valued the widow’s offering of two small coins (Mk. 12:41-43). For him, even a glass of water – what could be simpler and more ordinary than a glass of water? – given out of love is of great value (Mt. 10:42). He taught us to be faithful in the little things (Lk. 16:10). In his parables, Jesus speaks of a farmer who sows, of wheat and weeds, of the mustard seed, of leaven, of the lost sheep, and of the prodigal son (Lk. 15). For him the Kingdom is the essential nucleus of this message and the Kingdom is always something simple and small but destined to become big. Like love.

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marello

“Give greater importance to a small virtuous act done in the present moment than to a thousand hopeful and generous plans for holiness still in the future” (Scritti, p.207)

- **Carry out our actions, even the most humble, like eating, drinking and sleeping, with love for God.**
Accept out of love the small and great everyday sufferings, taking advantage of the small sacrifices required of us. This is the holiness of small things and in the small things!
- Enjoy that which one is doing. In order to do this, see the extraordinary even in the day-to-day, the feast day in the weekday, in the simple and the common. “Make it so that the grace of special and unique days becomes a daily experience” and make of small actions a poem for God.
- **“Just as in a bouquet of flowers it is not possible to distinguish the sweetest smelling flower from the others and is often the most hidden one that is the sweetest smelling, so, if we put together many souls that are on the**

way of perfection in various states of life, we smell the gentle perfume of virtue but we are not able to distinguish which is the best. Sometimes it is the most unknown soul that, for God, effuses the most abundant scent of holiness” (Scritti, pg. 208).

- **“Great virtues are the reward of fidelity in little things” (Scritti, pg. 351).**

4) Pray



I do not ask you for miracles or visions, but for the strength to face daily life. Teach me the art of taking small steps!” (Saint Exupéry).

I thought, Lord, of that poor brick lost in the darkness of the large building. Nobody sees it, but it does its work, and certainly others have need of it. Lord, it is not important if I am at the top of the house or in its foundation, just as long as I am faithful to my place in your building.” (Michel Quoist).

“Say to Mary Most Holy: I am small, but I like being small, because you like those who are small, like Jesus did when he took the little ones in his arms” (Scritti, pg. 185)

“We must resolve to take the little virtues into greater account” (Scritti, pg. 274); More than extraordinary penances, like the discipline or fasting, we need to practice the little internal and external mortifications” (Scritti, pg. 275); “The great saints reached holiness not so much in practicing extraordinary virtues, which happen rarely, but with repeated and constant acts of the little virtues” (Scritti, pg. 274).

“Let us ask God for his holy grace especially in the little things. It is precisely perfection in little things that can make us holy” (Scritti, pg. 213).

“Purity, humility, obedience and purity are the four wheels on the cart that will lead us to heaven” (Scritti, pg. 190).

9. Union with God

“May our heart always be united with God” St. Joseph Marelli, Scritti, p. 198



1) Consider

All of us at one time or another have had a deep experience of God: in darkness of a church, in a

nice walk on the beach or in the mountains, contemplating a waterfall or the smile of a child, in a beautiful or sad moment of life, in a special moment of our personal history, or meeting a special and honored person. We have sensed, almost touched, God and his presence. He was there, and we were absorbed in that union with Him.

But what is this union with God? It is difficult to define, but we will seek to say something.

It is the goal of a long journey of prayer.

It is the breath of God in each gesture of our life, lived in love.

It is the ardent desire of the one who is able to leave all to have the ALL.

It is the foretaste of heaven: HIS presence in us.

The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard wrote in his diary: “The ancients said that to pray is to breathe. Clearly it is foolish to ask why. Why breathe? Well, because if you do not breathe then you die! It is the same with prayer”. Union with God, fed by prayer, is the same. And if our interior life is fragile, weak, it is because this continuous breathing is missing, the training in prayer that give light to our life and keeps us always united with Him.

But, be careful: the one who lives in union with God only in his intimacy does not have true union with Him, because this is possible only when we love our brothers and sisters, as all of the Saints did, beginning with our Founder. The love of God leads to love of brothers and sisters, because the brother or sister is the bridge, the way that leads to God. We can say without hesitation that it is the threefold reality **I-brother-God that brings about union with God.**

2) Meditate on the Word of God



God's initial plan

From all eternity God has willed to fulfil his plan in each one of us: to have us participate in his divine nature as his friends. He wants to celebrate is unity with us. For this reason he created the man and the woman “in his image and likeness” (*Gn.* 1:26-27), “moving about in the garden” (3:8) with them. This text contains God's plan, God's proposal for humanity. But sin destroyed this plan, and the man and the woman realized that they were without God (3:11ff). In the Old Testament, God attempts many times to re-establish this plan, making a covenant with his chosen people: with Noah (*Gn.* 9:1-17), then with Abraham (*Gn.* 17), with Moses on Mt. Sinai (*Ex.* 19 & 24), with David (*2Sam.* 7; *Ps.* 89). Still, these attempts by God did not meet with a response from humanity. So, God played his final card!

Jesus Christ

Jesus brings about in Easter the new and definitive covenant, and because of this, now, the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts (*Gal.* 4:6), and assists us (*Phil.* 1:19), becoming God's presence in us.

By baptism:

- We are incorporated into Christ (*Rm.* 6:5) and so we are “dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus” (*Rm.* 6:11);
- We participate in the life of the Risen One (*Col.* 2:12);
- We are the “temple of God”, “of the Holy Spirit” who “dwells in us” (*1Cor.* 6:19; 3:16). We are the “dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (*Eph.* 2:22), the presence of God in people's hearts.
- Now, the Christian forms a “spiritual house” (*1Pt.* 2:5), live in communion with the Holy Spirit and is united with him (*Eph.* 4:3). The Christian can now say: God is in me, and so I belong to him (*Rm.* 8:9), I am a “child of God” (*Rm.* 8:16), and I can cry out “Abba, Father” to God (*Rm.* 8:15; *Gal.* 4:6) as a participant in the “divine nature” (*2Pt.* 1:4). The Holy Spirit give life to us (*Jn.* 6:63), because “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts” (*Rm.* 5:5). The fruits of the Holy Spirit in us (*Gal.* 5:22) produce all that is holy (*Eph.* 5:9), and bring us true “freedom” (*2Cor.* 3:17).

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marelllo

Marelllo's spiritual teaching

Let us take in this text of our Founder from 1888: *"The Holy Spirit inspires as he wills and in the way he wills and we have only to be docile to his inspirations. So when we find ourselves recollected in God's presence, which absorbs and concentrates us completely and makes us so passive that we almost cannot even form a thought, let us not be upset that we are unable to enter into vocal prayer or meditation. Let instead be docile to the movement of the Holy Spirit and remain in this state until we feel called out of it. Indeed, this is true prayer, while vocal prayer and meditation are only means to achieve it. When the fire is burning, it is not necessary to add more wood. So, when we find ourselves so absorbed in God vocal prayer nor any other consideration is necessary for us to go to God"* (Scritti, pg. 210)

Before all else, Marelllo speaks about being docile to God's inspirations, to wait on God. Christian living demands docility to the Lord.

For Marelllo, God is the protagonist of the process of union with God and this attitude he refers to as passivity...But relative passivity, because God acts but we also act with God. Yes, allow God to act, allow Him to work in my spirit. Christian life is vocation, and the initiative is always His, it is always He who calls, but he demands my personal response.

This is union with God, which absorbs us and dispenses us from every form of prayer, like one never uses more wood when the fire is burning intensely. This is a beautiful way to live graciously, freely, as an oblation and each one's vocation is to live contemplation as the way to Union with God. It is to have, as the poet Garcia Lorca says, *"un corazón caliente y nada más"*, a warm heart and nothing else.

4) Pray



"O my good Jesus, enlighten my mind so that I might know you: inflame my heart that I might love you and all of my heart might be consecrated to you"

It is not enough to pronounce vocal prayers with the lips: we need to, so to speak, chew them, taste them" (Scritti, pg. 195).

"Let us ask St. Joseph for familiarity and intimate union with Jesus" (Scritti, pg. 188).

"We must call on the Holy Spirit before setting our tongues, our hearts and even our feet in motion" (Scritti, pg. 173).

"And man desires to praise you, for he is a part of your creation; he bears his mortality about with him and carries the evidence of his sin and the proof that you resist the proud. Still he desires to praise you, this man who is only a small part of your creation. You have prompted him that he should delight to praise you, for you have made us for yourself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in you" (St. Augustine, Confessions).

10. Carthusians and Apostles

"Be Carthusians indoors and apostles outdoors"
St. Joseph Marelllo, in J.B. Cortona, Brief Memories, p. 26



1) Consider

Prayer or apostolate?
Active life or contemplative life?
Martha or Mary (Lk. 10:38-42)?
The Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37) or the

Samaritan Woman (Jn. 4:1-42)?
Nazareth (Lk. 2:51) or the journey to Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51)?
The Christ who spends the night in prayer (Mk. 6:46-47) or the Christ of the multitudes (Mk. 8:2)?
The cloistered monk or the missionary?

These are questions that we often ask, almost as if they were two totally different ways of living the Christian adventure. So there are those who see prayer as the only solution to the world's problems and those who think that what is needed above all else in the Church is dynamic pastoral action. We run the risk of skimming over the texts about Martha and Mary, or even the Good Samaritan and the Samaritan Woman, emphasizing first one then the other aspect.

St. Joseph Marelllo did not think of separating faith from life, much less did he think it possible to be an apostle without praying or to pray without being at the same time an apostle. He repeated the saying: "Carthusians indoors and Apostles outdoors", but he really wanted to teach that in the end they are really one thing. There was no confusion in his mind and heart. The Carthusian is the monk who lives in silence and prayer and makes

this his apostolate, and reminds us that in our lives we need to be people of prayer, but at the same time intrepid apostles and missionaries.

2) Meditate on the Word



Martha and Mary (*Lk.* 10:38-42)

Tradition, simplifying and synthesizing, has made these two sisters symbols of the active and contemplative life, as different yet complementary forms of Christian living. In fact, the two aspects are

complementary and they come together in the same experience of being a disciple of Christ. The Gospel text does not seek to highlight one aspect over the other but shows that what counts the most is love.

The Good Samaritan (*Lk.* 10:29-37) and the **Samaritan Woman** (*Jn.* 4:1-42)

Two icons that demonstrate passion for Christ (the Samaritan woman) and passion for humanity (the Good Samaritan), which, however, in the end are really only one passion: that of love.

The Samaritan Woman

Jesus is tired and thirsty as he comes to the well at Sychar and asks the woman: "Give me a drink" (*Jn.* 4:7). In their dialogue, Jesus takes the opportunity to show the woman that he can offer her *living water*. But she only knows the water of that well. But when she treats Jesus like a prophet (4:19), then Jesus reveals himself to her: "I am he (the Messiah), the one who is speaking with you" (4:26). This is the moment of a deep and contemplative encounter. Now the thirst for living water can finally be quenched. The Samaritan woman becomes, in a certain sense, herself the living water in proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah (4:28-29). This text is a gold mine that is still very much unexplored on the theme of prayer and contemplation, which then becomes evangelization. At this well in Sychar there is celebrated a marriage that is different from those in the time of the patriarchs: that of Jesus with each person passionate for him.

The Good Samaritan

The expert in the Law questions Jesus, and knows that one needs to fulfill the Law (*Dt.* 4:1ff) but he himself synthesizes the 613 commandments

into two: love of God and love of neighbour (*Dt.* 6:5; *Lv.* 19:18). The problem was knowing who the neighbor might be, because for a specialist in the Law this could be only a member of his people, a brother, a neighbor, a friend, as long as they were not sinners (*Prov.* 25:17; 27:9; 17:17; *Sirach* 37:1-6). Jesus brings forth something very new: the neighbor-brother is everyone! And he does it by means of a parable very rich in humanity and love. There are two principle characters in the parable: a man and a Samaritan. A man, that is, someone anonymous, without home or work, no identification, who represents each human person and a Samaritan, almost a pagan, discriminated against, because to be called a Samaritan was embarrassing (*Jn.* 8:48), but a "good" Samaritan, full of compassion. In the parable a new concept of how to practice love of neighbor clearly emerges and, after the true and great Samaritan of History who is Jesus (the true protagonist of the parable) who "descends" not from Jerusalem to Jericho but from Heaven to earth to take upon himself all human suffering, the Christian is no longer allowed to differentiate between people but needs to be a neighbor to each person who suffers.

3) Walk in the footsteps of Marelo

- Prayer must become for us, as for Marelo, "the substratum" of all our actions, from the simplest to the most demanding. We are convinced theoretically that prayer is, even today, "*the most powerful apostolate*". But we need to have this conviction pass from our head to our heart and into our lives.
- Apostolate: "*This, then, is our mission to make the teachings of Jesus Christ known, loved, and practiced*" (*Letter 25*). In the same letter, St. Joseph Marelo explains how to fulfil this mission: "*Pray much*". Do we prefer the work of God or work as our God? Let us be careful with the heresy of action!

This is neither poetical nor fantastical: how did Joseph, Mary and Jesus live their "insignificant" days in Nazareth? What was their apostolate in those long 30 years of anonymity? The house of Nazareth was, we would say today, an experience of prayer, and work, at home. There was no "outdoors" for them because their house was open to all of humanity. Mary, in her Magnificat (*Lk.* 1:46-55), had opened her heart to all history, past, present and future, and Jesus lived busy about the things of his Father (*Lk.* 2:49) and Joseph "did" his part in the plan of Salvation.

Paraphrasing from a biography of St. Thomas Aquinas, we ought to say that each one of us needs to be, in an extraordinary way, a completely contemplative and active person: *“miro modo contemplativus et activus!”* A child of Marelllo needs to walk on this path in order to be faithful to his Founder.

4) Pray



“Let us pray. In these times prayer has become the greatest, the most powerful apostolate” (Letter 22).

Pray at all times: *“Humble and persevering prayer (Letter 33), “confident” (Letter 41), “daily” (Letter 44), even “in dryness of spirit...that God will finally*

put an end to our lukewarmness (Letter 33).

“You can pray always if you do all for God, all for love” (Scritti, pg. 246). So say always and in every action: *“All for you, Lord!”* (ibid) The day lived this way becomes truly a “Carthusian” day, whether at home or away.

“Right at the beginning of the day, when we are supposed to get up, let us say: O Lord, I am ready, I want to spend this whole day in your service and for your glory” (Scritti, pg. 246).

“If you pray for all those who pray for you, pray for me as well” (Letter 53). Are we able to say this as well?

The Author

Father Mario Guinzoni, Oblate of St. Joseph (OSJ), was born in Armeno (Novara), Italy on February 5, 1949. He left for Brazil in 1971 as a seminarian, finishing his theology studies in Curitiba. In 1976 he was ordained a priest in his hometown by the Bishop of Toledo del Paraná, Bishop Armando Cirio, and has lived these thirty years as a missionary in Brazil. Director, first of the minor seminary of the Oblates of St. Joseph in Ourinhos in the state of São Paulo, then of the theological seminary of the Oblates in Curitiba, Paraná, as well as Director of Vocation Ministry, he wrote the book, *Todos somos chamados* (We are all Called). From 1987 to 1990 he was pastor of the parish of Jandaia do Sul in Paraná, and from 1990 to 2000 he was pastor among the poor – farmers, natives and “seringueiros” of the enormous parish of St. Francis of Aripuanã in the state of Mato Grosso, in the Amazon, then of the new parish in Colniza. A time of suffering and difficult years full of adventures but beautiful and unforgettable as well.

In 2000, he returned to São Paulo as director of the theological seminary of the Oblates and then, novice master at Cascavel in Paraná. From 2003 to 2006, he was superior of the Oblate Province in Brazil. Since the end of 2006 he is in Italy, in the parish-Shrine of the Moretta in Alba (Cuneo) and is vocation director in the Province San Giuseppe Marelllo in North Italy.



ST. MARELLO



211 North J Street, Madera, CA, 93637—marellobookstore.org