

2011-3 – Three points for meditation and prayer

Like Mary and Joseph, and with William Joseph Chaminade,
let us say “Yes” to God’s call in our day.

I. PROGRAM OF THE ALLIANCE MARIALE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHAMINADE YEAR.

- ** During the week: rosary and prayers for the canonization of Father Chaminade.
- ** From Thursday 10 March to Friday 18 March 2011: novena to Saint Joseph.
- ** Saturday 19 March 2011: Solemnity of Saint Joseph.
Gathering of the entire Marianist Family and guests
for a day of formation or recollection.
Suggested theme: The “Yes” of Mary and Joseph.
Sharing; Mass.
- ** Friday 25 March 2011: Solemnity of the Annunciation.
Mass; prayer to Mary
(See prayer, below: “Our alliance for mission.”)

II. PERSONAL AND GROUP REFLECTIONS

Let us say “Yes” to God’s call in our day, in the present situation of our lives.

Our vocation corresponds to a foundational intuition of Father Chaminade.

Let us be persons consecrated to God while in the world -- and in a de-Christianized society.

As consecrated lay persons, each of us responded, and continues to respond to the Lord’s call, wherever we may be.

- ** **It is in the ordinary conditions of a lay life**, with our professional activity, our family bonds, our surroundings, our various occupations and commitments -- and for many, through illness or advanced age -- it is there, in the offering of our lives, and very often unnoticed, that we exercise our daily “Yes” to the Lord.
- ** **In a society where many persons are isolated and abandoned**, we wish to live “in community,” even if, in fact, we experience isolation and abandonment. In fact, our vow of chastity unites us to Christ and anchors us in fraternal love. Each one, to the extent she is able, places herself at the disposal of others: her own family, her neighbor, disadvantaged persons, those in difficulty. Service might be lived very simply in our habitual relationships or within the framework of charitable organizations.

WITNESSING:

The witness of one of our members who, after a hard life of work, now is faced with difficulties of health while supporting her sister and brother-in-law who are seriously ill.

Do not seek to understand everything, but accept the situation of each day.

Have the wisdom to recognize what does not depend on us.

Like Mary, keep these things in our heard and ponder on them.

(Alliance Mariale of France)

Reflections on the present condition of our lives.

On his return from exile in 1800, Blessed Chaminade asked for and received the title of Missionary Apostolic. He realized that there was urgent need to revive or rekindle everywhere the divine torch of the faith.

Every Marianist is, consequently, a missionary sent to multiply Christians and to provide an education in faith. To achieve that, Father Chaminade exhorted Christians to live in conformity with the graces of their baptism. It is baptism which makes every Christian a missionary. Faith, when received and lived, must become contagious, as he said.

To the ills which undermine our society, whether in peace or in war, and which have many names (corruption, theft, pillaging, prostitution, addiction to material goods, expropriations), do not we have a message to proclaim?

Is it not urgent that we present the values which Blessed Chaminade applied in his day?

Being disciples of Blessed Chaminade must not consist only in theory, in some formula. It must root itself in our lives. In our part of the world, does not our family need to slough off the old so that its members may be authentic disciples of Blessed Chaminade and transform our society?

(Alliance Mariale of Ivory Coast)

In Father Chaminade's footsteps.

The Church in Quebec is going through some very difficult times.

Decline in religious practice.

Diminishing number of priests, and they, of increasing age.

Development of a very strong spirit of criticism, nourished by ever greater attacks against the Church by the media.

All this provokes a crisis of faith.

** Following the example of Father Chaminade, and with Mary and Joseph, on this 250th anniversary, it is my challenge every day to seek the signs that Christ is truly alive and at work, and that he suffers with us. Is he not intimately united with the sufferings of those for whom he gave up his life? Our Church in Quebec stands firm in the face of anger and challenges, to seek the truth which is far from evident amid such a leashing out of accusations.

** What is the challenge to be accepted? Like Father Chaminade, let us conserve deep within our hearts faith, and the hope that Christ will never abandon his Church, its bishop, its priests, or its flock. I must pray that the Holy Spirit continue his work of blessing the Holy Father, our bishops and our priests, and thus to sustain them. Above all, I must pray and bless all those people who savagely drag our Church through the mud. Does this mean that I approve the injustice, the errors of some among them? Not at all! But I do not judge, by the acts of a small number, the entire community which has done so much good throughout the history of Quebec. I pardon, for I believe that it is pardoning which cures all wounds. Did not Jesus say: "Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone"? I am at peace seeing Father Chaminade in the garden of his novitiate, touching the feet of Mary and saying: "Even today you will crush his head." He was convinced that evil will never prevail over the good.

* Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Mary and Joseph. Thank you, Father Chaminade. Thank you for your joy, your hope, your love which invite us again today to struggle against the current on the road that leads to the love of the Father. Thank you, Mary, for covering your Church with your maternal mantle. I am happy to say to you: Yes. I am ready to place myself at your service and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, ready to accept the challenge. For, even after 250 years, the Church has, and will always have, very important challenges to face. Yet, confidence, faith, and hope are always there.

"Do whatever he tells you."

Virgin Mary, you said to the servants at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you." That is certainly what you are saying to us, your servants, today: "Do not forget! Do whatever my Son tells you." Each day your Son speaks to us, first through his word, in prayer, in our own heart -- then, through others and through events. Yes, Lord; you speak to us often. Give me a heart that listens, listens to you! Grant me truly sensitive ears to detect more clearly the breeze when you pass by. May the power of your Spirit penetrate me to enable me to follow Jesus, to faithfully carry out his least desires. In that way I will bring my stone for the construction of a new world, to the glory of the Father and for the salvation of all. "Here I am, to do your will." Amen.

WITNESSING: "Yes" to the Lord through work.

** In life, there is the "yes" which is given repeatedly in our daily routine, and there is the "yes" marking the important things we have to do. Here I would like to speak to you of a "yes" which I presented to the Lord through a re-orientation of my professional life at the age of forty years.

** When I was younger, I underwent two professional formations: the first was a bachelor degree in music; the second, a technical program for social work. After having worked for some ten years in the social sphere, I felt that I was not really at ease in that arena and that I was neglecting my musical aptitude and formation.

** The gospel and the parable of the talents were calling me. I saw in my environment the need for musicians to accompany the different celebrations and song-fests. A desire to give greater place to the Lord in my life was increasing within me.

** After some years of reflection and discernment, I confidently re-oriented my work toward music. I believe that that is where the Lord wishes me to be. Teaching piano is more adapted to my physical condition, for I live with some consequences from polio. My new orientation of work has allowed me to be somewhat more available to the Lord and to the realization of my vocation as a consecrated layperson as well as my commitment in the *Alliance Mariale*.

** I am happy, because, by allowing myself to be guided by the Lord, my life is more unified; I have been able to realize most of my aspirations. Thanks to the Lord and to Mary for having guided my steps and for having supported me in my response to their call.

(*Alliance Mariale* of Canada)



OUR ALLIANCE FOR MISSION

Virgin Mary,
Servant of the Lord and Mother of the Church,
We come to renew our alliance with you
And we consecrate ourselves anew to you
To assist you in your mission.
We wish to welcome you into our life and
Offer you our heart completely.
We dedicate to you
Our life and our time,
To be, with you and like you,
Servants of the kingdom.
We offer you our thoughts,
Our words and our actions,
That they might be impregnated
With the Spirit of Jesus.
We wish to proclaim your name and your love
To our sisters and brothers,
So that, coming to know you,
To love you and to serve you,
They may know, love, and serve
Your Son, Jesus.
Make us sharers in your faithfulness,
Your strength, and your hope,
that, serving like you
With love and fidelity,
We may help you family to grow,
The family of the children of God.
Amen.

Manuel Madueño, SM
Siguiendo a Jesús, Hijo de María, p. 275