

41. When will the time come?

This wonderful story is recounted by Fr Mayet who, for forty years was the silent scribe of Fr Colin and the Marist project. Father Colin, full of enthusiasm and impatience, speaks of his love and hope for the lay branch. The vignette of Cardinal Castracane adds a humorous and very human touch to his retelling of the story.

JUNE – JULY, 1838, TALK BY FR. COLIN AT TABLE IN BELLEY

“Ah! Gentlemen,” he said to us one day, “please pray to God to send someone to spread the Third Order all over the world. I want this with all my heart; I ask God for this. I need someone with an apostolic enthusiasm, someone filled with the spirit of God, someone who can preach like an apostle. Oh, I laugh when I think of the good-hearted, simple way I acted. In my request for the approval of our confraternity of the Third Order, I simply wrote that people would see at the end of time what they had seen at the beginning: ‘One heart and one mind’. That, thereby, all the faithful, all those who were to remain faithful to God, would be of one heart and one mind. Cardinal Castracane began to laugh and said to me: ‘Well, the whole world would be Marist then?’ ‘Yes, your Eminence,’ I said to him, ‘the Pope, too; he’s the one we want as head.’ Well, right away I obtained three documents with indulgences for the Third Order. Ah, gentlemen, let’s come alive; our undertaking is a bold one;” (laughing:) “we want to invade everything. When will the time come?”

LM Doc. 47, par. 1-2. (See E. Keel, p. 60)

Notice the following three observations:

1. Colin asks his confreres to pray for someone to spread the Third Order all over the world. This does seem to be happening today, slowly, not through a “someone” but rather through many, many Marists who have caught Colin’s vision.
2. “The whole world Marist” – This is not about triumphalism but love, Colin’s enormous love for Mary and his desire to bring broken people back to wholeness through her.
3. “When will the time come?” This question leaps from the past to confront lay Marists today.

Underpinning and surpassing these observations is the infectious enthusiasm of a man consumed with love!

