

2. Irrevocably

Four of the twelve who committed themselves at Fourvière to found the Marist congregation, would take their vows twenty years later in the Society of Mary: Jean-Claude Colin, Marcellin Champagnat, Étienne Déclas and Étienne Terraillon.

JULY 23, 1816 -

THE FIRST MARIST ASPIRANTS – FORMULA OF COMMITMENT

We the undersigned, striving to work together for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary, Mother of the Lord Jesus, assert and declare our sincere intention and firm will of consecrating our-selves at the first opportunity to founding the pious congregation of Mariists. That is why by the present act and our signatures, in so far as we can, we irrevocably dedicate ourselves and all our goods to the Society of the blessed Virgin. We do this not childishly or lightly or for some human motive or the hope of material benefit, but seriously, maturely, having taken advice, having weighed everything before God, solely for the greater glory of God and the honour of Mary, Mother of the Lord Jesus. We pledge ourselves to accept all sufferings, trials, inconveniences and, if needs be, torture, because we can do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens us and to whom we hereby promise fidelity in the bosom of our holy mother the Roman catholic church, cleaving with all our strength to its supreme head the Roman pontiff and to our most reverend bishop, the ordinary, that we may be good ministers of Jesus Christ, nourished with the words of faith and of the wholesome teaching which by his grace we have received.

[OM 50] E. Keel, pp. 79-80

The event of July 23, 1816 at Fourvière reminds us that to serve Jesus in the Society of Mary is, first of all, not about ideas or theories but about commitment. The core of the Fourvière pledge is based on five verbs which all refer to a commitment. The aspirant Marists consecrate themselves to the founding of a congregation; they dedicate themselves to the Society; they pledge themselves to endure all trials this might entail; they promise fidelity to Jesus Christ; and they solemnly vow to give themselves to the salvation of souls.

