

February 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Christmas season seemed quickly to blend into ordinary time. Already a new month is upon us. There are two commemorations of note in February: the World Day for Consecrated Life (February 2) and the World Day of the Sick (February 11).

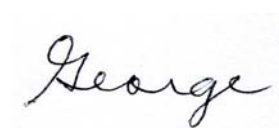
The World Day for Consecrated Life, as described by Pope John Paul II, "is intended to help the entire Church to esteem ever more greatly the witness of those persons who have chosen to follow Christ by means of the practice of the evangelical counsels." It is an opportunity for us to offer thanks for our Marianist vocation and to beg God's strength to be true to that vocation to the end. February 2 also is the anniversary of the consecration of the first 11 members of the Bordeaux Sodality, and so let us pray as well for the lay branch of our Marianist Family.

Pope John Paul II designated February 11 as World Day of the Sick, "a special time of prayer and sharing, of offering one's suffering for the good of the Church, and of reminding us to see in our sick brother and sister the face of Christ who, by suffering, dying, and rising, achieved the salvation of humankind." Let us be mindful on this day of our sisters and brothers in healthcare facilities and those who care for them.

The Lenten season begins on February 17. It is another chance for reconciliation. No matter how we've faltered or failed in the last year, we receive the precious gift of another try. Lent is not a time of darkness. Our Lord is the God of second chances. The annual opportunity to step out of the shadows of sin and into the light of hope is upon us. We can try harder and do better this time and, if necessary, the next time and the next. Every chance we take to seek and receive the grace of God is another opportunity to show our gratitude for the gift of salvation. Entering Lent with any other attitude is certainly futile.

Attached are the special liturgical observances of this month. May our Lenten journey help us be united as a Church and as a Marianist Family to hear the crying needs of our world, and let us pray for God's peace on our world and on us all!

Affectionately yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George".

George J. Cerniglia, S.M.
Assistant for Religious Life