

## **To Birth Jesus as Mary Did**

I recently read the July 30, 2022, concluding message from the International Lay Marianist Assembly in Madrid, Spain. The posting presents three directions for Lay Marianists throughout the world:

- 1) To make our charism more visible within the Church
- 2) To allow communities to be a place of welcome, without judgments, and be bridges of closeness to the faith for those who feel abandoned and excluded
- 3) To welcome young people with a sensitive attitude to their concerns, to make them participants in our decisions and be available to accompany them with the richness of our experience

Reflecting upon them brings me to our Marianist Mission: “To birth Jesus as Mary did.” I find these directions to be wonderful actions to fulfill our mission in our world today. They can be ways to engage in the mission and spread the Good News about Jesus Christ. And, of course, this time of Advent and Christmas allows us to reflect on our mission and how these directions may become part of Marianist lives. Looking to our Marianist Saints during this season of the Incarnation can assist us in our reflections.

Blessed Chaminade, through the Bordeaux Sodality and the Society of Mary, invited men and women of different ages, classes and states of life to be missionaries of Mary – witnesses to the importance of faith in society. Blessed Marie of the Conception de Batz de Trenquelléon and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate worked with the poor to lift them and to help them recognize that they are gifts in the eyes of God. Venerable Marie Thérèse de Lamourous at the Misericorde lived with and assisted marginalized women to empower them and improve their self-worth. Our Blessed Marianist martyrs from Spain and Austria were educators who reached out to the youth to imbue them with a religious spirit in their lives. They are awe-inspiring witnesses to birthing Jesus as Mary did. Let us find ways to emulate these witnesses in our world today.

Let these words from Blessed Chaminade and Blessed Marie of the Conception help us in our reflections:

### **Blessed Chaminade:**

“Mary, in becoming the Mother of Jesus Christ, gave the world the author and the source of all graces ... not just as a mere channel which God made use of ... it was an effect of her will. God made use of her love. Story of the mission of Gabriel. An

eternal decrease of the wisdom of God in respect to Mary, which he shall never retract. ‘God never takes back his gifts or revokes his choice.’ (Rm 11:29).” (See page 51, paragraph 78, William Joseph Chaminade: Marian Writings, Volume 1, Ed. by J. B. Armbruster, S.M., Marianist Resource Commission, Dayton, OH 1980)

### **Blessed Marie of the Conception de Batz de Trenquelléon:**

“We are about to enter the holy season of Advent. This is a time of grace during which many persons will make a rich provision of merits for eternity. And we, my dear child, shall we do nothing? I suggest that we remain united in spirit with our holy Mother and imitate her recollection and the attention that was hers while conversing with the divine Child she bore in her chaste womb. We must put more effort into our prayers and meditations, be more constantly in the presence of God, and multiply short, fervent prayers.

In the spirit of the Church, may we be truly desirous of our divine Liberator. We should feel the need we have of him. Often hidden in the spirit with the Infant Jesus in Mary’s womb, let us admire the examples of love he gives us in such profusion, examples of humility, obedience, charity, and try to imitate him in some aspect of his infinite perfections.”

(see Letter 329 To Mélanie de Figarol, Tarbes, November 27, 1818, paragraphs 3 and 4, page 29, Letters of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, Volume Two: 1816-1827, Ed. by Joseph Stefanelli, SM, North American Center for Marianist Studies, Dayton, OH, 1999)