

3. Such are our projects

In the following fragment of a letter from the very early years, dated January 25, 1822 and addressed to Pope Pius VII, the two Colin brothers and Courveille formulate the goals of the Society. The text speaks of evangelizing believers and unbelievers, catechizing the uneducated, training youth and being close to the sick and the imprisoned. It echoes the missionary drive that was to be characteristic of the Society.

JANUARY 25, 1822
THE MARIST ASPIRANTS – LETTER TO POPE PIUS VII

In the meantime, however, we presume to recall to the memory of Your Holiness the object of the Society which will be established, if it pleases your Holiness. Its purpose is to expend everything for the greater glory of God, for the honour of Mary the Mother of God and for the service of the Roman Church. To work for the salvation of their own souls and those of their neighbour through missions to believers and unbelievers in whatever part of the world the Apostolic See might wish to send us; to catechize the uneducated and ignorant; to train youth in every way to knowledge and virtue; to visit those in prison and the sick in hospitals; such are our projects as they are set out for us in constitutions already composed.

[OM 69] E. Keel, p. 94

This text reminds us that from the very beginning a certain 'missionary restlessness' was seen as essential for the Society, to reach out beyond the beaten path and to go from place to place, especially new places in need. Like the apostles, the Marists were to be sent to proclaim the Gospel and to seal their words by signs of healing and comfort, and like the apostles they were to find their own salvation by doing their utmost for the salvation of others.

