

## 6. At the end as at the beginning

*Marcellin Champagnat in his Spiritual Testament recalls the first disciples of the early Jerusalem community who were 'one heart and one soul' (Acts 4:32), and so does Mother Chavoin. So it is not surprising to find the same reminiscence in the 1833 Summarium written by Fr. Colin. Five years later, Fr. Colin looks back at his first trip to Rome. When he presented the Summarium it was with the great hope that, through it, the last centuries of the world would see what the first century witnessed: the multitude of believers having but "one heart and one soul."*

### DECEMBER 1833 SUMMARIUM

**The general aim of the Society is to contribute in the best possible way, both by its prayers and its efforts, to the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the just, and to gather, so to speak, all the members of Christ, whatever their age, sex or standing, under the protection of the Blessed Mary Immaculate, Mother of God; and to revive their faith and piety and nourish them with the doctrine of the Roman Church, so that at the end of time as at the beginning, all the faithful may with God's help be one heart and one soul in the bosom of the Roman Church, and that all, walking worthily before God and under Mary's guidance, may attain eternal life. For this reason entry into the Society is open even to lay persons living in the world in the confraternity or third order of the Virgin Mary**

[AT I, s, 109] E. Keel, p. 50

Throughout history the apostolic community of Jerusalem has been the ideal of many religious. Still, the words of Fr. Colin remind Marists that what is at stake is not only the ideal of a religious community. The ideal of the apostolic community is held up to the whole people of God, notably to the laity. The image of Mary leading God's people to their final destination, reminds us of what Pope John Paul II says about Mary and ecumenism in his Encyclical (March 25, 1987) *Redemptoris Mater*: 'Why should we not all together look to her as our common Mother, who prays for the unity of God's family and who 'precedes' us at the head of the long line of witnesses of faith in the one Lord?' (n. 30)

