

Lent: A Journey as Stewards

*Each one of you has received a special grace,
so like good stewards responsible
for all these varied graces of God,
put it at the service of others
(1 Pt 4:10)*

Introduction:

In this time of Lent, we are reminded again to “stand fast in the grace of God” (Pt 5:12) as God has entrusted this gift (*chárisma*) to us - as servants (*diakonia*), dispensers (*oikonòmo*) of grace.

Each of us is called, therefore, to become a treasurer, a steward of ‘varied graces’ that are expressed by our charism and are to be made available to all for the benefit of all.

Every member of the community, therefore, rich in this gift, takes an active, co-responsible role in community life.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Take care not to perform righteous deeds
in order that people may see them;
otherwise, you will have no recompense
from your heavenly Father.

Mt 6:1

Christ willed to be born, to live and die poor.
Having given the example, he calls those who wish
to be His followers, to be poor in spirit,
to be detached from material possessions,
to have filial confidence in God and
to tend towards that joyful liberty of spirit
which will enable them
to give themselves entirely for His service
Const. 18

READ

Holy poverty is what makes persons interiorly free, and allows them to grow in faith and charity, a charity that has eyes able to see the needs of others, and to have a merciful heart to help them. Holy poverty is animated by the love that places others before itself, and puts its trust in God, who provides for His creatures every day, like the lilies of the fields and the birds of the sky (cf. Mt. 6:25-34).

Holy poverty is recommended by Jesus to the young man who went away sad because he had many goods (Mk. 10:22) and wanted to keep them for himself. The master had suggested that he sell everything so as to lead him to interior freedom and to mercy that is authentic and generous. Poverty leads to charity and thus enters into the contemplation of the mystery of God.

Economy at the service of the charism and mission

REFLECT

Am I living *Holy Poverty*?
Am I a living memory of the Poor Christ?

PRAY

Good and loving God, Source of every grace and blessing, we bring You thanks this day for the many gifts You have given us. As we begin Lent, we pray for the strength to commit ourselves to become good stewards. Lord, bless us as we continue to live in poverty like Christ.
Amen

ACT

List all the gifts
that you have received until now.
Then list all the gifts
that you share with others,
in your ministry and in your community.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

*He gave us this land
flowing with milk
and honey.
Deut. 26:9*

The Society of Mary desires that we,
her children, should be missionaries of
action and missionaries of prayer.

ES 190.3

READ

“Fidelity to the founding charism and to the subsequent spiritual heritage of each Institute”⁷ is, together with the demands of the Gospel, the first evaluative criteria for decisions and actions that take place at every level, because “the nature of the charism directs their energies, sustains their fidelity and directs the apostolic work of all towards the one mission.”

It is necessary, therefore, to undertake a review of the mission as an expression of the charism to verify if the charismatic identity of established works continues to emerge in the current operational activities.

*Guidelines for the Administration
of the Assets in Institutes of Consecrated Life
and in Societies of Apostolic Life*

REFLECT

What kind of steward am I?
How do I express our Marist charism
in practising this stewardship?



PRAY

Lord God, We praise You and we thank You for Your tender, faithful Love. Everything we are and everything we have is Your gift. In the Name and Spirit of Jesus, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, and to share our time, our talent, and our material gifts as an outward sign of the treasure we hold in Jesus.
Amen.

ACT

Read again *the Spirit of the Society* in the Constitutions and take time to appreciate more the charism entrusted to us.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

One of the things I fear most would be to see the Society become rich. Then the people place their confidence in their purse, not in God.

ES 166.6

*He then said to him,
"I am the LORD who brought you from
Ur of the Chaldeans
to give you this land as a possession."
"O Lord GOD," he asked,
"how am I to know
that I shall possess it?"
Genesis 15:7-9*

READ

Money in itself is a good instrument, as are many other things at the disposal of the human person, and is a means to order one's freedom and to expand one's possibilities. Nevertheless, the means can easily turn against the person. Likewise, the financial dimension of the business world, focusing business on the access of money through the gateway of the world of stock exchange, is as such something positive. Such a phenomenon, however, today risks accentuating bad financial practices concentrated primarily on speculative transactions of virtual wealth, as well as negotiations of high frequency trading, where the parties accumulate for themselves an excessive quantity of capital and remove the capital from circulation within the real economy.

“Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones’.

Considerations for an ethical discernment regarding some aspects of the present economic-financial system” of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

PRAY

Gracious and loving God, we understand that You call us to be the stewards of Your abundance, the caretakers of all You have entrusted to us. Help us always to use Your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. May our faithful stewardship bear witness to the Love of Christ in our lives. We pray with grateful hearts, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

REFLECT

How am I helping in the management of assets in the Congregation?

ACT

During this Lenten season, share any material blessings you have.



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Above all try to live in
the spirit of faith,
which will lead you to
see God in everything
CMJ 90.3

*All ate the same spiritual food,
and all drank the same spiritual drink,
for they drank from a spiritual rock that
followed them and the rock was the
Christ. (1 Cor 10:3-4)*

READ

Responsibility, transparency, and the maintenance of trust are interconnected principles: no responsibility is given without transparency, transparency generates trust ...trust verifies both. Responsibility is the principle of awareness that relates the evangelizing mission to the Church's assets.

Economy at the service of the charism and mission

REFLECT

Am I aware of my responsibility in the Congregation?
Am I also transparent in all my actions as Marist?
Do I reflect the ways of Mary in myself?

PRAY

Generous and loving God, You call us to be disciples of Your Son Jesus and good stewards of all Your many gifts. Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness and deeper appreciation of Your countless blessings. Transform us through the power of Your Spirit to nurture stewardship as a way of life marked by faith-filled prayer, service to our neighbour, and generous sharing. Teach us to be faithful servants of Your gifts. With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold the gifts entrusted to us. We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



ACT

Be visible in the community during the Lenten season.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

We acknowledge that our resources, both human and financial are for the mission of the Congregation. In order to further Mary's work in our world ... we will continue to develop our resources and find new ways of supporting our ministries.

General Chapter Documents 2015

The father said,

"My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found."

Luke 15:31-32

READ

Management of Assets and Stable Patrimony

It is understood that patrimony consists of all fixed and movable assets, all rights, assets and liabilities of the juridic person. This patrimony, which is essential to the life of the institute, cannot be put at risk. In light of this it is critical to rethink and deeply study, in the respective ecclesial and legislative contexts, the canonical norms pertaining to the so-called "stable patrimony".

The Code of Canon Law does not explicitly define this. It presumes the classical understanding, emanating from the canonical doctrine of "assets legitimately designated" as being a permanent endowment (whether capital goods or income) of the juridic person for the purpose of facilitating the realization of the goals of the institute and ensuring economic self-sufficiency.

Guidelines for the Administration of the Assets in Institutes of Consecrated Life and in Societies of Apostolic Life

REFLECT

How have I helped in sustaining the assets and funds of the Congregation?

PRAY

O Lord, I know that at the end of my life You will ask me to account for the talents and gifts You have bestowed on me. May I be able to reply that I made a difference on behalf of Your Kingdom on Earth. Amen.

ACT

Say a prayer for all the benefactors of the Congregation.



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Do you know that Mary, our good Mother truly wishes to be the head of those who are entrusted with her Society? She will guide them even in little things, if they are careful to do nothing without consulting her.

Let us always have recourse to her and we shall always be helped.

CMJ 15.1

*Then Jesus straightened up and said to her,
"Woman, where are they?
Has no one condemned you?"
She replied, "No one, sir."
Then Jesus said,
"Neither do I condemn you.
Go, and from now on
do not sin anymore."
John 8:10-11*

READ

In God's salvific plan the Church is like the faithful and prudent steward [who] has the task of carefully taking care of what has been entrusted to him .In fact, he is aware of the responsibility of protecting and managing with attention his own goods, in the light of his mission of evangelization and with particular care for the needy.

Economy at the service of the charism and mission

REFLECT

How do I take care of the task entrusted to me by the Congregation?

ACT

Make a list of the things that the Congregation has entrusted to you.

PRAY

Most loving God, You have placed an important task before us. There will be challenges, which we will meet bolstered by Your strength. There will be decisions to make, which we will discern with Your guidance. There will be work to do, which we will accomplish fed by Your grace. We ask You to be with us as we continue this adventure in faith. Help us to see the great good that will be accomplished when we answer Your call to build the Kingdom. We ask this through the intercession of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

