

Thanks for being here, being here together  
Thanks for accepting to be a Marist leader  
Thanks for your everyday work and witness

What a privilege it has been to be here with one another these past few days  
Each of us has learnt again how much we have to learn

We are not yet scriptural exegetes but through Mary's work with us we can appreciate better the message of St John's gospel: God's welcome to all to be in God's household, to be temples of the Spirit, living water, for others

The expression 'household' reminds me of the phrase in the early tradition of the Marist Brothers of everyone feeling 'at home', children of the family, *enfants de la famille*.

In John's Gospel, the Central theme is acted and then named: foot-washing, the question "Do you know what I have done to you?" and then the words, the new commandment, 'to love one another'. Jesus was into processing, just as you do in service, outreach and immersion experiences.

Another key text for leaders comes when Jesus asks Simon Peter, Do you love me? Feed my lambs. What the lambs need comes from God. Those who love Jesus can provide this.

In preparing the text "In the Footsteps", we drew on our experience as Marist educators to express what we understand our experience of God's mission to be. We are not preachers. We evangelise through educating. We engage with the everyday life of our students and their joys, their struggles and questions. We go further by introducing them to Jesus, to know and love, the human face of God.

We take John 10.10 as key to our vision: **I have come that you may have life, life to the full, abundant life**. It is the vision of every parent, every grandparent, every teacher and youth worker.

So, we have there our answer to why we do what we do everyday. The phrase could be at the top of every strategic plan. God inspires us gives us hearts of flesh, acts through us, cries and laughs with us, forgives and holds us.

Suggestion: for your contemplation, or *lectio divina*, take the prayer of Jesus : John 14, 15

Some selected lines: Listen to them spoken to you.

Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, you who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will you do, because I go to the Father. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.

I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever,

I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

This I command you, to love one another.

To finish, a prayer from a mystic, Sr Elizabeth of the Trinity:

**Remain in me.**

It is the Word of God who speaks,  
who expresses this desire.

Remain in me,  
not for a few moments,  
a few hours which must pass away,

But remain

permanently,  
habitually.

Remain in me

Pray in me

Adore in me

Love in me

Suffer in me

Work and act in me.

Remain in me so you will be able to encounter anyone or anything.