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Dear Friends

2012. It does not seem very long since we saw in the Millennium along with all the hopes and aspirations. A great deal of water had flowed under the bridge since then. On the very day, Saturday 17th June, that the Millennium Bridge in London was opened with a great fanfare and hastily closed because of vibrations, the Council for the Marist Way was established at a meeting in Birmingham. There wasn't a great fanfare but there have been a number of vibrations which have needed attention. However the good news is that the Council is still working and members of the Marist Way are now taking on responsibilities and sharing the special vision of a Marian Church. In recent years the Days of Recollection have been conducted by the members; a special contribution has been made to the Marist days in Walsingham; Swanwick has been the location of a number of successful conferences; we have contributed to the European meetings in Turin and Francheville and this year one group are planning a visit to the Marist Origins. "Like a Bridge" was the authoritative history of the Third Order of Mary (Marist Way). Sometimes bridges need adjustments to correct vibrations, but this does not prevent them from being an aid to people in crossing difficult waters. May God's blessing be with us in 2012.

The winter issue of "Family Connections", the newsletter of the Marist Laity of Ireland, was very impressive and contained a report of the meeting in Francheville. Eileen McCann reported:

"We feel we are at 'the end of time'. The Church in Ireland is in turmoil.

We who love the Church are feeling lost and betrayed.

We hear Jesus ask us "Do you wish to go away?" (JOHN 6:6-8). With the followers of Jesus, we find ourselves answering, "Lord to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life."

We decided to begin by remembering all of the positive times, the many wonderful faces of the Church, e.g. people we have met, people we have read about, occasions like funerals, belonging to a group of people who believe in more than the world shows us, the inspirations of Missionaries... Ireland is famous for its Missionaries, the social teaching of the Church.

Only then could we look at our Church as it is now.... How we have been hurt, betrayed, lost and in some cases abandoned.

We feel that as Marists we are called to be Mary at "our end time" and embrace the broken body of Christ that we love.

The Church will not die in Ireland because "I AM THE CHURCH!"

What followed Eileen's talk was a thunderous applause and a feeling of tremendous support, empathy, encouragement, and a solidarity as people in the audience began to shout out, "I AM THE CHURCH!"

I spent Christmas in Lourdes with a small group of pilgrims. The weather was quite delightful with a clear blue sky every day and a pleasant temperature - such a change after last year's severe winter. We had plenty of time to ourselves and it was very easy to ponder on the great mystery. Indeed

“A light will shine on us this day,
the Lord is born for us:
he shall be called Wonderful God,
Prince of Peace,
Father of the world to come;
and his kingship will never end”.



PROPOSED PILGRIMAGES FOR 2012

Planning is underway for 2012 and I am now able to give you some idea of what is being proposed.

MARIST ORIGINS This is being planned in conjunction with the Marist Way in Sidcup. Hence this pilgrimage will start from Sidcup. **Monday 14th / Saturday 19th May 2012**. Spend 3 nights in Francheville and 2 nights in Belley. We will visit Lyons, La Neyliere, L'Hermitage, Ars, Cerdon and the various places of interest in Belley. Cost will be about **£450.00** which will include all travel, insurance and five nights accommodation based on twin beds, en-suite, and half board.

MARIST LOURDES PILGRIMAGE **Sunday 3rd / 10th June 2012**. (NB date of Spring Bank Holiday). Travel by coach and ferry. 5 nights full board in Lourdes. Full pilgrimage programme and various outings. Cost: Hotel Esplanade **£395.00**; Hotel Panorama (near Grotto) **£545.00**. Includes Travel Insurance. Booking forms available.

SHRINES OF FRANCE **Monday 3rd / Tuesday 11th September 2012**. 2 nights Paris (Rue du Bac, St Vincent and tour of Paris); Nevers (Ste Bernadette) 1 night Paray le Monial (St Margaret Mary Alcoque and the Sacred Heart); 1 night Rocamadour and the ancient shrine; 3 nights Lourdes and return to England on Brittany Ferries from Santander to Portsmouth with en-suite cabins and meals provided. This will be a wonderful pilgrimage. Cost, to be confirmed, around **£575.00**, including insurance.

Marist Liturgical Calendar and Mass Intentions 2012

Date	Feast or Celebration	Mass Intention
Jan 10	Mission of Oceania to Marists 1836	Society of Mary
24	St Francis de Sales	
28	St Thomas Aquinas	

M. Coleman SM, Marist Way Regional Animator