

## Helene Carion: How Am I Called to be Marianist?

[*Editor's note:* Helene, from Leon, France, wrote her essay as part of the inaugural session of Marianists Write Now!, a NACMS-sponsored writing program held virtually from Friday, November 13 to Saturday, November 14, 2020. Each participant in this session of Marianists Write Now! wrote a personal reflection on the following question: "How am I called to be Marianist?"]

At first, I didn't know how to answer this question. Then I asked myself what my "pillars" are, and it was answered. My pillars are the Marianist ones: faith, Mary, community, mission, and family spirit.

Almost 30 years ago, I arrived to teach physics at a Marianist school at Belfort, in the eastern part of France. There I felt a welcoming, a warmth, a family spirit, a community of faith—all inspired by Mary. However, a significant event happened when a Marianist brother asked me to help with a youth gathering in the summer. He was Father André Fétis, SM. Sometimes, I now say, "It is all André's fault," which means, "thank you, André." I did not even know what I was exactly needed for, only that it seemed to be something good and helpful for the group. I said "yes," and it was the beginning of a beautiful path that has not ended.

Today I know it was the right thing to do. God must have seen that it was good and the Marianist brothers, too. I was not forced; I was always free to choose to answer "yes!" Now, nearly 30 years later:

I am a lay Marianist.

I have been called to responsibilities in Marianist Lay Communities (MLCs).

I have taken part in several national and international meetings.

I was blessed to go to Haiti and Korea.

I work on the French review *Vie et Fraternité Marianistes* (VFM).

I work in a Marist school in Lyon, where I find a charism close to the Marianist's and where I can openly and freely live as a lay Marianist.

I experience real friendship with many Marianists of all states of life, all over the world and just across the road.

So maybe it is my turn:

To call,

To love more, and more freely,

To welcome,

To help, to help running things or let them run,

To let others take their rightful place, to make space for them, the youngest especially,

To pray a lot, to sustain faith, and to encourage,

To simply be here, in community, in communion,

To share the Marianist life, in sickness and in health.

We live in unsettling times; there are a lot of unknowns. Maybe it is time to be like Samuel, closer to the Temple, and to lie down so that I can hear the call of God for me or for others, even when this call seems rare. I hear that:

I am called to be a Marianist by going on serving, being with any human being I meet, every step of the way, for as long as it is given to me;

I can show faithfulness, show my faith in the present and the future by becoming closer and closer to Mary; and

When in distress or surrounded by it, I can watch intensely the cross that saves, and stand with my brothers and sisters at the foot of it, with Mary, who shows us the right way.