

## Deepening in Members their commitment in Christian discipleship

Fr. Champagnat did a lot of sitting!!

When visiting the Hermitage over a number of years, in the evenings I would often take the opportunity to sit in Fr. Champagnat's Chair and be in conversation with him.

He would have spent many hours in his room overlooking the Hermitage gardens pondering and reflecting in this chair in the company of Mary Our Good Mother.

I always felt a very strong sense of connection with him and of his fatherly presence, his love and interest and especially his extraordinary capacity to listen to where he was being called with the Brothers and how to enable their life in Jesus and Mary.

I do a lot of sitting in my life - in my own contemplative silence and also sitting with young people and adults, with victims of sexual abuse as they tell me their stories. I am always conscious of the Marial attitude of attentiveness and respectful presence as people entrust themselves to me.

Often, we just chat about life in general, their dreams, their hopes, their desires, their challenges, their relationships, their families, their inner life and their desire for God.

Each one's journey is just so unique and personal as each attempts to articulate their own joys and struggles, as they come to know and love the person within and the God who dwells within each of them.

It is patient work, listening compassionately with the ears of the heart. For me AWARENESS of God's active presence in the persons of Jesus and Mary makes this listening possible.

This journey which is different but the same for each of us heightens both parties' awareness of the Spirit. This enables the birth of Jesus within us and in turn invites others to do the same.

As I reflect on my own life in relationship with Jesus and Mary I am convinced that it is in my daily life experience that I come to know that lavish, all embracing love that sustains and challenges me.

In article 2 of the 1986 edition of the Constitutions of the Brothers I have always been struck by the phrase "Marcellin was seized by the love that Jesus and Mary had for him and for others." Throughout my life I have attempted to allow myself to be seized.

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