



*I have come to bring fire to the earth  
and how I wish it were blazing already!*  
Luke 12: 49

## *4. Fire and rose*

If we were looking for a spiritual centre point of the Marist enterprise, we might possibly find it in two "moments" in Mary's life which may at first sight seem almost contradictory: Mary's life at Nazareth and her life in the early Church after Pentecost. In many statements jotted down by Mayet, Colin calls up these two images of Nazareth and the early Church, sometimes making a distinction between them, and sometimes making no distinction, blending them together as if they were two sides of the one coin. Marist historian Jean Coste writes: "The first point of reference for every Marist is the person of Mary, of whose spirit we must partake. That Mary represents the heart of Christianity, of the Church, is brought out in two biblical mysteries, to which Father Colin ceaselessly sends us back. The first is Mary present in the Church after Pentecost: humbly immersed in its midst, animating by her prayer and her zeal that first apostolic group. The second sets before our eyes the house of Nazareth, where, in the obscurity of a little carpenter's shop, the redemption of the world began to be realised, and where we see so clearly that a person cannot truly work for God if he is not spiritually ready to accept, if need be, for God's glory, even obscurity and apparent uselessness." Colin saw great richness in these two images. They helped him to envisage the Marist enterprise as a tree of many branches. They helped him, too, to shape his convictions about the need for Marists to be united in mind and heart, to be open to the Spirit and to work zealously in a hidden way. The image of Mary at Nazareth and in the early Church is also enriching for us who feel the call to prayer, yet realise our place is in this world of activity. The Church's liturgy honours Mary with many titles, among which are two significant ones: we call Mary "Mystical Rose" and "Queen of Apostles". In Mary we recognise one in whom the fire of Pentecostal action and the rose of mystical contemplation are combined. In this she is a model for all those who wish to find a unifying point in their lives.