



*In your midst I will leave a humble, lowly people,
and those who are left will seek refuge
in the name of the Lord.
Zephaniah 3: 12*

7. Humble people

The "Peaceful Revolution" in the Philippines in 1986 was an event which stunned the world by its effectiveness, and by the fact that it was a bloodless event. People who watched the action on television were amazed by the simplicity of the whole event. Seeing the tanks halted by women praying the Rosary, and arms laid down not in response to violence but in response to eyes of love burning down any opposition, one wondered whether it was really possible to understand this whole peaceful revolution unless one was a Christian. Here were played out some of the central paradoxes of the Gospel teaching: that God's weakness is greater than human strength; that simplicity overpowers all the schemings of the great; that humility disarms the strong; that love conquers all things; and that real power belongs not to those who trust in the symbols of war and aggression, but to those whose trust is in the name of the Lord. Watching the television reports of the event was like seeing lived out the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zephaniah:

*I will remove your proud boasters from your midst,
and you will cease to strut on my holy mountain.
In your midst I will leave a humble, lowly people,
and those who are left will seek refuge in the name of the Lord. (Zeph. 3: 11-12)*

This paradox of power in weakness and strength in simplicity which lies so deep in the heart of the Christian life is also the foundation of the Marist experience. Mary's first prayer was in praise of the God who "scatters the proud hearted", and who "casts the mighty from their thrones and raises the lowly". Her fundamental trust was in the name of God and the power of God's name. Marists who follow Mary's way of living the Gospel never see themselves as anything but a "humble, lowly people" in the midst of the Church. The "battles" that Marists are called to fight may be less dramatic than that of the Filipino people, but the instruments – prayer, faith in God, and love - are to be the same. Nothing defeats the Spirit when it comes in purity and power.