



*See, I am doing a new deed;
even now it comes to light;
can you not see it?
Isaiah 43:1*

2. Something new for our times

In Scripture, God's choice of human beings for a particular mission often seems to have been a mystery quite beyond the laws of human logic or reason. Certainly, this choice hardly ever seems to have had much to do with personal talent or worthiness. Moses' first response to God's choice of him was, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh? I am slow of speech and a stammerer." God chose David, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons, and the last one that Jesse would have thought would be chosen. Isaiah protested against God's call, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips." Jeremiah questioned God's choice, saying, "Ah, Lord, I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." Ezekiel threw himself to the ground in fear at God's presence, while Jonah ran away from God, and prayed: "Take my life. I would be better dead than alive." Even Mary was "deeply disturbed" at the angel's message, and questioned how it could possibly come about. As for personal worthiness, we have only to remember the apostles: one of them betrayed Jesus, one denied Him, and the rest ran away. And yet, while God's choice may not have had much to do with worthiness or talent, it had a lot to do with usefulness. These men and women were chosen because they would be useful in God's plan. It was God's plan; it was God who was the crafter, God whose fingers would mould and shape the chosen person. "Do not call yourself a child," God says to Jeremiah. "I will put words into your mouth." And to Ezekiel, "I will make your brow like adamant, harder than flint. Do not be afraid." The first Marists had no illusions about the unlikely material that they were; but after all, that wasn't the point. What was more important was that they had been chosen, and chosen for a particular task. They were prepared to let themselves be shaped and formed into something they would never have imagined for themselves. Colin never envisaged that Marists would be a breathtakingly beautiful or delicately refined ornament in the Church's showcase; but he knew that the Society of Mary would be something new, and above all, something "useful" for God, for the Church and for their times.