



# The Marist Sisters

**Origins** The country France, in 1816 — the starting point of the Marist Dream  
12 young men climb to Fourvière and make their solemn promise there to found a Society in Mary's spirit and name — One tree, many branches, sharing this aim.

Like all the branches of the Marist Family...  
*our Dream begins in Fourvière*

*jeanne marie chavoin*

As with many **Dreams** the preparation had begun long before ... in the little village of Coutouvre in France where our foundress, **Jeanne Marie Chavoin**, was born on 29th August 1786.



As she grew up she was appreciated for her great faith, compassion and ability to get things done! Inspiring all she did was her great desire to give herself totally to God and to do this in religious life. Despite this desire she waited... for she knew she was not destined to join a religious community already in existence.

A letter arrived from Fr Pierre Colin, brother of Jean Claude and now parish priest in Cerdon. It was an invitation to Jeanne Marie and her friend Marie Jotillon to be part of the Marist project. The **Dream** was becoming a reality!  
In September 1823 permission was given to begin the women's branch of the Society of Mary (Marist). Jeanne Marie and Marie Jotillon were joined by a third member in October of that year - Marie Gardet... and by December 8<sup>th</sup> 1824 eight young women were received into the novitiate!

**Charism:** (gift from God to our world):  
we are "called by a **gracious choice** to live the Gospel as Mary did in a **Congregation which bears her name**". Wow! What a privilege and what a responsibility!

**Call:** to be a presence of Mary in our world today. Taking as our model the Holy Family in Nazareth and Mary in the early Church, we believe it is possible to transform a village, town, city... yes, even our world, into a happier human community, creating relationships of friendship, service and prayer.  
Jeanne Marie teaches us that it is **how and who we are** - before God and with one another - that makes the difference!