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Fourth Sunday of Easter

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Maybe we shouldn't be afraid, but there is more and more research and writing predicting that certain trends in technology – artificial intelligence and automation -- have the potential to be disruptive to our society worldwide, especially for millions in the labor force. Even though there are benefits, they are often called “disruptive technologies.” Oh, great...just what we needed.

However, “disruption” is not new in our story as Christians. In our first reading, Paul and Barnabas, in urging others “to remain faithful to the grace of God,” were trying to be that in their own lives. However, they ran into “violent abuse” and contradiction. Then even after they had some success (“the Gentiles were delighted”), they ran into persecution.

This dynamic is part of our story as a Marianist Family. The Marianist Charism was born in a time of disruption. The French Revolution, which started out with real hopes, ended up with violent disruption for individuals who were slaughtered and for the structures of Church, government and education that were devastated.

Where is the “joy and the Holy Spirit” that we read of at the end of the first reading?

Unlike Paul and Barnabas who “shook the dust from their feet,” our Founders remained in the disruptive fray as long as they could. While they may not have always been joyful, they remained open to the Holy Spirit and the fruit of their faithfulness was a manifestation of the Holy Spirit given for the benefit of the community (1 Cor.12:7) – which we call the “Marianist Charism.”

They were a witness to us of remaining faithful to the grace of God. From their experience of the Holy Spirit came a way to respond to the varied “disruptions” in our lives.

Faith of the Heart: we believe that we have more than our own human resources to bring to the big and little disruptions in our personal and ministerial lives. As Jesus tells us in the Gospel: “...no one can take (us) out of the Father's hand.”

Community: or one great **inclusive** family in **mission**, “from every nation, race, people, and tongue” as we hear in the second reading. We are not alone and the diversity in our union brings us different, creative perspectives and talents to the disruptions and these gifts lead to benefits for the common good...the good of people who suffer due to the disruption of systemic injustice, poverty and interpersonal betrayals.



And we do this in the name of **Mary**, who experienced disruption at the Annunciation, the flight into Egypt and at the foot of the cross. We are called to be her face in and for the Church.

The *Revelations* reading reminds us we can survive the disruptions of a “time of great distress.” Our faith, our authentic community life and our alliance with Mary allow us to hope for more than survival. We look to *flourishing*... leading to being “filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.”

Amen...alleluia.