



FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATION ONLINE

Dear Brothers and Lay Marists,

Advance Happy New Year to one and all!

I would like to inform you that the Marist Brothers' Foundation anniversary celebration this coming January 2 will be done online. The Mass will start at 10:00 AM. This will be presided by Fr. Joemer Candido, DCM, chaplain of the Notre Dame of Dadiangas University. During the Mass a number of our Lay Marists from the different sectors will make their renewal of commitment. After the Mass, the Provincial will give a message. Lunch will follow at the Province Center.

I am inviting all of you to join us in the said celebration. We will be using the Facebook page of Perpetually Maristas and East Asia Marists of Champagnat.

Let us remember to pray for each other and that the New Year will bring a lot of blessing to all of us and to our families.



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM BR. SUPERIOR GENERAL

Guided by the Star of Bethlehem, let us create Homes of Light

Dear Marists of Champagnat,

Warm greetings from Rome. I wish the very best for each of you, your communities and families, in the midst of the challenging situation we are experiencing across the world due to the pandemic.



To speak of Christmas is to refer to the light of God in our midst. A light that shines in the darkness. It seems that in this year 2020 there has been a lot of darkness and so it is harder for us to discover this light amid all that we are living through. And yet, that light has never faltered.

Three months ago, I sent a Circular to the Institute, inviting everyone to build “homes of light”, to care for life and generate new life.

I invite you to be watchful for our inner light to remain aflame, so that together we can be the “Marist Charismatic Family”, “Beacons of Hope in the midst of this troubled world”, in the words of the XXII General Chapter.

Christmas is a time to look for ways to rekindle that light:

- the light that comes from the Good News of having God among us, for that is what Christmas is all about.
- the light that gives us hope to face the uncertainty that surrounds us.
- the light that helps us to overcome our fears and anxieties (which may have increased in this special time the world is living through).
- the light that we glimpse in the generosity and dedication of so many people in their service to others.
- the light that leads us to imagine a different future, one that we want to create together under the watchful gaze of God. Like the star of Bethlehem that led the Magi from the East to go on their quest beyond their cultures and homelands.

In my Circular I mentioned the idea of caring for the light that is in each of us, developing our inner lives and spirituality. We must look within and there perceive the light of God shining brightly, a source of hope.

We learn from Mary how to do this. We can imagine her heart, so free and full of God, and therefore transparent to God’s light. The light that came from within her was the light of God shining in and through her. We are invited to have the same experience.

We are also invited to discern the light of everyone around us, in our communities, families, fraternities, workplaces.

We are invited to discern the light of the most vulnerable, those who lack even the basics of life. We go out of our way to share what we have, to share our very selves. And to let their light shine on us.

To be a beacon of hope in this troubled world is an invitation for us to let our light shine, not just as individuals, but as communities and families, as a global Marist family.

Marcellin was a light in the midst of the dark situations he had to live through. Like him, let us be light for those around us.

Guided by the star of Bethlehem, let us build “homes of light”, in this particular moment of fragility and vulnerability around the world.

My best wishes to each of you, your families, your communities, your fraternities. May this Christmas and the coming year 2021 be full of hope for you.

Fraternally,

Br. Ernesto Sanchez Barba

UPDATES:

DECEMBER HAPPENINGS IN LAGAO COMMUNITY



Another double birthday celebration happened in Lagao community on December 19. It was the joint birthday celebration of Br. Larry (Dec. 9) and Br. Gary (Dec. 24). This time the prayer liturgy was organized by Br. Dave Rano, while food facilitation was done by our new community treasurer, Br. Jong-Jong. The three Marist communities of General Santos came together

again for a sumptuous meal.

Br. Dave Rano, gladly accepted the invitation of the Lagao Parish to share a thematic reflection in Cebuano during the 3:00 am Mass on December 21.

In compliance with the government protocols on Christmas celebrations, a more tempered Christmas party was held for our office staff and the support personnel of the community on December 22. We started with a prayer-liturgy, followed by the giving out of service awards. The recipients were Mrs. Liza Larase, the community cook, (10 years), Mrs. Luz Ringor, caregiver and archive secretary for 5 years. Mr. Milo Santianez, driver and property maintenance for 5 years. and Mrs. Raquel Bernaldez, who is retiring after 23 years of service as laundrywoman. The Christmas bonus and gift certificates were then distributed and lunch followed.

The following day, some Brothers started leaving for their respective family homes to spend the Christmas holidays. Brothers Pius, Gilbert and Wency stayed behind together with Brothers Ador and Romy.

By: *Br. Romulo Porras, FMS*

Bacusanon Community Life in the Midst of Challenges



Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 tells us that there is a time for everything. Right now, is a time for us to be courageous in facing the challenges that the pandemic has brought us and be hopeful that these trying times will soon be over. Indeed, the pandemic has affected us all. During this time, we, though not positive with the Covid-19 virus, are all feeling its consequences.

Our small community here in Bacusanon also face the challenges that the pandemic has brought throughout the world. However, it does not prevent us from living as one community. I may be greatly challenged

during this time, but I am grateful because I am where I am. Community life here in Bacusanon gave me the courage and hope to live a life which is different from the life that I am used to. It gave me the sense of life which my past experiences could not give. I became more aware of the things that I do in this community; it also gave me the opportunity to be with the people I am working with and know their lives more deeply. Being here for 1 year and 4 months taught me that there is more than a busy life in school ministry; it is a life of treasured moments, a life of great relationship, a life so simple yet meaningful and a life of community which I can call a real family.



In the end Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 is right, there is really a time for everything. This time is a time of great challenges but also a time for us to rediscover the “Community Life” that we, the Marist Brothers, have inherited from our first Brothers.

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all of us. God Bless us all.

By: Br. Cian Marco M. Tabuada, FMS

2020 Vision blindsided by the pandemic

The year 2020 caught us all off guard. Allow me to recall what happened and did not happen around me here in Kobe community for the past twelve months.

In the beginning of the year, I was full of hope as fellow Filipinos and I have planned to further learn more about the Catholic catechism during our Bible Studies starting January and be more regular in conducting them at least once a month. Upon arriving from the preparation for perpetual vows, I started volunteering in Sunday School for kids preparing for confirmation and even for



first communion in Sannomiya, Chuo Church and another volunteer work in a parish-related English club in Akashi Church. Also, my Japanese has advanced in level as I continued my studies in YMCA. Maybe it would be a busy year for me, I thought. But then came the pandemic, cancelling all parish-related works for me and leaving me only with my Japanese studies.

Even before the national government declared the state of emergency, the Japanese Bishops Conference already decided to cancel the celebration of the Mass in public as well as all parish-related activities starting February 29. When the government finally decided to declare a state of emergency, all schools had to cut short the school year and end it right away in the first week of March. No graduation ceremonies. I had a ticket booked for Manila last March; but as the borders were closed, it was cancelled. Generally, the citizens here in the country have opted to stay home more often than before to lessen their contact with people. The usually crowded parks with the cherry blossoms were almost empty. Surprisingly, discouraging overtime work now became a norm together with the idea of the work-from-home.

As for our community, we have to say no to visitors for the time being. We must be extra careful and avoid if possible, going to big hospitals as these places are usually where the clusters or outbreaks happen here in Kobe. At the beginning of the school year last April, almost all the schools in Japan



including my language school had to adopt the online classes for the meantime to avoid possible outbreaks. Eventually, the schools decided to re-open last June, provided that the students and teachers wear masks, have their body temperature taken before entering the school, observe social distancing, and wash their hands well. The Japanese government provided its citizens the needed help despite the hit-and-miss decisions they had made so far. Kobe community too benefited from the government financial support given to each member last summer.

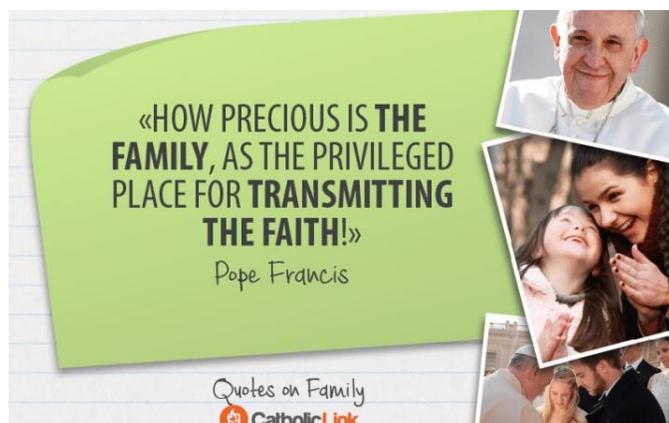
When the public celebration of Masses resumed after almost four months, I was able to renew my temporary vows. I decided to stop going to Sannomiya Chuo Church for the time being and instead go to the Kitasuma Church monthly together with the brothers and by myself in Akashi Church for the English Mass once a month.

Aside from the new corona virus, there is also the seasonal influenza at the start of cold season, so all the community members decided to take the influenza vaccine last October. It was unexpected for us here in Kobe community to know that the physical rehabilitation center where the brothers go to regularly for many years had to close last October. To visit the Marist Brothers grave in Futatabi, we had to wait for almost the end of November. In the midst of the cold winter, I had to transfer to the 2nd floor as all the air conditioners on the 3rd floor stopped working.

This year's December cannot be celebrated as we celebrate it like the previous years because of the pandemic. No big gatherings, some cancelled Christmas Masses in nearby churches, and even not being able to meet my family personally this year. Whenever we hear the news, it seems that nothing good ever comes out. Yes, that may sound true only if we forget the "Good News" of the gospel. So, let us remember the "Good News" as our God still expresses his love for us, even suffer with us, and continues to comfort us despite what is happening around the world now. Emmanuel, "*God with us*", is the reason to rejoice. As he too suffered on the cross for us, we too suffer with our brothers and sisters affected by the pandemic.

Looking back to this year 2020, I realized we are still blessed with lots of graces. And that is a good way for me to end this year, pondering what has transpired this year, the good and the bad, and all the graces we have received. Though it has been a rough year for everyone, let me end this year with gratitude. Cheers! 神に感謝。Maraming salamat po.

By: Br. Allen Timola, FMS



GENERAL HOUSE, ROME

Our Christmas celebration here in the General House was not only memorable – there are 23 of us in house at the moment, a significantly bigger crowd than in previous years – but also very meaningful because it was a moment of fraternity and closeness in an epoch where social distancing has become a norm.

At 6:30 PM of the 24th, we gathered in reception hall for the Petición de Posada, a Mexican tradition that commemorates the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem

([https://www.tripsavvy.com/christmas-](https://www.tripsavvy.com/christmas-posadas-tradition-in-mexico-1588744)

[posadas-tradition-in-mexico-1588744](https://www.tripsavvy.com/christmas-posadas-tradition-in-mexico-1588744)). The procession ended in the Chapel where we then celebrated the Night Mass.

Dinner was hosted by the General House Community (oftentimes referred to as the 3rd Floor Community, whereas the 1st Floor Community is that of the General Council). We converted the community room on the 3rd floor into a dining hall. A group of brothers volunteered to prepare the meal; while the General Council community also brought some food to share. The dinner came in different courses; we had seafood salad, pasta, paella, and fish, among others. The desserts are also worth mentioning.



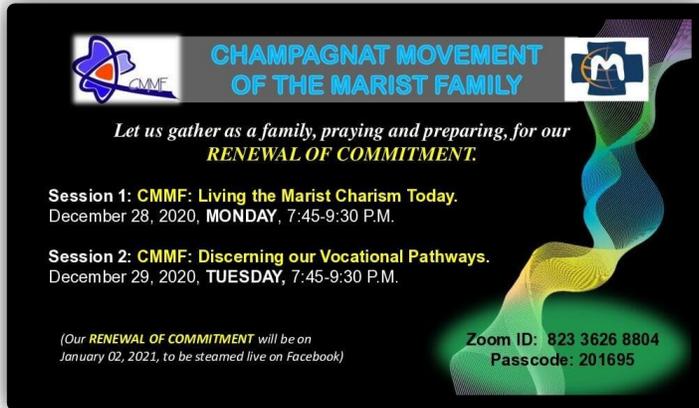
On Christmas Day, we had lunch at the restaurant of the hotel “next door”. Somehow it gave us a sense of dining away from home. Joining us were the three immigrants whom we are



accommodating in partnership with Caritas; they are from Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Venezuela and are waiting for their residency permit.

By: *Br. Lindley Sionosa, FMS*

CMMF FORMATION AND ORIENTATION FOR “FRIENDS OF MARCELLIN”



**CHAMPAGNAT MOVEMENT
OF THE MARIST FAMILY**

*Let us gather as a family, praying and preparing, for our
RENEWAL OF COMMITMENT.*

Session 1: CMMF: Living the Marist Charism Today.
December 28, 2020, **MONDAY**, 7:45-9:30 P.M.

Session 2: CMMF: Discerning our Vocational Pathways.
December 29, 2020, **TUESDAY**, 7:45-9:30 P.M.

(Our RENEWAL OF COMMITMENT will be on
January 02, 2021, to be streamed live on Facebook)

Zoom ID: 823 3626 8804
Passcode: 201695

On 26th December 2020, the Laity Committee met to finalize the Formation Sessions intended for the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family. The first session which will be held on December 28, has the theme CMMF: Living the Marist Charism Today. The second session will be on December 29 with the theme CMMF: Discerning our Vocational Pathways. This CMMF formation experience hopes to prepare participants for their renewal of commitment to live with

greater vitality the life of being lay Marists as shared and lived with others in the Champagnat Movement.

The Laity Committee also discussed the intention of organizing the “**Friends of Marcellin**”. They are individuals who are not members of the CMMF but have expressed their interest in knowing more and desiring to grow deep in their Marist experience. Their orientation in preparation for their recognition as “Friends of Marcellin” is scheduled on **30th December, 3:00 P.M. (Philippine Time)**. Participation is open to the laity from the different Sectors of the East-Asia Province.



By: Ms. Agnes Reyes

The Most Holy Family

"The Lord sets a father in honor over his children;
A mother's authority he confirms over her sons.
He who honors his father atones for sins;
He stores up riches who reveres his mother."
Sirach 3:2-6,12-14





THE ARCHIVIST'S CORNER

Br. Romulo Porras, FMS (#11)

The following is one of the unpublished articles of Amihan Plus 2019 as reported by Br. Andrew Chan, fms on December 16, 2019.



Lunch with Br. Justin Mobilik, FSC

After 9 years with the Marist District of Asia (MDA), formerly Asia Mission Ad Gentes (AMAG). I returned from Samut Sakhon, Thailand where I was based. I was assigned to a mix inter-congregational community in Nabawan, a town in the Interior region of Sabah. The community then was composed of a de La Salle Brother, Br. Egbertus, (a local Sabahan from Papar), a layman, Mr Francis (a local from Bingko), Br Paul Ching, FMS and me. It was a learning experience to live with local Sabahan. The apostolate of the community was to provide hospitality (hostel)

to indigenous students (Muruts). The presence of God is shared and experienced through and in their simplicity, patience, and compassion.

I moved to Kota Kinabalu when Br Tim Leen, returned to New Zealand in January 2019.

On January 26, 2019, Br Paul Ching celebrated his Golden Jubilee with Br Anthony Cheng in Permatang Tinggi, Seberang Prai.

I enjoy the friendship of people in Kingfisher Park in Kota Kinabalu. The people here are friendly and courteous. They accompany me in visiting and tasting the local food in various places.

I am also getting know the religious in the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu. For the World Day of Consecrated Life, we organised a Triduum. On the first day, the prayer session was at the Carmelite Chapel at Jalan Kanci; the second day at Stella Maris at Tanjung Aru and the third day at St Michael's Church, Penampang. Local lay people also joined in the prayer sessions. From time to time, I also receive visitors here at our house in Kingfisher Park.

On 15-17 February, the religious in this archdiocese organised the annual Vocation Awareness Seminar for youth between 18-35 years old at Pace Bene, Papar. There were about 180 participants. It was one of the biggest groups to attend a religious vocation promotion and recruitment activity in Malaysia.

At present, the members of the community at Kingfisher Park, Kota Kinabalu are Br. Andrew Chan (China Sector Coordinator), Br. Paul Ching Sun Nam and Br. John Tan Wee Eng. No Brother is involved anymore in the Nabawan mission; instead, they are connected with the nearby parish school.



Photo shows the Brothers' residence at Kingfisher Park, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

Birthday Greetings to:



December 27
Br. Jacobo Song (Chul-seob)



January 02
Br. Abraham Kang



January 05
Br. Manuel V. de Leon

Death Anniversaries:

- December 29, 1999 – Br. Vincent Kunert died in Hong Kong.
- December 30, 1915 – Br. Joseph Procule died in Beijing.
- December 30, 1931 – Br. Aristonique died in Shanghai.
- December 30, 1934 – Br. Joseph Abdias died in St. Genis-Laval.
- December 30, 1944 – Br. Paul Auguste I died in Shanghai.
- December 30, 1952 – Br. Joche Benoit died in Shanghai.
- December 30, 1961 - Br. Jules Raphael died in St. Genis-Laval.
- December 31, 1939 – Br. Ignace died in Beijing.
- January 02, 1953 - Br. Joseph Georges died in Varennes-sur-Allier
- January 02, 1956 – Br. Nestor died in St. Genis-Laval.
- January 02, 1959 – Br. Lece died in Beijing.



Prayers please...

- ✚ For the gift of life and family.
- ✚ For our families to rely on God for our needs and trust in His ways.
- ✚ For the children to learn how to obey and to love their parents in thought, word, and action, just as Christ was obedient to Mary and Joseph.
- ✚ For God's blessings upon us.
- ✚ For healing of our sick family members, relatives, and friends.
- ✚ For protecting us in all anxieties.
- ✚ For all the missionaries around the world.
- ✚ For the response of the souls of those who have died.
- ✚ For the end of the pandemic.
- ✚ For the prayer intentions of the Brothers, Lay Marists, Benefactors, Families, and friends.