

# MDA

marist district of asia



# news

APRIL 2021

## WAKE UP, LORD!

The ashes of our Lenten journey were more pronounced this year - not fading with Ash Wednesday but thickening in the following weeks with the outbreak of COVID-19. Each of the plans we had for Lent - the sacrifices, the resolutions, the acts of charity - were rearranged, making room for more sacrifices than we thought possible.

We sacrificed our physical friendships, birthday celebrations, anniversary milestones, family visits, apostolic activities... We've lost friends, family, or neighbors to a virus that until a few months ago was hardly known about or discussed. We've sacrificed our liturgical lives, being able to receive Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist, attendance of daily masses, pastoral formation and classes.

Pope Francis likens this pandemic to the evening storm experienced by the disciples in the boat, saying, "For weeks now it has been evening." This evening has been long, dark, full of the unknown. Throughout this "evening," we have had to confront our vulnerabilities and experience our littleness.

We've had to realize that without light, we cannot see. Perhaps we've grappled with fear in this darkness - a fear of the unknown, a fear of isolation, a fear that the dawn may never come.

Perhaps our minds have been left to imagine: Lord, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" This time of quarantine, social distancing, and pandemic has been our evening storm which, *"Exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules...shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities... [and] lays bare all our prepackaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls."*



We thought “we would stay healthy in a world that was sick,” but the storm has awakened us from our personal slumber. And we need light. This realization is the seed of faith – a faith which recognizes the need for salvation, for one another, for the light of God. The realization of our littleness, our helplessness, our dependence, our mortality, is the perfect place from which to enter into the Triduum and await the lighting of the Easter candle – the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God has provided flickers of hope, reflections of grace, throughout our journey at sea: livestreams of Masses, daily Scripture reflections, broadcasts of Adoration, priests hearing Confessions in drive-thru, virtual retreats, Pope Francis’ blessing of the entire world. Yes, the light of Christ exists even in the darkness. And the darkness has not, and will not, overcome it. It will shine ablaze all the more radiantly this year in the midst of our utter darkness, sparkling in the gloom. The darker the night, the better able we are to see the light. And in the darkness, we look up.

Let us welcome the light of Christ this Easter by first lighting his love in our hearts. When Christ’s life lives within us, we can enkindle it in the souls of others and set alight all we encounter. “Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons,” Pope Francis reminds us. Wake up, Lord! The disciples shouted in the midst of the storm. Wake up, Lord! The world shouts again today. Cry out with me again this Triduum, “Wake up, Lord! We are perishing.”

Christ’s response to our cries this week is open arms embracing us through nails and scourging. His response to our cries is a head beaten, bruised, and crowned with thorns. His response to our cries is silence to jeers, taunts, mockery, and abandonment. His response to our cries is the relinquishing of his spirit in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world. Our cries are never unheard. “The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith,” Pope Francis said. “We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love.”

Then, and only then, “In the silence of our cities, villages, communities the Easter Gospel will resound.”

Happy Easter to everyone.

*Brother Ismael Valls*

## MDA Community Leaders meeting

On March 17, 2021 the community leaders had the opportunity to meet with **Br. Maximiliano Meier** and listen to the context of his book *Marist leadership* written in 2018.

Below are some notes:

- *In some way we are and will always be leaders.*
- *Leadership is a role more of practice, rather than talks; listening and doing with the help of others.*
- *It is a pastoral work, a service.*
- *The bad leadership can destroy and the example of good leadership can build, like Champagnat constructing L'Hermitage.*
- *We need to know our history and know the message of Champagnat.*
- *We have our unique Marist way of being leaders as brothers and lay.*
- *Each of us has different qualities and talents, they can be developed for the servant leadership.*
- *The Charism did not finish when our founder and leader Champagnat died, it was empowered by the Holy Spirit and it keeps growing.*

**Br. Max** also gave an explanation of the seminar about his book, *Marist Leadership*. There are 5 sessions that can be followed online. The invitation remains open to those who would like to follow this seminar (*there is no starting or ending day; if you wish you can contact Br. Max by email: [stiedlmax5@gmail.com](mailto:stiedlmax5@gmail.com)*).

Thank you, **Br. Max**, for sharing the richness of our history and tradition, Marist elements that inspires us to drink from our sources and encourages us in our mission.



*Br. Canisio J W*



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## *Tamontaka Community- A New Beginning*

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Greetings from Tamontaka Novitiate Community, Philippines!

It is a privilege for me to be part of this Community as it has just been re-opening recently. As we all are aware that everything is affected due to Covid-19 situation, and the travel ban is still getting tough. That is the reason for **Br. Paco** and I, decided by District Leader with other Provincials, arrived at Tamontaka on March 6<sup>th</sup> and were warmly welcomed by **Brs. Pepito and Wency**. Many things have been happening around this community as it is under being prepared to welcome a group of new Novices from Davao to arrive in April. We all might notice one things strangely is that two Novice Masters are present in one Community: **Br. Pepito** is assigned as a Novice Master for Tamontaka Community and preparing to this incoming group, and **Br. Paco** is assigned for Tudella Community in Sri Lanka, but since both of us have been stranded here in the Philippines so we move to this community to start our Canonical year of Novitiate and we are connecting with other fourteen novices in different countries of MDA, East Timor and Solomon Island. Last March 25<sup>th</sup> was marked with the ceremony of Entrance of the Canonical Year for me and re-opening of Tamontaka Novitiate house. The celebration was joined by **Br. Dominador**, the Provincial of East-Asia Province with some other Brothers from school and a lay Marist. It was a simple but meaningful celebration as we celebrated together with the feast of the Annunciation. It was followed by dinner.



For me, I am still continually doing the online program guided by Brothers from Tudella formation team. I am really grateful for everything bestowed on me for the past year as well as the beginning of second year of Novitiate, I could count many blessings from God and our Good Mother, Mary even though I am, in one way or another, affected from the issue of corona virus and moving here and there inside the Philippines, it can be called my 'Second Home'. I have never had any thinking of losing hope and joy in the journey, it has shaped my patience and my love for dream of being a Marist through what I have encountered along the way.

*Ly 2<sup>nd</sup> year Novice*

News from Saigon Community – Viet Nam



**"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Lk. 1: 38). On the Feast of the Annunciation, we rejoiced with Duy and Thành as they entered their canonical year as novices of the Marist Brothers. They were received by Br. Anselmo Kim.**



*Bro. Bao*

## News from Talit Community – India - Bro. Jiji

This academic year 2021 we have 53 hostel boys are with us at this moment from Class 6th to 11th only. We did not open class 5th students because of the covid- 19.



This year, we have 8 lay teachers are working with us. Helping our hostel boys for their studies. Taking classes every day for two hours.

On 27<sup>th</sup> February, we had a teachers' meeting with our Hostel teachers and community college teachers. During the meeting **Bro. Malangmei** presents the child protection policy. **Bro. Jose Maria** presented a Marist way of teaching to the children. At the end of the meeting, we had a family meal together with our brothers and lay teachers.





On 28<sup>th</sup> March, we celebrated the Holi festival with the Champagnat group organized by Br. Jose Maria



On 29<sup>th</sup> March, we had a celebration of Holi with our Hostel students. We have celebrated full of happiness and joy.



We had an Easter celebration with our hostel students. On the day we had a Football Match with our hostel students. In the evening we had a meal together with all the students and the Marist community. Our Brothers and hostel students are preparing the meals together. We celebrated as one family of Marist together.



## From Br. Tri

From 29<sup>th</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> April, there were about 100 participants, Lay people and Brothers from the Province of East Asia, took part in the Holy Week Retreat, which was held virtually, the theme "*Home of Life*".

The Holy Week Retreat online was a significant event as we brothers and Lay Marist accompany one another in prayer and reflection. Each day Br. Ernesto shared by via zoom his retreat presentations accompanied by suggestions and actions. This online retreat had provided Brothers and Lay an opportunity for spiritual renewal as we participate in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.



## News from Mymensingh Formation Community – Bangladesh

### New Aspirants:

On 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2021, two young men accepted into the Aspirancy Program. **Br. Vigilio** Community Leader of Giasnogor represented the MDA Leader and accepted and welcomed **Mr. Shovo Chrían** and **Mr. Shohel Costa** as Aspirants. **Sr. Shakuntla, smsm** presented our Marist Logo as a symbol of our acceptance. **Bro. Rubel, Novice Sumon** were also joined with us from Giasnogor Community.



### Apostolic experience:

Our Aspirants began their Apostolic experience with the poor people who live next to the railway tracks with the guidance of Taizé Brothers. **Bro. Guillaume (Taizé Brother)** guides them and helps them to move with those poor people. Every Thursday afternoons, our Aspirants are with those poor people particularly with the children.



### Family Visit:

The second week of February, **Bro. Alex** visited the two Aspirants and the Candidate's houses and conversed with their parents. It was good to go all together with the Aspirants and Candidate to all their houses and know them more about their birth place and their lifestyle. It was a great experience to share our brotherly wishes to all of them.



Aspirant **Shovo Chiran** and his Family Members



Aspirant **Shohel Costa** with his mother and sister **Sr. Sumi, RNDM**



Visit the parents of the Candidate **Lolat Kubi** who is going to finish his class 11 soon and will enter class 12 in the month May.

### Holy Eucharistic celebration in our community:

First time we had Eucharistic Celebration in our house the week before Holy Week 2021. For some reason we did not have mass in our chapel from 2019 January onwards... our New parish Priest was happy to help us to have Mass in our house. So, the Asst. Parish Priest **Fr. Peter** (New Priest) came to our house and offered Mass for us. I hope it will continue at least once a month.



During the Holy week, we had a three days special retreat on Holy Triduum which was very much helpful for us, particularly for our young men in the formation to celebrate Easter with meaningfully. We joined with the Cathedral Parish for the Holy Triduum and our **Bishop Ponon Paul Kubi** was the Main Celebrant. Last year due to the lockdown we didn't have a chance to celebrate Easter.

*Bro. Alex, fms*



## News from the Online Seminar about Marist Leadership

1. At the present time, have about 27 participants. Two of them already finished the lessons and got their certificate. Congratulations!
2. If you prefer, you can write your answers on the worksheet in Spanish.
3. Download the files as soon as possible with a simple “click” on the indicated link. The files remain only a certain time on the server. If you “lost” your files and you want to continue the seminar, please, send me a simple email. The same, in case I forgot to transfer the next lesson. Normally I transfer immediately after getting the answered worksheet.

### NEW MATERIAL

I can offer you two Power Point Presentations about “**BRIDGE BUILDING**”. Use it for your personal reflection of for community and staff meetings.

If you are interested in getting the files, do it with a simple message to:  
[stiedlmax5@gmail.com](mailto:stiedlmax5@gmail.com)

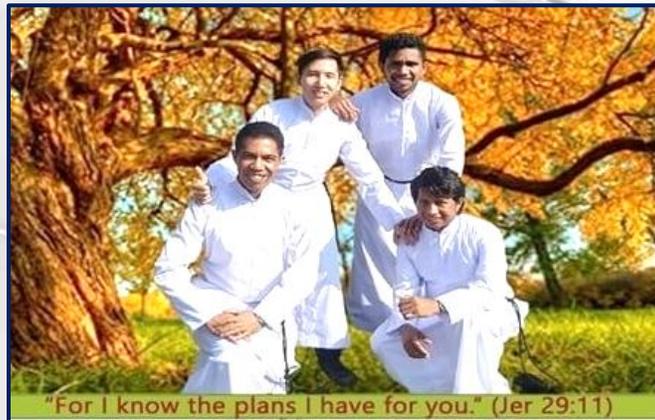
*Br Maximiliano Meier  
Coordinator “ON-FOR”*

### Pictures from Pailin community – New Hostel, Cambodia



Congratulations Br. Tran Ngoc Gion and others for your Newly committed life

As Marist Brothers.



### **Birthdays**

**April 2021**

10<sup>th</sup> Rbel Nokrek

20<sup>th</sup> Nguyen Thanh Hung

**May 2021**

5<sup>th</sup> Anton Cong Nguyen

9<sup>th</sup> Xia Baoxuan

16<sup>th</sup> Le Van Nghi

29<sup>th</sup> Nguyen Van Tri

**Good wishes and  
Prayers Brothers**

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