



# Sharing

THE LAY  
MARIST  
VOCATION

N. 09 | 31 JANUARY 2022

## GREETINGS TO ALL MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT!

*Mrs. Marjorie Rañeses – Asia Laity Commission*

In connection with the celebration of Amoris Laetitia Family Year (2021-2022) which will culminate on the gathering of families, in Rome, for the World Meeting of Families (on 22-26 June 2022), this issue of Sharing Bulletin will present experiences and testimonies on how families particularly in Asia were nurtured by the living out of the Marist values.

Family Spirit is a central value for all of us Marists. We have its foundation on the same values lived and shared by St. Marcellin with those of the early brothers, living in an environment of mutual understanding and deeply caring for one another. We hope to share with you how our Marist life contributed to the making of our meaningful family life.

Also in this issue, we feature stories about the Friends of Marcellin, individuals who were attracted to the life of the Marists and have committed themselves to grow more in the spirituality, shared life, and mission. They are the beginning Marists and we see it a blessed opportunity to accompany them in their Marist life growth journey.

As we continue to walk together, I wish you all an enjoyable time reading about Marist life in Asia. With blessings.



## “The Joy of Love” in the Marist Way

*Agnes S. Reyes – Secretariat of Laity*

A Marist trademark that we all share is the family spirit. Inspired by the home of Nazareth, every Marist home encompasses the attitudes that make the family spirit a reality. With love, forgiveness, openness to one another, humility and standing at the service of one another are manifested in the Marist family, in schools and in our other ministries. In our families, we develop meaningful relationships “where the experience of loving and being loved become part of our life in the ordinary moments of our day”. (cf. Water from the Rock, 105).

Valuing the centrality of families, Pope Francis in his encyclical Laetitia Amoris articulates a loving way of looking at the concerns of families in a more practical and concrete realities. In the earlier part



Each issue of the Bulletin is prepared by one of the six regions of the Institute under the coordination of the Secretariat of Laity. This month's issue has been prepared by the Asia Region.

of his writings, he highlighted the vocation of families: “a positive experience of family communion is a true path to daily sanctification and mystical growth, a means for deeper union with God” (LA 316). He poignantly encouraged a contemplative stance in our regard of every member of the family, that is, “to contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God and to see Christ in them” (LA 323).

For us, we take the inspiration of valuing family in the way of the Marist through St. Marcellin. His relationship with the early brothers were marked by warmth and tenderness. The spirit of their growing community is founded in a very familial atmosphere with Mary at the center as their Good Mother.



Interwoven in the realities of the family are both the joys and the pains, the successes, and challenges. As pointed out in the *Laetitia Amoris*, families nowadays are beset with crisis that has threatened the family’s core values. Among others, are the anthropological and cultural changes like the extreme individualism where each member of the family becomes an isolated unit, mindful only of the time they spend in the virtual space. Most children even the adults in the family have more time looking at their gadgets than time to look at each other’s eyes expressing love for the presence of the other. The culture of ephemeral which tends to treat quality relationships like the way we treat material objects, that is, thinking of relationships as dispos-



able, easy to be thrown-away when one no longer wants it. This eventually poses a threat to sustainability of true and authentic relationships. Added to these, consumerism, poverty, migrations, are elements that threatens the quality of family life.

**With the values of family spirit, lived and cherished by the Marists, how can we profess the faith we have in living the integrity of the family amidst these threatening circumstances? How can we make more visible the Marist family tradition that can counter the diminishing of family values in our time?**

We intently look at the values of Marcellin. His love of Mary has strengthened us in our nurturing the gift of our family. Marcellin reminds us of, as he did with his brothers, to always run to Mary for in her heart and in her arms, we find our brother and friend Jesus. His preferred ways of relating to God and to Mary were through familial terms: Jesus in his Sacred Heart, Mary as Our Good Mother. We learn from Marcellin himself how much he encouraged among brothers and in their

relationships with the people they meet, especially their students, the nurturing of relationships that is fraternal and loving. Pope Francis in citing some pastoral perspectives, reiterates that families should not only be evangelized, but they should also evangelize. The families are agents of family apostolate radiating to others the joy of the Gospel.

**How do we as Marists, imbued with a deep sense of a family spirit, radiate for others the warmth of belonging, exuding the joy of communal living? How do we find, as a family, time to reach out to those in need: the lost, the last, the least?**

Certainly, wherever the followers of Marcellin are present, working together in mission, this family spirit is the Marist way of living the joy of love. Its wellspring flows from the great love of Mary, our Good Mother, bringing us all together as one family under her name and under the cloak of her maternal care. Through our family spirit in the Marist, we offer a deep sense of global belonging and communion by making our own families a reflection of God's profound love for all.

## Prayer for the International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation

God our Father-Mother,  
You wanted St. Marcellin's life project  
to be distinctive in expressing brotherhood and simplicity,  
embracing a Marian and apostolic spirituality,  
and having a deep love for young people.

Today, there are many of us Marists of Champagnat  
who follow in his footsteps with audacity and hope,  
who day by day enrich our distinctive vocations  
as followers of Christ,  
and who dream of a Marist future of being united  
in the service of the Church and the world.

We know that in Your mercy  
You make all things new (Rev 21:5)  
and that we are all invited  
to share at Your table as brothers and sisters.  
We turn to You and entrust to You  
the International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation.  
We ask especially for Your blessing for the Marists  
who participate in this journey of dialogue and discernment.  
Help us in welcoming, nurturing, living and sharing our vocation.

Send us Your Spirit so that we may know how  
to read the signs of the times,  
to discover the ways in which you want to lead us,  
to value our diversity, recognizing that  
each of us is a dwelling place of the Spirit of Your Son Jesus,  
to respond faithfully to Your calls  
and to grow strong as Global Charismatic Family.

Amen.

Mary, Our Good Mother, pray for us.  
St. Joseph, our protector and guide, pray for us.

# Marist life: Marist District of Asia

*Nguyen Viet Bao - MDA, Vietnam*

The Marist presence in the Marist District of Asia exists amidst differences in faith. Most of the lay partners and teachers are from other religions such as Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism, so it is still a challenge for the Marist District of Asia (MDA) to develop the Marist Laity and until now MDA hasn't been able to form any official Lay Marist group yet. However, the appointment of Mr. Tin, a Marist lay man from Vietnam, to the MDA's Lay Marist Sub-Committee is seen as an important development in the life of the District.

Thus, knowing that every country in the District is uniquely different, but with our presence and apostolates in different countries trying to answer the needs and calls of today, we promote in different ways the Marist vocation, the lay Marist vocation. Equally important, we need to deepen our understanding of what it means to be a "Marist" in our own context and to promote Marist life where we are. We must be believing that a fully committed Marist, Brother or Lay, can create change and generate new life despite the challenges.

I recall this prayer from St. Marcellin as he trusted in God and wholly put everything in the hands of Mary, "if this work should perish, it is not our work that fails, but yours, for you have done everything for us. We therefore trust in your powerful protection, and we shall trust in it always."



This time of Covid-19 may have offered us the worst of times and the best of times, but we strive to develop vision and hope for what will be best for the present and for the future because, like St. Marcellin, we too believe that this work is God's work which is the work of Mary, and we are their co-workers. It is this work in the way of Mary that lead us to Jesus.

Let me end with the quotation from Chales Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities: "...it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only".



# Becoming Friends of Marcellin

*Elma Rafil - East Asia, Philippines*

It is the gift of encounters that allow us to connect with people and share real life experiences and inspiring stories. It is in this venue that we realize how we grow together as we journey with one another. As Asians, we are relational, and we are inspired to nurture among us this bond of friendship

Looking at the future of the Province, we align ourselves with the Congregational thrust that puts value to the development of the vocation of the Marist Laity. Affirming the vision that the “future of the Marist charism rests in the hands of committed brothers and lay”, we designed a program for those interested in Marist lay life. This 6-month (every first Saturday of the month session) is intended for those who feel wanting to know more the life of St. Marcellin Champagnat, desire to live his spirituality, and partake in God’s mission in Champagnat way.



→ pag. 6

## Nurturing marist life with "Friends of Marcellin"

*Qalista Dhony – East Asia, Malaysia*

What I like the most about Friends of Marcellin is the friends we meet in every session. We are a global family, from different countries. During the sessions, we share our life reflections and our faith.

In those sharing, we understand people better and knows that we are not alone. Even though we could be from different countries, the challenges we faced as human are not very much different, we are all human, coping and adapting daily lives in loving tender touch of our Mother Mary.

The sessions are also good foundation for new lay Marists who would love to know Marist better. Not just getting to know, but also experience Marist in a sense.

The challenge with the sessions is that it was done online, hence the effect of communication is different from face to face gathering. However, it was great to keep in touch with Marist global family even during pandemic.





The program offers an opportunity to grow more in the MARIST WAY OF LIFE exemplified by St. Marcellin that is centered in JESUS and lovingly accompanied by MARY. The sessions embody the themes on SPIRITUALITY, SHARED LIFE and MISSION.

Last year, the East Asia Province recognized Ten (10) participants as completers of the Friends of Marcellin Program.

This year, 2nd of January, 2022, the East Asia Prov-

ince celebrated its 205th Foundation Anniversary, with an event where the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (CMMF) members publicly renewed their commitment and also the event recognized thirty four (34) completers of the Friends of Marcellin program. The Friends of Marcellin are now actively engaged in the lay animation activities. This, indeed, is an initiative that fostered the growing seeds of Marist lay life. May the Friends of Marcellin continue to become witnesses to the gift of Marist life in their respective places.



*Friends of Marcellin*  
@FRIENDSOFMARCELLIN



# My journey with the "Friends of Marcellin"

*Jan Maverick Rabino – East Asia, Philippines*

In this very difficult time, our family was greatly devastated when we were infected with COVID-19. We had to go on isolation, and the anxiety of the unknown took a toll in my health. I questioned God during that time: "Why me, Lord? A nurse who's not practicing in the field got this virus." There must be a reason.

At the last leg of my isolation, I heard numerous stories of struggles and heartbreaks. This was my turning point to inspire these people to teach them about the disease and how to cope with it holistically. I shared to them that there will always be a light at the end of all these difficulties through the story of the Memorare in the Snow, where Marcellin's devotion to our Blessed Mother was highlighted and amplified our inspiration as Marists.

True enough, my journey did not stop there. When Ms. Elma Rafil invited me to be part of Friends of Marcellin during my isolation, the first session was the moment where I felt that the Marist spark in me ignited more than ever; this is when Bro. Lindley Sionosa, FMS shared in the session the same story of Marcellin in the Memorare in the Snow. That pivotal and serendipitous moment gave me the hindsight that I truly belong in the Marist, that there is this Marist Spirit in me that needs to be rekindled and my journey is just starting here in the Marist community. From then on, every virtual gathering with

the Friends of Marcellin is an opportunity for me to reconnect, rekindle and embrace the Marist in me.

I have been always Marist by heart. As a graduate from a Marist Institution during my younger years, there is this part of me that will always yearn the Marist Spirit in my life. As I explored life as an adult, I have grown professionally and have seen the reality of life. With this, my longing for the Marist Spirit has been stronger than ever. The thirst for a Marist Family was quenched, however, when I was given the opportunity to be part of the Friends of Marcellin.



Memorare in the Snow

# The Marist Way

## Nurturing a Family

*Noemi B. Silva – East Asia, Philippines*



Bringing up three children while keeping a full-time university teaching job can be very challenging and at the same time rewarding. The daily struggle to do household chores,

preparing lessons and ensuring that my children were feed and ready for school kept me busy all day.

My husband and I had shared responsibility in child rearing and we agreed that our children were brought up with a strong faith in God. We attended Sunday mass as a family and evening prayers were recited before going to bed. My son once asked me if he can skip Sunday mass and evening prayer since he prayed in school and had attended first Friday mass. I said no because these are what we do as a family. We practice our faith and live by it. We ensured that they attended a Marist school where religious education is the core of the curriculum. I realized that what started as routine religious practices when they were young became an integral part of their grown-up life.

In our culture where family is very important,



the values of love, respect and helping one another were taught early in life. Household tasks were shared and studies were taken seriously. We led a simple life where only essential things were bought. When my children were young, they would happily go to the toy section in a store. They would choose a robot or electric car and I gently told them that they can get another toy. They knew we cannot afford to buy them so they settled on something less expensive. When they became professionals, I asked my youngest son, an electronics engineer, if a latest mobile phone model was worth its price. He told me that it was too expensive for my purpose. Now my children would remind me to stick to the essentials, even if I can afford it.

Being a parent is indeed rewarding to see your children take their productive roles in society. I am happy that they are now responsible parents to their young children.

As members of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family, my husband and I share the Marist charism with other lay people in our local community. My husband is a Minister of the Holy Eucharist and do volunteer work. I am active in my advocacy on pro-life, violence against women and children, morality in media and environmental protection. My family has expanded to my students and the community that we serve. We are indeed grateful for the Marist family spirit that has permeated our life.

## Valuing Family

*Jude Preeman – South Asia, Sri Lanka*

As a Marist, the Family spirit is deeply ingrained in my consciousness. I grew up with the rich experience of my own family that molded me to raise my own with sound core family values. My wife and I are blessed with a son and a daughter who are growing with us in a shared family values distinct also to our own Sri-Lankan heritage.

Through the years, I realized that I simply cannot stay with the family of my own. We joined other families in the Marist. It's a realization that we are all connected and that we are global in a local experience. Being connected is to stay in tune with the journey of each family as well.

Recently, I finished studying and got the Higher National Diploma in Family Counseling. I took this endeavor with the conviction and a goal in mind that I will continue to be of help to families in need and to help

them in the way of the Marist, reflective so much of the values of the Holy Family of Nazareth.



# The gift of christmas: marist life lived, marist life shared

The Philippines is noted to have the longest celebration of Christmas. The very day the “ber-months”<sup>1</sup> begin, in September, we hear Christmas carols, and we see some families begin decorating houses to herald the start of the Season.

In every celebration, we consider “love of family” as our baseline of a happy family gathering. We do the usual practice of giving gifts, express our joy by singing and dancing, laughing while recalling the happy memories of family experiences as ingredients of a joyful celebration.

2021 was a different one. We didn’t have our children and grandchildren with us. Our house was empty. No grand celebration as we used to be.

My second son informed me that his family could not join us because they opted to spend the evening of December 24th going to the place devastated by typhoon Odette and help the victims who were displaced, depressed, no food, no water, and no means of communication with their families. My son’s family decided to be absent with us and be present to those may have lost hope during Christmas day.

Initially, I felt sad. My grandson Jam, who had this idea of being with the typhoon victims for Christmas explained:

“Lola (grandma) come to think of this. Will you be happy, that while we are enjoying Christmas with sumptuous food, there are people who at this time are suffering from hunger and frustration because they have no one to be with, and its Christmas? We

look up to you grandma. You taught us to be concerned for others and so here we go... we will be with them for this Christmas.”

Hearing the noble cause spoken out from the heart of my grandson dispelled my initial feeling of resentment of not having them on Christmas eve. I realized who I have become for them, a role model.

They witnessed my apostolic services done for the least favored of our local community, my reaching out to those in need and the catechesis I render in our basic ecclesial community created an impact on them. I can confidently say that I have shown them the way of service for those who have less.

This experience gave me a realization that the sound formation I have, that is, deepening my life in the way of the Marist influenced my family. The Champagnat Movement, Memorare Community, provided me with opportunities to be grounded in my faith and

nurtured deep inspiration to live the Marist way of life in simplicity and with a heart of compassion for others. I had inculcated in them the value of sharing love to others, a trademark of Marist life. My influence on them as Marist was deep that they made it their own way of life too. For that, I feel that we are truly blessed. This realization that I have lived and shared my Marist life and that it has given impact to my family was one best gift I had last Christmas.



*Valmie Garcia Mariveles*

*CMMF, Memorare Community - Philippines*

## SOCIAL NETWORK MARIST LAITY

We invite you to share your experience as a Marist lay person on social media by posting texts, photos and videos using the hashtag #MaristLayVocation.

It will help us to develop an internet identity for Marist life worldwide.

At the same time, the Secretariat of Laity has created a public group in FaceBook: [“Laicos Maristas / Marist Laity - Global group”](#). It is a place to build an online community of Marist Laypeople and to share our emotions and experiences. You are invited to subscribe to the group and to start posting and gathering online with other members of our global family.

## [www.champagnat.org](http://www.champagnat.org)

- Marist entities raise their voices in defence of environmental preservation
- South America Region elects Regional Provincial and Secretary for the period 2022-2024
- West Africa promoted workshop on Safeguarding the Rights of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- CMMF renewal of commitment and recognition of Friends of Marcellin
- Guide for the Year of Marist Vocations
- Anniversary of the foundation of the Marist Institute
- One more step towards the new Fratelli Project in Malcao
- Human Solidarity: A Call to Work Together in Common Cause
- The Brasil Sul-Amazônia Province invests in the formation of collaborators for the Pastoral Care of Children
- Local phase in the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul of the International Forum on Marist Vocations
- Meeting of the team of lay animators of Arco Norte

# #LayMaristVocation

The newsletter will be issued monthly. Each time, a different Region will oversee it. The next issue will be sent on February 28th, prepared by the Marist Region of América Sur. You can [subscribe here](#) to receive Marist News and SHARING.



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