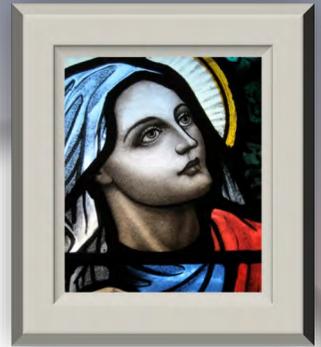


**MARIST
INTERNATIONAL
NOVIATE
SRILANKA**



JUNE/JULY NEWSLETTER 2022

Welcome to our novitate newsletter. We hope that you will enjoy it, and hopefully you have also done some similar things as we do in our community. Why do we do all these things? Because this is the moment to relax and give ourselves the opportunity to study and reflect on our life's journey and our call ahead as Marists.



Love of Manual Work, by Dedimo Soares : We have been living in the community for just 5 weeks. We will have experienced doing manual work most afternoons, with our Communal work, Personal Gardens, and our Personal chores. But we are so happy to do it in the community because it's helping to make us develop good habits in our life to be responsible. From this experience that we have, we grow together as we live in community. (cont.)





Love of Manual Work (cont.) ... We grow more in our relationships with the brothers and learn how to deal with different problems that occur sometimes. When we do manual work together, we always have fun together and enjoy sharing the different experiences that each of us have. However, we try to support one another so that we can understand other people better with the different situations that we face. From these experiences we will be growing something different in our life, particularly as we learn how to support one another in this community.

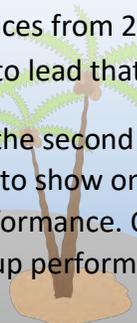
Our Induction Retreat: by Ruben During the retreat time we enjoyed the sessions that brothers Réal and Rod gave us. We also learned about how to live in a quiet moment to speak with God and experience God's presence among us. Sometimes we found it difficult but we tried our best to give some moments to the Holy Spirit. During our sharing time we felt very happy because everyone was sharing a different experience to see God's presence in their life.



May 27 to 29 Novices Gathering, by Ronaldo Da Costa: On the day when we arrived at the Hanwella Retreat house, run by the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, I was so excited to meet the other novices from different congregations. I thought maybe 8 or 10 congregations will be there, but it wasn't that, it was double what I thought of on the first day.

I was chosen to be MC of the gathering on the first night. How wonderful it is? ... to be an MC of over 85 novices from 20 congregations. I was nervous and felt wonderful about myself, but I thought "how am I going to lead that many people!?" I told myself I am going to make it and lead them.

On the second day I was chosen again to be a leader of a group. We were asked to prepare different activities to show on the stage and we were so excited to perform our games. We were really satisfied by our performance. On the night everyone felt excited and fully participated well on the **concert night**. Each group performed dramas, games, dancing, singing etc. I can't imagine how excited I was on that night. (cont.)





(cont.) ... Here are the photos of a group which I led over the three days. At the end of the program everyone was running here and there to catch up with others. I was standing on the veranda looking at Brother Rod and the same time I looked around and told my group to have a photo together. There was something special for me about this gathering. A photo will tell you and make you feel what you felt at that moment. It won't happen again and you can't have the same experience, but the memories will live forever.

Group 5. *“Ask yourself: “Does this subject move me to feel, think and dream?”*

“When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs. When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence.” (Ansel Adams)



Our First Day, by Pech: Before flying to Sri Lanka, I flew to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. I then travelled with Cuong and Ky, and we arrived in Sri Lanka's airport around 11pm. We were met by some of the novices and formators. It's strange the things that stand out for me. On that exciting day I also remember, with some shock, a group of crows close to us, as we were walking to the van with our bags. It was like the crows were crying out to me. I have seen these birds on television but never seen with my eyes, and so close like this. It felt frightening!

In the following weeks we went to visit some places in Sri Lanka. In Colombo we visited the beautiful Buddhist Temple, the nearby lake, and then drove an hour to our Retreat Centre.

By about 12 midnight our formators brought us to the community, but we didn't come through the front gate ... we entered through the back gate. When I saw the place, I felt so bad because it's full of banana and coconut trees and I thought I was going to live in a forest!

Then, early morning I could hear different sounds of the birds, the sound of the students and the sound of the trains, so I felt more comfortable with the place which made me feel at home.

I am so happy and blessed and I really enjoy the nature and the food here. Thank you Lord, I am grateful that I am here.



Our Induction into the Novitiate, on May 10, 2022, the official start of our Novitiate!



Novitiate free time, by Ky

For myself, I like my free time because I will have more time for myself to discover and do personal things. I also have more time to do creative things like: playing guitar, organ, painting and gardening...

And in the Novitiate, all of us have the opportunity to spend a lot of quiet time for ourselves, journaling, reading books, praying personally...

We can spend some time playing sports and different games to improve our health and relax such as: soccer, volleyball, table tennis, and indoor group games run by Br Rod...

Lastly, we can take time for ourselves to go out to explore and enjoy, as well as make friends and visit neighbors...



Emmaus walk: By Simon The first time I experienced the Emmaus walk was in Tudella. I had a good conversation with my friend when we walked together around the neighborhood.

I also saw Jesus walk with me and my friend, because when we walked we saw many things, like Ja-Ela city, that I had not seen before, and I also saw some drains full of plastic bags. It reminded me about Laudato Si “care of our earth”.



Trip to Colombo, by Eddy On the 18th May, the first year Novices and the Brothers went to Colombo. We went early in the morning, about 9:00 a.m. We usually go by van, which is our only car in the community. On the way, we enjoyed our trip. We saw a lot of traffic on the road and it was heavy rain and cloudy all around the road. When we arrived in Colombo we went to visit many places. Like, we visited the museum which is called a Buddhist temple. There were many different types of Buddhist statues, which showed a lot of history and Buddhist style which they used many years ago. We saw a special tradition about Buddhist prayer under a tree. The tree was very important for Buddha when he sat under it for meditation. When Buddha went out from the city to the forest, he sat to make a meditation until he died. It was a very important tree for their beliefs.

After that, we travelled around the city, and we had some snacks in the car. We continued to visit the river, which was very green. At this time we took some photos. The people were very friendly. In the city they have many buildings and a lot of traffic on the road and a lot of people around the city. It was amazing to visit Colombo city and we had a nice experience to know other cultures and religions in a different country.

At that time, we continued to the hospital and did a check-up for our health. We were lucky because we were getting a negative result, and our health was good. So, we enjoyed our trip. After that we went to have our lunch at the restaurant. We had chicken and rice. We also enjoyed an ice-cream. In the restaurant we took some time to share stories and rest for an hour. After that, we started travelling to the place for our retreat, which is called the “Eymund Campbell Centre”, a Blessed Sacrament house. On the way, people were sleepy because we travelled a long way; it took about two hours. We stayed there for three days to start our first retreat to begin our Novitiate program. It was a very interesting experience on our first trip, and we enjoyed ourselves during that time.



Champagnat Feast Day: by Manecas We enjoyed our Feastday Mass and Party on June 6. The Mass was by Fr Ivan, our Parish Priest, and we were joined by our Staff, two local Lay Marists and also Br Lawrence, from the local Charity Brothers' Community.

After the Mass, our party was upstairs in the recreation area. We enjoyed the drinks, the food prepared by novices, especially Suji and Br Chinthana. Entertainment included some singing in Vietnamese (thanks Ky!), Sinhala (thanks Suji!), Tetun (thanks Ruas!), Khmer (thanks Pech!) and some dancing also. Singing continued with a song sung by our cook Rebecca's son.



Sport: By Cuong When I first came to Novitiate, I realized we had a sports program here. We all love to be involved in Football and Volleyball, but I prefer football. Maybe because I'm a bit short to play volleyball well. I remember the first time we played volleyball together, The first sentence I learned was CABULO I didn't know what it means but everyone calls each other like that. There are moments that are truly memorable. For example, some players don't know how to play volleyball, they hold the ball like trying it out and then throwing it over the net. Again I remember Ruben playing volleyball he thought he was playing soccer and he was a goalkeeper he caught the ball. then everyone laughed... I remember when we were playing football One of our players was injured, everyone was worried and ran to see how he was and help him. Small actions but it is meaningful, showing the connection between brothers.

Playing sport is necessary because it brings about physical strength and mental power to the person who is involved in this on a regular basis. Outdoor sports such as football, cricket, vol-

However, some indoor games and sports like brain games, chess, Uno, Sudoku, Scrabble etc improve mental power and concentration levels. Sports and games are very beneficial to us as they teach us punctuality, patience, discipline, teamwork and dedication. Being involved in the sports activities helps us in getting protected with numerous diseases such as arthritis, obesity, heart problems, diabetes. (cont.)





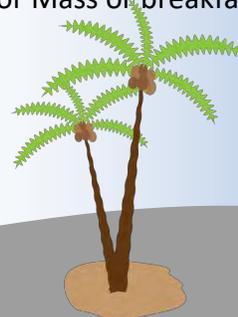
(cont.) ... Especially in the community, sport helps us connect with each other, bringing joy as well as brotherhood. It teaches us to go ahead in life by removing all our weaknesses. It makes us bold and gives the feeling of happiness by reducing the occurrence of anxiety and anger. It makes us physically fit and mentally relaxed, helping us to more easily deal with all the problems.



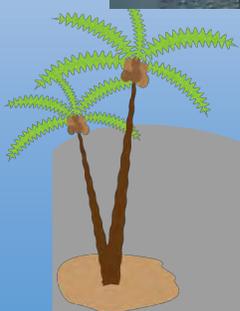
Our Classes: by Ruas Dear friends, in this moment I want to bring your attention to our novitiate program. In this program we are learning different subjects with several brothers in this community. In my experience so far in this program, I really enjoy my studies with brothers and friends. We also have some guest speakers from Australia, Canada, Philippines and other countries.

We have five brothers here in our Novitiate, plus 21 Novices, if we count Elijah, who is still stuck in the Solomons. We really enjoy our classes, with the Brothers helping us a lot in our formation journey.

We have some recollection time on Monday's, plus some Workshops then sometimes. We have once a week English class with Sister Catherine, Scripture class with Br. Rod twice a week, plus he takes care of us when something happens to us in community. Brother Réal running the Religious life class. Brother Kikko is our novice master and he teaches us Marcellin's life. Brothers Remi and Godfrey are our English tutors, helping us in reading and writing. Every time when we are responsible for reading for Mass or breakfast, we practice first with them. (cont.)



(cont.) ... As well, we have Mr Mark coming on Fridays teaching us music, plus we are starting some Computer classes soon, for those who want some help. Overall, we're very busy with our classes and homework, but we're kept active and involved in our work, helping us to learn and grow as 'little brothers of Mary'.



ACEP (Apostolic Community Experience Program)

“NEVER STOP LEARNING BECAUSE LIFE NEVER STOPS TEACHING” (by Topu)

As a novice of the Marist Brothers, born in Bangladesh, I wanted to start my reflection on my apostolic community experience with this quotation. Because wherever we go or are, either we teach or learn from different persons and things. For my apostolic experience, I was assigned to a community and ministry conducted by the De La Salle Brothers' (known also as Brothers of the Christian Schools).

My ministry there was working with and being present to the boys at “Boys’ Town”, in Ragama, Sri Lanka. These students are studying in a technical school run by the Brothers, in areas such as working a lathe, motor mechanics, welding, and electrical.

The home and school is a De La Salle project for the underprivileged, marginalized and poor children. I was assigned there for six weeks, from May 15 to June 25. I was very glad, happy and challenged as well. Why I say I was delighted to be there, because it is a place where I felt privileged to listen to the life story of the boys there.



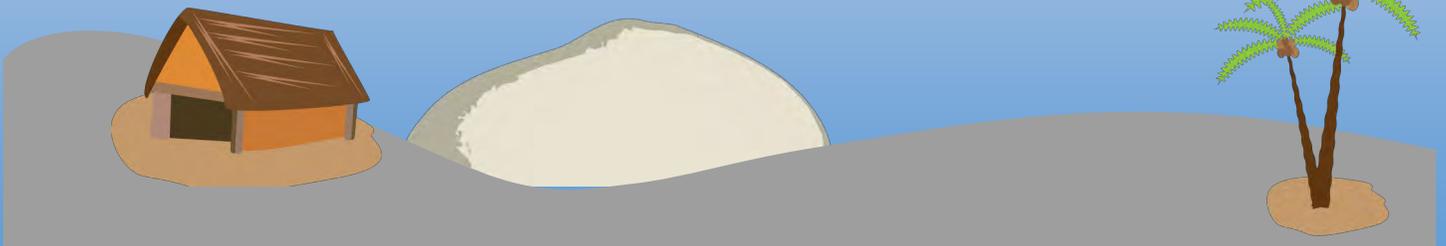
I was struck by their stories as well as their determination and dedication. With the very short opportunity and time I was there, I was able to be one of them in order to help, but also to be helped in learning further skills for my future ministry. Alongside this happy moment, I was also challenged to communicate with them in English.

I was not only challenged by communication but also emotionally, because I met a boy there who has psychological problems. Yet being someone who struggles, his dedication in learning, working, and playing challenged me a lot to be the face and tender hands of the world. Above all, my apostolic experience was a privilege being with the De La Salle Brothers and all my experiences taught me a lot.

ACEP by Dionisio From 15th of May to 25th of June 2022, I had an amazing apostolic community experience in Maris Stella College Negombo. I was warmly welcomed when I arrived, and the community offered fantastic hospitality. As always, with every Marist community I found it was easy to feel at home.

Happily, there were a number of magnificent things that I experienced. First and foremost, experiencing the community life where brothers are on mission. I experienced being on mission by teaching in the school, particularly with grade 7. Furthermore, I had the experience of being called as Brother to work among the young people by joining them to play football with the college team. So, each experience gave me the direction of my life to move forward in the way which God shows through my vocation as being called to be a good model Brother in this turbulent world.

During those days of my experience I felt great. I experienced the love and care in community as brotherhood. In addition, we shared our experiences of joy, challenge, story, and culture as brothers around the table and also we encouraged one another to be strong in our call. Therefore, sharing the life and experienced the loved, care and support among the brothers in community is the grace that God provides and the gift of our called. (cont.)



(cont.) The Community experience has developed my identity as a Brother. Along with the ministry that I was involved in, I developed more self-confidence as a Marist Novice who was able to work alongside with other Brothers and Lay Marists by doing numerous activities and participated in diverse events and also was open to the different cultural realities throughout my ACEP. Likewise, by developing my identity as a religious brother and being able to work with others was the marvelous grace that God bestowed.

Lastly, I'd love to thank my formators, Brothers and people who supported me in many ways during my community experience and who still encourage me now to grow and move forward. Hence, the community experience was so remarkable for me and it has given me the image of my future.

ACEP EXPERIENCE IN BOYS' TOWN (by Tran Van Thanh)

My ACEP experience was 6 weeks in Diyagala Boys' Town (one of the projects of the De La Salle brothers) which provides and promotes value education to poor and marginalized youth and gives them excellent training in Technology, Agriculture, and Animal Husbandry, with the assistance of devoted staff and supervisors.

As soon as I arrived at the community, I was immediately impressed and felt at home, probably because it is a Brothers' Community, similar to our own Marist Community. There are some similarities in style of mission, their way of life and their hospitality with the three of us doing ACEP in their community. During my days there, I had various experiences, including: 1) living in community, 2) working with the boys, 3) teaching catechism in the Parish.

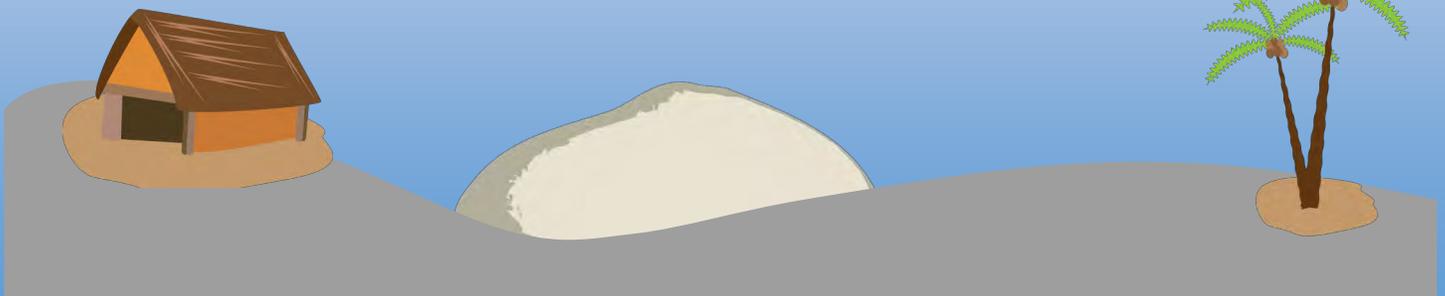
I was **Living in a community** where I felt, not like a stranger or guest, but rather a community member who was included. I indeed enjoyed the time the whole community gathered together for meals and tea times. I was really captivated by the stories and experiences each member brought which made me feel like I'd forgotten all the fatigue and worries of hours of work and service. Although very busy with work, each member of the community was always trying to set a time to gather in the chapel. Those moments being with God were so wonderful, as I was impressed by how the brothers made the prayer times important and effective. We can be busy with everything but prayer takes time and patience.

Most of my activities there were with the boys. Every morning, we cooked, cleaned, or worked in the garden together. Those were the moments when I could listen to their stories or even learn new skills from them that I had not known. They were not able to speak English much, which I found rather difficult during my English class with them. To transfer the knowledge and skills which I prepared in our pre-ACEP novitiate classes, required a great effort of adaptation, keen observation, and being ready to change to make things better for the boys I was teaching, than to keep leaning on what I had known and done. And at least, I found that the boys there were so approachable and they tried their best to learn and speak English. This motivated me a lot in my class preparations and during my classes.

The boys living in a section separate from our Community, and their school was also on the property. Working with them, I can't help but mention the moments playing sport with them. That was the time I felt close to them and got to know them better, and I really enjoyed playing football and basketball with them.

One of my unforgettable experiences in this period was in Our Lady of Salvation parish where I came to **teach catechism**. I had many good moments when the students, catechist teacher and I discussed and learned together the Sunday Gospel as well as the catechism lessons.

Thank you Boys' Town community, our formation team as well as my companions that contributed to the creation of my wonderful ACEP experience which helps me in my personal and vocational development.



ACEP MINISTRY IN KALPITIYA, by Julio Brites

My ACEP ministry from 15/05/2022 to 25/06/2022 was in the Marist community and in the school of St Sebastian G.S. Vidyalaya Kandakuliya. My ACEP ministry was wonderful. I stayed in the community with two Marist Brothers. It was a very nice community and a peaceful place. I felt at home when I stayed there. The two brothers with whom I lived in the community were friends and took care of me when I stayed with them, from the moment I arrived until the end of my apostolic experience. It seems to me that the brothers really warmly welcomed me to stay with them. So, we always prayed together as a community for the evening prayer. It was helping me to discover more about my prayer life and to know more about my relationship with God and to discern more about my identity as a Marist religious brother. I am very grateful for this experience.

This ACEP had a positive impact on my experience of community life, as I stayed with two brothers and we always saw each other as brothers. Though we had different jobs to do, we never broke our friendships in community life. It seems to me that we have really built up the Marist Spirit in our hearts. The areas that impressed me the most in community life were the way we saw each other as brothers and built our relationships and lived a simple lifestyle. So, we always did small activities together in the community. All this experience gave me the knowledge to build my friendships more, to love more my vocation as a Marist.

I stayed in the Marist community and went to have my apostolic experience at the school. For six weeks, the teachers, Sister and my accompanier, Br Lal, organized the programs well for me. I achieved a lot while teaching English to 4th, 6th and 8th graders for six weeks at the school. The students were very respectful and behaved well during my English class. This made me feel confident to teach English to them. So, I recognize that this ACEP gave me the opportunity to explore more of my gifts and talents that are within me.

I learned many things from this ACEP, "Teaching with love for the students". I felt I was able to inspire them to learn in the classroom, helping them to give importance to their studies, helping students build and discover more of their dreams for the future, particularly in speaking English. I was teaching English in many different ways to students; such as reading, writing, speaking, drawing, games, etc. I recognize that this experience has greatly helped me prepare for my future ministry with children during my mission wherever I am.



And finally, this ACEP was really a remarkable experience for me to explore more my identity as a brother. In particular, it helps me to appreciate the gifts of others in the community and of the people I have bonded with in the course of my ACEP. Thank you.



[PICTURE: visit of Br Réal and Aldo to Kalpitiya]



APOSTOLATE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE IN MARIST SEVANA, HALDANDUWANA (BY LEE)

It is a great opportunity for me to have been able to complete my ACEP in Marist Sevana – Haldanduwana where three brothers are present and working in different ministries.

During my ACEP time, I was involved mainly in the Girl's College, run by the Holy Angel Sisters Congregation, where I was observing a range of different classes from grade 6 to grade 12. Occasionally, when a teacher was absent from a class, I took the initiative to talk with students and brought up some varied topics creatively so that we could share and feel each other's presence and laughter together.



For the Montessori school, I had two weeks meaningfully being there with the children, helping a teacher and the Sisters to play and run the class with some activities. They were all so actively and playfully enjoying with us, that after school-time they highly spoke of me and my companion to their families and friends because they really felt our loving presence and our joy that we brought for them.

We also had a couple of weeks helping a brother to teach English for girls in an orphanage close to our community. This orphanage was run by a Religious Sister, then she was transferred to some other places, so she was replaced with a lay worker. The girls and the person in charge of it were so pleased to receive us there. Even though we had a short time to be with them, they were so enthusiastically trying to study and enjoy some activities together.

Unfortunately, I was not able to have more chances to join the youth ministry program, which has been helping in the community every month, and even the catechism every Sunday at the parish. I wish I could have had a chance to do something in these two areas also.

All in all, I have felt really privileged and joyous to take part in this time of ACEP. It helps build many of my qualities and character to be a better and good Marist. All those experiences and memories I had through this time are so precious to me and my near future ministry of Marist life.

