



AT THE CRIB WE FIND THE INNOCENCE, SIMPLICITY, GENTLENESS AND EVEN WEAKNESS OF A GOD WHO IS CAPABLE OF TOUCHING THE HARDEST OF HEARTS.

ST. MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT



Colegio Santa Maria Toledo

A YEAR FOLLOWING THE GENERAL CHAPTER

MESSAGE OF BR. ERNESTO SÁNCHEZ, SUPERIOR GENERAL

The Superior General of the Marist Institute, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, sends a video message to all the Marists of Champagnat. This is also available in PDF, a year since the General Chapter.

Recorded in the 4 languages of the Institute ([English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)), the message is available on the social networks ([youtube](#) e [facebook](#)). It is also possible to download the text here in PDF ([English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)).



GENEAL ADMINISTRATION

- Last Monday, the Secretary General, Brother Carlos Huidobro, together with the General Council, organized the Christmas celebration for the Brothers and co-workers of the General Administration. Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, wished everyone a "Happy Christmas" on behalf of the entire General Council.
- From Wednesday 19th, the Councillor Generals Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa and Óscar Martín visited the Province of Brasil Centro-Norte.
 - From the 26th until the 29th of December the Provincial Chapter of Ibérica will take place in Lardero, attended by Brothers Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General and Ben Consigli, Councillor General.
 - Brothers Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, and João Carlos do Prado, Councillor General, will take part in the Chapter of Compostela in Valladolid from the 26th until 30th December.
- On the 26th and 27th of December, Brother Óscar Martín, Councillor General, will lead the Provincial Retreat in Guadalajara, México Occidental.
- From the 2nd until the 5th of January the Chapter of the Mediterránea Province will be held in Guardamar, attended by Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, and General Councillors Ben Consigli and Joao Carlos do Prado.

BR. ROBERT THUNUS

NEW PROVINCIAL OF WEST CENTRAL EUROPE



Br. Robert Thunus

Son of parents from a working class background, I was born in 1960, in Waimes to the East of Belgium. I have a sister and three brothers one of whom died at the age of 13. I am the last, with my twin brother who teaches in a Marist school.

I first encountered the Marist Brothers during my tertiary studies in electro mechanics, at the Institute of Notre-Dame in Malmedy. During my postulantship I followed a course of religious studies in Charleroi. Then I entered the French-speaking international Novitiate in Switzerland. I made my first vows in 1983 and my perpetual vows in 1988.

In the course of my work with young people, I taught religion, was vocations animator, taught in the boarding school, was catechist in the parish and involved in facilitating Marist Vocations.

After a number of years in this apostolate, I followed a supplementary course of formation in catechetics and pastoral work in the Lumen Vitae Institute in Brussels; then I spent some time in Italy in the Focolari Movement.

From 2003 until 2006, I took part in an international project, set up by our new Province in Dublin, Ireland, for the accompaniment of young adults. I was a member of the Provincial Council from 2006 to 2012. For 9 years, I was director of the community and the Welcome Centre of le Bua in Habay, being at the same time a member of the European Team for the Mission.

Following a sabbatical, I had the privilege to take part in the last General Chapter in Colombia and followed a formation course in Canada. Before accepting the Provincialship, I had just been appointed to Brussels to help the Brothers of Belgium deal with the finances and administration. At the beginning of this new stage opening up before me, I am thankful to the Brothers of my Province for their confidence and I place in the hands of God and Mary my new mission of animation of the Province.

The General Council, after studying the results of the consultation carried out in the Province, has appointed Br. Robert Thunus as Provincial of West Central Europe, for a first mandate of three years.

Br. Robert will begin his service as Provincial during the next Provincial Chapter, which is due to take place from the 23rd to 26th April 2019.

Br. Ernesto, in his letter sent to the Province on 27 November, thanked Br. Brendan Geary, Provincial for the last 9 years: "I have witnessed personally – as a General Councillor and now as Superior General - your generous devotedness, and the creative ways that you have accompanied the diverse realities of the five Countries of the Province, forming teams with the members of your Councils."

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE TRANSLATORS

In this last issue of the year, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all those who collaborate in the translation of the news. Only thanks to them can we publish every day news about Marist life and mission in the four languages of the Institute and thus create communion, contributing to the formation of a global family. Our sincere thanks go to Br. Douglas Welsh, Br. Jeff Crowe and Sister Mary Berchmans (English); to Br. Pau Fornells and Br. Jesús Alberto Rodríguez Delgado - Chuchi (Spanish); to Br. Gilles Hogue and Br. Jean-Pierre Cotnoir (French); to Sister Heloisa Afonso de Almeida Sousa, Br. Teófilo Minga and Br. Roque Brugnara (Portuguese).

In addition to them, other brothers and several professionals provide their services as translators, under the coordination of Marta Graupera, for the messages of the Superior General and for longer texts for publications.

Thank you for your service and dedication. God bless you!

If you also want to be part of this group as a volunteer, you can contact us by writing to the following address: comunica@fms.it

NEWS IN BRIEF

PROFESSION IN PERU

On December 12th, Brother Guillermo Rivera Atoche celebrated his first profession in the Instituto Marista in the College of Santa Rosa de Sullana, received by Brother Saturnino Alonso, Provincial of Santa María de los Andes Province.

COLOMBIA

The government has granted the Province a concession of two public schools for 12 years, with the possibility of their renovation. These schools are dedicated to the lowest social levels (0, 1, 2 and 3) of Colombian society which reaches level 6. These two new centres are in the outlying area south of Bogotá, where the Marists already have two other schools, besides those of Popayán and Villavicencio.

BELGIUM

The Mayoress of Genval visited the Brothers' community. They shared with her everything about the Marist life worldwide. She was delighted with our Marist presence in the fringes, especially the activities of the Blue Marists of Aleppo.

MÉXICO CENTRAL

On the 15th of December, Nicolás Chablé Ríos and Mario Alberto García Ríos who had just completed their Novitiate in Medellín, made their first profession in the Instituto Marista in the Provincial House "Quinta Soledad."



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GROUP "TUTTI FRATELLI"

THE EXPERIENCE OF BROTHER ERNESTO IN THE SYNOD ON YOUTH

On Saturday, November 24, in the House of de Lasalle Brothers, there was the annual encounter "Tutti Fratelli" of Congregations of Brothers, to which assisted approximately seventy participants from sixteen Congregations (among which ten Marist Brothers).

Br. Ernesto Sánchez was asked to share with the group something of his experience in the Synod on "the Young, faith and vocational discernment". Br. Ernesto spoke of his lived experience, presented, in general the great features or characteristics, of the Final Document of the Synod and underlined some points.

After this, the organizers proposed a dynamic in language groups during which dialogue took place with some Italian young people. The idea was to live a dynamic like the one carried out during the Synod in which there

were 36 young people participating at all times.

The encounter ended with a prayer in the Chapel, which has a special decoration given that this year the 300 years of the death of Saint John Baptist de la Salle are celebrated.

Brothers from eight Institutes form the organizing group, among these Brothers Tony Leon and Ángel Medina, meets several times a year to reflect on themes common to our Religious Institutes of Brothers. In fact, next year, during the month of September there will be a program of formation for community animators with participants from each one of these Institutes of Brothers.

[Download here](#) the outline that Br. Ernesto used and distributed among the participants to speak about his experience during the Synod.



BR. ZUBAIR YAQUB

FINAL VOWS IN PAKISTAN

Br. Zubair Yaqub made his final vows on 8th December at Sargodha, Pakistan, at the parish of St. Francis Xavier's church. Bro. Sunil Liyanage was delegated to represent Br. Provincial of South Asia.

Chief celebrant was Fr. Nasir William, director of the Diocesan commission for social communication.

All the Marist Brothers from Sargodha and Peshawar together with parishioners, Priests, Nuns, parents, relatives, teachers and also well wishes were among the participants to commemorate this happy occasion.

MARIST WORLD



Guatemala
Retreat Province of América Central



United States
Marist Bayonne Community



Brazil: Thanksgiving for the beatification of Brother Henri in Curitiba



Colombia
New Brothers of the Province of Norandina



Brazil
Mendes: Chapter Brasil Centro-Norte



Australia
Lavalla200> Mount Druitt

LET GOD BE THE FIRST GUEST OF YOUR HEART

NOVITIATE COMMUNITY OF SAVE, RWANDA



We met all together on the 23rd of September 2018: Eight second year novices coming from community experience in four different communities (Byimana, Rwabuye, Mururu and Nyangezi) and thirteen postulants admitted to the novitiate. Two formators were waiting for the novices in the novitiate. The novitiate's community is now composed of 21 novices

from six countries: Central Africa Republic (1), DRC (8), Kenya (2), Madagascar (3), Tanzania (1), Rwanda (6) and 2 formators from Madagascar and Rwanda.

After few days of orientation and initiation, the novices started the process of making the Community Life Plan. This process was concluded by a pilgrimage to Kibeho on 18 October to entrust the year of formation to Mary.

Then the community continued with the timetable of the novitiate with all its different activities.

On 24 November 2018, the thirteen first year Novices were received officially in the novitiate. The celebration was simple and

truly Marist. The presence of Brother Kalisa, the provincial of Pace and the representative of all Marist communities of Rwanda made the celebration very significant for all. Sure of the presence and the intercession of Mary and Champagnat in their community, the novices and Brothers commit themselves to really "let God be the first guest of our hearts".

THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN CHILE, URUGUAY AND VANUATU

MARISTS FROM URUGUAY AND CHILE IN GENEVA



During the next month of January, several countries with Marist presence will be evaluated in the Universal Periodical Exam. The Provinces Santa Maria de los Andes, Cruz Del Sur and the District of Melanesia decided to participate in the process to inform on the situation of children in Chile, Uruguay and Vanuatu, respectively. Together with international and national organizations such as BICE, Edmund Rice International, or Franciscans International, reports were prepared focused on the fol-

lowing themes:

- Uruguay: youth justice, decent dwelling, school abandonment and violence against children.
- Chile: institutionalized children, school inclusion of children with special educational needs, violence against children and the right to participation.
- Vanuatu: boys and girls with disabilities and effects of the climate change.

One of the more important stages of the whole process is the effect or impact, so that our recommendations are accepted by the States and, later, that these may bring them up under Exam. With this objective, George Raczynski (Chile) and Mauricio Fuentes (Uruguay) travelled to Geneva. Unfortunately, it was not possible for Andrew Litanga to travel from Papua New Guinea to give his report on Vanuatu.

Both Mauricio, as well as George were invited to speak in an important event: the Pre-session, which the UPR Info organizes.

The organizations of civil society present in this Conference their reports to the Diplomats of different countries who are in Geneva.

Besides, they had the possibility to have an interview with International organizations and with the Permanent Missions of Chile, Germany, Denmark, Slovenia and Ireland.

The Marists from Italy, Bolivia, Madagascar and El Salvador are already working to prepare the reports, which they will present in March 2019.

BOLIVIA: NOVITIATE OF THE REGION AMÉRICA SUR

FIVE NEW MARIST BROTHERS

Five young people finished their Interprovincial Novitiate of the Region América Sur, in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and they make their Religious Profession in their different Provinces.

Br. Rai Costa (Brazil Sul-Amazônia) made his profession on December 7. Br. Clebio Pereira and Danilson Maia (Brasil Centro-Norte) made their profession on 9 December. Guillermo Rivera (Santa María de Los Andes, from Peru) made his profession on December 12. Pablo Rifarachi (Cruz del Sur, from Argentina), will make his profession on January 11.



FIVE INTERCONGREGATIONAL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH SUDAN

The initiative known as Solidarity with South Sudan was inspired by the Congress of Consecrated Life which took place in 2014: Passion for Christ, passion for the humanity.

The Union of Superiors and Superior Generals listened to the call of the Conference of Bishops from South Sudan to respond to the needs of people, after suffering three decades of war, in critical areas for example: formation of teachers, formation of male nurses and matrons, agricultural experts and social work initiatives .

From 2008, five intercongregational religious communities established themselves in South Sudan to follow that mission. Today there are 30 priests, religious and lay persons from 18 countries and 19 different congregations.

Of these, two are Marist Brothers: Christian Ndubisi Mbam and Longinus Uchechukwu Dimgba, both from Nigeria.

In this year of 2018 we commemorate 10 years of solidarity with the people and the Church of South Sudan. The celebration took place on the occasion of the Assembly of Solidarity with South Sudan, celebrated on November 28 in the General House of the De La Salle Brothers.

The Assembly was marked by welcoming Father Paulo Smyth, President, who also gave a breakdown of the history, witnesses and mission of Solidarity with South Sudan, followed by some prayerful time. Also presented and approved was the submission of accounts for 2018, as well as the budget for 2019.

Following this, those taking part in the Assembly were given, in greater detail, the 4 main performance areas developed in South Sudan: education, health, sustainable agriculture and social work. The day ended with a lively Eucharistic Celebration, followed by a festive meal to celebrate the 10 years since the foundation.

The needs of the people in South Sudan are many. In the greater part of the country there is a problem of security, more than half of the population experiences hun-



ger, the social services are reduced to a minimum, the economy is failing and is marked by a strong degree of corruption. The peace which is so desired is not synonymous with just the cease fire and surrender of weapons. Peace is a system of justice, an appropriate application of laws and the reduction of corruption. The country needs to be unified and to be productive. In that sense, in these 10 years of the history of the project, set up by the religious, contributes to the country by the formation of

male nurses and matrons; also with the formation of social work helpers better equipped in trying to cure the traumas left by the war; through the formation of farmers to acquire a strongly based economy; and formation of teachers coming from all the regions of the country.

The combined efforts and collaborative work among the congregations and lay people, in association with the local Church, is making a difference in South Sudan. But there is much to be

done. At this moment the greatest challenge is the need for a greater number of people available to dedicate some time in their lives to helping in this situation. This is a plea to all the congregations.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF MARIST
NEWS WILL BE PUBLISHED
ON THE 3RD OF JANUARY.
WE WISH YOU ALL A
HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY 2019.

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