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# NEWS BULLETIN



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## **Message for the Foundation Day 2020**

Champagnat, with a group of seminarians, had planned to found an Order of Priests who will devote themselves exclusively for missionary work and to the education of youth. However in Marcellin's mind, "it is not only an Order of Priests, but we need, also a group of Brothers, who can be devoted exclusively to the teaching of youth". His colleagues could not understand him but gave him permission to go ahead.

Hence, on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1817, Marcellin Champagnat founded a Religious Institute of Brothers called, Little Brothers of Mary. His mission was to spread the gospel of Jesus among young people in schools. His objective was to make Jesus known and loved among children and young people.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2020, we mark 203 years of the foundation of the Marist Brothers Institute. In founding the Marist Brothers, Marcellin encountered many obstacles but with humility and simplicity, he was also able to win the hearts of several other influential people who supported his course of action.

There was a felt need in the society at the time and he was determined to provide a solution there and then. After commending it to God and Mary, he was convinced that God would see him through this venture. As, "Mary has always done everything for us", he entrusted his Institute to Mary saying, "Mary, this is your work".

It was a new beginning for Marcellin full of challenges and disappointments. We are embarking on a new epoch in the life of the Marist District of West Africa. There would certainly be obstacles, discouragements and oppositions? Did Marcellin give in to them? He was determined to accomplish his vision and trusting in Mary's help, he was suc-

cessful. What are our attitudes when we encounter challenges along the road? Like Marcellin, we should be bold, consistent and determined believing that Mary, our Good mother, will help us overcome those obstacles. Sometimes our lives have to be completely shaken up, changed and rearranged to re-locate us to the place we are meant to be (Saul Speaking).

As we celebrate foundation day, 2020, let us be focused, determined and involved in the mission that is ahead of us – walking towards becoming a new province.

With these words, I want to wish you all a happy feast and a prosperous new year.

*Br Cyprian Gandeabo*  
*(District Superior)*

### **The causes that bind us :**

**Become a herald of the Good News; denounce injustice, work for peace, defend life, and care for creation. (R.33.78) Join your contemplative gaze to your prophetic attitude. Over time your personal transformation will give credibility to your fight for social change.**

*'Extracts from the rule of life' No 32*

### *Graduation Ceremony at MIUC*

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2019, fourteen fourth year Brothers from MIUC were awarded a Diploma in Religious Studies (DRS). This graduation comes after 3 semesters of studies which are intertwined with professional studies. During these periods of learning, the Brothers are exposed to various courses such as; Marist Patrimony, Sacraments, Liturgy, Church History etc...



*Brothers with the MIC Superior during their graduation.*

The Diploma in Religious Studies was initiated by the Superiors of Africa and Madagascar, with the aim of providing the students Brothers with necessary skills to achieve the goals of the Institute in a changing world full of diverse needs. .

During the graduation ceremony, Brother Vincent De Paul, coordinator of the Religious Studies program, thanked the superiors for giving such an opportunity to the Brothers in initial formation and congratulated the teachers for their dedication and time. He also congratulated the Brothers for their perseverance and hard work during the learning process and urged them to put into practice what they had learnt for the service of the institute and their various administrative units.

Finally, he called upon Brother Albert, the principal of the College to award each Brother with a Diploma in Religious Studies, which made them officially certified Catechists.

*Br Tuo-Paulin*

### *Sustainability Meeting with Focus on Risk Management*

*'If you cannot manage properly what you have, what is the purpose of having something else'*



A workshop was organized from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of December at the Marist International Center on Sustainability by the General Administration in collaboration with the technical team from Curitiba – Brazil led by Mr June Alisson. Eighteen participants took part in this meeting from the different administrative units in Africa and Asia as well as the technical team from Brazil and the Econome General Brother Libardo. Brothers Pascal Birkem and Cho Nchang represented the Marist District.

The focus was on risk identification and management. Every organization or institution needs to manage its risks in order for it to be successful. Risks are the uncertainties that affects the objectives of any organization. They must therefore be clearly identified so as to help minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive impacts.

The various strengths and weaknesses of the various administrative units were identified and solutions proposed. Indeed, the workshop was an eye-opener for many of the participants and we look forward to managing our ministries in such a way that we get the means to run them well and efficiently not only now but also for the future of the young people to whom we minister. Therefore we need to be **Responsible, Transparent and Trustworthy** in management of our resources.

*Br Cho Nchang*



## Formation de Formateurs Religieux



***Br Francis Lukong and a cross section of Formators undergoing the program***

The first part of the 2019/2020 session of the “*Formation de Formateurs Religieux*” (FFR) program started on September 23, 2019 at the “*Centre spirituel jésuites*” at Châtelard (Francheville, near Lyon), France with eighteen participants from eighteen religious congregations in residence from Africa, Asia, Central America, Europe and Middle East.

The program puts emphasis on human and spiritual growth, discernment and accompaniment of the participants. “*Relecture*” (review) groups and individual work are organized to help them communicate their experiences and convictions. Ten days of Spiritual Exercises with individual accompaniment, weekly sessions focused on self-knowledge, listening in personal relationships, group animation and, some guiding principles for spiritual support, struggle and growth in spiritual life, and the practice of discernment, form part and parcel of the package offered at *Centre spirituel jésuites*”, Châtelard in Lyon. The second part of the FFR takes place at *Centre Sèvres* – Paris (*Facultés jésuites*) from January 06, 2020 where participants attend courses in the general program of the Centre Sèvres.

***Br Francis Lukong***

## Baptism & First Holy Communion @ Our Good Mother Schol - Ashalaja

On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019, Our Good Mother School – Ashalaja was in a festive mood. After three years of preparation, the catechumens of the School were presented for the Sacrament of Baptism and first Holy Communion. A total of ten catechumens took part in the Sacraments; six for Baptism and four for first Holy Communion.



***The newly baptised & those who received First Holy Communion***

The mass and the celebration took place in the school premises and it was the first of its kind since the establishment of the school in 2013 and it will continue for the subsequent years by the grace of God. As a school community, we are grateful to the Lord for giving us the strength and the wisdom to form the little ones in the way of the Gospel. We continue praying for the graces to lead more souls to Jesus through Holistic Education.

### **Brotherhood, the gift that we receive :**

The sacraments of baptism and confirmation welcome you into a new life in him, and invite you to walk by his side and to announce the Reign of God.

Extracts from the rule of Life No 32

**By Br Yao Aristide - Ghislain**

## **This is the season! This is the reason!**

Amid the Christmas celebrations lies the hidden danger of forgetting the link between the crib, the cross and the altar containing two realities of the mystery of incarnation and redemption. One of St. Marcelin's favorite meditations focused on the crib, the cross, and the altar. He frequently advised the young Brothers in formation as well as those teaching to place themselves at these three places.

Around the crib in the darkness and the cold, where a little straw had been placed, the divine prodigy took place. About the Crib, there was the warmth of two human hearts, the heart of Joseph, and the heart of a Mary. According to Fulton sheen, it was not so much that His birth cast a shadow on His life, and thus led to His death; it was rather that the Cross was there from the beginning, and it cast its shadow backward to His birth. Ordinary mortals go from the known to the unknown submitting themselves to forces beyond their control. But He went from the known to the known, from the reason for His coming to the fulfillment of His coming, namely, the death on the Cross. According to Gregory of Nyssa if one examines this mystery, one will prefer to say, not that his death was a consequence of his birth, but that the birth was undertaken so that he could die.

The rule of life of the Marist brothers talking of these three places says that Jesus is the Centre and in them, he reveals God's love to us in a deeper way. In the manger, we are invited to discover a God who has pitched a tent in our midst one who comes to us as a brother and friend. Christ on the cross as the most radical sign of a God who is love, the altar reveals the gift of the mystery of God, service, and presence, food and relationship, sustenance and strength. They are three privileged places where in gratitude you can bring your life and deepen your relationship with Christ. (Rule of Life pp. 16)

***Br Peter Awof***

## **CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATION AT MIC, NAIROBI**



Christmas at the Marist International Community in Nairobi was well celebrated with student Brothers from other countries studying in Kenya. The community started the preparations on the 23<sup>rd</sup> with a general cleaning to make sure that the compound was conducive for the celebration. Shopping for Christmas was done as part of the preparations and each fraternity bought food, gifts and decorated the fraternities and the entire community. The preparations continued on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December with more cleaning.

The Christmas vigil mass was at 8:00pm during which the main celebrant invited all to bearers and witnesses of the good news of the birth of Christ. After mass, there was a special gathering in each fraternity during which we shared our brotherhood in the spirit of Christmas. After having enough time to celebrate and rejoice together, some Brothers decided to move to other fraternities where the spirit of sharing continued. It was indeed a joyful day full of celebration for all the Brothers who demonstrated the gift of brotherhood as was requested by our founder.

***Br Kra Benjamin fms***

**MARIST DISTRICT OF WEST AFRICA**

**(Cameroon, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Libera & Tchad )**



## END OF TERM – CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES IN MPS



The Christmas festivities and the end-of-year events took a euphoric turn at Marist Preparatory Sabin Akrofrom on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2019. The day started with Holy Mass which was beautifully animated by the kids. During mass the celebrant encouraged them to celebrate the season with joy and modesty. He cited the peace brought by Christ as paramount in every of our activities.

After completing their end-of-term examinations the students waited with anxiety for the famous “Our day” during which they donate gifts to their teachers and friends as expression of the charity and gratitude that comes with Christmas. This day is also a moment for kids to identify and show appreciation to their teachers. What makes this day so spectacular is the sharing of: special fried rice and chicken, drinks and items like balloons. On this day which happened to be the last day before closing for the term, the kids had their fill and fun with so much excitement. To make their day was the long time prepared chorography which attracted a lot attention. Talented kids in dancing exhibited their agility and rare dancing skills for their amusement and that of their friends. Following thereafter was the special program, “*Battle for knowledge*” which involves answering random questions from selected books by the program coordinator Br. John Kusi. This program has promoted a lot of reading skills and competition for knowledge among kids. Many more kids are getting attracted to this program especially with

the fact that the winner goes home with a price. This day and its activities left the kids so tired and satisfied and they went home with lots of joy to kick-start their festive season.

*Br Tombir Brendane*

## Carols Night with Students & Teachers of Ahwiren



The reopening of the Marist mission in Ahwiren two years ago has brought untold joy to the inhabitants and to the students of St. Joseph Technical Senior High School in particular. Although the Brothers and Postulants are not directly involved in any apostolate in school, their presence has created a very positive impact in the lives of the teachers and students. We do an apostolate of presence. The relationship that prevails between the community and the school is very amiable.

Recently, this cordial relationship was expressed again when the school invited the Community to attend and actively participate in the carol night service in school on Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2019. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 the community also invited our co-workers particularly those teaching the postulants, the cook and some of our neighbors to celebrate Christmas with us in the community. Some of the coworkers were overwhelmed with joy when they noticed that we have special love for Mary our good mother. The celebration was indeed a great one and the family spirit was truly genuine. We thank God for the Marist presence in Ahwiren and we pray that the fraternal family spirit may always prevail.

*Br Divine*

## **Christmas celebrations with the Students of Champagnat Bouaké**

The Marist Mission in Bouaké held a series of Christmas celebrations with the pupils of the nursery, primary and the secondary school students on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 respectively. All the events started with a Eucharistic celebration during which the various preachers recalled the joy that the birth of Jesus brought to the world. He urged students and staff alike to bearers of this joy as they go about their Christmas celebrations.



At the level of the nursery school, various nativity scenes were acted by the pupils and each parent presented his child with a gift. The primary school pupils got a taste of the Christmas celebrations with various games organized for them. They had a really wonderful moment amongst themselves and with their teachers. Finally, the secondary school students were not left out as they got a feel of the birth of Christ which was well coordinated and animated by themselves.

Indeed, the Christmas celebration with the students and staff was a an opportunity for us to share our faith with our majority muslim students. We pray that the birth of Christ may bring peace among our students, in our community and in our country Cote d'Ivoire.

*Br Cho Nchang*

## **Carols day @ MCS Buokrom**



Students of MCS Buokrom gathered on Wednesday December 18<sup>th</sup> 2019 for their Christmas Carols beginning with mass at 8.30am. In his fervent homily Rev. Father Isaac Manu urged the students to make use of the few days left to amply prepare themselves for the Solemnity of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. He did so by using the analogy of how we prepare so well for an a visit of an august guest such as king, then how much more would we prepare for the coming of the King of kings at Christmas? He concluded by urging all not to be carried away by the anticipated jollifications only, but to also to prepare well their hearts in order receive the God who is coming to dwell among us.

To kick-start the Carols Day which was chaired by Brother Linus, the Assistant Headmaster; Mr. Hans Appiah heartily welcomed all and declared the day open. This was followed by the nine lessons taken from the Old and New Testaments, interlaced with a Christmas message to the entire school community and various performances from the Voices of Marcellin, and the Drama Club. Students and staff also took turns to showcase what they had prepared.

The ceremony also saw the send-forth of Ngodebo Parfait; a Novice who coincidentally had also come to the end of his three-month apostolic experience. Mr. Hans Appiah thanked him for his meritorious and unalloyed services while with the school, and encouraged him to remain steadfast in his religious formation. The Pupils, Students and Staff then exchanged gifts as well as season greetings to crown the ceremony.

*Br Tameh Conrad*



## **Christmas Celebration in the Lebanese Context**



*Br Bongben with Students in Lebanon.*

In Lebanon, 35% of the population follow a form of Christianity called Maronite Catholic. These Christians build manger scenes called a Nativity Crib in their homes, churches, schools, shops, and other public places, and the Marist of Champagnat's family is not an exception. This is usually done right from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December and so puts everyone in the mood of prayer and celebration. In fact, the crib seems more popular than a Christmas Tree. It is traditional for the scene to be based around a cave rather than a stable. It is often decorated with sprouted seeds such as chickpeas, broad-beans, lentils, oats, and wheat that had been grown on damp cotton wool in the weeks leading up to Christmas. The crib scene then becomes a focus for the prayer of people in the house, and other places where the Crib is built.



*The Crib at the School Chapel*

The jingling of bells, the Christmas carols, and the impeccably adorable decorations at every corner of the school at Jbeil and Amchit (one of the Marist schools in Lebanon) put the school community in the mood of celebration. Cribs were built at strategic places in the school such as the chapel



*Brothers from the two communities in Lebanon sharing in the Christmas joy.*

and the park at the entrance of the school. This created a mood of prayer in school as one could spot students as well as teachers stop to say a prayer in front of the Crib. There were also a series of Christmas celebrations in school amongst the teachers, and students before Christmas break. And so the Marist core value of family spirit was very evident.

The Brothers also made Christmas a remarkable celebration as we all gathered in the Marist Community of Champville (Champagnat's city) to make merry and to commemorate the birth of our savior Jesus Christ. Brothers (young and old) celebrated life together in such a fun and funky way as if to suggest we were of the same age group. Indeed it was a very a lively, and an enriching moment.

*Br Bongben Emmanuel*

Being a child of God and a brother of Jesus is the primary and essential identity of each person (cf Mt 5:45; 25:40-45). Living that identity fully, by simply being a brother, is the essence of your Christian vocation.

Extracts from the rule of Life No 3



## Christmas Celebration for Brothers in Ghana



*Brothers at prayers before the party*

As it is the custom, every year on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, all the Marist Brothers working in Ghana come together to celebrate Christmas as a family. This year 2019, the celebration was hosted by the Marist Community of Buokrom (Kumasi). This celebration brought together all the Brothers, novices and postulants of the Marists of Champagnat in Ghana. It was one of a kind to have these levels of Marist formation and life meeting together. The spirit of Brotherhood that was witnessed left so much to be taken home. Champagnat would have been like, “see how they love one another!”



*There was plenty of food & drinks to share.*

It was a great moment of festivity, joy and meeting for Brothers who had not met each other for a long time due to their busy schedules. The celebration started at 6pm with prayers led by the Novitiate community followed by the welcome address of the superior of the community Brother Linus Ngam.



*The joy of Brotherhood*

After the allocutions, the meal was blessed and served. There were varieties of local and foreign dishes as well as drinks. All the brothers ate and drank while sharing stories and memories. This moment was followed by presentation of gifts from various communities. At the end of the celebration, the District Superior Brother Cyprian in his short message commended such a celebration as a living sign of fraternity and urged Brothers to be spiritual their words and deeds. He also used the occasion to wish all the Brothers a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2020. The celebration ended with prayers and the Marist Community of Kwadaso (Kumasi) was designated to be the host of the next Christmas party which will be on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

*Br Yao Aristide Ghislain*

Within the ecclesial community, you are called to witness to and to celebrate the sacrament of brotherhood. Your vocation attests to the sacred character of the brother, a special vessel of God's presence in the world.

· 'Extracts from the rule of Life No 6'



## Christmas Celebration at the Marist Novitiate—Kumasi, Ghana



### NOVITIATE COMMUNITY

*Christmas celebration in the Novitiate community was a great and joyful one full of activities.*



*The Novitiate community presented gifts to all community members & co-workers.*



*The master of the Novices addressing the entire community on Christmas day, bringing to the awareness of all, the essence of Christ birth for Christians living in the community.*



*The Community reminds herself of the importance of the crib at prayers.*



*Animation was done by blocks and it was so well animated that we could feel the joy of the birth of Christ.*



*Novices & Formators 2019—2020*



*It was also an opportunity to celebrate our Brothers birthdays so as to appreciate them as gifts to the Institute.*



## **Foundation day at MIC**



On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2020, the community of Marist International Centre in Nairobi together with the members of MIUC staff, Religious men and women and friends of the Brothers celebrated the 203<sup>rd</sup> foundation day of the Institute. The celebration began with community prayer at 7 and later the Eucharistic celebration at 11 in the community chapel. During the Eucharistic celebration, Brother Spiridon Ndanga, reflecting on the foundational event of the congregation asked the congregation to imagine for once what would have happened, and where will they be, if Champagnat did not found the congregation of the Marist Brothers of the Schools.



*Brothers after Mass on 2nd January*

Taking a cue from words of Joyce Johnson Rouse's song "standing on shoulders of the ones who came before, we are stronger for their courage, we are wiser for their words, we are able to stand a little taller, to work a little longer and our shoulders will be there to hold those who will follow us, likening us to the young boy on the

shoulders of Marcellin as depicted in the statue that stands in one of the niches on the external façade of St Peter's Basilica in Rome, He exhorted the Brothers to look to the future with hope because of being raised upon the shoulders of a vigorous spiritual tradition which is able to carry us into a future filled with promise of vitality and hope. He added that Champagnat was a visionary who long before the advent of the charter of child's rights, insisted on elements which advocates for children's rights.



*A special meal was shared on this great day*

The celebration was followed by a group photograph and a family meal with all present to mark the end the occasion. The foundation day celebration ended with vespers in the main chapel. The celebration of the 203 years of the foundation of the Marist Brothers of the school, the third year into the third century of the existence of the congregation was significant because the dwindling numbers of the members of the institute is ironically contrasted with the growing number of those the institute is serving in its various works around the world.

### ***Br Peter Awoh***

By living as a brother, you state clearly that you intend to follow Jesus by taking up his way of life. Your consecration has its roots in the incarnation for it gives birth to a specific feature of the human face of God, revealed in Jesus.

. 'Extracts from the rule of Life No 9'



## **The Sociopolitical Crisis in Cameroon Challenges Brothers to look beyond the Classrooms**



The Marist Brothers in Cameroon have had a reputation for excellent quality education for more than half a decade. Most people know the Brothers for nothing else than committed educators and school managers. Even some Brothers feel lost or inadequate believing they have nothing more to offer than teach in the formal school setting. The current sociopolitical crisis rocking the two English Speaking regions of Cameroon has brought all educational programs of the Brothers to a complete standstill and schools shut down, challenging the Brothers, especially those of Tatum community to review their sense of brotherhood in the absence of formal schooling.

The three Brothers in Tatum Community during this year 2019 /2020 have challenged themselves to give another image of brotherhood through service to the local Christian community and young people in general. Instead of lamenting and waiting for school resumption that seems not to be happening, the Brothers have been collaborating with the parish pastoral team in the animation of the youth group, prayer and action groups, Small Christian Communities besides computer literacy classes for children in the community. The Advent

and Christmas seasons were particularly charged with organization of recollection for Christians in preparation for Christmas and celebration of Communion Service in collaboration with the Parish Priest. The traditional Christmas party with the children equally brought hundreds of them to the community where the Brothers were overwhelmed in their efforts to entertain them.



These activities have so far opened the doors of the community to request for counseling services especially at a time when many families and young people in particular are deeply disoriented by the ongoing crisis. It is also an eye opener for what awaits us as youth ministers at the end of this crisis when our schools may be flooded with children whose family homes have been destroyed, parents killed or kidnapped / arrested and tortured, sexually abused pushing some into teenage motherhood. It is equally possible that some of our students who are no longer in schools have joined the ranks of drugged and armed separatist fighters who may resolve to come back and continue schooling.

Are we well-armed to give them the needed psycho-spiritual and moral guidance for proper reinsertion in the society?

Happy New Year 2020.

*Br Stephen Kpunsu*

## **Meeting with Aspirants - Yassa**

The Marist aspirants in Cameroon met at the Yassa community in Douala from the 27th -30th December for an encounter. This program attracted three young men who desire to dedicate their lives to God in our Marist family of Champagnat. The aspirants came from Yaoundé in the Centre Region, Ndop and Bamenda in the North West Region. This program gave an opportunity to these gentlemen to get closer to our Marist community and to get a gist of who the Marist Brothers are, and what the Vocation entails. It was also a time for aspirants to live in a Marist Community and to observe the animation of our community life, mission and apostolate.

This was in a bit to help them in the discernment of their vocation as Marist Aspirants. These few days were animated with prayers, conferences, one to one interviews, as well as outdoor and indoor games. The inputs at the conferences were delivered by all the Brothers of the Community. However, because of the size of the community, the premises of a nearby convent were used for sleeping and the conferences.

The next Aspirant session is scheduled for the month of April and more young men are expected to attend. Let's keep on praying for more faithful vocations to our Institute, as well as promoting vocations in our own little ways.

*Br Mbiatem Eyong*

Being a child of God and a brother of Jesus is the primary and essential identity of each person (cf Mt 5:45; 25:40-45). Living that identity fully, by simply being a brother, is the essence of your Christian vocation.

'Extracts from the Rule of Life No 3'.

## **FINAL RELIGIOUS PROFESSION OF BR HARRY NYANTI**



Br Harry Nyanti made his Final Profession on Saturday December 21<sup>st</sup> 2019, at the Holy Martyrs' Parish, Barnersville Estate, Monrovia. The ceremony began at 10:30am, with a procession led by the District Superior and his Council, the Marist Brothers and the parents of Br Harry. Many Religious men and women also graced the ceremony with their presence not forgetting the eight priests who concelebrated and the parishioners, friends and relatives who turned out in their numbers to support Br Harry.

Presiding over the ceremony, was Most Rev. Lewis Jerome Zeigler, Archbishop of Monrovia. Along with him were his Vicar General, who delivered the homily for the day. In his sermon he challenged Br Harry and all religious men and women present to be living witnesses of the gospel of Christ. He also used the opportunity to talk to the young men and women who were present by advising them to make meaning out of their lives just like Br Harry was doing on this great day. In conclusion he thanked the parents of Br Harry for his gift to the Church and the Marist Brothers for nurturing his vocation. The ceremony ended at 1.45pm with some refreshment.

*Br Washington Tekay*



## **NEWS IN BRIEF**

### **Visit of the District Superior with his Council**



**District Council with Br Harry during his Final Profession.**

The District Superior, Rev. Brother Cyprian Gandeebo, arrived in the Champagnat Community of Monrovia on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2019 and immediately began his canonical visit that ended on December 13<sup>th</sup> 2019. He was shortly joined by the District Councilors who came for the council meeting. The District Secretary was equally present as well as Mr Felix Fosu an IT Technician who came to update the Brothers and staff on the latest software being used in the District for academic and financial reports. They all attended the final profession of Br Harry.

**Br Washington Tekay**

### **Building of a New Community in Monrovia**



A major event in the District took place on Wednesday on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2019 when Brothers Oliver Tata, Sebastian and Pascal Birkem, along with the Brothers in Liberia, signed a construction contract with Mr. James Fred Koker, for the building of the new community in Kpain's Town,

Marshall, Margibi County. Actual work started on Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup> 2019, with tremendous progress. This is due to the fact that the District sent the Ghanaian site-engineer, Mr. Samuel Nontwiri, who is always there, making sure that the work is properly done. Thank you, Mr. Nontwiri!!

**Br Washington Tekay**

### **Schools reopens in Tchad after strike!!!!**



Collège Marie Ke Tal was supposed to reopened on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 after a two weeks Christmas break. This reopening was however paralyzed by 3 days' general strike in the country. A timely negotiation between the government and board of workers appeased the situation and so we were able to finally resume on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2020. Let us hope that the year runs on smoothly.



**Installation of a Girl's Club**



**Opening Year Mass**

**Brothers Alfred and Frédérick**



## TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM OF VOCATION MINISTRY : A SUMMARY

*I present here a summary of an article written by Brother Alberto Parise, mscj, (a Combonian Brother) who is currently working in Europe but he lived and worked in Nairobi Kenya as well, involving himself in the field of youth ministry. He wrote a long article: Towards a new paradigm of vocation ministry. It is an attempt to propose another way of looking at youth ministry and vocation ministry in the Church today. I hope this summary will help all Marists concerned with youth and vocation ministry as well as those teaching in schools to deepen their understanding and commitment to this noble task.*

As we have mentioned in the opening article (editorial), last year, the church organized the synod for young people in Rome (October 2018). Inspired by the preparatory document of this synod, and the final document of the synod and the post-synodal letter, *Christus Vivit* by Pope Francis, the author, reflecting on the reality of youth and pastoral experiences throughout the world, wrote this document one year later after the synod, and gave it a title, **TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM OF VOCATIONS MINISTRY**. I will summarize important points raised by the author to help Marist youth animators or ministers in the Marist Provinces in Africa.

### **The Conditions of the youth :**

The author begins his reflection by pointing out the conditions of the youth in the world today. Young people in today's world are affected greatly by the dynamics of globalization in different forms. Globalization on its dark side, triggers the mechanisms of exclusion of the dominant economic system that generates violence, impoverishment of the majority of the world's population and environmental devastation as Pope Francis denounced in *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato si*. The author pointed out that among the most significant consequences of this "globalization of indif-

ference" (Pope Francis) are precariousness and insecurity experienced by the youth in many parts of the world. "*the insecurity of working conditions and the social precariousness block every medium and long term project. The journey of young people is marked by the difficulty of planning the future*", the author insisted. The impacts of these realities are on both psychological and cultural. Psychologically, it lessens self-confidence and the possibility of pursuing one's dreams and life plans. Culturally, it creates a kind of a new culture, the culture of "multi-belonging" adopting and feeling in two or more different cultures or different lifestyles, rather an identity confusion which becomes *the normal way* of "feeling and moving around the world".

Another consequence of these realities is the growth of disenchantment with the institutions such as the Church. Young people feel that these institutions *are increasingly distant, insignificant and based on a top-down or authoritarian power*.

The author recognizes that young people rather value equality, pluralism of thinking and acting and greater inclusion. Therefore, young people listen more and attach themselves not to an institution but to individual people who communicate values through their lives.

Despite all these realities, the present and the future are not all bleak. With young people in the world, a new world can still be possible. There are signs of growth of solidarity, community ties, spirituality, social commitment as well as the fundamental value of welcoming, friendship and mutual support. Young people simply long for participation and leading role in the society desiring to make use of their giftedness, skills and creativity. Many express their commitment towards the poor as a way of discovering faith and God's call.

#### Four challenges of the Youth Ministry (YM)

The author then gives four responses or challenges to consider if Youth Ministry is to be relevant and to respond to the situations of the youth today.

The first response consists of narrowing the distance between ministers and the young people. There is a need to “go out towards them”. The author argues that *being part of their world implies learning their languages, the cultural horizon in which they move, inhabiting their spaces - often characterized by their own rules of interaction - with an open, respectful, non-judgmental attitude, but capable of appreciating their values.*

The reality is that at times the majority of young people in parishes, schools and youth movements remain uninvolved or accounted for in the traditional youth ministry. That is why, according to the author, Pope Francis recommended that youth ministry should consider two broad lines of action: *“research”, that is, the invitation to attract new young people to the encounter with the Lord, and “growth”, that is, the development of a path of maturation for those who have already lived that experience (Christus vivit 209).* In the mind of the Pope, “research” pushes for “popular youth ministry” that should be broader, more flexible, in places where young people can be found in order to knit relationship with them, to listen to them unconditionally, to awaken their deep desire to enter into dialogue with the gospel through their language and life. “Growth” on the other hand is not about indoctrination but deepening the faith experience, fraternity and service of the young people.

The second response, according to the author, is a call to be prophetic. If the church wants to remain relevant in the eyes of the young, it has to live the gospel values radically, *embodying an alternative way of life: fraternal and supportive, sober, sustainable, consistent, and making common cause with the least and the excluded.* The church has to overcome clericalism, a mentality of exclusion, imposition of hierarchy and domination so that the

church of the service can emerge, a church in communion with the people, and in solidarity with the poor.

The third response is accompaniment. Young people are in dire need of group/community and individual accompaniment. The author argues that pluralism and multi-culturalism, which young people wish to embrace, may not always be easy to assimilate, and uncertainty, confusion and violence may not be far off.

Therefore, *prepared companions are needed, credible witnesses who can communicate humanity, and who can facilitate a critical reading of reality and its complexity.* This form of accompaniment must be integral, taking into account all dimensions of life, human, social and spiritual, capable of reading the signs of the times. Companions will help young people lead a life of prayer with the concrete situations as well as a process of entering into dialogue with God in light of the gospel.

The fourth response consists of appropriate vocational discernment. At times, vocational discernment limits itself to the call to priesthood and consecrated life. It has to be broader than that, to *call to life, which invites young people to a response that can take very different forms...an approach aimed at facilitating awareness of one's deepest and most authentic identity, to be cultivated according to the invitation of the Spirit.* A good vocational discernment, on the other hand, should help see vocation not as a fixed destiny, a plan that is already written and must be carried out *but rather an open path without any pre-determined form but must be built step by step by listening to and obeying the Spirit.* The author stresses that *discernment is therefore a continuous, fundamental process, in which there is no map that defines the paths from the beginning, but a compass, the invitations of the Spirit to follow Jesus, to respond with faith, creativity and availability, overcoming the planning mentality that, if exasperated (or frustrated), leads to narcissism and self-closure.*

## **Features of a renewed YM**

If then Youth Ministry has to be prophetic and to reach its objectives namely, the integral growth of the person, the fostering of the personal encounter with Jesus in the Word and in the excluded, promoting the critical mind of the youth and vocational discernment, YM must have some fundamental characteristics:

### ***1. Testimony and consistency of life from the Youth Ministers***

Pastorals programs must be coupled with visible and lived values such as simple lifestyle, closeness to the marginalized, coherence, adherence to the values of fraternity, justice, social responsibility and sustainability. *Young people have great expectations of seeing new ways of daring in both community life and ministerial service: attempting new paths, going out to situations of periphery, changing the structures whose injustice, unsustainability and emptiness they perceive*, the author insisted.

### ***2. Protagonism of young people***

This means fostering as much as possible the contribution of the young people. They have to take initiatives, develop creativity and autonomy in all activities in where they are involved and where they are properly accompanied. Their perspectives and sensitivity must be respected so that they engage themselves freely in all activities such as community involvement, meetings, sharing of life history, reflection and prayers. Only through this freedom will they experience meaningful interpersonal relationships and build their identity.

### ***3. Collaborative Ministry***

The author expresses that YM shareholders must bring their respective contribution because YM is a community responsibility. Moreover, *as a community, we create the conditions for an attractive YM for young people by creating an environment*

*of fraternal relations and an incarnate spirituality, attentive to history, to life and to the presence of the Spirit in it.* YM shareholders are schools, youth groups, and local churches.

### ***4. Welcoming spaces***

Another important feature that makes YM attractive to the young people is when they feel welcomed as they are. The author argues that a particular "free space", in which young people can reflect, pray and experience themselves in a community dimension without pressure.

In fact, young people without exception grow in their self-esteem in places where they can meet with joy and experience fraternal love.

### **Conclusion: Practical questions for reflection**

For us who have been involved in youth ministry directly, there is an invitation to reflect on and to refocus our ministry to the youths of today. The following questions may be of help in such reflection.

*How do we effectively renew our Youth Ministry and Vocation Ministry in our local context?*

*What are the economic, social, religious and cultural challenges that young people face in their areas?*

*What kind of structures can we put in place to welcome, to listen, and to accompany young people especially those not attending our schools?*

*How can Youth Ministry and Vocation Ministry be inserted in our formal education programs? Pope Francis puts forward "popular Youth Ministry" that take into consideration "research" and "growth". How will this be practical in our local context?*

***By Br Tiámaro-Alphonse, FMS***



## Interview with Br. Nyuydine John Lavnge



*Brs Cho & John during the interview.*

**Editorial Team:** Good morning Brother John. It's good to have you back in the District for your holidays. Tell us more about your mission in Cambodia.

**Br John:** Good morning Brother Cho. I have been in Cambodia for the past three years working in the Community of the Brothers of Mission Ad Gentes. I followed the Lavalla200 program and was sent to Cambodia. Normally those of us working here from the Lavalla200 program are integrated into the Marist District of Asia and hence we follow the norms of the District, so ours is not strictly a Lavalla200 community as the others. Catholics in the whole country is an estimated 0.4 % of the total population of about 16 million. The civil war of 1975-1979 claimed close to three million people. So practically everything about Christianity is like starting afresh.

**Editorial team:** Can you shed more light about your community?

**Br John:** The community of Pou-long where I belong to is made up of only two Brothers, Br. Bernhard Tremel and myself. Initially there were three of us but unfortunately for us, one was transferred and only two of us were left and there was no other Brother to replace the one who was transferred. My community member, Br. Bernhard, a German Brother is in his early seventies. We have a rather small community house (a church house) which is partitioned and one part is used for our apostolate as a classroom.



*Br John with his pupils doing sports*

**Editorial team:** That sounds quite interesting, what about your mission?

**Br John:** Our mission consists basically of teaching English language to children of the village of Lung where we stay, and the students who stay at the hostel that belongs to the church. These students attend the English class at the Pastoral Center which is just a five minutes' walk from their hostel. The children who attend classes in the community are all in the primary school. They close from school at 11am and come to the community at around 3pm. Our lessons run from 3 to 4:30pm from Mondays to Fridays. We have about 23 pupils from kindergarten to grades 5 but sometimes some do not show up because of household chores or because they are taking care of their cattle in the fields. The second group is those who are staying at the hostel and who come from basically the parish surroundings and are largely Catholics. We teach them in the evenings from 7 to 8 pm when they are back from school at 6pm. These students range from grade six to grade twelve.



*Br John with his pupils in the classroom*

**Editorial team:** Apart from teaching English what other apostolate do you do?

**Br John:** First of all, we do an apostolate of Presence which is one of our core values and as we do not have a school of our own. We assist the parish priest in transporting students to the village and bring them back on weekends. We do this when the parish priest is not available and asks us to assist him carry out this task. We also have monthly meetings with the Bishop to share our aspirations, hopes, joys and challenges with him.



**Editorial team:** Talking about joy, what are some of these joys that you have experienced?

**Br John:** We have a very good and cordial relationship with the parish which is worth mentioning. The aim of our mission was not to create an apostolate of our own, but to be present and this has largely been successful with the collaboration of the parish priest. Again, the immigration officials here do not disturb us as is the case in other neighboring countries, hence making our work easier.



**Editorial team:** That must be very wonderful, tell us more about the challenges of the Mission.

**Br John:** The first one is that the language of instruction at the school is Kmer. Teaching them English is very difficult for the students to grasp and it needs a lot of patience. Secondly, we would have loved to have many students but since some parents do not see any need for their children to learn English, they do not send their children to learn the language. And those who attend English lessons are not consistent due to their household chores. This is particular of those we teach in the community house, (*the primary school children*) It is really difficult to achieve something lasting with them within a short period but we keep on trying our best hoping that in the near future the effect would be felt. And finally Buddhism is the main religion and therefore evangelization is really a challenge but we are still hopeful.

**Editorial team:** Thank you Brother John for your time. Any other thing you will like to share?

**Br John:** Thank you Brother Cho Nchang for this interview. Let us continue to pray that the Lord may call more Brothers to his vineyard as the harvest is great but the labourers are few. God bless you.





## PHOTOS OF INTEREST



Religious men & women at Br Harry's profession



Br Divine & the postulants on Christmas



Aspirants in Chad during a recollection.



Br Asante & catechumens



Nana Kusi—Mensah



Staff of Champagnat Bouaké at a recollection



Marist Community Leaders Program - Rwanda



### 3-TIPS FOR A GOOD HEALTH



#### Avoid hazardous and harmful alcohol use

Alcohol is not a part of a healthy diet, but in many cultures celebrations are associated with heavy alcohol consumption. Overall, drinking too much, increases your immediate risk of injury, as well as causing longer-term effects like liver damage, cancer, heart disease and mental illness.

WHO advises that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption; and for many people even low levels of alcohol use can still be associated with significant health risks.

Remember, less alcohol consumption is always better for health and it is perfectly OK not to drink. You should not drink alcohol at all if you are: driving, operating machinery or undertaking other activities that involve related risks; you have health problems which may be made worse by alcohol; you are taking medicines which directly interact with alcohol; or you have difficulties with controlling your drinking.

#### Limit sugar intake

Too much sugar is not only bad for our teeth, but increases the risk of unhealthy weight gain and obesity, which can lead to serious, chronic health problems.

As with salt, it's important to take note of the amount of "hidden" sugars that can be in proces-

sed food and drinks. For example, a single can of soda can contain up to 10 teaspoons of added sugar!

Some tips to reduce sugar intake:

Limit intake of sweets and sugary drinks such as fizzy drinks, fruit juices and juice drinks, liquid and powder concentrates, flavoured water, energy and sports drinks, ready-to-drink tea and coffee and flavoured milk drinks.

Choose healthy fresh snacks rather than processed foods. Avoid giving sugary foods to children. Salt and sugars should not be added to complementary foods given to children under 2 years of age, and should be limited beyond that age.

#### Cut back on salt

Too much salt can raise blood pressure, which is a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Most people around the world eat too much salt: on average, we consume double the WHO recommended limit of 5 grams (equivalent to a teaspoon) a day.

Even if we don't add extra salt in our food, we should be aware that it is commonly put in processed foods or drinks, and often in high amounts.

Some tips to reduce your salt intake:

When cooking and preparing foods, use salt sparingly and reduce use of salty sauces and condiments.

Avoid snacks that are high in salt, and try and choose fresh healthy snacks over processed foods. When using canned or dried vegetables, nuts and fruit, choose varieties without added salt and sugars.

Remove salt and salty condiments from the table and try and avoid adding them out of habit; our tastebuds can quickly adjust and once they do, you are likely to enjoy food with less salt, but more flavor!

## BIRTHDAYS

### JANUARY

January 1 <sup>st</sup>	Eric Konaté
January 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Emmanuel Bongben
January 11 <sup>th</sup>	Paulin Banagnana
January 18 <sup>th</sup>	Cyprian Gandebo
January 21 <sup>st</sup>	Audwin Shang
January 26 <sup>th</sup>	Francis Amoako
January 28 <sup>th</sup>	Ndim Gilbert

### FEBRUARY

February 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Martin N Mbeng
February 19 <sup>th</sup>	Brendane Tombir
February 20 <sup>th</sup>	Francis Veye
February 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Anthony Doe
February 26 <sup>th</sup>	Joseph Kwame M

### MARCH

March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Mbiatem Eyong
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Simon Kanjam Lawrence Doe
March 24 <sup>th</sup>	Tansam Yuonji
March 29 <sup>th</sup>	Wiysenyuy Habib

**Next Edition will be Published  
on : March 15<sup>th</sup> 2020.**

## KINDLY PRAY FOR :

- ⇒ For our upcoming District Assembly, that the Holy Spirit may lead us on the right path.
- ⇒ For the District Superior and his council in their animation of the District.
- ⇒ For the peaceful repose of the soul of the mother of Br Samuel who passed away on the 15th of January 2020 in Monrovia.
- ⇒ For peace and stability in Cameroon and for all suffering as a result of the crises.

## REMINDERS !!!!!

- **February 28<sup>th</sup>** : Deadline for submission of budgets for mid-term evaluations.
- **March 10<sup>th</sup>**: Deadline for submitting articles for next publication of the Newsletter.
- **April 15<sup>th</sup>** : Deadline for submission of reports of reflections on creation of a new Province to Coordinators and District Council.

## Superior's Calendar of Activities

January 6 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> 2020	C'ty Leaders Rwanda
January 20 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> 2020	CSAC Meeting, Enugu
January 30 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Travel to Accra
February 10 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Visit to Novitiate C'ty
February 29 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Travel to Rome
March 2 <sup>nd</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Prov. Meeting, Rome
March 11 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Travel to Accra
March 17 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Visit to Buokrom C'ty
March 23 <sup>rd</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Visit to Kwadaso C'ty