

MDA

marist district of asia



Building bridges

news

APRIL 2020

IN SOLIDARITY AND CONNECTECNESS WITH OUR GLOBAL SUFFERING HOME

Dear brothers these are two reflections that could help you and your community in this especial time

Pedro Sosa, doctor and singer-songwriter:

"I am convinced that we are living a moment of opportunity due to this time of suffering, because we are all mobilizing a lot of resources that we did not know we had when came the time to accompanying, promoting initiatives and support. It's being put into play how we humans give away when situations are adverse. And we are more than responding, with a "we are not alone, we are together in this" ...

God knows how to sneak in there. I have no doubt that He is amid this pandemic to enhance the best of human beings. So, we need to connect with this source of vitality, of hope. Knowing that God is present in each one of the people with whom I come across and, in the choices, I make every day, impels me not to fail...

Climbing the cross

In this Lent, more Lent than ever, a question constantly assails me: What does God see in you and me so that it is worth climbing the cross? The great challenge this Holy Week will be to consider how God sees us so that it is worth suffering for man, giving life for man and wanting to approach man, incarnate the nature of man. Saint Paul reminds the Corinthians that we now see in an "imperfect" way, but "when the perfect comes," we will see face to face as God sees me. How nice to consider life in these circumstances from this perspective! From all the potential that we all carry within, that God sees and for which it is worth starting a story of salvation".

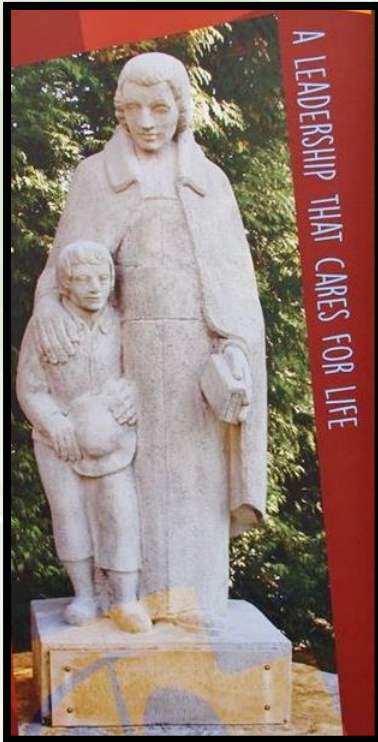
Fr. Richard Rorh shared:

"We cannot face large-scale crises as individuals; we cannot carry the pain of this reality on our own, nor can we only look out for ourselves. The pain is communal and so too must be the response" ...

I believe - if I am to believe Jesus - that God is suffering love. If we are created in God's image, and if there is so much suffering in the world, then God must also be suffering. How else can we understand the revelation of the cross? Why else would the central Christian logo be a naked, bleeding, suffering divine-human being? The image of Jesus on the cross somehow communicates God's solidarity with the willing soul. A Crucified God is the dramatic symbol of the one suffering that God fully enters into with us - much more than just for us, as many Christians were trained to think.

Bro. Paco Garcia

A Leadership that cares for LIFE



The superiors of the administrative units meeting with the general council, March 2020.

It was my first experience of such gathering of Marist leaders. Even though I did not know many brothers, it was familiar to interact with them. I was one of the youngest among the group, and it was nice to hear their stories of many years of experience in this role as leaders. I understand more and more of the need to be a leader who listens to, and is open to welcome the voices of the Spirit present in each person. It was a good opportunity to share issues of our global family and mission. The spirit of the last General Chapter is spreading faster than covid-19, it goes beyond our limitations and borders and reaches those Champagnat dreamed of.

We inculcate the Marist charism that brings hope and life to young people. And so, everyone has the role of leadership, how I use best this great tool will depend on what you dream about, and in whom you trust. We have seen and learned from Jesus and Mary to be leaders of service and care. It is comforting to feel when, after all, God is leading, provides and cares for Life.



To the Newly Professed Brothers



Dear Br.Duc, Br.Duy, Br.Nghi, Br.Phuc, Br.Long, Br.Hai,

Greetings from the General House!

What a wonderful treasure you discovered in your life! It was HIS initiative and you generously answered like Mary:

“Let it be done to me according to your Word.”

The beauty of this vocation is also expressed in our Rule of Life:

[2] He loved you first (cf. 1Jn 4:19), calling you to life and to a life of faith. In your vocation as a brother, you are called to live out this gift fully and without reservation.

[13] When you live your life with kindness, a purity of heart, and a love for those whom society disregards, you begin to experience the beauty of your vocation.

And as the Rule of Life says, I too encourage you to:

[59] Share all your energy and enthusiasm, as well as your dreams and hopes for the future. Continue to integrate into your life all that you have learned in formation about yourself and our way of life.

[71] Live your brotherhood with simplicity. Your primary mission is to be a brother

Yes, dear brothers, your first mission is to be Brother! Live it out with joy! I take this opportunity to say thanks to the Tudella formation team for their dedication and care they have for each of you.

Thanks to all who assisted you during these two years, and thanks South Asia province for your warm welcome and support! For sure, the brothers in the general house and I are missing a wonderful celebration there in Tudella, but we feel united with you in this especial moment of your life. We are grateful to Mary for the gift of vocation and your generous answer. Always keep holding in HER hand!

Champagnat and all of us are very happy with your commitment. We pray for you!

Congratulations dear brothers!

From **Br. Ernesto (Sup. General)** and your servant leader

Br. Canisio J. W.

Retreat – preparing for the Profession 2020

To prepare for our first profession, we second year novices had an eight-day retreat in the Jesuit community, in Kandy. It was a good time for us to contemplate and listen to the voice of God in our hearts, before we enter the special state of life, of becoming Little Brothers of Mary.

All of us were happy with the place that we had chosen for our retreat. It was cool and quiet, the food also was good, because we had a lot of vegetables!



In the retreat we were guided by Fr. Baylon Perera. Each day he gave us different points to reflect on and we also met him for spiritual direction each day, so that he could help us to deepen our relationship with the Lord, and listen to his call for us. So, after the retreat all of us were very happy, satisfied and ready for our first profession.

Now we are longing for our profession which is coming, but the other side of our reflection is dealing with our doubts and worries with the situation of the corona virus. Maybe there are many brothers and local lay people who are not really happy as they cannot attend to share our profession, but we trust in God as our mother Mary did when the angel Gabriel proclaimed to her to bear Jesus. She also wondered and doubted, but she trusted in God because she believed that with God nothing is impossible. So, we too just trust in God and let Him guide us in the way that He wants.

And the most important thing that helps us to stand firm in our vocation is your prayer, so dear brothers and lays Marist, please pray for us always, especially on the day that we'll receive our first vows.

Thank you very much!

Novice: LE VAN NGHI

News from Pailin – Cambodia

Due to the Corona Virus, all public and private schools were closed until after Khmer New Year and also Churches, Mosques and Pagodas. No activities in the Pastoral centre these days. There are no many infected people in Cambodia but we don't know for how long.

All the group of volunteers have cancelled their visits to our centre due to the Virus. As a consequence, there is no more income for the running projects costs. We will have problems to pay the salary to our teachers at this time of crisis. Apart from this, we brothers have a lot of time to do some manual work in the house, garden and in the new hostel building. Maybe we have to prepare a special schedule of our life. We have enough time to have our personal retreat and follow a program of Religious studies and readings.



(Picture from our garden beside our oratory)

Bro. Max Meiere

From Postulancy House - Davao

MARIST FAMILY CELEBRATION:



Fathers, Sisters and Brothers from the four branches of the Marist Family joined at the Marceline Home (General Santos) to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Religious Profession of **Sr. Kateia, smsm** from Kiribati.

The Marceline Home family prepared in a simple and familiar way this joyful celebration we are grateful for their warm welcome to their place.

WELCOME AND FAREWEL CELEBRATION

The community of the Postulancy welcome **Bro. Hoan** as a new member of the Formation team. At the same time, we expressed our gratitude to **Bro. Paco** that has been Director of the Postulancy for the last six years and now has been



appointed Master of Novices in Sri Lanka. Thank you, Bro. Paco, for this long commitment in the formation of Young Marist Brothers. **“Vaya con Dios”**

Bro. Hoan Castro

News from Talit Hostel

Year of 2020, we began with a good hope and joy to help our students in their education and we have 65 boys in our hostel including new comers. We were happy to welcome the new ones and their parents to our place.



On the 9th of February, we had our annual Parents meeting. At beginning of the meeting, our students perform a very meaningful welcoming ceremony according to the Santal culture by washing their feet. Parents were so happy to experience it and well received by the brothers for the day program. During the meeting, we brothers help the parents to understand our purpose of our presence in the hostel also discussed with them the reality of the administration, students' education and other development issues. Also, our students were able to perform some cultural dances which were brought joy in us. Parents also were given a time to



express their own suggestions or clarify something with the administration. We had a good interaction among the brothers, parents and students. At end of our meeting all were participated in the Eucharistic celebration then we provide lunch for all. Before the parents leave the place, they met the brothers each one personally with their sons to know more on individually. It was a wonderful day for all.



February 22nd, we had first meeting with our special teachers who give special tuitions for our students in the hostel. This year we have six teachers apart from the brothers and they come everyday morning and evening to help our students' subjects. During the meeting, we help them to understand the life of Marist Brothers and our mission here also we explained the 'Child rights policy' very much and asked them to follow it seriously. At the end of our meeting we went out for a lunch together with the Brothers.

This year 5 of our students had written their class 10 exam which is an important in their education journey. Before the exam we had invited those 5 boys' parents and we had thanksgiving eucharistic celebration and special blessing on those 5 students.



In the hostel, we had football competition among our hostel inmates. We divided 5 teams among them and had a very friendly competition and share our joy. We had a lot of fun with the students.



March 10th, our country celebrated 'Holi' festival (colour festival, welcoming the Spring season) we the brothers too join with our children and celebrated the day by spray colours on each other and share the joy of welcoming the season of Spring.

We are in the season of Lent too... so our students and Brothers are trying our best to have a blessed season Lent by having stations of the Cross every Friday. Our students are preparing well with reflective thoughts of the Pasion of Christ. Brothers are helping them to have a meaningful day and praying together.



Bro. Jiji

News from Viet Nam

“A stitch in time saves nine”



For many of the returnee’s families, life here keeps getting harder and harder because of the limited job opportunity and so there is a little income for daily basis. Over the last several months, observing children around the area of Ta Do, especially those who come to class, I see a lack of energy in them. They seem to get sick more often. What is more, some of them have to work really hard that includes waking up very early to assist their parents and going fishing at a very young age. This moves us to start a **feeding program** in the hope that it will somehow help to improve their health, and most likely providing them the basic nutrition they need. It’s the second week after we started the program, these poor little children are overwhelmed with happiness on their face. “Do we have milk today, teacher?” they often asked at the end of the lesson. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our donors who generously and constantly show their interests and support us in our activities with these poor returnees’ children. As Pope Francis reminds us: “Do not forget the poor during the corona virus pandemic”. Let us do whatever we can to help, care and support each other, especially the poor and the neglected people through these uncertain and challenging times. May God be with us in all that we do.



Tây Ninh

Still learning....

FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SPIRIT:



I arrived in Bangladesh exactly on November 19, 2019, on a flight from Thailand. On that memorable day, I was accompanied by Brothers Eugene and Alexander to the Dhaka International Airport, the capital of Bangladesh, thus ending a long journey that only by plane, with its three transfers, lasted around 26 hours. I would like to share some of my experiences of these days.

During last four months of immersion in the culture and language of Bangladesh, the first thing I have experienced with all its rigor, is to realize that to enter a culture totally unknown to me; you had to start from scratch, and so it was, put into practice with patience and open myself to the action of the Spirit, beginning with scarcely recognizing the sounds that people use in their language, to all this, the range of sounds and signs in their writing is added; ancestral customs, traditions and relationships; ethnic groups; its past and

present marked by profound political, social, cultural and religious changes; its diet, which basically consists of rice, dal (a highly appreciated legume), vegetables, various flat, fruits, fish, chicken and chilli. The food is prepared very seasoned, but also the desserts that are generally made with rice and are very sweet. I really enjoy the food that is very healthy for me so far.

For two and a half months I was living in my community, located in the northwestern part of the country, near what they call the “Tea Garden” here, where it is possible to find numerous communities of Hindu families who came from India in the time of the English. . The brothers run a school and two hostels, with the help of two Marist Missionary Sisters and two laity (in charges), also with the presence of several teachers who speak the language of the region well. With the support of the Brothers in Bangladesh and after consulting them, I decided to study the language. I have been living in Dhaka for a month and a half at the Jesuits, who give me what I need to live. Near here is the place where I am going to attend the classes, which are private and where I am the only student. The plan is to continue studying for at least six months.

There are many other details to mention, but I think that the most important thing at this time is to be able to feel the action of the Holy Spirit when verifying that the Marist Brothers and the Marist Sisters have learned the language, their committed commitment to the Bengali children and youth in the education and training of their people and their dignity. Jesus and Mary continue to show their protection and help through our presence and witness.



Bro. César Barba Gómez.

First Profession in Sri Lanka Inter-National Novitiate

With great joy and gratitude, we have celebrated the First Profession of (MDA) :

- Br. Lê Văn Nghị fms**
- Br. Lê Danh Hải fms**
- Br. Nguyễn Văn Phúc fms**
- Br. Trần Long fms**
- Br. Lê Văn Duy fms**
- Br. Bùi Văn Đức fms**





As a leitmotif of the celebration, they have chosen this word of God:

“The Lord Himself goes before you: He will be with you. He will never leave you or forsake you. Do not be afraid or discouraged.”

Deuteronomy 31:8

Due to the context of the Coronavirus Pandemic, you understand that this profession has been done with very few guests physically present. But with the help of technology, our livestream transmission has united us with thousands of people, including the parents and relatives of the brothers who have made their first profession. We want to thank all those who have sent beautiful messages and assured us of their unity and prayer. We can assure you that it has been a very meaningful celebration, where we could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.



In his thanksgiving message to all at the end, Long expressed a warm thanksgiving to the Lord and to all, quoting Psalm 145, as they do according to tradition every Vietnamese New Year: *“Every day I will thank you: I will praise you forever and ever”* (Ps 145:2). And at that moment, they could not forget their loved ones. So Duc has expressed a few words of gratitude to the families, relatives and friends in Vietnamese.





Among the messages received, I would like to quote two of them of particular significance.

The first one is from Br Ernesto and Br Canisio together:

Greetings from the General House!

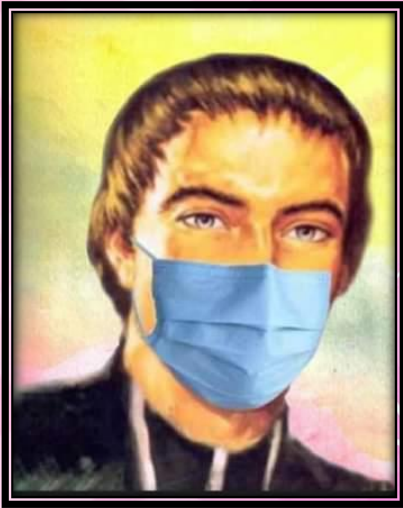
What a wonderful treasure you discovered in your life! It was HIS initiative and you generously answered like Mary: "Let it done to me according to your Word."... and quoting our Rule of Life: [71] Live your brotherhood with simplicity. Your primary mission is to be a brother.

The second one was from Br Tony Leon with his nice image-gift to the novices:

"Attached is my gift to the 6 young men who will make their first profession. The idea is not only about their actions tomorrow as one of courage and heroism as they are making a commitment in an age of uncertainty and vulnerability. I wanted to add another byline: "Some heroes are real," to suggest that we do not have extraordinary powers like the superheroes as in the Marvel or DC universe but we are human, we are real and our power and authority come from the Holy Spirit. Like in the image, may they bear the Marist charism close to their hearts and carry their crosses daily."



Br. Réal Sauvageau



Journeying together as a GLOBAL FAMILY

BIRTHDAYS

April 2020

10th Rubel Raphael
20th Hung Nguyen Thanh

May 2020

5th Anton Cong
9th Xia Baoxuan
16th Le Van Nghi
29th Duy Binh

June 2020

2nd Guangzhao Zhang Pedro
6th Nguyen Van Tri
7th John Lavngue Nyuydine
16th Walter Eras Lopez
18th Réal Sauvageau
19th Nguyen Viet Bao
22nd Jiji Dhasan
23rd Nguyen Van Phuc
24th Tran Ngoc Gion (Novice)
30th Ricardo Pina Garza

**Good wishes and Prayers
Brothers**

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