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MARIST NEWS

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WHAT ARE WE LEARNING FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS?

COVID-19 is a global challenge that mainly affects the most vulnerable. The Marist Institute, a global charismatic family that works to accompany thousands of children and young people in their educational journey, is actively involved with educators and students at this very special time. We ask the superiors of the Marist Administrative Units to share with the Marist world what they are learning from this extraordinary situation. Here are some reflections. Others will come.

In that link you can read about the situations in the Administrative Units as well look for some resources.



Br. **Hipólito Pérez**

Central America

Everything that is happening is too fast



and it is too early to draw any conclusions. The truth is that in a very short time the lives of millions of people have suddenly changed. Personally, my life has also changed. It has been a time to become aware of the fragility of humanity and of the planet; to discover the pain and the impotence in the face of so much death, suffering and desolation; to deeply appreciate the goodness of the human heart and the generous solidarity in the giving of doctors, nurses, police, army... and of thousands of anonymous people who have quietly contributed their all in silence. All together we are stronger and solidarity overcomes evil and pain. After all this has passed and the impact has diminished, we will have time

to integrate the experience in a more deliberate way and that can generate, at all levels, a new way of seeing, feeling and acting in the world, a new individual and collective consciousness.

Br. **Moisés Alonso Pérez**

Ibérica

To me personally the main lessons taken from this situation are:

- The great FRAGILITY in which we live; we go from a state of general calm to a situation of collective depression and general fear, in a very short time. We are very fragile and there is nothing left for us but to abandon ourselves into God's hands.
- A second very obvious lesson is

the practical meaning of the concept of GLOBALIZATION. How a problem located at one point on the planet becomes a threat to all of humanity. This is the world we have built and in which we will have to learn to live.



Today, it is clear that we have no idea. We did not know how to anticipate the consequences that were coming, because they were already happening in other countries.

- A third lesson: there are MANY FANTASTIC PEOPLE, capable of forgetting about their own health and their own safety, risking everything to help other people. The behaviour of the health personnel is worthy of a "gold medal" (give them, doctors and nurses, all the medals that have been prepared for the Tokyo Olympics).

- It is not worth wasting a minute listening to the POLITICIANS when it is clear that the only thing that interests them is preserving their reputation (to

save their job) and to do so they conceal data, they lie, they look for excuses and justifications for their mismanagement... And this has been seen in several countries... Very few have been able to rise to the occasion.

- Our Elders are unprotected. It has been unfortunate that in several countries it has been made public that hospitals

differentiate according to age and ask that the elderly not even be taken to hospital. It has been very hard to see that, being the most vulnerable group, they have been relegated to the margins of care.

- I think there will be many more lessons to be learned from this event, and we will have to analyse it at the end of the day. And surely there will be a before and after of the Covid-19

Br. **César Rojas**
Norandina

This is a situation that has exceeded our expectations and all forecasts. As Marists and as humanity we recognize ourselves as weak and in need of

God's presence and Mary's protection. It is a time to renew our confidence in them, as Saint Marcellin did.

We have invited the whole Province to pray the Memorare daily, a prayer that reminds us of the scene of Champagnat lost in the snow with Brother Stanislaus, and who miraculously through his intercession is saved from dying in the storm. As Marists we need the protection of Jesus and Mary at this time.

It is also a lesson for us to be builders of a new and different society, of a just, fraternal and supportive world. From this world tragedy, may a new humanity emerge, full of hope, truly in solidarity, capable of establishing means for us to walk together.



"I'M LIVING THIS AS A TIME OF GREAT UNCERTAINTY. IT'S A TIME FOR INVENTING, FOR CREATIVITY. THE CREATIVITY OF THE CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO SHOW FORTH IN OPENING UP NEW HORIZONS, OPENING WINDOWS, OPENING TRANSCENDENCE TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD PEOPLE, AND IN CREATING NEW WAYS OF BEING AT HOME. IT'S NOT EASY TO BE CONFINED TO YOUR HOUSE."



POPE FRANCIS

MARIST PRESENCE IN ANGOLA



The Marist Brothers arrived in Angola in 1954 and today the Marist presence is linked to the Province of South Africa. The Marist community is especially dedicated to education, and they work together, Brothers and lay people. There are nine Brothers present in the country and they are distributed in three communities: Luanda, Kuito-Bié and Kwanza-Note “Ndalatando”. Seven Brothers are Angolan, one Brother is Brazilian and one Brother is Spanish. Since 2015, there has been a fraternity of the Champagnat Movement in Kuito-Bié and another fraternity is in the process of being created in Luanda. In Luanda, where there are four brothers, there is a school which has three sections: primary (from the first to the sixth year), compulsory secondary (from the seventh to the ninth year) and the secondary school (from the tenth to the thirteenth year), dedicated mainly to the formation of teachers. The school has about 70 students. Three Angolan Brothers are in

Kuito-Bié, and they run the São José Marist Teacher Training School for students in grades 10 to 13.

Two brothers from Angola live in Kwanza-Note “Ndalatando” and are in charge of a primary school, where the children attend from the first to the ninth year of education.

The Marist vocation is fairly fertile and there is a need for people to transmit the charism of Saint Marcellin Champagnat. In addition to working with the laity,

the Brothers are also dedicated to promoting Marist religious life. The Province of Southern Africa has

vocations for the Angolan Brothers at all stages of initial formation (7 in MIC, 4 in the novitiate and three in the postulancy). There is also an aspirant’s house in Kuito-Bié, which receives candidates wishing to follow Marist life as consecrated religious, and which currently numbers 20 young people.



marist world

BOLIVIA: PALM SUNDAY IN ROBORE

BRAZIL: SÃO JOSÉ SOCIAL SCHOOL

PHILIPPINES: BR. ANTHONY QUMMAR (PAKISTAN) RENEWED HIS VOWS – MAPAC



SYRIA: BLUE MARISTS IN ALEPPO

ARGENTINA: FUNDACIÓN MARISTA: LIBERTADOR GRAL. SAN MARTÍN, JUJUY

COLOMBIA - NOVICIATE OF MEDELLÍN

18 April 1999: Saint Marcellin Champagnat “A heart that knows no bounds”



Twenty-one years ago, San Marcellin Champagnat was canonized in the Vatican. “Dear young people who have come to express your devotion to the spirit of education given by Fr Champagnat, I encourage you to remain faithful in the path to which you are called by God”, Pope John Paul II said, in his welcoming speech to the pilgrims of different parts of the world, assembling in Rome for the canonization.



The Marist family experienced the canonization as a special occasion, under the slogan “A heart that knows no bounds”.

You can remember this event visiting [this page](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

THE MARIST PRESENCE IN SCOTLAND

The Marist Brothers arrived in the United Kingdom in 1852 (London). Today we are still present in Scotland, where the Brothers arrived in 1858 (Glasgow). In Scotland we are no longer actively involved in schools. Brother Ronnie McEwan works in Kinharvie Institute. Brother Joseph McKee continues to work on behalf of the Institute in general, as does Brother Brendan. Brother Colin continues to work as archivist in the General House. Now retired are Brothers Alan, Charles, Douglas, Norbert, Joseph and Wilfrid. We, retired Brothers, are very happy to have our Marist brothers and sisters supporting us in less structured environments. The Brothers have passed on the responsibility for the charism of Saint Marcellin Champagnat to the state-run St. John's High School, Dundee.

St. John's High School

The head-teacher, Fiona McLagan and her dedicated staff have worked very hard to foster the Marist charism. To enter the school is to experience a feeling of warmth. Almost the first thing to greet the visitor is a beautiful statue of St. Marcellin, Rule Book in hand, arms outspread in welcome. There is also a sense of history here: the statue stood for many years at the entrance to our chapel in Marist House, Glasgow. It is fitting that Marcellin has moved to St. John's High School, where every member of staff, every pupil is aware of what it is to be Marist.

As a part of the Religious Education programme, the children are introduced to Marist history and at the start of their secondary education they are encouraged to find out more about the early Brothers, the reasons why Marcellin founded our Order.

In their third-year members of a group are given the task of speaking to their peers, going more deeply into the Marist History.

In their fifth year, students can volunteer to spend a period in Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage, France, where they have the opportunity to study, discuss and play with students from diverse countries. On their return to St. John's they share their experiences and tell what it is to genuinely be part of the international Marist family.



The corridor outside the school chapel is dedicated to pictures illustrating the development of the Brothers, the work done by the Brothers in Dundee, the present work being done by the students in the school.

Partnership with India

One of the year groups of the St. John's High School is tasked with raising funds for our India Village Project. After twelve years, we are still very much involved with our Brothers in India and the money raised through various school events is used in such projects as the Rainbow Project, the schools run by the Brothers and the project to educate children in outlying villages – very much in the footsteps of Marcellin.

In Scotland we continue with confidence to place our apostolate and prayers in the hands of Mary.

Br. Douglas – For the Marists of Glasgow



RUMANIA

LAVALLA200> IN MOINESTI

The community began on October 4, 2017, with the first members: Br. Barsen Garcia Alonso (Santa María de los Andes, Peru), Br. Mario Meuti (Mediterránea, Italy) and Br. Antolin Santos (Ibérica, España), with his 18 years of experience in Romania. He was not really from the Lavalla200> program, but his presence was indispensable to be able to communicate in the local context. At the end of February 2018 the other two members of the community joined us: Francisco Decezaró and Nanci Prochnow (Brasil Centro-Sul), after having waited for months for their visa for Romania.

At the start, people had the illusion that the Romanian language would be "easy" because it was a Latin-based language, but it turned out to be quite difficult. We took language lessons every day, but still when Antolin returned to his work in Bucharest in June 2018, none of us was ready to manage to communicate with local people. So, Adriana, our language teacher, also took on the role of guide and mentor as we took our first steps with the local authorities and public offices.

Identifying a common ministry

From the time we arrived in Moinesti, we set about getting to know the local reality and culture and possibilities for ministry. We identified a need to work to prevent children from leaving school. So, we decided to set up a Centre for children and adolescents in situations of social vulnerability and risk of dropping out of school.

The Brothers belonging to the Province of Iberia, who work in the two Marist centres in Bucharest, thought of including the Moinesti community into their "Asociatia Fratilor Maristi ai Scolilor din Romania", officially recognized by the government, with the idea of making our relations with public institutions possible. After a few months the community realized the need to create a branch of the Association in Moinesti and have it recognized legally. With the help of a lawyer and Brothers from Bucharest, recognition finally arrived at the end of May 2019, with our inclusion in the list of NGOs approved to operate in Romania.

Then it was necessary to get the new NGO accredited at the Ministry of Labour as an organisation allowed to work in the social domain. This required much effort and patience. In the meantime, we found a suitable building to house the new Marist centre: an isolated building, in the neighbourhood



close to our community residence and close to public housing for families assisted by Social Services. The building has three spaces for activities, two separate bathrooms, a small office and a storage room. The lease contract was manageable, and some refurbishment began.

Finally, on August 9, 2019 the accreditation arrived, but due to legislative changes during this period of waiting, the premises, project and organization chart had to be approved by the Ministry of Labour. In addition, the approval of the Fire Brigade, Health authorities, and Veterinary and Food authorities were required...

On October 20, 2019, the whole dossier was ready and sent to the Ministry. Finally, on December 5, 2019, the community could celebrate: the provisional LICENSE valid for one year had arrived!

Finally a Marist centre in Moinesti

"CENTRUL DE ZI MARISTI": this is the name of the ministry of the Lavalla200> community that has been living in Moine ti, in the Moldavian region of Romania for over two years. After the approval received in December, on January 6, 2020, the four community members and the three contracted specialists got together to get to know one another, and for us to give an introduction to the Marist world, our presence in Moinesti, our educational style... A plan of action was prepared: contact the families indicated by the Social Services; meet the school principal; and distribute invitations to possible candidates for a meeting to explain our project. This took place on January 16: there were not many mothers, but they were all interested and ready to register.

On the strength of this request, our social worker, accompanied by another person, was able to start the home visits: carry out a family survey, listen to the needs expressed and prepare a first needs analysis... Some of the mothers invited others and within a few days we had 11 children: 8 from 6 to 9 years old

and three teenage girls. One thing is for sure: they all have personal, school and family issues: only one child in eleven, for example, has the surname of his father, but he no longer lives with the family either...

We began by inviting the kids for three days of settling in: games, some music, a nice snack, a simple art workshop... Monday, January 27th saw the full program swing into action from 13.30 to 17.00. The first session (13.30-15.00) is dedicated exclusively to homework, then there is a snack, free time, a game of some sort; in the second session there are very practical educational activities: guidance on living with others, hygiene, food; educational games, short reflections, board games...

Very quickly we realized the enormous difficulties they experience at school: the youngest are 6 years old and attend a preparatory class prior to first grade... Even after a month it is still a battle to get them to sit still and concentrate for a while. Those of the 1st and 2nd class are a bit more advanced, but they struggle with reading and basic mathematical operations! Finally, the three teenage girls require personalized attention and recovery exercises far below their class grade.

In February, in addition to working on their behaviour towards one another, we engaged in some craftwork: preparing the

traditional gifts that people exchange for the Spring Festival on March 1st, and little presents for their mothers on March 8th, which is Mother's Day in Romania.

For this occasion, we arranged a small concert with all the children, ending with a song to the mothers present, giving the gifts and enjoying a nice snack all together... And without having planned it, one of the staff put some well-known music on and the traditional dances began. Everyone joined all the more happily because it was so unexpected.

The official inauguration of the Centre was scheduled for March 13: we had distributed invitations to the civil and religious authorities: the Mayor, the pastors of the Catholic and Orthodox churches, the Director of Social Services, the Principal and some teachers of the school, a couple of our brothers from Bucharest and other friends who helped us in the long preparatory phase... But the Coronavirus, also in Romania, changed our plans! The Centre had to close and everything is postponed until after the crisis.

It's time to complete the demands of bureaucracy working from home: pages and pages of reports, minutes and documents to be updated... We are waiting for a detailed inspection that will confirm that the Centre is in compliance with the law and then grant us a 5 year license.

SPAIN

MARIST OLYMPICS IN THE PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA

The XXVIII Marist Olympics of the Province of Compostela was scheduled for March 26-28 in Palencia, Spain, but due to the health crisis caused by the coronavirus, the event has been postponed until next year. In 2021, the Olympics will be held in Palencia and will coincide with the cele-

bration of the centenary of the Marist presence in the city. The Castilla School will host the event.

The last Olympic Games, held in 2019, were held in Carcavelos, Portugal. This is an important provincial event, where an average of 1000 students and Marist collaborators participate.

This tradition began in Portugal in the 1960s. Its principal enthusiastic organizers were Brother Carneiro and Professor Simões, who later introduced the idea to Brazil.

After a break, the Olympics were resumed in 1995, at the Externado Marista in Lisbon. In 1998, in the VI Olympic Games held at Carcavelos, a delegation from Mozambique and another from Greece participated in Portugal, continuing the internationalisation of the event, which had begun the previous year.

In 2005, the year of the XIII Marist Olympics, the Marist apostolates of Portugal were integrated into the new Province of Compostela, and the initiative was adopted by the entire Province, with the participation of the eighteen schools of the Province.



SRI LANKA

FIRST PROFESSION IN THE NOVITIATE OF TUDELLA

Six novices from the Marist District of Asia made their first profession at the International Novitiate in Tudella, Sri Lanka on Saturday, April 4th. The new brothers are: Bui Van Duc, Le Van Duy, Le Danh Hai Hai, Long Tran Long, Le Van Nghi and Nguyen Van Phuc.



The ceremony was held privately, given the situation in the country, and only the Brothers of the South Asia Province were present to receive the vows of the novices.

Brother Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, in a letter sent to the newly professed brothers, said : “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 his part, Brother Canisio José Willrich, Superior of the District of Asia, welcomed the novices from the General House where he is currently located: “Welcome new Marist Brothers. The entire Institute and Church is happy with your generous YES. Congratulations and may our Good Mother bless you!

INTERNATIONAL NOVITIATE OF TUDELLA



The Marist Novitiate in Tudella is an international novitiate of the Provinces of South Asia, Australia and the Districts of Asia and Melanesia. Along with the six novices who completed their two years of formation and made first profession, five other novices, who have finished the first year, will start the second year. They are from two countries: four from East Timor and one from Vietnam.

For the first year of novitiate, which begins in May, we will have 16 new novices. Twelve of them come from the Davao Postulancy. Two from Papua New Guinea. Two more from MDA, they come from their own country, after another year of discernment.

The new novices are expected to arrive in Sri Lanka on May 2.

The vice master of novices is Br. Royal Sauvageau (Canada) and the formators: Br. Rod Thomson (Australia) and Br. Chinthana Nonis (Sri Lanka). Other members of the community are: Br Remigius Fernando and Br Sales Fernando (Sri Lanka).

BRAZIL

CMMF LAY MARISTS LIVE AN EXPERIENCE OF SOLIDARITY IN MEXICO CITY

The members of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (CMMF) are laypeople who help to spread the Marist way of being in the communities. This is the case of Sandro Liech, from the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul, and his family, whose participation went beyond borders and who, with their Marist spirit, are helping to transform an outlying suburb of the Mexican capital through a musical project. They arrived in the country in July 2019, and will spend a year there.

Here is the testimony given by Sandro, his wife Jocimare, and their son Otto, about this experience:

“For ten years now, we have been members of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family. And when your heart tells you, ‘Go and do not look back, go and help those in need, be a light, be a beacon and be a bridge’, you cannot remain indifferent. For this reason, we decided to donate a year of our lives and, as a family, we immersed ourselves body and soul in the mission.

Our field of action is in one of the most marginalized areas of Mexico City. The challenges? There are many. But what encourages and motivates our dedication is the desire to offer other alternatives that that might help the people.

Since our arrival, we have been working at the Calmecac Cultural Center. Calmecac was the name of the school for the children of the Aztec nobility. Hence the meaning of a Calmecac, here on the margins— that education for the nobility is also available to the less fortunate. We serve children, young people and adults Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Our work consists of administering this cultural center and taking care of the children, youth, women and the elderly. We offer music classes, with eight types of instruments. And for those who do not have their own instrument we offer practice schedules. Every week we serve approximately 130 students.

In Calmecac we also offer classes in zumba, yoga, aerostep, capoeira, boxing, dressmaking, Arabic dance, crafts and first aid. It is important to mention that we have the support of the people in the community. An average of 300 people come to the cultural center each week.

Living the charism of Champagnat in an environment that is not Marist is a challenge, since we have the obligation to follow Champagnat even more and to show it with our lives and our dedication. Solidarity has no frontiers and the richness of the Marist charism is for everyone, for the whole world! To be Marist means to have a heart that knows no bounds.

In our hearts, we carry infinite gratitude for this opportunity that we have been given and allowed to live.



VANUATU

UPDATE ABOUT DAMAGES CAUSED BY CATEGORY 5 CYCLONE IN SANTO, VANUATU

Category 5 cyclone Harold raged in Melanesia during these past days. Now it has moved away from Vanuatu leaving behind it a lot of damage particularly on the islands of Santo where the Brothers are. Brother Jean-Marie, Superior of the District of Melanesia sent a new report about the damage caused by the cyclone.

“The cyclone has caused very serious damage on Santo, Pentecost and Ambrym Islands. Many houses are down or standing without a roof. All garden foods have been damaged or destroyed. Most of the people on the islands depend on these crops but now that they are gone, they are wondering what they are going to eat in two weeks’ time. This week and maybe next week they will be able to use some of the food damaged by the cyclone, but then that will be all. It is a major concern at the moment.

We are grateful that aid has already arrived from New Caledonia, Australia, New Zealand and even China too. But of course there is also concern about the COVID 19, so strict measures have been put in place with the arrival of those aids.

On Saturday I was able to talk to the two Brothers on Santo. They are both safe and fine. But like with many other families, the cyclone removed the roofing irons of the Brothers’ house.



They have taken refuge in two smaller rooms attached to the main building. They are cleaning the house and trying to save the things they can. That’s how they spent Easter. We will really need some support to rebuild the Brothers’ house as soon as we can. It is not possible for me to travel as all the international flights out of PNG are suspended for another two months. This makes it very difficult for me or others to visit the Brothers.

Apart from the Brothers house, the school buildings are also badly damaged. It will be months before the school is open again. The damage is most serious and we don’t really know how or when the repairs can be done.

We just hope that everything will be quickly re-built and get back to normal.”



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