



Year **XII** - Number **625** | **22 APRIL 2020**

# MARIST NEWS

MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT | GENERAL HOUSE | ROME | WWW.CHAMPAGNAT.ORG

## IV REGIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REGION OF AMÉRICA SUR

On Thursday 16th April, the IV Regional Assembly of the South American Region was held by videoconference, bringing together more than forty representatives of the five Marist Provinces in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Special participants were the Vicar General, Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, and General Councillors, Brothers Óscar Martín Vicario and Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa.

Because of the context of the coronavirus, the meeting, originally planned for the 15th to the 18th April in Cochabamba, Bolivia, concentrated its deliberations to the afternoon of the 16th.

The meeting opened with a moment of reflection led by the Provincial of Reference, Br. Inacio Etges, who addressed the need to understand the new scenarios from a regional perspective.

“At present, we are living in an extremely important situation, of decisions that demand courage to respond to the questions that all of humanity is asking,” he said. “We are experiencing a new beginning.” For the Executive Secretary of the Region, Br. Alberto Aparicio, such an Assembly is the new look of the Region: “This Assembly opens the door to a new way of working



together, of unity, of dreaming and sharing our hopes together,” he said.

### **The urgency of being a global family**

The Vicar General, Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, began the Assembly by referring to the calls of the XXII General Chapter, reminding us of our need to act as a global family.

He also recalled that steps in the process of regionalization are a response to this increasingly urgent need. With emphasis on the crisis scenario posed by the pandemic, Br. Luis Carlos prodded the participants to think about sustainable models of administration and emerging collaboration.

“In this pandemic, we need to be witnesses of unity and hope,” he said. “Alone, we will not be able to face the challenges of the

## general administration

■ The activities of daily life remain restricted in Italy, at least until May 3. For this reason, the employees of the General Administration, who work in the offices, continue to exercise their functions through the Internet, from their homes.

■ All the brothers, both from the General Council and from the General Administration community, are at home, except Brother Carlos Alberto Rojas, who is in Porto Alegre. Brothers Canisio Willrich, Superior of the District of Asia, and Juan

Miguel Anaya, from the Province of Mediterránea, consultant in Canon Law for the General Administration, are also present.

■ The Provincial Councillor and the directors of the Secretariats and departments, are following, by means of video conferences, the various needs of the Institute, especially supporting the most vulnerable situations at this time of crisis caused by the COVID-19.

Institute and the world. We need to walk in communion.”  
 The General Councillors also participated in the first block of presentations. Brother Óscar spoke of the importance of taking care of our institutional mission beginning with the care of the people involved: “Regionalization has to be at the service of life,” he stated. “Right now, we are invited to build a society of service and care”.

Along the same lines, Brother Sylvain contributed the perspective of care starting from the stages of formation of the Brothers, emphasising that our approach needs to be sensitive to the needs and capacities of the Brothers, and so in this sense from the inside out.

**Training and Covid-19**

The second block of the Assembly, led by Javier Peralta Lar-

raín, a specialist in communication strategies and public affairs at Nexus Communications, and professor and journalist at the Catholic University of Chile, dealt with risk and crisis management.

This presentation, even though it was included in the pre-existing program, added a valuable and unexpected focus by reframing the current world scenario and action possibilities during times of crisis.

For Brother Alberto, the contribution offered by Larraín was essential: “Surprised by an unplanned turn of events, there is a feeling that nothing will be quite the same,” he said. “The training in crisis management allowed us to feel united as a single body, an instance in which we were able to deepen two fundamental themes for the Region”.

BRAZIL

**CMMF PROMOTES VIRTUAL NOVENA OF SAINT MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT**

The Virtual Novena of Saint Marcellin Champagnat began on April 8. Lay people from the various fraternities that make up the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (CMMF) together with some brothers from the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul meet online due to the coronavirus pandemic-every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. (Brasilia time) to pray the novena which will end on June 6, the feast of the founder of the Marist Institute, Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

“Prayer at this time is a refuge whose power lifts us up and moves us, puts us in tune with this world that suffers so much, with others, with ourselves and with God. And so, the needs of the Church on earth, even in a virtual way, are united with the heavenly Church to praise God. Let us constantly seek these moments of union in our faith,” stated Br. Alisson Furlan.

“The idea of starting an online novena came up precisely in this period of Covid-19, when we could no longer meet physically. We needed to lift our spirits through prayer and, being an outgoing Church, to be connected with God and with others we chose this virtual novena,” commented Mariana Rogoski, coordinator of

CMMF in the Province.

Faced with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Marist Province of Brasil Centro-Sul postponed events and suspended face-to-face meetings, including the monthly meetings held by the 32 Provincial fraternities of the CMMF.

You can follow the meetings of the novena on the [Facebook page of the Champagnat Movement](#).



LIBANO

## LAURA MIÑO PÉREZ: A MARIST VOLUNTEER IN THE FRATELLI PROJECT

Laura Alejandra Miño Pérez is a Bolivian Lay Marist from the Province of Santa Maria de Los Andes. She was a volunteer in the Fratelli Project in Lebanon from October 2018 to December 2019. Her participation in the project was carried out through the mediation of the CMI Department of the General Administration. The Fratelli Project was created in 2016 by the Congregations of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Marist Brothers in response to the emerging urgent needs of the most vulnerable and at-risk children and young people. Here is Laura's testimony:

What has been most moving for me in recent years is the feeling of communion that takes place between us and the people we come to serve, even though we have never met before. I experienced it in my own life at the age of four at home in Bolivia, when we had to move from one region to another due to health problems. I experienced it through my parents, who left their home in Ecuador to become missionaries in Bolivia almost thirty years ago. I experienced it while working with the Guaraní communities in Bolivia with the Marist Sembrar Foundation. I lived it in Brazil, which was my first experience of international volunteering. I lived it in Ghana, in Thailand, in China, where I encountered cultures that were new to me (another language, new ways of eating, of relating), and in community life during my three years with the LaValla200 Program. I often felt like a foreigner, a migrant and a refugee. Perhaps so often that the fear of the unknown became a companion and then a friend: I came to admire and welcome the unknown.

The Fratelli Project seeks to provide a space where those considered “the others” can dream, meet, play, cry, learn... can just be. It is a socio-educational space, which stimulates interaction, learning values, and allows those who are or have been part of the project to dream. During the fourteen months of my life in Fratelli I faced many challenges and I learned from them. As a volunteer, I helped with transportation, played with the children during recreation, assisted the women in the sewing course, took care of the babies and



children during breaks; I assisted in the art workshops, made bracelets, mandalas, taught dancing. I also collaborated at the community level, as part of a diverse community that seeks to make real the dream of brotherhood. If there were no borders or flags; if there were no rich and poor; if there were no differences in how men and women, Christians and Muslims are treated, then perhaps the world would be a better place. But what there is, is people dreaming and building that better world; sharing God's love in concrete works of service and dedication. It's true that we are all just passing through. But we are also all here now, with the opportunity to be better humans, better sisters and brothers, to go out of ourselves, to welcome others, and to ask ourselves, What will I leave behind after my passage through life?

Have you ever thought—as a Brother, layperson, young person, student, or former student—about becoming a Marist Volunteer? If so, contact the Department of International Mission Collaboration (CMI) at [cmi@fms.it](mailto:cmi@fms.it)

# SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH SUDAN



Two Marists Brothers (Christian Mbam and Dimgba Longinus) from Nigeria live in South Sudan, as part of the Project Solidarity with South Sudan. There are 31 clergy, religious and lay persons from 18 countries and 19 congregations living in 4 communities. Together, they train teachers, nurses, midwives, local farmers and community leaders in the youngest country in the world. Here we reproduce a report, from Br. Christian, about the situation in the country, predominantly in the Riimenze community, in this time of COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

## SHORT UPDATES ON RIIMENZE – IDP, PRIMARY SCHOOL, FARM AND COMMUNITY AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

South Sudan is among the latest to report positive tests of the Coronavirus pandemic in the country among many others, worldwide. Up until the 5th of April we had enjoyed uneasy peace about the pandemic with zero case reported. Now we have been made to understand that we need to be more alert after the first case was detected and now rising to four cases with over sixty people being observed. Up until the 5th of April, it was mostly business as usual for most of the population. Only the relatively few literate and media-current population took some precaution about the disease that had ravaged many counties of the world.

### Government Action

On the 25th of March or thereabout just before the news of the first case of Coronavirus was reported from Juba, the

government announced the closure of schools, a ban on social gathering including for religious purposes, curfew was imposed nationwide. Instructions on rules of hygiene and sanitation and social contacts were disseminated. But the awareness centered only in towns while the rural people lived in ignorance about the whole issue. Since the past weeks, massive campaign has been mounted by the government to try to contain the spread. South Sudan is very vulnerable with very rudimentary means of fighting the pandemic if becomes widespread. Radios, Television for the few who have access to it, mobile network, public announcement in the village and markets are ongoing. Most South Sudanese have become aware of the pandemic but those in the hinterland and very remote places still go about their business as if nothing is at stake.

### Riimenze School and Farm

The government announced closure of the schools from the 27th of March to the 27th of April. Since then the Riimenze Parish School has been under lock and key. Our teachers have left for Yambio, our state capital from where most of them came from. Even the remedial evening classes also organized by Solidarity through the support of Friends of Riimenze in Italy, has vacated. Riimenze is virtually under lockdown. Even Masses are celebrated with the major church doors closed. By government instructs that public workers must be let off work at 1.00 p.m., South Sudanese time, rather than work up to 4.30 p.m. This instruction is presumed to affect even private institutions and the farm projects. Recently, there was a visit to the Solidarity farm in Riimenze by the South Sudanese law enforcement agents

**OCEANIA**

Last Monday, the Oceania Council Meetings took place by video link. The technology worked effectively to bring people together from Port Moresby, Auckland, and three locations in Sydney. Marists across the region are experiencing similar conditions - lock downs, limitations and restrictions - and similar challenges in their ministries and lives. However, all are equally optimistic and looking forward to a return to relative normality.

**UNITED STATES**

On May 1st, the religious Brothers in the country celebrate their day. This year's meeting will be virtual and members of religious congregations and also people interested in the Brothers' vocation are invited to participate.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Marist Mercy Care is living the situation caused by the COVID-19 with wonderful backing from local and international supporters. The community sewing project called Addo Township Designs, involving local dedicated ladies, continue to make masks for the Sundays River Valley communities.

**SPAIN**

The NGO SED has mobilized the families of the Marist schools of the Province of Ibérica so that, together, they can continue to help in the fight against the COVID19 in their environment. From San José del Parque, the group PASOS of mothers in solidarity is preparing protective aprons for the Canillejas Health Centre in Madrid.

**BRAZIL**

"He saw him, he felt compassion and he took care of him" is the motto of the Solidarity Campaign promoted by the 4 Marist Schools of Brasilia, which collects and distributes food, hygiene and cleaning products to the needy.

and they insisted that the workers must leave at 1.00 p.m. So now the farm workers leave the farm at 1.00 p.m.

**What are the impacts of these restrictions?**

Children in Riimenze and majority in South Sudan have no access to the digital network as to register for online classes. The grown-up among them would have been engaged in farming with their parents, but unfortunately the rains which were expected two months ago are still dragging their feet, coming. However, the children are not totally idling, they are helping their families to vacate the camp by constructing houses in the new chosen homes and moving the meagre family belongings to those places. The youngest ones roam around or do some minor chores for the families like fetching water in small containers. Of course these children are losing study times and are more exposed now to dangers and mischiefs.

For the farm, limited activities means also limited production. So the impact is of longer term. Economically, this is not sound. South Sudan imports more than half of its food needs from its neighbours. When the major farms operate at half production, then importation during the next season will increase. The pounds, South Sudanese currency will drop causing inflation. Meanwhile workers, according to the instruction must be paid their salaries and take their normal annual paid leave. What an economic burden on small businesses. Even for our Riimenze Primary school, we will need funds to cushion any extension of the academic year.

**Internally Displaced Camp**

Last month or so in my update I did mention that Riimenze camp dwellers are mostly leaving. It has continued and is ongoing. The camp is way above halved. Mostly the weak and vulnerable members are still staying back. But we continue with food distribution to our nearly two hundred of the elderly who either stay around or come over for their monthly

ration. This is very valued by them as it supplements the family effort to feed them, some of whom are only extended family members. How long more this will continue is to be determined by Solidarity. But my take about it is that we have the poor always with us and so as long as people are willing to support them, we should not deprive them of that additional help to raise their feeding standards. Solidarity did this, though in more reduced level, even before the camp phenomena. Acutely needy few who are staying around because of lack means, we try to help them put up some home.

As of now, the war in vogue presents its own challenges – needs for protective measures and hygiene. The living conditions of the people in Riimenze and it's environ is very poor. Rules of hygiene are almost impossible to meet. Regular washing of hands, sanitization of frequently touched surfaces is had to meet. Caritas has suggested possibility of helping. But this is not finalized.

**Conclusion**

The concern of most people now is the Coronavirus pandemic. Though no case has been detected in Western Equatoria State, but the fear of an outbreak pervades the atmosphere. There is no total lockdown in the state, either, yet its economic impact is being felt by those who must grapple with it either in the short or long term. Our projects are not exempt from this. If ever there is an outbreak, which still remains a high possibility, because of the numerous porous border inroads between South Sudan and its many surrounding neighbours, living conditions and poor facilities in the rural areas are threats of rapid spread. Our camp has emptied in a large scale leaving those who either have special reasons for not moving, either because of reasons of job and few others that must be supported to leave. But when it comes to distributing rations to the elderly, we do not make distinctions between those who are still remaining and those who have returned home.

# COVID-19: WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER

We invited the superior of the Marist Administrative Units to share with us what they are learning with such a situation.



## WHAT ARE WE LEARNING FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS?

### México Occidental Br. Miguel Angel Santos

In the Provincial Council we have reflected on this point.

- We reinforced the idea that we live in an interconnected world. We are part of a whole. We have to take care of each other.
- We will not be able to live in the same way when this pandemic ends. In the world of work, economy, ecology and society we will have to seek the best for each other and for each institution.
- This is a great opportunity to strengthen our social fabric and social solidarity.
- To assume our personal and social responsibilities.
- To feel like a



family and a global society.

- To strengthen community life
- To promote interiority and self-training.

### Compostela – Br. Tomás Briongos, Provincial

We are living in a situation where there is little physical mobility, but a lot of emotional intensity and spiritual depth. If at times we have organized our lives very individually, looking out for our own interests, what we are living now brings us together with all the brothers of our local community, and with all the people in our immediate surrounds. Every day we grow in our understanding of how we depend on others, particularly in relation to health and in food, and that



we belong to a supportive network. We learn that alone, we cannot save ourselves, and maybe that is why every evening we go out onto the balcony to applaud those who do so much for us. An epidemic that hits close to home can give rise to fear, worry and mistrust. In the face of these feelings, how do we react, how do we cope? We can shut ourselves in so that no one can touch or infect us, or do we open our eyes and pay attention to other brothers, to others who may need us? Do we offer a word of encouragement, a joke that makes them laugh, a deeper thought about what is happening to us, and that we want this to not paralyse us but strengthen our Marist commitment. This experience is like a loudspeaker amplifying all that we are. Learning from this experience requires attention and awareness so as to take note of how we are acting and thus to know ourselves a little better. May such learning help to stimulate a small transformation in us.

**Norandina**  
**Br. Julián Olmo, provincial**  
**delegate Ecuador**



There are many lessons to be learned from the current situation, including An opportunity to develop our Marist spirit of solidarity. The importance and necessity of digital platforms for education and communication. The need to take more care of and

value our health and to take care of each other. To be more audacious and creative in the use of personal time and in community  
 Brazil Centro-Norte – Br. Ataide José de Lima, Provincial  
 I believe that this moment shows how fragile humanity is in the face of a challenge for which we are not prepared. Never have we felt such a need to be as close to others as we do now, to our friends, even as we respect the norms of social-distancing. This is why I believe that we have the opportunity now to review values and attitudes, to recognize that solidarity, the presence of others, and working for the common good are of great importance and necessity for the happiness and life of everyone and the whole planet. Isolation

is distressing and depressing for most of us and, however much technology brings us closer together, it is not the same as being able to be with the other and the reassurance and affection this brings. If it is true that we are going to learn how to handle new technologies to

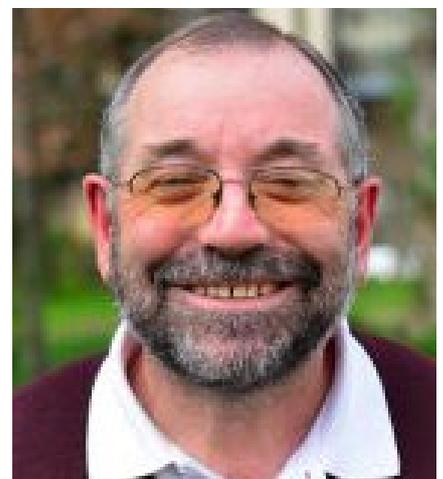


have faster and more efficient communication, the greater truth is that we can learn how important others are in my life, how much co-existence, even if forced inside the house during this period of quarantine, brings us closer and makes us concerned for the well-being of one another.

This time of crisis also teaches us how much co-existence has to teach us whether it be in society, in school, in church communities and or in families; it is important in the raising of our children, adolescents and young people. The experience can teach us how important we are for each other and how much we become more human when we are together. All of this has a strong connection with our Marist values that are based on the Gospel.

**Santa María de los Andes**  
**Br. Saturnino Alonso, Provincial**

Saint Marcellin is a model for us, and for our Church, of following Jesus in the style of Mary in all the moments of his life, especially in the many difficult and painful situations in which he lived. His example of life motivates us to live this time in depth by being beacons of hope. We will achieve this if we keep our lives in the essential, being creative in seeking God and building brotherhood.



## WHAT TEACHING DOES COVID-19 BRING TO US AS MARISTS?



### Br. Pat McNamara United States

We Marists are reminded to place our confidence in Mary's care and protection in this crisis as we do in other challenges and anxieties that

confront us. Our simple brotherhood endures in spite of our physical isolation; we are still together to support and encourage each other in new ways. And after this crisis, we will be together in better days and ways.

### Br. Canísio José Willrich District of Asia

What we are experiencing and seeing around the world is hard to describe. This pandemic is changing the world permanently, and so it can be for us brothers and lay. It makes me rethink about what truly is a "life or death", and beckons reflection on fundamental issues of humankind, and see it more from the Divine perspective.



In this painful time, Easter comes with its full meaning, perhaps now more than ever. In the scriptures we see what Jesus did in such situations of suffering and darkness, and finally after three days in his "locked in", light emerged! Hope became alive! Comes to me the call of the general chapter: "To be a beacon of light and hope in this turbulent world."

### Br. Robert Thunus West Central Europe

Faced with this situation, we can feel helpless and power-

less. Nevertheless, I believe that it is a privileged opportunity to develop two attitudes: fraternity and prayer. In this way we can spread another contagion, that of kindness. As Pope Francis emphasised in recent days, "... it is together that we shall come out of this situation, moving forward with hope". I think of all the little gestures



of care that we can show to each other, looking to a new way of living with those close to us: fellow Brothers, family, friends, colleagues, the young people in our care. We can also do this from a distance, using modern means of communication – telephone, e-mail, Messenger, Skype, WhatsApp, etc. Reach out to others, ignoring self, simply to show an interest, to listen, to encourage... It is also taking the time to contact someone who is alone and needs support... It is creating a re-laxed and calm climate, with sometimes a touch of humour. It is stressing the positive that I see, even in the media, in the acts of solidarity that people are capable of... It is a way of "rubbing elbows" during a time of trial, a way of living "with a little more love than usual" as Francis Cabrel sings.

### Br. Benê Oliveira Brasil Sul-Amazônia

Ir. Bene Oliveira - Maristas Brasil Centro-Sul  
I believe that the most important lesson we can learn from our suffering the danger of coronavirus pandemic should be the trial of replacing fear by hope. I greatly appreciate the message Cardinal





Tolentino Mendonça, in charge of the Apostolic Archives and of the Vatican Library, gives us in his book “The strength of hope — the hands that support the soul of the world”.\* He tells us that we need hands, religious and non-religious hands, holding the soul of the world. He means people who testify that hope is the very first global prayer of our century, able to save humankind.

We can conclude that our keeping the quarantine restrictions must be seen as an opportunity, as a gift, as a new time for us to overcome fear, to increase hope and to meet again people as a community, as a common home, as a global family. According to our XXII General Chapter, it is

time to “move away from a culture shaped by ‘ego-s’ and adopt that of the ‘eco-s’ (ecology, ecosystems, an economy of solidarity, ...) to reduce the scandal of indifference and inequality”.

Let us remember that Saint Marcellin Champagnat experienced that kind of attitude in a high degree when he had to stimulate his Brothers in the hard first times of the foundation of our Institute. Think of the 1830 Revolution when he faced a group of soldiers in l’Hermitage. He simply said to his Brothers, “Don’t be afraid”, as an echo to Jesus’ words to his disciples “In the world you will have hardship, but be courageous: I have conquered the world” (John, 16, 33).

## MARISTS AND COVID-19

COVID-19 is a global challenge which 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.

[On this page](#) you will find information about the situation in some Marist Administrative Units and also resources to face the crisis caused by the virus.

# OUR MARIST WAY OF EDUCATING DURING COVID-19



We reproduce here below a letter that Dr Frank Malloy – National Director of the [Marist Schools of Australia](#), sent on April 7 to all the directors of Marist Schools in Australia. It is an important message for all Champagnat Marists working in education around the world.

## QUALITY LEARNING AND TEACHING

Your continued support of the students, staff and parents in your school community and the calm approach you are taking in leading others during the COVID-19 crisis is greatly appreciated. Your faith-filled, intelligent, generous, and courageous leadership continues to define our collective Marist response. In this critical time, as leaders of learning, we are called to consistently promote and inspire high aspirations for learning and teaching with our students, staff and parents. It is not an easy task. Vital is the need to bring a growth mindset to the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching in the midst of the greatest health and economic crisis in our shared life experience. As leaders of learning, we are compelled to grow the engagement, progress and achievement of every student in our care.

### A new learning paradigm

Schools across the world are grappling with the challenge of delivering learning to students in their homes. In most of the developed countries, online learning has become “mainstream”. As with many other industries, businesses, and services, responses to the impacts of the virus are likely to influence education in some ways for many years to come. Learning and teaching from home is a paradigm shift for our students and educators. Without a physical classroom, leaders and teachers

are seeking new ways to gather feedback on how students are engaged and progressing. Maintaining a culture of collaboration and mutual support between teachers and, teachers with middle and senior leaders is paramount. Ensuring as much as possible equity of access to offsite learning, particularly for our boarding school students from remote areas presents further challenges. For some of our students for whom home is frequently a volatile and unsettled environment, learning from home is proving difficult. The Australian media is currently reporting the increased pressures on parents to work from home while, at the same time, ensuring their children are learning.

### Our Marist way of educating during COVID-19

As always, and particularly at this time of crisis, the capacity of our Marist schools to continue to deliver high quality learning and teaching for each of the students in our care is a fundamental priority. The goal of every school in this matter is clear: to maintain and grow the engagement, progress and achievement of every student. This is sacred work. It is the work we are called to do in the spirit of Saint Marcellin and our Marist mission:

We exist to support the Catholic Church’s evangelising mission to make Jesus known and loved and to ensure quality education in the Marist tradition (Marist Schools Australia Mission Statement).

Following an intense period of close consultation by the MSA

Regional Directors with all MSA Principals, necessitated by the COVID-19 crisis, the following learning principles are presented in an effort to capture our shared commitment at this time and provide support and guidance as we continue to further develop, deliver and refine the practices and processes of offsite learning arrangements.

**We are Mission focussed**

We exist to support the Catholic Church’s evangelising mission to fulfil the educational, pastoral, and spiritual needs of our current and future students and their families. This is our work. This priority guides all decisions related to the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching.

**We are Learner Focused**

Every learner is like all others, like some others and like no other and we are called to respond creatively, flexibly and effectively to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for every student.

We are committed to feedback rich reflective practice in relation to the new paradigm. At this time, as new ways of learning and teaching unfold, the voices of the key stakeholders must be heard, with preference for those we serve, our parents and their children.

**Our values as Marist educators are evident**

The characteristics of Marist education remain important touchstones in the design and delivery of this new paradigm.

Presence: By, for example, seeking alternative ways of maintaining positive relationships between students and between teachers and students through regular check in, online or phone discussions and pastoral care.

Simplicity: By, for example, ensuring simplicity of access and delivery in our teaching and clarity in our expectations of students and colleagues.

Family Spirit: By, for example, ensuring preferential attention and support is provided to those students whose needs are greatest or for those whose situational context is more complex.

Love of Work: By, for example, seeking ways of making offsite learning arrangements engaging, varied, flexible and meaningful through active participation and where possible, learning by doing.

In the Way of Mary: By, for example, bringing the Marial dimensions of tenderness, strength and consistency to our teaching,

and ensuring prayer and reflection are important components of the way we deliver offsite learning arrangements to our families.

**We respect and respond to diversity among our students**

We seek to provide personalised learning where possible for each student. We acknowledge that for some students, offsite learning arrangements will offer some distinct advantages while for others there is likely to be some degree of learning loss. Adapting for the diversity present in any classroom becomes more demanding in offsite learning arrangements and therefore requires strategies to ensure student voice and agency and the building of a safe, supportive and productive learning environment.

**We are committed to excellence in teachers and teaching**

The role of the teacher remains the critical element in ensuring successful learning by students. Clarity of communication and regular, specific feedback to students in offsite learning arrangements where the use of online technologies and other remote arrangements are understood and practised as supplementary to teaching and not a replacement of the teacher.

**Our Principals are leaders of learning**

The Principal, clearly positioned as leader of learning, is critical in ensuring consistency and quality in the delivery of learning experiences for all students.

Visible leadership by the Principal of the learning journey during COVID-19, will be the key influencer in building the morale and professional capacity of teachers, the confidence of parents, and importantly the successful learning outcomes for students.

**Living and Leading with Paradox during COVID-19**

There are some obvious and not so obvious tensions and paradoxes for schools in navigating our way through this time. Our education has often trained us to have a desire for explicit answers and explanations and perhaps, be less tolerant of ambiguity and paradox. And yet we find ourselves in new territory and in these times, we are all learning. Seeking out the advice and support of others during this period is vitally important and to that end, it will be our intention to continue seeking ways of supporting schools and curating the sharing resources between schools for the benefit of our students.

This is, after all, Marist family spirit in action.

Dr Frank Malloy – National Director of the Marist Schools of Australia, 7 April 2020



## BRAZIL

## LAVALLA200&gt; COMMUNITY OF TABATINGA

## From the middle of the forest

We would like to share some information about the new community of Tabatinga, our new members, new dreams, new realities.

Br. Paul Bhatti has been responsible for welcoming the new members. Paul has been in the community for two years and his time in Tabatinga is coming to an end. Once this situation of the Coronavirus is over, he will return to Pakistan. We are very grateful for his work and dedication here.

Br Luke Fong from the Pacific District arrived from Fiji on 23 January. Luke has previously worked as a teacher in primary schools, as a formator of novices, and in many other roles. Mario Araya was the second to arrive on February 6. He is a Chilean layman who has just finished his three-year commitment in the Lavalla200> community in Syracuse. Finally, we welcomed Martha Eugenia Martinez, from Mexico, at the airport of Leticia (Colombia) on March 12. Last year she completed two years in the East Harlem Lavalla200> community in the United States; she belongs to the Province of México Occidental.

It is worth mentioning that in the month of November, until the middle of December 2019, Martha and Mario made their first visit to Tabatinga, at the request of Brother Ernesto Sánchez, with the aim of getting to know the city and one another. During this period, they attended the diocesan assembly, getting an overview of the situation of the Diocese of Alto Solimoes. Then they returned to their respective countries to begin the process of obtaining a visa.

## Some news

In February, the community participated in the Parish Assembly, a special time to get to know the Church's reality and possible ministries in which we can be involved as Marists.

Luke has begun Portuguese classes in a school near our house; it will be slow but sure. Martha and Mario are studying at home with a young language teacher. No doubt their natural Spanish will help the two of them to communicate more easily than Luke, but for the moment their Portuguese remains poor.

Mario participates in the Sunday celebrations on the Island of Santa Rosa (Peru) with Brother Marco (La Salle). They share responsibility for preparing children for Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation every Sunday. For her part, Martha has begun



to participate in a group of women organized by the Ursuline Sisters. Luke goes with Sister Rosilda (Ursuline Sisters) every Saturday to provide religious instruction in the community of Comara.

## In Coronavirus times

As you can imagine, we here in Tabatinga are also confined to stay at home. Jeff and Fachi (responsible for the accompaniment of Lavalla200) had planned to visit during the last week of February, but due to the situation in Italy and the world, everything had to be suspended.

In Tabatinga we still have no confirmed infections. Every day we hear news of possible cases, but the reality is that it is still possible to go out on the streets with some degree of normality. As a community we have decided to expose ourselves as little as possible to the virus, trying to go out only as much as necessary and prohibiting visits to the community.

We have taken advantage of this special time to start drawing up our community and mission plan with meetings every morning. We are beginning to get to know each other and share our missionary experiences, our hopes and challenges for this new beginning.

Twice a week we have a celebration of the word at home, we live the Eucharist without great rites or deep preaching, we share the bread in the simplicity of silence. We know that throughout the world everyone is facing a difficult and incomprehensible situation. We hope with all our hearts that the spirit of Marcellin and our Good Mother will accompany us this Easter.

A warm hug from the new community of Tabatinga to you all.

Martha, Paul, Luke and Mari

SPAIN/PORTUGAL

## BROTHERS OF COMPOSTELA: AGAINST ISOLATION, FRATERNITY

With the permission of García Márquez, we changed the title to “Love in times of COVID-19” or “Brotherhood in times of isolation”. Love is always creative, but it is even more so when necessity sharpens one’s wits. And in the face of the isolation imposed by the present circumstances, the Marist Brothers of Compostela have decided not only not to distance themselves, but to take advantage of the opportunity to come even closer.

Since the beginning of this crisis, besides the video calls with family and friends and all those related to work, the younger Brothers of the Province are taking advantage of this means to meet and to remember the most important thing of their mission: fraternity. These have been quiet and affectionate moments to share how each one is living this situation in his particular situation.

On Easter Day the invitation was extended to all the brothers of the Province of Compostela and twenty-four communities from different parts of Portugal, Spain and Honduras participated in the same call. The inter-provincial community of the post-novitiate in Madrid, the Brothers in formation in



Guatemala (Ángel Cuevas and Rui Pires) and María Bobillo, a member of the LaValla200 community in Atlantis (South Africa) also became involved.

After a greeting from the Brother Provincial, Tomás Briongos, each of the animators of the different communities shared a celebration in honour of the Risen Lord. Besides being the first experience of video calling for some older Brothers, it was a truly moving moment; a very special family meeting. The Easter season in which we are living must indeed remind us that, in the love of God, a love that overcomes death and whatever the distance, we are always united. May we continue to experience it and take advantage of this time of creativity and connectivity to promote fraternity and to be like the lovers of the novel by García Márquez: “different and innovative, and therefore transgressors of the traditional order”.

B. Fábio Oliveira



### Institute of the Marist Brothers General House

Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2 - Rome, Italy - [comunica@fms.it](mailto:comunica@fms.it)

**Website**

<http://www.champagnat.org>

**YouTube**

<https://www.youtube.com/user/champagnatorg>

**Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/fmschampagnat>

**Twitter**

[https://twitter.com/fms\\_champagnat](https://twitter.com/fms_champagnat)