

Marist International Novitiate  
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Mawatha Tudella Ja-Ela

March and April

# Tudella Novitiate Newsletter

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Wherever you go...

**Editorial:** Welcome everyone! It's been a while since our previous Newsletter, and many things have occurred here in Tudella and beyond. We hope you enjoy reading about our experiences!

## Apostolic Experience of Bros. Gaspar & Hai



We first went for apostolic work in a nearby school, Immaculate Conception of Mary, to teach English Grammar to grade five and six. I felt a little bit nervous and worried because this was a big challenge for me, due to my difficulties. However, I wanted to face it.

As time went on, I felt more confident with my partner Hai. We worked together as a team, as we had a discussion together be-

fore going to class. We were very happy in doing apostolic work. I gained different skills as I went along with my apostolic work and was encouraged to be with young people and teaching them. These works very much inspired me for my future life. This was an amazing experience, even though we had only a short time and I am sure it is one of the foundations for my future.

*“hello everyone! Thanks for reading articles. Maybe you would like to visit us sometime, and get to know our Community better!”*



### Visit of Br Rod's mother, Helen (by Gaspar)

I have realized myself that, when mom Helen arrived here, I felt excited to meet her and to welcome her to our community as well, but before that I felt a little bit nervous or felt some shame with her because of my language skills. After a few days I felt no more fear and I was more confident with her to share whatever story I had. And I felt very happy with mom Helen present in our community, particularly at my Birthday celebration through mom Helen's participation. She represented, for me, my mother, in our Community. Even my mother does not participate for my Birthday in our Timorese culture, but I really felt the presence of my mother with mom Helen. Mom Helen came to our community and brought us joy, happiness and a smiling face. Maybe each one of us really felt it in our heart, especially for myself. I was really feeling it in my heart through her smiling face with me. And also, I imagined mom Helen in our community like our mother Mary, our Good Mother in our community. [PHOTO: Helen, with one of her favourite Novices, Duy!]

## Healthy Living (Bro. Joseph Bui)



Being **healthy** should be part of our overall lifestyle. Realizing the importance of keeping ourselves healthy, we at the Novitiate had a workshop in healthy living and using medicines in the first aid cabinet, with the help of Dr. Mrs. Damika (employee of UNICEF). This workshop helped us to raise our awareness with our eating habits. To maintain a healthy lifestyle, we need to keep eating healthily. We need to add more fruit and vegetables to our daily food and eat less carbohydrates, high sodium and unhealthy fats. Avoid eating junk food and sweets (less salt and less sugar). Good nutrition is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Combined with healthy food, physical activity can help us to reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce our risk of chronic diseases and long-term illnesses. Thanks to Dr. Damika and brothers for organizing this workshop for us.

## Games & Ministry Workshop

Bro. Long

We, together with Novices from the Holy Family Sisters and Perpetual Help Sisters, had a wonderful opportunity of having a day's workshop on Games and Activities for ministries with Br. Rod. The workshop went on very well with lots of different games and activities, and a Taizé prayer at the end, which I am sure will be very helpful for us all, especially for us Marist Brothers working with young people. As for me personally, I strongly believe that to unite



young people together and to let them experience God, we have to make them feel the joy, the happiness and the meaning of being together. So, one of the great methods is to bring games and activities and prayers (like Taizé) into their lives. I also had a few years working in youth ministry so I really understand well the great effect these kinds of activities

have on young people. And during the workshop, I was brought back to some of those wonderful experiences which I had with my friends when I was at home.

We give thanks to Br. Rod for generously sharing his knowledge and his experiences with us. It was wonderful for us to learn all those skills to prepare for our future mission. It's really worth our day. Congratulations to Bro. Rod and to all.



## Independence Day of Sri Lanka

I find it very interesting to live in this international novitiate community. I am lucky because I can approach people coming from different countries all around the world. The celebration of Sri Lankan Independent Day on 4th of February helped me to appreciate

the cultures and traditions of other countries. During this celebration we had the taste of delicious Sri Lankan food, and the presentation gave me a deeper understanding of the history and the traditions of Sri Lanka. We are grateful to the Sri Lankan Brothers for helping us to get in touch with the history of the country I live in. Sri Lanka certainly has a very long history and we admire the beauty and the values of Sri Lankan culture. *By Gioan*

## Religious Profession, April 4, Tudella, Sri Lanka 2020 (by Br Rod Thomson)

With great joy and gratitude, we celebrated on April 4 the First Profession of our Brothers, all from Vietnam:  
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



They chose the theme:

**“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.”** (Deut. 31:8)

Due to the lockdown, there were no guests, except some members from the Hermitage Community next door. But with the help of technology, our livestream transmission on Facebook united us with thousands of people from around the world (nearly 3000 views of our video). We thank all those who have sent messages and assured us of their unity in prayer.

Among the messages received, Br Ernesto and Br Canisius (leader of MDA, locked down at the General House) wrote: *“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.’ And quoting our Rule of Life: [71] Live your brotherhood with simplicity. Your primary mission is to be a brother.”*

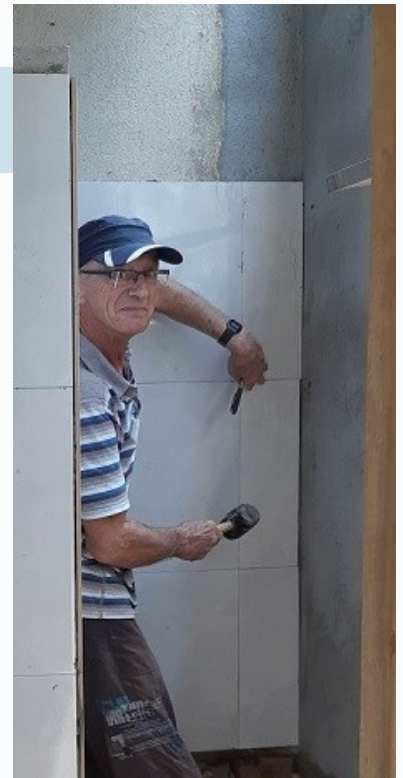
In his thanksgiving message to all at the end, our Br Long quoted Psalm 145, as they do according to tradition every Vietnamese New Year: *“Every day I will thank you; I will praise you forever and ever”* (Ps 145:2), and Br Duc expressed a few words of gratitude to their families, relatives and friends in Vietnamese.

Br Tony Leon crafted a wonderful image for the occasion, and stated

*“Not all superheroes wear capes!”*

## Visit of Reginald Sauvageau to our community by Mateus

On Friday morning Br Réal with Br Nick went to the airport waiting for Reginald, who is Br Réal's brother. He arrived in the airport and they took him to our Community. We were really happy to welcome him in our Community because he came here to help us to build some more rooms, for the new group coming next month. Sadly, he stayed with us only three weeks, but he worked hard, and we did too. He asked the Novices to help him to break the wall close to the dining room. We employed some workers also to help. When the workers finished the job, Reginald asked for Novices to help him to finish painting the wall. Even now, we are still painting, and we haven't finished yet. Reginald has gone back to Canada now, because of the virus. Thanks for Reginald and his generosity and kindness to help us.



*"Hello Lay Marists and Brothers ... some more interesting news from us  
in our community over these last few months!"*

## Passover Meal and Farewell to Brother Nick by Bro. Real

It has become a tradition to celebrate the Passover Meal at the novitiate, commemorating the Jewish Passover. It is a good way. This appreciation of our Jewish heritage is vital to experience a deeper connection with Jesus and his disciples. For the Jews, the "Passover" means not only the physical exodus from Egypt, but the spiritual passing over from the slavery of sin to the freedom of God's people. In the light of Christ, it gives meaning to each of us, acknowledging the "Passing over" we have to do in our daily life, each "Pasque" from sadness to joy, from death to new life,

embracing each difficulty with faith in God's love. This year we celebrated it on March 30, before Holy Week. The idea was to live it with the Second Year novices whose departure was supposed to be on April 6. But finally, this departure will be later according to the present situation.

### FAREWELL TO BRO. NICHOLAS FERNANDO

We also thought that it would be a good opportunity to have the farewell for Br. Nicholas, Master of Novices for these last six years. He will leave us on April 6. Many warm thanks and nice videos came from the brothers of MAPAC, the novices of this year and the formators present. Many recognize in him the good shepherd, a simple brother, always close, always caring for each one. We can really say of him following the example of Jesus: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to his departure..."



## FIRST AID WORKSHOP *by Adelino Soares*



On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 I suggested to the Brothers in the community to have a one-day workshop about “first aid”, so we had this workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

It was a great time for us to know about it. According to me, it was a need for our community. I have discovered that this basic learning about the basic techniques of first aid was really helpful for the community, because not all of us know much about first aid. I was very happy because the brothers allowed us to have this workshop. I saw that all of us were really interested and we were involved right from the beginning of the workshop, and each one of us also raised questions to know more about the fundamentals of first aid, and this can be responding to our community life, to be compas-

sionate and take care of one another in the community. And some other things I have learned from the workshop is that Henry Dunant was the co-founder of the Red Cross. “The legend of this solitary man lives on to this day and his passionate sense of universal brotherhood”. “First aid is assistance given by a trained first aider to a patient or casualty at an emergency, in accordance with standard theories and techniques using the available materials in the surroundings until professional medical help is sought.”



## Apostolic experience with the Charity Brothers

My apostolic work started in September 2019 in the Charity Brothers school for disabled children. Every week on Thursday I, with my two second year novice friends, **Nghi** and **Liu Cong**, went to work with the children in that place.



I really liked to work and play with the children, but on the first day when I started my apostolic work there, I found it quite difficult to deal with them. After a while, I tried to be close to them and talk, but it was not easy. Later on I discovered three things that made it difficult to deal with them. Firstly, I cannot speak Sinhala. Secondly, they cannot speak English, and thirdly, some of them are not able to play or even to speak.

So, when I came home, I asked myself “what I am going to do with those children?” In my mind I said that I will do nothing with my apostolic work ... it was too hard to deal with them, but I continued to try my best to approach them we went. I talked with them with my body language and made some funny sounds to make them laugh and encouraged them to approach me. Right now, I find it very easy to work with them, and in my experience some of them now really try to have some conversation with me.

They also have two places that we go to work. One place we go is to help those who work in the maintenance or manual work area. And the other place we work in in the classroom with the students to see what they are learning. Those children are very kind and generous for us to work with them. **By Isac ....**

## Apostolic work in St Mathew’s Church, by Bro. Duy

As we, the second year novices, come to the end of our novitiate program, we have to stop our apostolic work in St Mathew’s Church in Ekala, where we have been teaching catechism and conducting the choir. I feel delighted that I had opportunity of be involved in two classes during the last two years.



Working with these students has been very meaningful for my Marist life. Some activities, including games, that I had introduced, helped them to be more interested in what they learned. Our part in conducting the Parish choir, preparing them for the Sunday Eucharistic celebration, was a special contribution in our mission. Due to this

involvement in the Parish, our relationship with the Catholic families has deepened.



## OUR WAY: LIVING IN COMMUNITY

*In February 2020, as a response to a Workshop on the Marist "Rule Of Life", we Novices wrote the following reflection based on our personal experience and reading of Ch.2 "Our way: living in community".*



**Introduction:** Brother, your experience of fraternity is the most precious gift you can offer to a world in turmoil. Do your best to develop with your brothers a constant mutual love. Keep in your heart the last and most important wish of Marcellin before he died: "That we may say of the Little Brothers of Mary as the first Christians, see how they love one another." Doing this, you will feel Jesus more and more present with his love and peace, as the early disciples at Emmaus. He will give you courage and energy for all the challenges of your mission as you strive to make this world more fraternal.

**Live Simplicity:** We are called to live a simple life, as in Nazareth. Supporting one another, we treasure each one in and appreciate what each shares. Like Mary we keep these things in our heart. Our vocation is to help people to recognise Jesus in the way and manner we help, listen, share, and encourage one another to step forward in prayer and ministry.

**Be a Community Man:** Above all we must depend on God and ask for grace to live as a community. Brother, as the Emmaus story tells us, in order to live as a community, coming from different backgrounds, we must open ourselves to listen and to share our story with others if we are to build up our community life. We share things in the love of Christ, knowing that God's love is boundless and shared equally among us. We are called to radiate this love by taking care of one another. His love is revealed in each one of us and from there spreads out to the world. Be aware of your gifts and strengths, as well as your difficulties and challenges, in order to be able to offer help and receive help from one another. This reciprocal way of sharing will help you to grow in your daily experiences, spirituality and skills. You will always find great strength for your journey in living together as family. Living this way will give you joy and happiness, and in this joy you will know you are home. Being a brother amongst brothers is a blessing for us, leading us ever deeper into the experience of God's love. Brother, for the difficulties you will encounter on your mission, realise that your religious community is a good base where you can find shelter and provisions, where you will be nurtured and given rest. And as a community member you are called to exercise a sense of responsibility and a willingness to be accountable to each other.

**Forgive One Another:** With your brothers, decide to always be faithful to the new commandment of Jesus to "love one another", always available to support one another in all the daily situations of your life, being present to your brother when it is required. Try to see each other every morning with new eyes.

**Take Care of Your Heart:** To be a brother today you are called to accept the limitations of each other and willingly forgive each other's mistakes. The brother's life has many challenges in our world today, so the encouragement and understanding we can extend to each other is very important, helping us to go forward in our vocation. Keep strong your spiritual life. It is a most precious thing. If you find that your work is continually taking you away from prayer and community activities, then when troubles come, so too will the temptation to walk a different path. If the body doesn't have a heart, how can that body survive? So, brother, take care of your heart, your personal and spiritual life, that your sense of life-fulfilment, balance and relationship with God is nurtured in every moment.

**Be a Man of Prayer:** As a consecrated brother, called to be both mystic and prophet, you are to express your contemplative nature and deep prayer life both communally and personally. Spend time with Jesus, share your life with him and listen to him. Really feel his presence always and everywhere, and every day he will bless you abundantly. With your brothers you will experience the truth of these words: "Wherever you go, I will go." Furthermore, know deeply that your vocation is a great gift calling you to rest, together with Jesus, in God, who lives at the centre of your heart. This 'rest' can be practised through meditation, staying close to the Word in Lectio Divina, and by reflecting in your Examen on God's voice speaking to you through your daily experiences.

**Brothers on Mission Together:** As brothers of the Institute, we come from different countries and sent on mission to places of desperate need around the world. As pilgrims like those young disciples on the way to Emmaus, we experience Jesus risen when we share our lives and stories. As they went in haste to meet the eleven and the others, we are reminded that whatever we do, we do so always together with Jesus, our brothers and Lay Marists ... who, with us, have experienced the embrace of Jesus' that then sends us on mission. Missioned by the Institute, know therefore that in all those you encounter in your life and ministry ... we see the face of God.





# Our Community Mission Statement

As a Marist international and intercultural novitiate community, we feel called to further discern our vocation – growing in our closeness to the Lord.

Hence it is important that we spend time in prayer and our Review of the Day, learning how to discern God's will.

We believe that the Lord reveals himself to us through our ordinary, daily experiences. These experiences include our ability to understand our individual differences – for example, in our personalities, our cultures, and our ways of learning. We are called to accept and appreciate these differences as gifts from our brothers.

We strongly emphasize the value of being united, through our mutual support, authentic sharing and attentive listening. This gives us happiness, love, intimacy, and a sense of belonging.

This helps us to realise that we journey together, called to live in solidarity with one another, living the Marist charism for our time.

We are not perfect, we have a lot of weaknesses and struggles, and need to accept ourselves and forgive one another, to build up a loving community. We are called to forgive at any time and to learn to ask for forgiveness from those we consciously or unconsciously hurt or upset.

Through all our novitiate experiences, we feel called to connect with God and each other, to grow in our vocational journey.

## Members of the community

### Formators

1. Brother Réal
2. Brother Rod
3. Brother Remy
4. Brother Sales

### Newly Professed Brothers

5. Brother Duc
6. Brother Duy
7. Brother Hai
8. Brother Long
9. Brother Nghi
10. Brother Phuc

### Novices

11. Adelino
12. Gioan
13. Gaspar
14. Isac
15. Mateus

## Marist Brothers

Marist International Novitiate  
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Sri Lanka

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**We are Marist Brothers**  
**for the world**