



## OCEANIA COUNCIL MEETING

# MARIST LIFE IN OCEANIA

In normal times, the November meetings about the processes and pastoral concerns of the Administrative Units that make up the Oceania Council (OC) and Oceania College of Leaders (COL) would be held in Brisbane, but this time these contacts were made online on 2 November.

Since the lockdown began in March, members have not been able to be physically present to each other and been developing communication skills and creativity with Zoom and similar internet platforms. Rather than sitting around the one table for OC and COL meetings, each of the members is able to operate from their home base: Port Moresby, New Zealand and Rome.

A summary of the OC and COL meetings is below and a number of significant developments are reported.

### Development of a Single Administrative Unit

The restructuring process with the District and Province moving to a single administrative unit (AU) by the end of

2022 has been continuing for some time now and the Marists are being kept in touch with development with Bulletins and Updates.

### New Province Committees are being established including:

- New Province Executive – to lead the process to establish the new Province
  - Secretariat – to support the Executive
  - Reference Group – to review, integrate and deepen the thinking
  - Province Design Committee – to recommend design and set up plan for the new Province.
  - ICT Task Force – to identify and implement information and communication technology strategies and tools to engage meaningful region-wide collaboration, information sharing, dialogue and engagement
  - Local Units Future Planning Committee – for future planning and engagement processes across the regional unit, local and/or country level



## general administration

- On Monday, the directors of the Brothers Today Bureau, together with Councillors João and Óscar, participated in the meeting with the International Commission for the Revision of the Formation Guide.
- On Monday, the Cmi met with the CPVs of Europe.
- On Tuesday, Brother Ben, General Councillor, together with Brothers Libardo and Goyo, from the Economie General, participated in the meeting of the Economic Affairs Council.

- On Tuesday and Thursday the regular meeting of the General Council takes place.
- On the same days, Brothers Luis Carlos, Vicar General, and General Councillors Ken and Ben plan the meeting of the International Mission Commission, scheduled for 9 December.
- On Thursday, Brother Fachi, director of the Cmi, participates in the General Assembly of the Inter-Congregational Project "Solidarity with South Sudan".

**Issues Affecting Formation Programs in Oceania**

A consequence of the COVID pandemic, with the closure of State and country borders, travel restrictions, isolation and bubbles, all have had significant impact on the movement of aspirants, postulants and novices to and from houses of formation and scholasticates. Formation programs across Oceania have been affected and Novitiate programs, and the possibility of an Interregional novitiate and the location of and movement of formators are being explored.

**Communication and ICT Issues**

The issue of providing connectivity and reliability for our communication networks to all our Marist activities in the region is being energetically addressed. Recent report from Marist Schools Australia to the Oceania Council reveals the complexity and extent of the issue and the positive ways in which the problems are being addressed.

**Lavalla 200> Project**

This project is continuing successfully with the community

and the Marist Learning Zone at Mount Druitt. The first volunteers (Argie and Rodrigo) have completed their contract and returned home to Mexico. For the new group, Fabrizio Basso from Brazil is already here and the arrival Silvia & Ruben from Spain has been held up by Corona virus restrictions and are expected to be in residence by March.



**Oceania Partnership Committee**

The recent OPC Strategic Directions 2020-2021 document included as a priority the participation of OPC and Marists in the Spirituality Program being planned and prepared by the Institute's formation team. The program was expected to be delivered as a joint Asia-Oceania initiative in the Philippines in 2020. The COVID epidemic pandemic has stalled both the preparation and the scheduling of the Institute led course, now due to be held in the Philippines from 27 November-11 December 2021.

The next meeting of the OC and COL to be held on 29 March 2021.

EAST ASIA

**LEARNING THE ART OF ACCOMPANIMENT**

Brother Darren Burge, Vice Provincial of Australia, accompanied eight brothers from the Province of East Asia in an experience of learning the Art of Accompaniment. The program is intended, among others, to define spiritual accompaniment and examine its core components, learn the skills required to accompany others on their faith journey, enrich the person's understanding of his own experiences of accompaniment in its various forms, explore and deepen the person's understanding of his own prayer experience, provided opportunities for contemplative prayer practices and explore the practical application of the principles of accompaniment in the person's own ministry context.

The participants are Brothers Allen Timola (Kobe, Japan), Lloyd Gamboa (Dadiangas, Philippines), John Emil Alada (Kuching, Malaysia), Jo-an Legaste (Cotabato City, Philippines), Elmer Jandic (Singapore), Aljon Yonder (Sarawak,



Malaysia) Jong Acosta (Provincial House Community, Philippines), and Paul Won (Seoul, South Korea).

The program consists in four meeting. The first one-hour module was delivered online via Zoom on November 21. The next sessions are programmed to: 28th November, 5th December and 12th December.

GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION

# BR ERNESTO SPEAKS ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MARISTS



The Superior General, Br. Ernesto Sanchez, participated on 17 November in the Webinar organised by the Education Commission of the UISG and the USG on the Global Compact on Education, where the book launched by the OIEC “Lights for the Journey: Global Compact on Education” was presented, in which several Superiors General, including Brother Ernesto Sanchez Barba took part. In his intervention as a panellist, Brother Ernesto Sanchez Barba, Superior General, spoke about the specific contribution of the Marists to the Global Education Pact. He explained that “the first specific contribution of the Congregation of the Marist Brothers is to make us more aware of the need to walk together in the direction of co-creating a more humanised and more humanising society. May so many educators (Brothers and a great number of lay men and women, whom we call “Marists of Champagnat”), present on the five continents, feel more and more part of a global movement, together with so many other Congregations, and religious and governmental Institutions”.

“We are challenged to ‘go beyond borders’, connecting better and better at inter-congregational level and with governmental bodies, including the educational system... (a challenge in several countries). The Global Compact on Education aims to do this and will ask us to make further efforts in dialogue, connection,

and participation. And, of course, the transformation of the heart. Perhaps today we have more questions than answers; let us search together. Only together can we make this dream concrete,” said the Superior General at the end of his presentation.



Besides Br. Ernesto Sánchez, the panellists of the webinar were Fr. Pedro Aguado Cuesta (Superior General of the Escolapian Fathers and Coordinator of the UISG/USG Education Commission), Sr. Yvonne Reungoat (Superior General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians), Br. Juan Antonio Ojeda Ortiz (Lasalle, Project Manager of the OIEC and Consultant to the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education).

The book “Lights for the Journey: Global Compact on Education”, arises from the call of Pope Francis to build a global educational compact between all. The Catholic International Education Office (OIEC), together with other organizations and entities, has mobilized itself to gather the opinions of different people in the world, of the superiors general of religious institutions dedicated to education and of international experts, on what to do to overcome the difficulties and resistance in the face of this pact; what to change in education in order to build a more humane, fraternal, supportive and sustainable world; how to focus on people and educate them integrally from within; as well as other lights for the journey towards this alliance.



BR. BEN CONSIGLI  
**THANKSGIVING**

Thanksgiving is a national holiday celebrated on various dates in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Liberia. For many countries and peoples, it began as a day of giving thanks and sacrifice for the blessing of the harvest and of the preceding year. As I approach this feast, I thought it would be a good time to look back over the past months with gratitude, even in the midst of a world-wide pandemic, and in reflecting on all that has been and to look ahead with a joyful heart to all that will be.



The Psalmist had it right; it is good for us to give thanks to the Lord for all the blessings he has bestowed on us as individuals and as an Institute. Many days, as part of my Morning Prayer and reflection, I try to hold what I call a 5-minute gratitude session. I close my eyes and think about who and what I am grateful for.

I don't have this gratitude session every day, but on the days that I do, I find that I am happier, less harried, and more positive. Why should that be? Why should the simple act of thinking about who and what I am grateful for make such a big difference in my life?

Just a few reasons:

- Because it reminds me of the positive things in my life;
- Because it reminds me of who and what is important in my life;
- Because it reminds me to thank God and to thank others;
- Because it reminds me that I am not alone.

What do I give thanks for, privately, in my little gratitude session? It varies, but in reflecting over these past months, there is much I am grateful for:

- My families and friends
- My community
- My vocation as a Brother
- The many health care workers (nurses, doctors, volunteers, etc.) assisting those stricken with CoVid-19



etc.) assisting those stricken with CoVid-19

- The generosity of so many Brothers and fellow Marists
- Our educational ministries...the wonderful evangelization efforts that occur, day in and day out in these institutions
- Those who serve on our various commissions, committees, and Boards
- Our Marist col-

leagues who nurture our Marist charism

- The steps we take to safeguard children
- Our youngest members' renewal of vows
- Our vocation efforts and the young men who are interested in exploring God's call to them.

marist world

MADAGASCAR: YOUNG MARISTS OF MADAGASCAR (JMM) – ANTSIRANANA



BANGLADESH: MARIST GIASNOGOR – FEEDING PROGRAM



AUSTRALIA: BROTHERS MEETING IN FITZROY



ROMANIA: CASE ALE SPERANTEI – BUCHAREST



SOUTH AFRICA: LAVALLA200> ATLANTIS



IRELAND: MARIST COLLEGE ATHLONE

- The stewardship of our finances
- Our solidarity efforts, via the Secretariat for Solidarity and FMSI
- Our senior brothers on whose shoulders we stand
- Those who minister to our senior men throughout the Institute...our Brothers, our aides, our doctors, our nurses
- The “little virtues” we show each other in community/at home daily

Henri Nouwen said it well when he recognized that “Everything is freely given by the God of love. All is grace. Light and water, shelter and food, work and free time, children, parents, grandparents, life and death— it is all given to us. Why? So that we can say thanks; thanks to God, thanks to each other, thanks to all and everyone.”

So what is our call during these pre-Advent days? Maybe it’s the call to take some time and reflect on all that we can be grateful for. I believe that learning how to experience gratitude involves being grateful as an attitude, not as a reaction when good things occur. Any one of us does not need to wait until things are perfect before being grateful; in fact, it may be just the opposite. It could be that the act of being grateful, in itself,

makes us receptive to life’s blessings, and these blessings continue as we continue to be thankful.

Marcellin knew that all he and his “Little Brothers of Mary” had come from God and Mary, his Ordinary Resource. His gratitude for being loved by God was very real. He often told his Brothers that “God has loved us from all eternity; he chose us and drew us out of the world. The Blessed Virgin has planted us in her garden, and she sees to it that we lack for nothing.”

Thank you, for all that you do for our Marist mission, our Marist community, and our way of following Jesus. Be assured of my gratitude as I leave you with the following prayer of thanksgiving:

Thank you, Father, for having created us and given us to each other in the human family. Thank you for being with us in all our joys and sorrows, for your comfort in our sadness, your companionship in our loneliness. Thank you for yesterday, today, tomorrow, and for the whole of our lives. Thank you for friends, for health, and for grace. May we live this and everyday conscious of all that has been given to us (from the Catholic Prayer Book)

Brother Ben Consigli, FMS – Councillor General

LAVALLA200>

## ROSA SCHIAFFINO: GATHERING STORIES

Rosa Schiaffino Fernández-Crehuet is a Spanish woman from the Province of Mediterránea. From 2018 she participated in the LaVal-la200> initiative, of communities for a new beginning. She was in the Community of Syracuse for 2 years until October this year. She will now continue the experience, this time in Holguín, Cuba. Here she shares some things that have had an impact on her to date.



### What motivated you to leave everything to join an international, intercultural community?

A strong sense of Marist vocation to live the Gospel with the poor, with the needy and to do so in and from a community.

### What living in community has meant for you?

What touched me most in community living was discovering myself through diversity. Before joining Lavalla200 I had had community experiences, but as a volunteer. I had been like a spectator, so to speak. To be co-responsible for the life, leadership and ministry of a community is a challenge. And on a personal level it meant rediscovering myself, dismantling and reassembling my pieces to fit them into an expanded puzzle together with the pieces of my other companions.

I believe that community life, with all its difficulties, has

been the most enriching experience I have ever had.

### And the ministry of the community?

I don't have words to express the personal impact of getting to know and sharing life with so many migrants. I think that what changed most over these years was my outlook. To see and recognise them as my brothers and sisters. Suffering their pain, getting angry with their anger and helplessness. Rejoicing with every success, however small.

### What key words summarize your experience?

"I'll get there! I'm coming!" This is what they say even though they just got out of bed and they were supposed to be somewhere else 2 hours ago. The snippet of Sicilian culture (sorry for the caricature) reflects how I had to cultivate patience when living interculturally and in another country.

A beautiful Muslim gesture is to hold your hand to your heart after greeting someone as a sign of respect. I carry each person in my heart.

**What was the most significant scenario or event in your time with Lavalla200>?**

The most beautiful experiences were the celebrations of religious festivals (Christian and/or Muslim) all together.

living. We come together at different ages and stages of life, genders, cultures and backgrounds. Moreover, for some this shared life is something new and for others... also, even if it is very similar to a "regular" community of brothers or to another community you have already been in, this is a challenge! Because it means breaking with mental schemes that we all bring with us and creating something solid from the reality in which we find ourselves. It requires time, understanding, openness, tolerance, listening, forgiveness, acceptance and patience. In short: it requires a lot of LOVE.



**What would you like to say to the brothers and lay Marists who are thinking of participating in Lavalla200> communities or other international/intercultural projects of the Institute?**

If this is what you want: GO FOR IT! What are you afraid of? The most that can happen is that you discover yourself and, in that discovery, you discover others. And be calm, listen to yourself and listen to God in silence. God's hope is for your happiness, so there is nothing to be afraid of.

The community and the children. Christmas, Easter, the end of Ramadan, the Feast of Sacrifice... To be able to CELEBRATE together, share experiences and be enriched and discover all that makes us one.

**How did the experience help you grow in your Marist vocation?**

Seeing the Marist charism alive in distinctive ways in each member of the community led me to reaffirm my vocation. In the Lavalla200 communities, we are committed to LIVE the charism intensely: family spirit, love of work, with Mary as our guide and with God among us. Brother Ernesto has invited us to be Homes of Light, and that is what in my opinion the Marist community in Syracuse has been: a Home open to those who decide to knock on the door for whatever reason – to get hooked on the Internet, to have a cup of tea or just to pay a visit. That's what it means to be Presence.

**What were the biggest challenges you faced during this time?**

The biggest challenges for me were in community



**If you are interested in dedicating a significant amount of time in a Lavalla200> community, please contact your provincial or write to [cmi@fms.it](mailto:cmi@fms.it).**



SOUTH AFRICA

# THE ST DAVID'S MARIST DAY 2020 PLEDGE



Each year, the St David's Marist Inanda, in Johannesburg (South African) celebrates the Montagne Day on 28 October, in memory of the meeting of St Marcellin Champagnat with Jean-Baptiste Montagne, the boy that had had no education or spiritual formation. As part of this commemoration each year the St David's Marist Foundation holds a Montagne Day Pledge campaign with the St David's boys, to encourage the next generation of young philanthropists.

The boys each write their own personal pledge as to how they will endeavor to live out the Marist values, and are asked to accompany this with a donation made from their own pocket money, or through earning it at home through an act of service. The students' pledges (as well as pledges made by staff, parents and Old Boys) are placed at the altar during the Montagne Day Masses held during the week of Montagne Day.

Usually the donations go to the Foundation's bursary fund, in support of further bursaries for boys in need to attend St David's Marist

(preparatory and high school). This year the St David's boys were asked to think about how many children in South Africa are experiencing a lost school year due to not having had the benefit or access to online schooling that the St David's boys were fortunate to be able to have during Lockdown. The funds raised this year will go to supporting students in the township of Alexandra through St David's partner organizations there to provide bursaries for quality education for disadvantaged children.

### St David's Marist Inanda Foundation

The St David's Marist Inanda Foundation was founded in 2006 to ensure the long-term sustainability of St David's Marist. The

Foundation has as its primary aim the identification of opportunities for growth and development for St David's boys. In the immediate term, the Foundation has the responsibility to ensure that children from financially disempowered communities also have the opportunity of a St David's education and to share in the Marist vision.



**CRUZ DEL SUR**

A virtual meeting, held on the 21st November, marked the celebration of the jubilee of Marist religious life of seven brothers of the Province. Brothers José Luis Calvo and Eugenio Magdaleno (70 years); Ernesto Benavidez, Hilario Schwab and Gabriel Sordini (60 years); Agustín Martínez and Miguel Ángel Schönfeld (50 years). You can see here the video in their honour (<https://youtu.be/dPOUgcUW28o>).

**CENTRAL AMERICA**

On December 2 the campaign “Central American Brothers, working together for a new beginning” launched by the province to help the victims of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador after Hurricane ETA came to an end. The campaign was aimed at Marist communities, fraternities, educational works and pastoral groups.

Another initiative of the Province was the on-line Provincial Retreat, held from 27 to 1 December, with the theme “Global family to serve the world”. Hundreds of people participated.

**NORANDINA**

Through the Facebook page “Laicos Maristas Norandina”, the province publishes the interviews carried out with the brothers and lay Marists of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. You can see the videos at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/yosoylaicomarista>

**CHILD PROTECTION**

On November 20, the Province of Brasil Centro-Norte launched the updated edition on Institutional Policy for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. It also presented a channel for reporting abuses. The Institutional Protection Team presented the two instruments and several initiatives planned for the Institutional Protection Team presented the two instruments and several initiatives planned for the training and dissemination of these tools

**CHAMPAGNAT MOVEMENT****35 YEARS OF ACTIVITY OF THE CMMF**

The Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (CMMF) was officially created in 1985, through the publication of a circular by Brother Charles Howard, then Superior General of the Marist Institute. Currently, the MChFM has more than 4,000 lay Marists throughout the world, grouped in some 270 Fraternities. Each Fraternity is headed by a brother or a lay animator.

On the 14th November, UMBRASIL held a virtual meeting in Brazil to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the foundation of the Movement. The celebration was attended by the members of the Fraternities of the three Marist Provinces of the country.

During the meeting, representatives from each province gave their testimonies. The celebration also included the presentation of a commemorative video, prayers and two thematic panels. The first of these, entitled CMMF, Light in all our Homes, had the special presence of the Superior General, Brother Ernesto Sánchez and the second was given by the current Director of the Institute’s Bureau of the Laity, Raúl Amaya.

Brother Ernesto presented some parts

of the circular “Homes of Light – We care for life and we generate new life”, where he highlighted “the commitment to encourage each other in this process

and in this effort, so that it becomes a common search and not only an individual one”. And he concluded with a question: How can the CMMF be a light and generate life for the Marist Mission, for the Church and for the world?

Raúl Amaya, Director of the Bureau of the Laity, addressed the topic of the internationality of the CMMF in the different Marist Provinces and Regions, which has 265 fraternities: “In Arco Norte there are 79, in South America there are 121, in Europe there are 46, in Africa there are 14 (Nigeria), and in Asia there are 5 (Philippines)”. Raúl highlighted the challenge of “continuing to take steps in the implementation of the new Project of Life in Fraternity, towards a greater lay growth, in interdependence and communion with the Marist Institute”.

The video can be accessed [here](#) commemorating the 35th anniversary of the CMMF.

In the world there are many ways of living the Marist lay vocation. Besides the CMMF, thousands of people follow the ideal of St. Marcellin Champagnat in their daily lives.

FMSI IN HAITÍ

# SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN IN DAME MARIE AND LATIBOLIERE



The Marist Brothers present in Haiti, together with FMSI, have promoted prevention campaigns against COVID-19 at Dame Marie and Latiboliere, where there is no access to the media or social networks. Similarly, the project financed by Miseen Cara has also distributed food baskets and hygiene kits to the neediest families in the areas where the Marists of Champagnat are present, with 4 schools and a programme for the reintegration of restavek children (domestic workers) into school.

The communication campaign reached an average of 35,000 people through visits to the communities (with a car and a megaphone) and radio messages. And 5,940 people benefited from the distribution of food baskets and hygiene kits.

### Haiti: the context in which the Marists work

Most people, especially those in rural areas, are not informed about prevention measures against the spread of Covid-19 and collective risk. Unfortunately, some information campaigns in

the country do not reach this part of the population because families do not have mobile phones or access to social networks.

In recent months, due to the pandemic, poverty levels have increased. Many workers who had informal jobs or who lived from day to day are unable to support their families. A large number of the households of students in Marist schools in the Dame Marie and Latiboliere areas find themselves in this situation.

**FMSI** is a Foundation created by the Marist Institute for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. FMSI carries out its mission through advocacy and lobbying activities and projects in countries where there is a Marist presence.

**Miseen Cara** is an Irish funding body, sensitive to issues related to the rehabilitation and school reintegration of children at risk of social exclusion.



### 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)