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# MARIST NEWS

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

2 JANUARY

## WORDS OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL DURING THE CELEBRATION OF THE 204TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTITUTE



**Thinking about the brothers of today and the future recalls five key words:**

### **SPIRITUALITY**

On several occasions I have been able to express: I believe that our rebirth as an Institute and its future will have much to do with the concrete commitment of each one of us to take seriously the journey of our own interior and spiritual life. This together with the commitment to encourage each other in this process and in this effort, so that it becomes a common search and not just an individual one.

**How is your thirst? Do you perceive a living Jesus in you?**

### **VULNERABILITY**

The pandemic has made us experience the vulnerability of the world and our own vulnerability. Perhaps it is time for a change of perspective: to connect with the vulnerability, weakness and fragility of others and discover that it is from there that our strength emerges. To feel that we are not alone, and that alone we cannot... that we need each other and we embrace the strength of God. Christmas speaks to us of a God who showed himself to be fragile and vulnerable. Called to be reborn from

what is small, from fragility and simplicity.

**How do I situate myself before my own vulnerability?  
How do I situate myself before the vulnerability of others?**

### **FRATERNITY**

Making community, and walking together brothers and laity... I can not imagine a brother wanting to go alone, the call is to live the mission as a team, accepting and welcoming the differences, valuing them as a richness and not as an obstacle. The home of light is a communitarian one. Walking together calls for open dialogue, unconditional and empathetic listening, as well as openness of mind and flexibility...

**How do you value your experience of internationality?  
What do you do to overcome individualistic attitudes and actions?**

### **DARING**

To go beyond our comfort zone, to respond to the emerging needs, which are so many. We are living in a period of great

uncertainty and this can lead us to experience fear, to have defensive and protective reactions (which would seem normal, natural...), but we are precisely called to go beyond these fears to launch ourselves into serving the most vulnerable and those living in poverty.

**How do you see yourself in the face of uncertainty? What stops you, to launch yourself into responding?**

**INTEGRITY**

The fifth word, I take it from Pope Francis’ answer when at the USG Assembly I asked him about some key to the future of religious life. And he answered: INTEGRITY. An integrity that becomes necessary not only with personal testimonies of balanced and unified life, but also with community options. We must understand that coherence of life does not mean perfection, but transparency and authenticity. Young people do not

want us to be perfect, they want us to be authentic.

**What areas of your life do you perceive as most coherent? Which ones do you perceive as incoherent?**

We entrust this work to Mary, our Good Mother, in her 204 years... Let us begin in 2021, with an attitude of hope. Hope that is not naive optimism but welcoming the presence of God and giving ourselves to building a better future. Marcellin has marked us from the beginning by his audacious and confident response. Also, with his attitude of welcoming his own vulnerability. We count on this heritage and this gift. A gift that is updated and becomes an inspiration in our days.

Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General  
2 January 2021

CANADA

“CARING FOR LIFE...” DAY FOR REFLECTION

In the context of Advent, the Provincial Animation Commission (CAP) of Canada organised a virtual reflection meeting based on Brother Ernesto’s Circular “Homes of light. Caring for life. Generating new life”. To animate this time of reflection, the Provincial Animation team called upon Brother Réal Sauvageau, a Canadian Brother currently Master of Novices at the Novitiate in Sri Lanka, in the context of Lavalla>200.

Brother Réal focused his presentation on the second part of the Circular: “Foyers de Lumière qui prennent soin de la vie”. Starting from a montage that presented the main lines of this theme, he took care to concretise how this care is demonstrated in the details through which we lived from day to day, recalling the link with “the little virtues” that enrich the daily life of our communities and our families. After the presentation, the participants had the opportunity to



share at some length, in teams of six or seven, their own experiences around this invitation to be homes that attract and nurture those who are close to us on a daily basis.

This meeting was intended for brothers and lay people in Canada: the most propitious moment in Canada was Saturday, December 12 from 9 to 11 a.m. (the

meeting even went beyond that...). But the invitation had also been extended to the brothers and laypeople of Belgium, with the help of the linguistic link: many joined the Marists of Canada (despite the time difference...) to form one family. The pandemic will have the advantage of helping to bring us closer together, whereas we are obliged to confine ourselves...

## AUSTRALIA

## VOCATIONS MINISTRY IN THE PROVINCE

A few days ago, the Province of Australia divulgate a summary with some of the major projects that have been the focus of Vocations Ministry this year, during this challenging time for engaging with young people on the specific vocations. The work has been overseen and supported by the Province Vocations Committee led by Br. Michael Callinan.

Before presenting the main initiative, it is interesting to note that the report highlights that contemporary research into the life decision patterns of Generations Y and Z increasingly concludes that decisions about long-term professional and relational life choices are no longer being made in the late teens or early 20s, but rather in the 25-35 age stage. While this means that the conversations and input about vocational options can still be made during secondary and university schooling periods, there are a shift towards explicit vocational discernment at a later stage in life. In this context, there must be specific strategies that target these different age brackets. This is the approach that informs the nature and action of the Province Vocations Ministry in Australia.

### Partnering collaboratively with Marist Youth Ministry

Throughout the year, even in these COVID times, there have been opportunities for specific presentations on Vocations in a number of Marist schools. For 2021, the Vocations Ministry team is writing some specific modules on Vocations, which will invite reflection and engagement with students from Years 7 to 12.

### Young Marist Professionals

The emerging group of Young Marist Professionals continues to grow across Australia, They are young men and women who have finished with the activities of Marist Youth Ministry and are looking to integrate their faith and professional lives with an explicit Marist flavour. A committee of the Marist Association has met throughout the year with the ongoing work with supporting these emerging groups, through which support as a member of this committee.

### Social Media Presence and Growth: Marist Brothers Life

A significant strategy in 2020 was to engage young people on our social media platforms. Named as 'Marist Brothers Life' the presence on Facebook and Instagram is another avenue of highlighting the life, mission, and community of the Marist Brothers in Australia in a contemporary context. The Instagram



account has grown by 180% from 160 to 450 people in the calendar year. Facebook has continued in general upward trend in the last year, with over 1600 people subscribed to the page. The team have also engaged the design expertise of a social media content developer for ensuring the production of high-quality and impactful social media posts.

### Religious Brothers Day (May 5)

The commemoration of this day continues to grow in Australia. This was achieved with the production of a short video of Marists expressing their connection and gratitude to the Brothers. This was released on social media platforms and received positive responses and engagements with over 2000 views of the video (Vimeo).

### National Vocations Awareness Week August 2020

In August 2020, a campaign to explore the life of a Marist Brother was undertaken, with the production of the resource booklet, "A Marist Brother" and the release of the three videos produced by Conor Ashleigh, a visual storyteller and photographer, and commissioned by the Province. The materials were distributed to Marist schools.

### Vocations Support Network

While it is the invitation for all Brothers to support and contribute to other people's vocational discernment, a number of specific Brothers, spread geographically across the Province have been asked to be local contacts for young men who have demonstrated explicit interest in Marist life as a brother.

### Future projects

Current work in being undertaken in the areas of schools, as well the development of another video project that expands upon the three areas of mission, spirituality, and community. Materials will continue to be produced for Religious Brothers Day, Champagnat Day and the National Vocations Awareness Week.

## SOUTH AFRICA

# THREE2SIX REFUGEE CHILDREN'S PROJECT IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

From the coronavirus pandemic's first months, the World Health Organization warned that Africa's health systems would struggle to cope if the virus began to spread on the continent. That prediction was realized here in South Africa.

Initially, a hard five-week lockdown from 27 March helped to keep the number of infections low, but that became economically ruinous as 3 million South Africans lost their jobs.

The Three2Six Project continued to operate from the homes of the children. We were able to get all the children's textbooks home to them and the teachers used WhatsApp to guide them through their work. We also provided additional money for data for teachers.

Throughout the lockdown we offered food support to the families, and during those lockdown months we were able to channel R540 000 worth of food support. This was made possible by the generous support from members of the public, religious organisations and from our regular donors.

We returned to school as soon as we could and were able to get teaching and learning in the classroom back on track again. Teachers were trained by Doctors Without Borders on how to minimize the risk of being infected by COVID-19. Thermometers, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were purchased for the project and we managed social distancing both on transport and at school. We introduced a staggered timetable to space children and introduced an additional day of teaching. We strengthened our partnership with the Johannesburg Parent Child Counselling Centre and have engaged six psychologists, on a part-time basis, to provide psycho-social support.

We made a decision to keep all of our children in the project for an additional year (they will still progress to the next grade), but because of the impact of the restrictions in the public system (with around 18% of pupils not having returned to school) we decided to wait a year when placement into public schools is likely to be easier. However, this does limit the number of new children we can accommodate in 2021.

We ran two camps in the Magaliesberg for two older groups in October and November. There was an opportunity for the children to connect with each other and to acquire new teamwork skills. The children enjoyed the meals and being outdoors. The outdoor experience was a first for a lot of the children who have mainly grown up in high-density areas.

In this last week we ran our holiday enrichment programme on



two campuses We also had one last food distribution to families at the end of November.

## Lessons this year

With the support of our partners we were able to offer food support to families who had been severely hit by the impact of COVID-19 on the South African economy. Our matter-of-fact approach in which we got to children to return to school as soon as regulations allowed, enabled us to continue the year with all the necessary precautions.

The support we had from the Turquoise Harmony Institute, Holy Family Sisters, Caring Women's Forum, the HCI Foundation, Breadsticks Foundation, the Maitre Trust, Misereor as well as Misesan Cara, allowed us to food, distribute masks, sanitisers and soaps. We were also able to reduce the number of children on campus and allow for better social distancing. We have continued with our daily health screening for COVID-19, and up until now we are not aware of any of our children becoming infected by the virus.

## Conclusion

We are very grateful for the support that we have received this year and are proud that we have been able to continue the programme in these difficult times. Many of our partners have been surprised that we have been able to catch up the academic year with our additional classes (one day a week) and offer such extensive psycho-social support.

I am extremely proud of our teachers who have helped us keep routines as normal as possible and who have gone the extra mile.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Mark Potterton – Project Director

**MADAGASCAR**

The provincial chapter began on Monday. Brother Michel Maminiaina Razafimandimby will take up his second term as Provincial and a new Council will be elected. Brothers Oscar and Ken, the General Councillors of the Province, being unable to be present, sent a video message.

**MARISTS IN ITALY**

The traditional “Mercatino natalizio” of the Collegio San Leone Magno in Rome had its 46th edition online. The motto was “No one is saved alone” and it aimed to support the social activities of the Marists in the country. The result was very positive and the funds collected are destined especially for families in difficulty and for the financing of three lodgings for the migrants hosted by the Lavalla200> community of Syracuse.

**EAST ASIA**

On the feast of the foundation of the Institute, 126 members of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family of the Province renewed their commitment to belong to the Movement and 19 “friends of Marcellin” committed themselves to follow the process of formation and the strengthening of Marist life.

**MADAGASCAR**

Brother Jean Michel Randriamihaja made his perpetual profession on 8 December at Antsirabe.



**BRAZIL**

**THE 5TH “COURTYARD OF THE GENTILES” TAKES UP THE TOPIC OF “HUMAN BROTHERHOOD”**



**Átrio**  
dos gentios  
“Fraternidade humana”

The 5th ‘Courtyard of the Gentiles’ was held on 16 and 17 December. The event, sponsored by the Institute of Science and Faith of the Pontifical University of Paraná (PUCPR), was held online and had as its theme, “The brotherhood of humanity”.

The ‘Courtyard’ is an initiative of the Vatican Pontifical Council for Culture. In Brazil, it is jointly organised by the Institute of Science and Faith of the PUCPR and the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB).

Its aim is to promote dialogue between believers and non-believers on the most pressing issues facing humanity.

The meeting this year was attended by theologians, philosophers and representatives of various religious denominations. On the 17th, Br. George Sabé, of the ‘Blue Marists’ of Aleppo, gave a talk entitled “A lighthouse of Brotherhood”.

The full programme and other details of the event can be accessed at the following link: [https://www.sympla.com.br/atRIO-dos-gentios\\_\\_1073706](https://www.sympla.com.br/atRIO-dos-gentios__1073706)

The Institute of Science and Faith of the PUCPR, a Marist university with its headquarters in Curitiba, in the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul, will celebrate its tenth anniversary in 2020, with Fabiano Incerti as its director. Since its beginnings, the mission of the Institute has been to promote occasions for dialogue between professionals on science, faith and culture from a human-Christian perspective. With a sharp focus on contemporary socio-cultural challenges, it seeks to bring together people from various disciplines to reflect, question and propose new perspectives on the major problems afflicting humanity today.



BRASIL CENTRO-SUL

# THANKSGIVING MASS FOR FIRST VOWS, RENEWAL OF VOWS AND THE JUBILEE BROTHERS IN CURITIBA



The Province of Brasil Centro-Sul celebrated the vocation to the consecrated life and the commitment to the continuity of the Marist mission in the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul with a Mass of thanksgiving on the 9th December 2020. The Eucharistic celebration took place in the Mother of Mercy Chapel of the Marist Memorial in Curitiba.

### First religious vows

To confirm their elections, Brothers Bruno Marcondes, Carlos Henrique de Oliveira and Nathan da Costa Cardoso dos Santos professed their First Religious Vows. As symbols of consecration, the new brothers received the alliance, the constitutions of the Marist Brothers and the cross. The Provincial, Brother Benê de Oliveira, received the vows of the new brothers in the name of the Superior General: “I commend them to the mercy of God and to the protection of Mary, our Good Mother”, said the Superior.

### Renewal of religious vows

Later, Br. Benê also celebrated the rite of Renewal of Religious Vows. Brothers Edicarlo Pereira Coelho and Rafael Reinaldo Rodrigues Fernandes renewed for one more year the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, in accordance with the Constitutions.

### Jubilee Dates of the Consecrated Life

On the other hand, as a third part of the celebration of

thanksgiving, the perseverance in the religious vocation was recognised, as well as the fidelity to God of Brothers Carlos Wielganczuk (70 years of consecrated life), Afonso Levis and Nilso Antonio Ronchi (both 60 years of religious life) and Jorge Gaio (25 years as a Marist Brother).

### The 3 brothers who made their first profession

Br. Bruno was born on 6 April 1995 in the city of Ponta Grossa (PR). He came to know the Marist Congregation at the community school of Santa Monica. There he had the opportunity to study, work and participate in the meetings of the Marist Youth Ministry and the Happy Life programme.

Brother Carlos Henrique was born on 23 December 1982 in Jundiaí (SP). After a time of vocational interest, he came to know the Institute of the Marist Brothers in 2012, after watching a vocational video of UMBRASIL on the Internet. The choice for the Marist life came after a process of significant accompaniment carried out by Br. Dario Bortolini.

Br. Nathan was born on 19 October 1995 in the city of São Paulo (SP). He got to know the Marist Congregation through participation in the Marist Youth Ministry groups in 2010. He was accompanied in his vocation by Br. Luis Adriano Ribeiro of the community of Br. Lourenço, in São Paulo.

marist world

SPAIN: VACCINATION OF THE COVID TO THE MEMBERS AND STAFF OF THE RESIDENCE OF BROTHERS IN MÁLAGA



FRANCE - LES MARISTES – ISSENHEIM



GENERAL HOUSE: CELEBRATION OF 204 YEARS OF THE INSTITUTE



INDIA: TIRUCHCHIRAPPALLI



VIETNAM: MARISTS COMMUNITY



BRAZIL: CENTRO SOCIAL MARISTA APARECIDA DAS ÁGUAS, PORTO ALEGRE

PHILIPPINES

WEBINAR ON THE VOCATION OF LAITY AND THE CALL TO COMMUNION AND CO-RESPONSIBILITY

As an expression of support to those in formation, Laity of the East Asia Province provided testimonies of their Marist lay life with the postulants of the Marist District of Asia (MDA) on December 14 to 17. The formation, via Zoom, was facilitated by Agnes Reyes, Assistant Director of the Secretariat of Laity. She was joined by Jano Dalumpines and Leander Arroza in sharing their Marist stories with the 16 Postulants coming from Bangladesh, Vietnam, India and East Timor.

The said webinar was conducted with the objective of the webinar was to share with the MDA postulants the gift of Marist lay vocation, lay spirituality and mission.



Mindful of the vision of a future animated by committed brothers and lay, the sessions also included the themes of communion and co-responsibility for the vitality of Marist charism. It was a hope-giving and an enriching experience for all to have listened to Br. Bao Nguyen from Vietnam who shared his experience and the brothers' initiatives of nurturing Marist lay life.



## MESSAGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION COMMISSION

On Christmas Eve, Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, sent Province and District leaders a reflection written by Br. Ben Consigli and endorsed by the International Commission of Marist Mission (CIMM) during their December meeting entitled “The pandemic and our Marist mission” ([English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)). This text is part of an initiative of the Commission to come up with ideas that “help us make life flow, give reasons for hope, get excited about our efforts, give meaning and rationale to what we are experiencing, to be innovators driven by passion and compassion”, the Vicar General stressed.

Other messages written by the members of the Commission will follow in the future, that capture the team's reflections during forthcoming on-line meetings.

The messages are, first of all, for Provincials and Province Teams/ Ministry leaders (education, youth ministry, social outreach) as well as university personnel, personnel of social centres, hospitals, hostels and other valued ministries.

The members of the CIMM are:

Ben Consigli, Ken McDonald, Angel Diego García, Francis Lukong, Carlos Alberto Rojas, Libardo Garzón, Gregorio Linacero, Mark Omede, Valdicer Fachi, Alberto G. Aparicio, Francis Jumbe, Frank Malloy, Rodrigo Espinosa, Manuír Mentges, Christophe Schietse, Chano Guzmán, María Bobillo, María del Socorro Álvarez, Francis Rahmat and Kevin Wanden.

In his letter of 24th December, Br Luis Carlos invited all to reflect deeply on the text “as a reminder that we are moving ahead, crossing bridges, making in-roads, lighting beacons of hope, creating homes of light and being with those who live on the margins”.





# THE PANDEMIC AND OUR MARIST MISSION

**D**ue to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the world is at an historical turning point and is presented with the opportunity for a change in direction. The world is at a crossroad and must make a decision. – to turn one way of another. Continuing down the same path that led to the present disaster is not a realistic or attractive option. The consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are – and will be – defined by choices.

As the rate of infections and deaths subside in some parts of the globe and rise in others and we begin to count the human, emotional, social, and economic cost of the epidemic, we will be faced with some great existential questions with which we will need to grapple and to answer: As a people, will we embrace nationalism, isolationism, selfishness, religious and racial bigotry, and outright neo-fascism or will we choose a more humane, open and compassionate “we-are-in-this-together” global approach to our common destiny? The answers will be found in the choices we make as a global family.

## **Where do these questions leave us as Marists?**

So where do these questions leave us as Marists? Our history as an Institute has been full of new beginnings and choices. Our Rule of Life reminds us that in January of 1817, when Marcellin walked into the house at LaValla for the first time with two uneducated men, he chose to respond to the needs of his time and place (Introduction to *Wherever You Go: The Marist Brothers' Rule of Life*). His early decision to move out of the rectory and move in with the Brothers was a choice that had deep and lasting impact not only on the Brothers of Marcellin's day, but on those Marist leaders who followed him and saw their leadership style as one of close personal accompaniment of the Brothers entrusted to their care. Marcellin's choice to build the Hermitage when he had limited resources and few vocations seems providential today, but in the 1820's, many viewed it as fool-hardy.

Often enough, someone or something else determined the road that the Institute would travel and the destination at which we would arrive. Such was the case at the beginning of the 20th century when our Brothers in France were confronted with a new law on the Separation of the Churches and State and faced a similar challenge filled with choices (Introduction to *Wherever You Go: The Marist Brothers' Rule of Life*). If our Brothers in France wished to remain in education and to maintain their schools, they would need to be fully laicized (or at least laicized pro forma) or remain as religious, abandon their schools, and go into exile into other

countries. Neither option guaranteed security nor an apparent way forward, yet a choice was made. Between 1901 and 1905, almost 1000 Brothers left France and established over 30 foundations in Europe, the Americas, Oceania, Asia, and Africa. When all was said and done, this historic impasse led to a significant turning point in our Institute's ability to fulfill its mission of making Jesus Christ known and loved in new lands with new possibilities.

Today, we are once again faced with an historic turning point impacting on our mission. A pandemic has now determined the choices before us. With a deepening global economic crisis, the prospect of hundreds of millions of workers losing their jobs and becoming even more impoverished, and tens of millions of children and young people without access to food or schooling and are victims of violence and exploitation, our Marist mission must respond to the current challenges.

## **As Christians, we are called to believe in and create a better world**

Our Christian faith calls us to be a hope-filled people, neither “gentile nor Jew; servant or free”, but a people united by our inheritance from Christ as children of God. A better world is possible, and the first necessary step in enacting such a world is to imagine what that better world should look like and what our mission as a people of God must be. The crises with which we now struggle invite us to rethink the fundamentals of our lives – work, school, economy, government, family, faith, and community, and to re-imagine the kind of world we would like to live in. Some who have begun to frame those questions have done so in both coarse and fine-grained ways, asking grand questions, like what does it mean to live in a society, what are our responsibilities to each other, can humanity survive climate change, as well as very specific questions like how do we meet the needs of the hungry, the jobless, the children, and the homeless in our midst?

The pandemic and its aftermath demand that we as an Institute rethink everything and that we come together to confront the challenges that we now face. What are our priorities as Marists on mission? What are the greatest needs in our community? How will they be met? How do we ensure that the most vulnerable among us are visible and heard? How do we want to or need to reframe our priorities considering the ongoing crises? How has the pandemic shaped our understanding of and ability to imagine what we want and what we need in light of the Gospel and of what is possible and what is necessary? What would we like to replace/change in

a post-pandemic world? What needs to go and what ought to stay the same?

### **Journeying Together as a Global Family!**

It is not sufficient for us to ponder these questions individually. We need to be doing this together. As Marists, we have the calls of our most recent General Chapter to guide us as we contemplate these questions collectively. In and of themselves, the calls hold true today as they did three years ago; the difference will be our responses to the calls. We cannot return to the previous “normal”; we need to shape a vision that goes beyond “recovery” from this pandemic.

Looking back at 22nd General Chapter, it is sometimes easy to forget this Chapter was the first to be held outside Europe, broadening our view of the world from a different perspective. The participants formed a rich and diverse community, gathered from all continents, all Provinces and Districts, Brothers and Lay Marists. Our Chapter was enriched by some very special moments and experiences. We stood with those who, during that time, were affected by the devastation of hurricanes, earthquakes, and violence, and we focused on crucial current and emerging realities in the various parts of the world where we minister. We were challenged to let go of old ways, of comfort and security, and to respond genuinely to new needs (Journeying Together as a Global Family: The Message of the XXII General Chapter).

### **What does God ask of us today?**

Marcellin Champagnat was moved by the needs and possibilities of his surroundings and listened attentively to the Spirit, to discover what God was asking him at that point in time. Today, in a similar way, we are challenged to answer the two fundamental questions from our Chapter but now in a pandemic-ravaged world:

Who is God asking us to be in this emerging world?  
What is God asking us to do in this emerging world?

The Chapter called us to be a global charismatic family, a beacon of hope in this turbulent world, to be the face and hands of Jesus’ tender mercy, to be bridge-builders so as to journey with children and young people on the margins of life, and to respond boldly to emerging needs (Journeying Together as a Global Family: The Message of the XXII General Chapter). These calls continue to contain concrete implications for all dimensions of our life and mission.

Answering those two questions will help us to wrestle with a myriad of others, such as: How can we best be a global charismatic family when national borders are closed, when the irrational fear of the immigrant, of “the other”, is running ram-

panant? How can we be beacons of hope and bridge builders in a divided, and at times, violent world? How can we journey with those on the margins of life as the margin continues to grow and poverty increases? In a world that professes “me first” and places blame on others, how do we be the face and hands of God’s tender mercy? How do we make Jesus Christ known and loved in new ways?

Our answers to these questions will profoundly impact the course of who we are and what we do as Marists in the years to come.

### **Leadership that “Forces the Spring”**

Father Timothy Healy, S.J., an American priest and former President of Georgetown University and the New York Public Library, believed that as Christians when we are frozen in our “winters” of anxiety or past frustrations or helplessness, we must “force the spring”—generating a clear vision with courage to reinvent our world. How do we, as Marist leaders “force the spring” in our day and time amid a pandemic? It might be by the words we speak and the actions we take. No simple task, but it is what we are called to do.

What kind of leadership works when past norms no longer have meaning or are even possible? In these seven-plus months since the virus shut down so many parts of our world, it is clear that leadership requires reading the signs of the times, quick-thinking, prayerful discernment, flexibility, calm, confidence, visibility, communication, moral courage, caring, faith in God, and disciplined decision-making. Leadership matters: it always matters.

Our response as Marists to this pandemic demands that we are intentional in the way we exercise the influence and responsibility invested in us. History will judge the impact of our decisions on the legacy of this virus not just in our communities and provinces, but also in our regions and the world at large.

As leaders we know that it is not time but intention that affects change. Days, weeks, and months may pass, but what do we intend to do in this moment, in the time that is given us? Who can we inspire, touch, or help with our words or actions? What are our priorities as we re-imagine our mission considering a changed (and ever-changing) world? Big change happens when a lot of little changes come together. It is that ripple from the pebble that slowly moves into a wave. So, we need decide on what our intention, our priorities, our choices, will be for our Marist mission. As Pope Francis has reminded us time and again, the COVID-19 pandemic is a trial but also “a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not”. As Marists, we can do no less.

GANA

## PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN THE MARIST DISTRICT OF WEST AFRICA



On Sunday 13th December, the Marist District of West Africa celebrated the perpetual profession of Br. Joseph Kwaku Asante. The ceremony, which took place in Kumasi, Ghana, was attended by priests, religious, as well as the lay people.

Br. Joseph started his Marist formation in 2010 and made his temporal vows in 2013. He proceeded to Marist International Centre, Nairobi – Kenya for his scholasticate formation and completed it in 2018. He is currently assigned to Our Good Mother School, Accra – Ghana, where he is working as a classroom teacher.

In his homily Rev. Gabriel Justice Anokye, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Kumasi, encouraged Br. Joseph to imitate St. Joseph the husband of Mary whose name he bears. According to him the letters J.O.S.E.P.H. represent the qualities of the foster father of Jesus: Just, Obedient, Silent, Exemplary, Prayerful



and Humble. The Archbishop believed that these adjectives should describe any consecrated religious and, indeed, they are virtues required of every Christian. The Archbishop also thanked for the work the Marist Brothers are doing in Ghana and to the Archdiocese of Kumasi in particular. He also encouraged the Institute to continue giving hope to the world and to the Church in its mission.

The District, that will become a Province next year, has now 63 perpetually professed Brothers.

GUATEMALA

# RETREAT OF BROTHERS AND LAITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA



From 27 November to 1 December, Brothers and Lay people of the Central American Province were invited to recharge their spiritual batteries. This year the retreat was by communities and with provincial connections, with two meetings per day, through Zoom . CHARISMATIC FAMILY TO SERVE THE WORLD was the theme that was developed during the five days and was the common thread of the whole retreat. Through the different themes of each day, the participants experienced the presence of Fr. Champagnat and his charism. Saint Marcellin, a man who saw and felt the needs of the children and young people of his time, especially those in rural areas; moved by his love for Christ and his gospel, decided to give an effective response.

Today, brothers and laypeople, feeling themselves to be Champagnat's Marists, with diverse vocations but inspired by the same charismatic source and feeling themselves to be part of the same global charismatic family and moved by the love of Jesus, are called, following in the footsteps of the brothers and laypeople who preceded them, to give responses that will be felt today, as beacons of light and hope through the Marist mission; always having Mary as their animator. In the end, happy to be part of this global charismatic family, all will assume the commitment to continue recreating today the charism of Saint Marcellin and of the first Brothers, conscious that to evangelize today, is an integral part of being as Marists.



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<http://www.champagnat.org>

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