



GENERAL HOUSE

THE WORLD MAP OF MARIST INITIAL FORMATION

In 2016, the Secretariat of Brothers Today prepared a map which showed the places where formation to become Marist Brothers is taking place. After more than four years, we thought it is time to renew this map.

In early 2020, the Secretariat made it one of its priorities the development of a new Directory of Marist Formation Houses and with it an updated map. During the AU Leaders' meeting in February 2020, Br. Ernesto requested the Secretariat to make a presentation about formation in the Institute, specifically in answer to the questions where and how many.

With the help of the International Commission of Brothers Today as well as of the AU leaders, we were able to gather the information and share them not only to the AU leaders but also to the Institute. We realized, however, that data in relation to formation is very fluid, meaning, the numbers change every



now and then. We see therefore the need to make updates at least twice a year.

[Download the directory in PDF](#)

Connecting with formators and candidates

The work of populating the directory enabled us to directly connect with most of the formators. Before the pandemic, the Secretariat

general administration

- The General Council has begun its February plenary sessions. In this first week, they are sharing on how they have been present to the Provinces and Districts, as well as the Regions, over the last four months. They are also reviewing the latest changes made in the four languages to the texts of the Constitutions, Statutes and Rule of Life, in view of the printing of these documents.
- On Monday, the General Councillors, Brothers Ben and Ken met with the Leader of the District of the Pacific, Br John Hazelman, to be a support to Marist participation in the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, which is taking place in New Zealand.
- On Tuesday, Br Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, attended the Mass of Pope Francis in St. Peter's to celebrate the Day of Consecrated Life.

- On the same day, Brs Luis Carlos, Vicar General, and Ben met with Br Carlos Alberto, Director of the Secretariat of Education and Evangelisation, recently returned to Rome, to discuss various initiatives in train in the Secretariat.
- On Tuesday, Brs Sylvain and Oscar, General Councillors, took part in an online meeting of the Regional Council of South America.
- On Thursday, the Secretariat of Education and Evangelisation will have an online meeting with representatives of Marist publishing houses to continue planning for the official opening of the Marist Schools Network.
- On Friday, the directors of the Secretariat of Solidarity, Brs Francis and Angel Diego, will participate in a webinar organised by the JPIC Commission of the USG and UISG to encourage follow-up of 'Laudato Si' among religious.

has already drawn up plans for visits to the different formation houses and meeting the brothers and the formands. But then, the pandemic happened, and our plans were redirected. The technology that we know today, however, mitigated this situation somehow. To connect all formation houses, we created a Facebook Group, FMS 20May, and launched it on June 6, 2020. Furthermore, we invited the formators and formands to produce short videos about their life and community and share them to the rest of the Marist world. We have had great success in both.

In October 2020, we once again asked the International Commission of Brothers Today to conduct a survey in the different administrative units to refresh our data on the formation houses. We also received information directly from the forma-

tors or coordinators of formation. By the end of November, we had practically the information on hand. At the same time as the data gathering, we started plotting the formation houses on the world map. Before the year 2020 ended, the World Map of Marist Formation was ready to be circulated.

COVID-19

It is worth noting that formation was not spared from the effects of the pandemic. Since many borders were closed, we have formands who could not travel and could not proceed to the next stage of their respective journeys. Thus, in a number of places, sprouted what is now known as “parallel formation houses” which were opened either in existing formation houses or in apostolic communities.

UNITED STATES

BR. JOSEPH TESTON, 100 YEARS OF ACTIVE LIFE AND SERVICE

Brother Joseph Teston, a Marist Brothers of the Schools (FMS) for more than eighty-one years, celebrated in the United States his 100th birthday on January 24, 2021. He is the first Marist in the United States to have reached this milestone since the Brothers established their first school in Lewiston, Maine in 1886.

Br. Joseph Teston was born in Savannah, Georgia. He first encountered the Marist Brothers when he entered the Marist School there when he was 5 years old. He says, “I’ve been a Marist ever since.” He entered the Novitiate in 1938 and took his first vows as a religious brother in 1940. His perpetual profession of vows followed in 1945.

Br. Joseph’s educational background includes a BA in Education from Fordham University, Bronx, NY (1946), MA in Math from Columbia University, New York City, NY (1948), an Honorary Doctorate in Education from De La Salle University, Manila (1972), and an Honorary Degree in Education from Notre Dame University in Marbel, Philippines (2008) where he served as President from 1966-1972. In 1977 he received an MA and MRE in Theology from Immaculate Conception Seminary, Douglaston, NY.

Br. Joseph began his teaching career at St. Ann’s Academy on Manhattan (now Archbishop Molloy High School, Queens) in 1942. In 1948, he and three other Brothers volunteered to go to the Philippines to assist with the establishment of schools on the island of Mindanao after World War II. As more brothers volunteered for the mission and the number of Filipino vocations to our Marist way of life increased, grade schools, high schools,

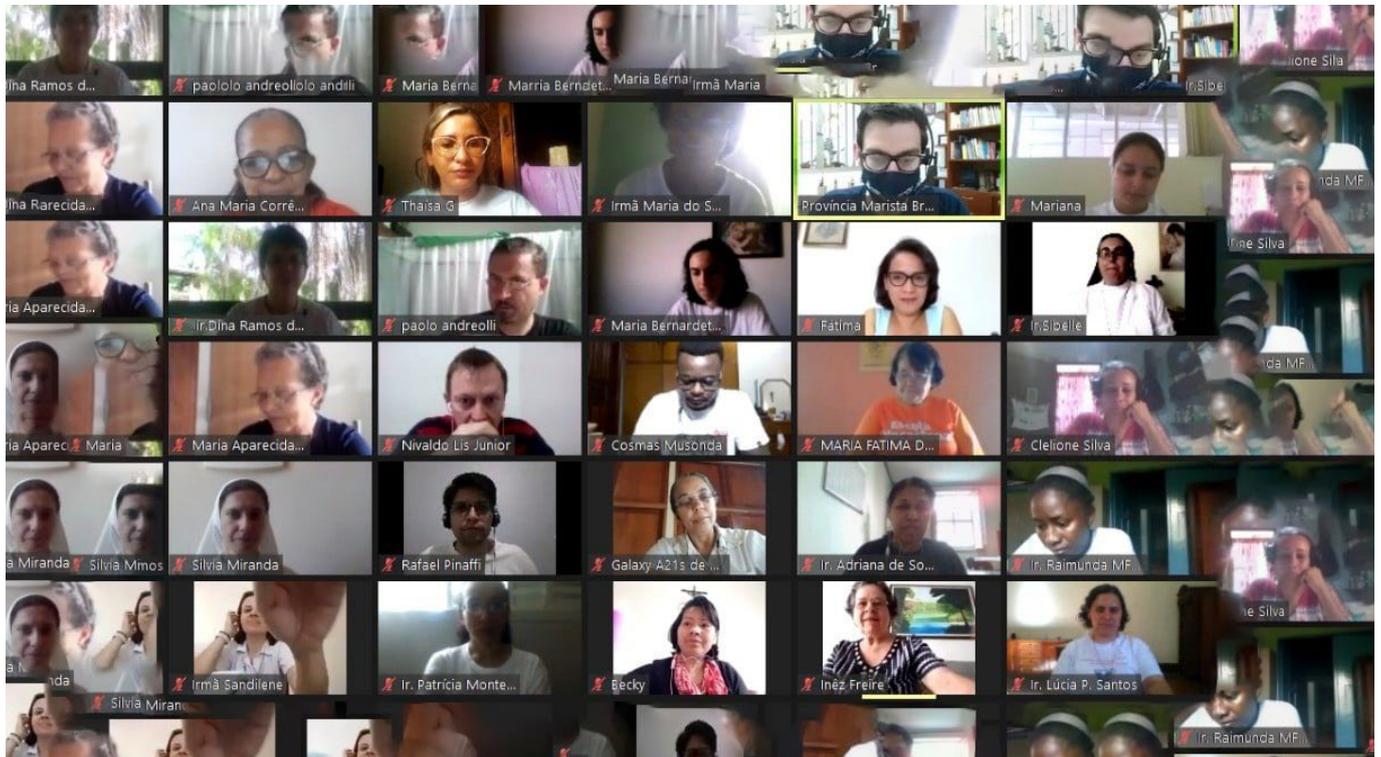


colleges and universities were established in Cotabato, Marbell, Lago, Jolo, Kidapawan, and Marikina. At one point from 1960-1963, Br. Joseph was appointed leader of the Marist District of the Philippines, a designation given to a missionary establishment that would one day become its own juridical province able to make its own decisions with regard to expansion and personnel.

After 24 years of missionary work in the Philippines, Br. Joseph returned to New York in 1972 where he took up residence in the Brother’s community at Archbishop Molloy High School. There he continued to assist the mission in the Philippines by raising funds for the work there. In 1975, he moved to Georgia to take up various teaching and diocesan assignments in Augusta and Savannah. In 2001, he moved to Miami, Florida where he assisted with various pastoral and training programs within the Miami Archdiocese. In 2011 he retired from active ministry and moved to Champagnat Hall, Bronx where he has the time to enjoy the rest he so deserves after eighty-one years of service to the Marist Brothers and the church.

VOCATIONS ANIMATION

BRASIL CENTRO-NORTE PROMOTES ANOTHER EDITION OF THE VOCATION SCHOOL



Under the co-ordination of the Department of Marist Vocations Animation of the Province of Brasil Centro-Norte, the Marist Vocations School took place from the 18th to the 23rd January, in the virtual format with more than 64 participants.

In collaboration with the Conference of Religious of Brazil and the Catholic University of Brasilia, during the course of the week there were significant moments of exchange, workshops, conversation circles, moments of prayer and a great deal of dialogue, especially with the young people. These moments were experienced on the basis of two formative themes that underpin the purpose of the School.

They dealt with concepts that helped the participants to explore in depth the various topics related to Vocational Animation.

The School offered advice on “Analysis of the Social Situation”, “Looking at the Church through Pope Francis – young people and Amazonia”, “Socio-emotional perspectives in vocational accompaniment” and “Virtual Vocational Accom-

paniment”. Workshops were also held on “Life Project”, “Affectivity and Sexuality”, “Social Networks” and “Corporality”.

The virtual space-time of the Vocational School provided new ways of acting for the vocational animators, and helped them to understand the needs and specificities of each candidate entrusted to them.

The Vocational School, promoted by the Marist Province of Brasil Centro-Norte in collaboration with the Conference of Religious of Brazil and the Catholic University of Brasilia, is the only school-project of Vocational Animation in Brazil, and involves every year about fifty congregations.

In the 15 years since its inception, the School of Vocational Formation has received 737 participants from all over Brazil and the world. The innovative project is a way of meeting the demand for Vocational Animation processes, and offers participants self-knowledge, understanding and preparation, both personal and professional.

COLOMBIA

SEVEN NOVICES COMMENCE THEIR FIRST YEAR OF FORMATION AT THE MEDELLÍN NOVITIATE

Seven candidates for the Marist life from four provinces entered the Inter-provincial **Novitiate La Valla in Medellín**, Colombia, on February 2nd, to begin their first year of formation under the title “Mary, the disciple who acts in silence, keep us in your heart”.

The novices are: Johnathan Alexander Cruz Hurtado (Colombia, **Norandina**), Cristóbal Sebastián Tovias Fraga (**México Occidental**), Xavier Sebastián Males Armas (Ecuador, **Norandina**), Saúl Isaías Conza Salazar (Ecuador, **Norandina**), Victor Hugo Franco Méndez (**México Central**), Gerson Alexander Poo Asig (Guatemala, **Central America**) and Jorge Luis Martínez Hernández (Nicaragua, **Central America**).

The team of formators includes Brother Alejandro Herrera, master of novices (Central America), Brother Jesús Hernández, sub-master (Western Mexico) and Brother Giovanni Velasco (Norandina).

On February 2nd, the formators will receive the Brothers with a welcoming ceremony and during the Eucharistic celebration, the novices will be given the important elements of the Institute of the Marist Brothers, such as the Constitutions, the calls of the XXII General Chapter and the Marist Cross.

The formation team and the novices invite all Marists of Champagnat to participate in the Eucharist for the beginning of the novitiate, which will take place on February 2nd, online,



through Facebook and Youtube (Times: 6:00 p.m. Colombia).

Along with the seven new novices, four novices are starting their second year. They are: Mesvin Marroquín (Guatemala), Ernesto Da Costa (Venezuela), Gerardo Rivera (El Salvador) and Pedro Pinzón (Central Mexico),

The Medellín Novitiate

The novitiate of Colombia (Norandina) is an international formation house, where young people from the Provinces of Central America, Central Mexico, Western Mexico and Norandina, begin their journey in consecrated life; this is an expression of the Global Charismatic Family, which responds to the call of the last General Chapter.

FEBRUARY 2

25TH WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE



Today, February 2, the Fest of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, the Church celebrates the XXV World Day of Consecrated Life. At the moment, there are 649,000 women religious and 184,000 men religious in the whole world. Amongst them, some 2,700 Marist Brothers have embraced this vocation and dedicated themselves to fulfilling the dream of St Marcellin Champagnat of making Jesus Christ known and loved, working especially with children and young people on the margins.

In his [Apostolic Exhortation Vita Consecrata](#), Pope St John Paul II stated that “the consecrated life is at the very heart of the Church as a decisive element for her mission, since it “manifests the inner nature of the Christian calling”and the striving of the whole Church as Bride towards union with her one Spouse” ”.

Regarding religious brothers and consecrated life, the Vatican document, “[Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church](#)” underlines that “The Religious Brother and Sister, by participating in the saving mystery of Christ and the Church, are permanent reminders for all Christian people of the importance of the total gift of self to God and a reminder that the mission of the Church, respecting the various vocations and ministries within it, is one and is shared by all”.

Concerning the mission of the Marist Brothers, the [XXII General Chapter](#) highlighted that “our vocation implies an availability to go anywhere in our worldwide family, working alongside the poor, especially children and young people, to transform the world. o being brothers is a call to be signs of humanity in all its fulness, which implies healing the wounds of our own lives, promoting the dignity of each person, and caring for our common home.”

United with Pope Francis, who will celebrate a televised Mass in the Vatican at 17.30 Italian time, we ask the Lord to inspire religious to be a prophetic voice and beacon of hope in this troubled world.



SECRETARIAT OF SOLIDARITY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, 2: ZERO HUNGER

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out a series of points for us to work towards in our quest to improve our world. These goals are ambitious, yes, but they are also achievable. They aim to be achieved by 2030 – we still have 10 years to go! A long way to go and an opportunity to grow as humanity, as society, as Christians, as Marists.

The second of these goals proposes to eradicate hunger in the world, under the title “Zero Hunger”. This is not a new goal. As Marists of Champagnat we have been working for many years to reduce inequalities, to prevent other human beings, our brothers and sisters, from going hungry.

The pandemic situation has significantly aggravated many situations of inequality, especially among the most vulnerable in our societies. The latest reports from international organisations raise an alarm bell regarding the eradication of hunger in the world.

As Marists, in many corners of the world, emergency projects are being implemented. Local, provincial, regional and also General Administration projects are trying to respond to the emerging needs that have arisen in recent months. Situations caused not only by Covid, but also by other causes. Projects in Syria, Chile, Cameroon, Honduras... The need is urgent and our response must be and is urgent.

The 22nd General Chapter spoke of building bridges. In the fight to eradicate hunger we can also build bridges, work together, help each other from different parts of the world. Every day we see the generosity of the Marist world, helping in other parts of the world, collaborating with other

institutions and congregations, opening our field of action beyond our own works. Is this not also what Pope Francis asks of us in Fratelli Tutti?

Special attention should be paid to children, particularly those in their early years. We know that a deficient diet can condition a person’s full development. We, who have a special vocation to work with children and young people,



have a clear commitment: “to face today’s challenges”. Hunger is one of these current challenges. Hunger in the short term, through programmes and projects to alleviate this scourge suffered by millions of people. Hunger in the medium and long term, through quality education, enabling today’s children and young people to develop fully and acquire the resources and skills necessary for their future lives and those of their families. Many of you, brothers and lay people, know first-hand the realities of hunger, and know the importance of a good education in this area.

Marcellin learned to deal with situations of sickness, pain, and weakness, both his own and those around him. Our spirituality is also rooted in these situations, from a compassionate heart, sensitive to the concrete problems of people, particularly children.

marist world

ROMANIA: CENTRUL DE ZI MARISTI



CAMBODIA: MARIST SOLIDARITY CAMBODIA – LAVALLA PROJECT



EL SALVADOR: COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL AMERICA: BIRTHDAY OF BR JOSÉ ANTONIO OCHOTORENA B.



AUSTRALIA: SOMERTON PARK COMMUNITY



FRANCE: NOTRE DAME DE L'HERMITAGE



SPAIN: MARISTAS CHAMPAGNAT SCHOOL – GUADALAJARA

Brother Ernesto, Superior General, invited us in his circular “Homes of Light” to care for life and to generate new life. To care for and to generate, two verbs that we have to understand “outwards”. This care and this generation of life must be outward, outward, it cannot be a purely selfish

movement towards ourselves. Can we not imagine our God-Trinity who would not have wanted to go out to meet the human being, to care for him and “give life in abundance”?

Congratulations to those of you who are directly involved in helping the hungry. Lots of encouragement to continue your work. To those of us who do not work directly in these situations, courage to do our bit. We are all called to give the best of ourselves, from our concrete reality. Age, nationality and abilities do not matter. We are all called,

today and always, to respond generously to the clamour of our world today.

Br Ángel Diego – Director of the Secretariat of Solidarit



EAST ASIA

PROCESS OF MID-TERM REVIEW AND STRATEGIC PLANNING



The Marist East Asia Province launched Mid-Term Review and Strategic Planning Processes from January 19-20, 2021 through video conference. The event was participated by around 270 people from Korea-Japan Sector, Philippine Sector and China Sector.

The virtual gathering had online sessions on the latest trends, contexts, and thrusts of the Church and the Marist Congregation. The first session had discussions and sharing on Church abuses and their manifestations. In the second session, Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, was present and affirmed that a better world is still possible in spite of the reality of the COVID-19 that has wreaked havoc on the world and turned all his plans upside down. He challenged the participants to build homes of light that care for life and generate life. In the same session, Br. Jeff Crowe, in charge of the Program LaValla200>, described and shared the experiences of mixed communities where Brothers and Lay live in communion.

For the third session, Br. Alberto Parise, MCCJ, Br. Ángel

Diego Garcia Otaolo (director of the Secretariat of Solidarity) and Ms. Cheryl Dugan emphasized how to care for our common home as we commemorate the 5th Anniversary of Laudato Si. They also presented the 7 Goals expected to move to concrete actions and spearhead the ecological conversion.

The virtual gathering culminated with the fourth session on Fratelli Tutti, the latest encyclical of Pope Francis, where Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ exhorted the participants to provide moral and political education to students.

At the end, Br. Dominador Santiago, Provincial of East Asia, shared his reflection on “to love and to serve”. He spoke with an invitation for all to do one’s part in order to have a fair share in the building of the Kingdom of God. He further encouraged active participation in the preparation of the Provincial’s Strategic Plan and stressed the thought that as we do our part, we do it all in the name of service and love.

Christopher James Ferrer



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<http://www.champagnat.org>

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