



Marist Brothers East Asia Province



News Bits

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HAPPY CHINESE/LUNAR NEW YEAR TO ALL! LET US WELCOME THE YEAR OF THE METAL OX!

Sts. Valentine, Cyril and Methodius



We live in the midst of a secular culture that celebrates Valentine's Day, which supposedly marks the joy of romantic love in our lives. However, the Catholic faith prescribes that we celebrate the Memorial of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, a monk and a bishop whose lives did not include romance as we think of it. So, who and what are we called to celebrate on February 14 each year?

Let's begin by examining what little is known about the life of St. Valentine, the namesake of Valentine's Day. St. Valentine of Rome

lived and ministered as a priest during the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius, in the early 200s.

St. Valentine was not simply a patron of *romance* in the way we think of it today. He was committed to uniting young men and women in the Christian understanding of marriage: one man and one woman, until death do they part. He was a priest of the Catholic Church, and he was martyred for his faith in the Lord, and for his commitment to Christian love and marriage.

In 1969, as one of the effects of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church implemented an update liturgical calendar. The new calendar removed the celebration of St. Valentine's feast day because there was so little that could be accurately known about his life. In its place on that day, the Church began celebrating the Memorial of Sts. Cyril and Methodius.

Cyril and Methodius were brothers born in the 820s in Thessalonica, a city in Macedonia on the Greek peninsula (the same city to which St. Paul wrote two of his New Testament letters). These brothers took up the call to go and evangelize an eastern European culture that did not yet know the Gospel. They traveled to Khazaria (what is roughly the Ukraine, today), lived in a monastery, learned the native language, and brought many of these people to conversion by their dedication and charity.

What, then, do we learn from the lives and works of these three men whom we celebrate on February 14? Regardless of whether we prefer to celebrate St. Valentine or Sts. Cyril and Methodius, it is most appropriate and fruitful for us to celebrate *agapé* love, the charity that it takes to lay down one's life for the good of another. And, we celebrate mission, the tireless efforts of men and women to bring that love to individuals and societies who do not already know. See, mission is the expression of love, and *agapé* is the essence of mission. All three of these men went on mission because they were driven by *agapé* for others.

On this February 14, let's celebrate nothing other than *agapé* (charitable love) and zeal for mission. That is the way that we will change the world!

(By: Derek Rotty, <https://catholicexchange.com/who-what-do-catholics-celebrate-on-february-14>)

UPDATES:

St. Joseph International School sends its New Year greetings.

Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous Chinese New Year celebration to our Chinese friends! Greetings from SJIS!



Br. Engel celebrates his 25th Birthday

On Friday, Feb. 5th, the Chanel Fraternity celebrated the 25th birthday of Bro. Engel Java. The celebration included a prayer service, happy hour and an outstanding barbecue meal. We were also treated to a video of Engel's recent years. The evening was great, and the celebration was terrific, for a terrific brother. Congratulations, Engel!!!



Marist Dadiangas Community Celebrates Br. Bob's 91st Birthday

On January 12, Br. Bob celebrated his 91st birthday. The personnel of Business Resource Center came to the Brothers' residence and serenaded him with a birthday song. In the evening, the community had a simple celebration and had a meal especially prepared by Br. Pat.



Marist Stella High School Singapore

In 1817, Saint Marcellin Champagnat founded a religious community, the Marist Brothers of the Schools, also known as the Little Brothers of Mary, to give the marginalised youth in rural France an education, and to introduce them to the love of Jesus and Mary. In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat, Brother Joche Chanel Soon from China founded Maris Stella High School (MSHS), to provide education to the needy and poor in post-war Singapore. It admitted boys regardless of race, language or religion even though the school started out as a Chinese-medium school.

Today, even while our education is grounded on Catholic teachings, our school is infused with Confucian ethos.

In our founder's footsteps

We celebrated our 60th anniversary in 2018, a significant milestone. Established in 1958, it was, until 1967, “a school without a school (building)”. Yet MSHS stayed true to its mission under the leadership of Br Chanel. Br Chanel led the Marist Brothers to live by their founder's Golden Rule: “To educate children, you must love them and love them all equally”. He worked tirelessly to raise funds to purchase land for the school. He built it and grew it into a large, modern school that constantly improves and renews itself while trusting that God will provide.

According to Br Chanel, “What is important to me is that the hallmarks of a Maris Stella High School education will always continue – effective biculturalism, co-curricular activities, religious instruction for Catholic students and the values enshrined in our school motto: diligence, determination, loyalty, dedication and courage.”

To our founder's end, we challenge ourselves to develop our Marists into “Gentlemen of Faith, Vision and Service”.

Gentlemen of Faith



Gentlemen of Service with residents of St Theresa's Home during the annual Sec 1 Catholic Camp

We nurture Gentlemen of Faith through our Catholic ethos and values. We live our faith by praying bilingual morning prayers and celebrating important liturgical events like Lent, Holy Week and the Marian months. During Lent this year, Marists reflected on their own shortcomings and sought to overcome their failings. And as part of Easter celebrations later, all Marists are encouraged to write a thank you card to their family members.

For Catholics, we organise first Friday Masses, Catholic camps and the Sacrament of Reconciliation for all Marists from both the Primary and Secondary schools. During Marian months, Marists from both the Primary and Secondary sections and

their families meet weekly to pray the Rosary. Collaborating with our Religious Education (RE) Parent Support Group (PSG), we also have RE lessons for our Primary Marists.

Gentlemen of Vision

A Gentleman of Vision sees what is not there yet. It means being imaginative and seeing possibilities. In the face of the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) world that Marists face, we seek to build 21st century competencies in our students. We focus on building positive learning dispositions in Marists to reboot their mindsets to embrace learning beyond examinations.

Our founding principal's vision was to nurture bilingual Marist gentlemen deeply rooted in traditional Chinese values, imbued with a bicultural sensitivity to the global outlook and with a readiness to serve society. Our SAP programme is named after him – the Brother Chanel Programme. As a full school, we have a 10-year SAP programme that is distinctive of MSHS.

For the first six years in the Primary section, our area of focus is “走近(文化)” i.e., to experience culture, through which we aim to provide a values-driven holistic education, through an authentic learning experience of the Chinese Language and cultural acquisition.

For the next four years in the Secondary section, our area of focus is “走进(文化)” i.e., to be immersed in culture. Marists are able to deepen their knowledge, skills and proficiencies in their interest areas of Chinese culture and bilingualism.

Gentlemen of Service

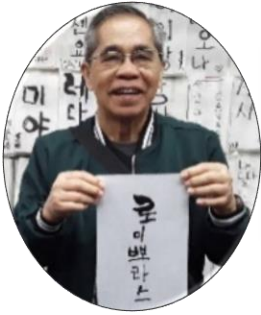
In the Marist family spirit, Gentlemen of Service live out the school values of being present to others and to society and help those in need. For example, as part of our Values in Action (VIA) programme we work with St Theresa's Home so that the boys can benefit from interaction with their elders, and thereby learn and live out the value of respect. The Home also engages the boys in physical activities and puts their muscles to good use!

We also partner with other organisations such as Agape Village, Catholic Kindergarten and Fernvale (MINDS) to give our Marists the opportunity to serve others in society, and to learn empathy and compassion for others. And during the Covid-19 pandemic, our prefects led a donation drive to support our canteen vendors when school activities stopped.

The Marist spirit is not only deepened by the close collaboration between students and staff, but also between the school and its stakeholders, namely the Marist Brothers and the School Management Committee, the Maris Stella High School Alumni Association and the PSG.

In the face of changing trends and new challenge in the New Year, we continue to seek to continue our founder's mission to realise the potential of “Every Marist, a Gentleman of Faith, Vision and Service”.

(Contributed by Maris Stella High School. Catholic News Singapore)



THE ARCHIVIST'S CORNER (#18)

Br. Romulo L. Porrás, FMS

A BIT OF HISTORY OF PHILIPPINE MARIST BROTHERS¹

From the point of view of a Non-Marist Brother

This article is a reprint from the AMIHAN NEWSLETTER, January-February 1997 issue written by Fr. Robert Sullivan, OMI.

First of Two Parts

All the Oblates in Cotabato City were gathered at the Cotabato Airport. The terminal building was a repaired Quonset hut, but it served the purpose. The reason for this coming together was to welcome the first Marist Brothers to their new mission in Cotabato.

We had been told that they were usually called “the Little Brothers.” This was an offshoot of the earlier French ways of humility. The “little” referred to the humble ways.

The DC3 plane landed. The first Brother to come down the ramp was Brother Herbert Daniel, a fairly tall man of a mere 300 plus lbs. Nobody ever mentioned the “Little Brothers” again.

Other Brothers followed, namely, Bro. Maurus James, the superior of the mission, Bro. Peter Leonard and Br. Humbert Damian. With a name like that he was always called Bro. Joe, his first name or Bro. Joe Damian, his name as a religious.

The Brothers all met us and as many other people as they could meet while waiting for their baggage.

There were always many kids around when a plane arrived and we noticed that the Brothers sort of gravitated to those young boys, the kind that they would teach. Soon there was a very pleasant conversation going. We were very much impressed by this. The Brothers were really very interested in their vocation of teaching boys.

All of these Brothers had been teaching in different schools around New York City when they were notified of their new assignment to the Philippines. The school year in New York ends in June but the school year in the Philippines begins in June. The Brothers would have to leave their classes in New York a couple of weeks early in order to travel the 10,000 miles from New York to Cotabato City.

Fortunately, by that time there was trans-Pacific air travel. As it happened, the Brothers arrived almost one week before the opening of classes for the school year 1948-49.

They were going to occupy the classrooms of Notre Dame of Cotabato Boys' Department, at that time it was known as Notre Dame Academy. They would be housed in a building that had just been vacated by the Religious of the Virgin Mary Sisters. The Sisters had moved to a new campus and a new building about 200 meters farther up Sinsuat Avenue. The Brothers' new home was not new.

It had served as a Boys' Dormitory before World War II. The Sisters' convent had been located in the downtown area of Cotabato. All of that had been destroyed in the scorched earth policy of the Army before the Japanese entered Cotabato. Because of the War, the Sisters in Midsayap, 50 km. away had moved to Cotabato for safety. So, the two communities occupied the old dormitory. That old dormitory was built in 1940 and the Brothers occupied it in 1948. They were the third group of occupants of that building. It was completely dismantled several years later when the Brothers wanted to enlarge the athletic field.

In those days, after their arrival the Brothers had to unpack and organize their own rooms in the house. They met their teachers for the first time and checked the equipment in the school. They took part in the enrollment which was going on when they arrived.

The Brothers had come by plane, so they could not bring much with them. Equipment had to be sent by ship, so that would need a month or more before it would arrive.

The Brothers were all on hand and their respective classrooms on the opening day of class. In general, they had very heavy teaching loads. They were ready in the classroom all day.

The first time that Report Cards were issued, the Brothers were also in their homerooms to meet the parents. This practice continues to the present time. This was a good opportunity for the Brothers to meet parents. These meetings continued outside of school where the Brothers met parents at social and religious gatherings.

It happened that in the same year, the Oblates Fathers opened a college in Cotabato. According to the agreement between the Oblate Superior and the Marist Provincial, the Brothers would also teach in the college. Bro. James taught Spanish and after the class got settled, they would have a quiz in every class. Bro. Herbert taught Philosophy of Education, and Bro. Damian taught Math.

Bro. Damian taught in a very loud voice that disturbed the other classes. So we had to put him in a classroom at the end of the building where the windows directed the sound outside instead of back into the building. Bro. Damian's class was always full of laughter. I wonder how students could learn in a situation like that, but one of the students told me that they enjoyed Br. Damian's class very much, and they learned much, very different from other Math classes. They were laughing but they were working and learning.

Bro. Herbert had a quiet class. He had jokes too but not as uproarious as bro. Damian's.

In later years when the time would come for the Notre Dame meet, they would start preparations and practice early. There would be running events of course, but how to select the best runners who would compete in the Notre Dame Meet?

The test was to see who could run faster than Br. Herbert. With all his 300 plus pounds he was a very fast runner. If you could beat Bro. Herbert or at least stay with him on the track, you were in. The track and field team was composed of those who could run as fast if not faster than Bro. Herbert.

(Years later, Bro. Herbert taught for many years in ND Marbel and also directed the theses of many graduate students. His health began to fail and he had to stop teaching. He died in Dadiangas in 1992.)

Br. James had coached basketball teams in the Brothers' schools in New York. The competition was fierce there. When he arrived in Cotabato, it was just natural that he would coach the team of ND Cotabato.

Midsayap had been known for years as having the most powerful basketball team for miles around. So, they were just waiting for the chance to crush ND Cotabato and their imported coach. Br. James was not in a hurry. He still had to develop team spirit in his Cotabato Team. To him, that was much more important than any game.

When they had a game, at the half time, the other team would bring out oranges or Hersey bars and Coke or Tru-Orange for their Team, to show how much they were appreciated. Bro. James had only water to drink. Even though Cotabato people brought oranges and other goodies to eat and drink so that the Cotabato Team would not be out to shame, it was not allowed. Bro. James admitted that chocolate would give quick energy, but it does not last. If you are exercising, the worst thing you can drink is Coke. For the Cotabato Team it was just *Paciencia na lang*. But they won. Midsayap could not understand what had happened. They knew the guys in the Cotabato Team. Every one of them was a push-over.

During the half-time, Bro. James would give a devastating lecture and point out the defects in each player's techniques. By the time the second half started, those ND Cotabato players were on fire with determination to play their very best and show Bro. James what they really could do. They wanted to be on the Team, and, of course, they won. Everyone in Cotabato and in Davao, Cagayan de Oro and all the towns around knew that Bro. James was without doubt the top coach of a winning team.

In Cotabato, the campus of ND Boys Department and ND University were not adjoining but very near each other. In NDU, we could hear the loudspeaker at the Boys' department. Every day at the opening of the morning session and again in the afternoon session, Bro. James would give a talk about some aspects of moral living. Two talks every day. Even in the burning sun of 1:30 p.m., the talk would go on. He told me that he knew it would be boring for many of the boys, but he just hoped that some of it would stick.

Maybe, someday!


One day I was on a plane from Manila to Cotabato. A Moro was beside me and introduced himself as a graduate of ND Boys. He wanted to talk about old times, like where is Bro. Damian and something about him. How is Bro. Peter. He asked about other Brothers who had come later but might be in Marbel or Lagao. Then there was a long pause. He said. "You know, I always hated Bro. James." Pause. "Until I had my first child. Then I understood what he was trying to do for us." Bro. James had hoped that some of his talk would stick. It did.

To be continued


¹The following article was made possible through the effort of Mr. Jose Nacianceno, campus minister (at that time) of Marist School, Marikina City and editor of Marist Herald, the publication of the campus ministry office. This article was published first in the Amihan Newsletter before the Marist Herald.

INFORMATION:

- The Oceania-Asia Administrative Unit leaders have decided to re-start the International Novitiate in Tamontaka, DOS, Maguindanao. Br. Pepito Mahong, FMS has been appointed as the Novice Master. The Novitiate will start on April 4. There will be 14 first year and 1 second year novices coming from Vietnam, East Timor, Cambodia, and Bangladesh.
- The role of Br. Jeff Rhey Antiquisa, FMS as Child Protection Officer has ended last February 6. He will be staying at Fourviere Community.
- Br. Crispin Betita, FMS, and Br. Teodulo Fernandez, FMS will temporary take over as Child Protection and Safeguarding Officers.
- The Provincial Council last February 4 decided that the Provincial Superior, Br. Dominador A. Santiago, FMS will be Acting-President/Officer-in-Charge of NDMU for the unexpired term of Br. Wilfredo Lubrico, FMS.
- On behalf of the Brothers, I would like to thank all the Marists and friends who have helped and supported us during the sickness, wake, and burial of Br. Willy. Madamo gid nga Salamat! (Br. Dominador A. Santiago, FMS)
- You can find below the information on Sr. Iosefina's wake and burial.



MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY
General Santos City, Philippines



REST IN PEACE
SR. MALIA IOSEFINA IOSEFO, SSM
(January 12, 1946 - February 11, 2021)

Zoom Passcode for Online Wake and Prayers
Meeting ID: 812 8891 2951
Passcode: 030743

and Live via

<https://www.facebook.com/Missionary-Sisters-of-the-Society-of-Mary-183064269994570>

Wake & Burial Schedule

February 13, 2021 (7:00 P.M.): Mass at the Sacred Heart Chapel
February 12 - 14, 2021: Wake at the Sacred Heart Chapel, NDDU-IBED, Lagao Campus
February 15, 2021 (9:00A.M.): Funeral Mass at Sacred Heart Chapel followed burial ceremony at Forest Lake Cemetery.

Birthday Greetings to:



February 15
Br. Timothy Song (Hyo-seob)



February 17
Mrs. Romula Oyao
(Affiliated member)



February 21
Christian Jay Lumactod
(Aspirant)

Death Anniversaries:

- February 14, 1978 – Br. Jonas Cruz died in Sri Lanka.
- February 15, 1944 – Gregory Pien, a junior died in Beijing.
- February 15, 1962 – Br. Joseph Romain died in St. Genis-Laval.
- February 15, 1967 – Br. Marie Daniel died in St. Genis-Laval.
- February 17, 1971 – Br. Joseph Gerard died in Singapore.
- February 17, 1972 – Br. Elie Alexis died in St. Genis-Laval.
- February 19, 1921 – Benedict Tsai, junior died in Beijing.
- February 19, 2016 – Br. Paul Clet died in Sibu, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Prayers please...

- ✚ For the eternal repose of the soul of Sr. Malia Iosefina Iosefo, SMSM.
- ✚ For all the departed and dearly missed Brothers, Family and friends.
- ✚ For all our sick Brothers, relatives, friends, alumni, members of the Marist Family, especially for Sr. Io, SMSM.
- ✚ For our Brothers working in other countries.
- ✚ For more vocation to the religious life.
- ✚ For peace and unity.
- ✚ For our schools / universities, students, teachers, administrators and alumni.
- ✚ For the employees who lost their jobs due to pandemic, that may God continue to provide their needs.
- ✚ For all the birthday celebrants for this third week of February.
- ✚ For the intentions of our family members, friends, benefactors, and affiliates.