



March 14, 2021: Fourth Sunday of Lent (LAETARE SUNDAY)



Jesus and Nicodemus

This Sunday is called "Laetare Sunday" in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite since its mood and theme is one of hope and rejoicing that Easter is near. In the Ordinary Form this Sunday is not different from the other Sundays of Lent even though the entrance antiphon for the day still begins with the Latin word "laetare" and the vestments worn by the celebrant are rose colored, not violet. The day is important because it is the day of the second scrutiny in preparation for the baptism of adults at the Easter Vigil.

(<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm>)

UPDATES:

FROM THE KOREA-JAPAN SECTOR

By: Br. Alfredo Herrera, FMS



The winter in Korea is approaching its end and with it there is the need to prepare for the beginning of a warmer weather that comes with the spring. To do that it is important to prune the old branches of the trees that have lost all their leaves and get them ready to fully receive the exuberance of life ready to explode. That is exactly what you can see the Brothers of the Education Center are doing in the courtyard.

The image of our Good Mother continues her pilgrimage. This past week (March 7-13) the image was warmly received in the house of Br. Tony Choi's family. In the photo we see his mother, Mrs. Theresa Kim welcoming the image and receiving it from Br. Domingo Lee, Coordinator of the Sector. There is no way that we could not mention the little "Jocomi" (the doggy) who was all dressed up and more than ready to participate in this very important occasion. We can observe its eagerness to appear also in the photograph.



On March 8, as we have been doing for the last 6 months, we had our monthly session to read and reflect upon Sr. Elizabeth Johnson's book "Truly Our Sister" which is a very interesting study about Mary in search of a better understanding of her role in our life and faith. The study group, organized by Br. Paul Won is formed by 7 people: 2 brothers, 1 sister and 4 lay women one of whom is a Columban lay missionary. The book is read in its original English form, but in order to facilitate a better understanding of the text, Br. Paul has been making a great effort to translate into Korean the different chapters of the text that we have been dealing with. The sharing is very rich

and highly stimulating because we have the opportunity to listen to the concerns, opinions and experiences of the women in the group. This is a very interesting activity that we could replicate with other people and on other topics also. In the photo of our gathering, one of the women was missing because she could not participate that time.



During Lent, the Education Center community has scheduled to pray the Viacrucis every Friday. Very close to our property in Seoul there is the Korean Martyrs' Shrine of "Choldu-san" which has Viacrucis on the grounds of the Shrine's property. In the photograph we see (from left to right), Br. Paul Won, Br. Augustine Lee, Br. Domingo Lee and Mrs. Agnes Cho Yun Su, secretary of the Welfare Association Office.

MEC MEETING

By: *Mr. Christopher James Ferrer*

As the chair of the Academic Committee-Basic Education, I had the opportunity to present the report of Marist Schools in the Philippines on this year's accomplishments and the plans for SY 2021-2022.

Just a glimpse...

Accomplishments would always point to how schools transitioned from traditional classroom approaches to Distance Learning Modalities. This may appear simple, but this entails investing in the latest technologies, improving IT infrastructure and logistics, conducting online human development activities, reconfiguring existing structure, and many others.



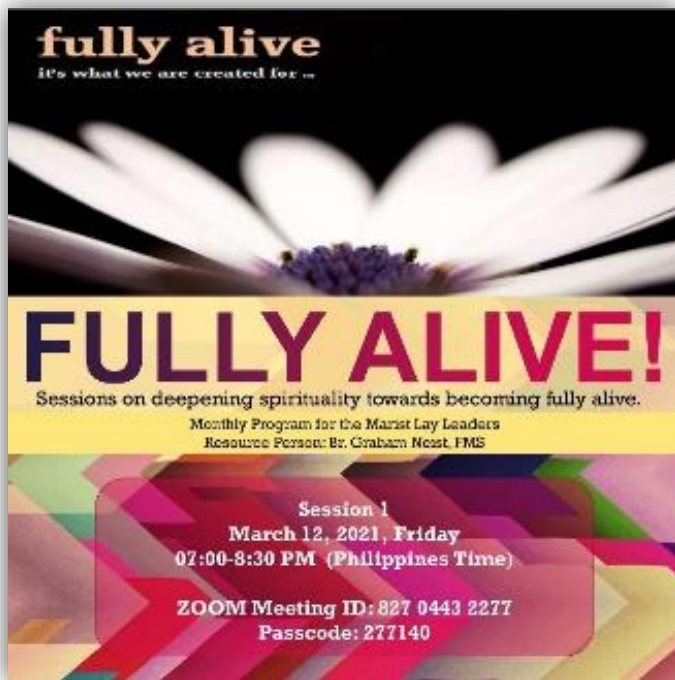
For plans, schools still see the continued implementation of distance learning. At present, the Department of Education has not made any official announcement regarding the learning delivery modalities for next school year. But noting the problems and issues the country is currently facing in relation to the COVID-19 vaccines for adults and the very small number of reported medical initiatives being conducted to create a vaccine for children under 16 years old, Marist Schools foresee the high probability that distance learning will continue in school year 2021 – 2022.

We continue to thrive and provide Marist quality education!!!

Fully Alive!

Spirituality Sessions for Lay Animators

By: Ms. Agnes Reyes



On March 12, thirteen Marist lay leaders participated in the session on deepening spirituality and its lived experience. This program is in response to the expressed needs of laity leaders for spirituality formation. The monthly program was organized under the guidance of Br. Graham Neist, FMS from Australia. “FULLY ALIVE! ...it’s what we are created for!” takes place every 2nd Friday of the month, from 7:00-8:30 P.M.



BR. CIAN'S 27TH BIRTHDAY AND BR. ADOR'S BACUSANON COMMUNITY VISIT

By: Br. Fred Salubre, FMS



We Celebrated the 27th birthday of Br Cian last March 11. Early in the morning parishioners surprised him with their serenade. In the evening we integrated the Birthday and Despedida party for Br Cian. It was a special celebration where parishioner shared their heartfelt gratitude for Br. Cian's great contribution to the parish. Bacusanon community was thankful for Br Cian for his 11 fruitful years being part of the Marist Brothers. As he begins a new chapter of his life, we wish and pray for God's blessings and guidance. We hope that he continues to be generous of his time to be of service to others. On March 12, Bacusanon community together with Br

Dominador Santiago visited Fr. Noel Pedregosa, the Administrative in-charge of the Diocese of Malaybalay. To discuss the ending of our contract in Bacusanon Parish mission. Fr. Noel was thankful to all the Marist Brothers, especially



those who were assigned in Bacusanon. He also expressed his sincere gratitude for our presence in the Diocese of Malaybalay for a long period of time and for helping them in the different ministries.



THE ARCHIVIST'S CORNER (#22)

Br. Romulo L. Porras, FMS

REMEMBERING BROTHER RENATO B. CRUZ, FMS¹

The following article is a homily delivered by Br. James F. Adams, fms during the Funeral Mass for Bro. Renato Br. Cruz, fms on May 19, 1997 at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Cotabato City²

Part Two of Two Parts

Chapter Eight: Ministry in Illness



It was the last week of October. The year was 1994. Brother Renato Cruz had just recently celebrated his 53rd birthday. He came to me at the end of our provincial council meeting and said, “Jim, take a look at my skin.” As he showed me his leg and his side he said, “What do you think about these black and blue marks? Look, I have several... like bruises but I didn’t fall, nothing hit me. What do you think are they?”

The next day he left to attend a meeting in Manila, and while there, consulted a physician at the UST Hospital. After some tests he was informed that he had chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), a kind of cancer of the bone marrow. He was told there was no known cure.

At first, in his shock, he told no one. But his scientific mind was working overtime. As he went through the normal feelings of denial, “This can’t be true; not for me... I am too young for this,” he began contacting friends in the medical profession both here and around the world. At first through the mail, and later by computer through the internet, he was furnished with a summary of the current medical literature... up-to-date and complete and with always the same conclusion. Although CML is perhaps the best known and most understood cancer, there is still no cure. Moreover, for people over fifty years old, certain treatments to possibly prolong life are more risky and less likely to succeed. In fact, statistically speaking, the typical person can expect to live only 3.4 years from the first diagnosis. Ray lasted only 2.5 years, an indication perhaps that he had this disease before October 1994.

When he came home from Manila in early November he commented: “I have learned of my sickness at such an appropriate time... the season of Advent... a time of waiting. How fitting. I can now accept this sickness and wait for God’s plan.” Little did he know that his waiting would last two and half years.

But this waiting was not passive. He was most active. He cooperated fully with his physician. He was invited to the United States for a more definitive diagnosis after Christmas and there, enjoying the friendship and hospitality of the Provincial and the other Marists, he learned that, medically speaking, there was little hope. More waiting.

On February 14, 1995 he wrote from New Jersey, USA: "Waiting has become a new part of my spirituality, and the Lord has been continually drawing me to re-examine my priorities and to be in closer intimacy with Him." Now I am beginning to understand what De Mello used to say about enjoying the present moment instead of worrying about yesterday and tomorrow. I am also being challenged to live out what I have been preaching about contemplation and the present moment. The experience of anxiety has revealed so much of my fears and the ever enduring love of the Lord in spite of my slowness of heart to respond to Him. I am also feeling homesick, and I would like to go home as soon as I can. The Lord is certainly calling me to live uncertainty and to have a deeper faith in Him. My health is in his hands, and I can only trust in his healing power and plan for me."

And so the final saga of the life of Renato Cruz began in November 1994. He saw that his sickness opened new vistas and, as he got weaker and weaker, he grew closer and closer to God. He allowed the leukemia, in a way, to further evangelize him. He became more grateful. On his birthday in 1995 he wrote: "I am also grateful for the opportunities of deepening my relationship with Mary during this difficult period in my life. Mary is becoming more real to me, and the Rosary has taken on a different role in my life. I am not too old, after all, to rediscover new ways of communicating with Mary and reflecting on her life." In February 1996 he wrote to the Brothers: "Maybe my sickness is a call to take God more seriously, and I am urged from within to continue encouraging all of you to be faithful to our call as Marists."

By August 1996 he welcomed his sickness as he said, "I now realize that my sickness is God's gift to me and to those I relate with. So many other surprises are in store for me, and I need God's light and strength to welcome them."

In his last letter to the Marists on Feb. 14, 1997, he wrote: "My hospitalization and suffering during the months of December and January take on new meaning after the experience of Bishop Ben's funeral Mass. My sufferings pale in comparison with the Bishop's painful death. Brothers, I have many more things to share with you, but they can wait for another time."

On Friday, May 9th, at UST Hospital, it was 8:10 PM. The last of the visiting Brothers had gone home. Ray had waved a hand in greeting, but it was also in farewell. I began the Rosary... the five sorrowful mysteries. Ray sat up in bed motionless. As we ended with the sign of the cross, he raised his right hand with all the IV tubes attached and blessed himself. A few minutes later he closed his eyes to rest... in peace. God had called home his faithful son.

As one of his friends abroad wrote in a letter of condolence the other day: "Certainly this season when we celebrate Jesus rising from death to new life, returning to the Father and sending the Holy Spirit, was an appropriate time for Ray to return home also. He will be even more effective as protector and intercessor from heaven than he was here on earth." And, we here in Cotabato might add, he continues to be a *ray* of light in the lives of so many of us. I can hear him saying, "Brothers, I have many more things to share with you, but they can wait for another time."

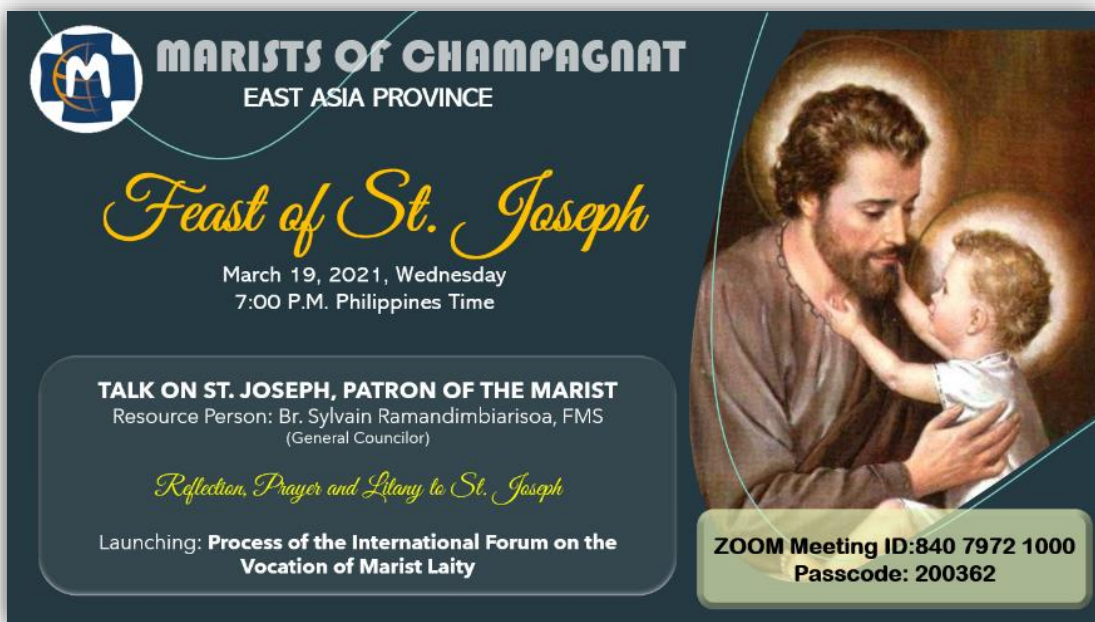
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¹*Br. Renato B. Cruz was the Marist Provincial Superior of the Philippine Province from 1987 to 1997.*

²*This article is a reprint from the AMIHAN NEWSLETTER, pages 34-37, of the May-June 1997 issue.*

INFORMATION:

- Br. Pepito transferred to the Novitiate on March 2. Br. Paco, and Br. Ly, our second-year novice from Vietnam arrived in the Novitiate on March 5. Br. Ted will be reporting to the novitiate on April 5.
- I visited Fr. Toto Pedregosa, DCM, the Administrator of the Diocese of Malababay, last March 12. We mutually agreed not to renew our contract for our ministry in Bacusanon, with a caveat that, the Brothers will always be welcome to go back to Bukidnon when the time is right.
- March 15: Marist Development Foundation Inc. Corporation and Board Meeting.
- March 17: Business Resource Center Board Meeting.
- We are encouraging everyone to join the launching of the Process of the International Forum on the Vocation of the Marist Laity. Let us support the laity in our province and across the Institute as they begin their reflection process on the future of their vocation as Marist Lay. Below is the flyer.



MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT
EAST ASIA PROVINCE

Feast of St. Joseph
March 19, 2021, Wednesday
7:00 P.M. Philippines Time

TALK ON ST. JOSEPH, PATRON OF THE MARIST
Resource Person: Br. Sylvain Ramandimbiarisoa, FMS
(General Councilor)

Reflection, Prayer and Litany to St. Joseph

Launching: **Process of the International Forum on the Vocation of Marist Laity**

ZOOM Meeting ID: 840 7972 1000
Passcode: 200362

- **INFORMATION FOR OUR RETREAT**

EAST ASIA PROVINCE
HOLY WEEK RETREAT / MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT
29th March to 3rd April 2021
Retreat Master: **Br. Ernesto Sanchez, FMS**

PRESENTATION AND A DEEPENING SHARING ON THE CIRCULAR
“HOMES OF LIGHT”

After morning prayer, the invitation is to read the indicated themes & pages for each day. Bro. Ernesto Sánchez will present some key ideas and highlights related to those themes. The invitation is to make a reflective and prayerful reading. At the end of his talk, we will offer some questions for reflection that can be done in the afternoon. He will also make connection with the days of Holy Week.

Monday, 29th	FIRST PART 1. Our personal experience of “home” 2. Mary, transparent to the Light	To read from Part I: Nos. 1 (pages 15-18) and 2 (pages 19-24).
Tuesday, 30th	FIRST PART 3. A spirituality that lights up our days	To read from Part I: No. 3 (pages 25-37).
Wednesday, 31st	SECOND PART 1. Living in community as a founding experience 2. & 3. Caring for ourselves/caring for others	To read from Part II: No. 1 (pages 45-51) and Nos. 2 and 3 (pages 51-60)
Thursday, 1st Holy Thursday	5. We care for our common home 6. We care for the light, we care for God	To read from Part II: No. 5 (pages 66-71) and No. 6 (pages 71-82)
Friday, 2nd Good Friday	THIRD PART 1. We generate life by our integrity 2. We dream of generating new life	To read from Part III: No. 1 (pages 89-93) and No. 2 (pages 94-98)
Saturday, 3rd Black Saturday	THIRD PART 4. Generating life with young people 6. A future with new Marist life CONCLUSION	To read from Part III: No. 4 (pages 104-109), No. 6 (pages 117-128) & the Conclusion (pages 141-143)

- Note: When reading the digital format of the Circular, check the pages, because the numbering may not coincide with the printed copy.
- An appointed team will be preparing the Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer for use during the retreat.
- Br. Ernesto’s daily session is scheduled from March 29 to April 3 at 2:30 PM, Philippine time (3:30 PM Korea and Japan Time, 8:30 AM, Rome Time).

Birthday Greetings to:



March 21
Br. Noel T. Fernandez



March 21
Br. John Vianney Kim
(Chang-woon)



March 21
Br. Simon Hur
(Duck-Hyun)

Death Anniversaries:

- March 14, 1976 – Br. Louis Nicholas died in St. Genis-Laval.
March 17, 1984 – Br. Charles Raphael, 8th S.G. 1958-1967 died in Belgium.
March 18, 1981 – Br. Louis Lambert died in St. Genis-Laval.
March 19, 1928 – Br. Joseph Gabriel died in Beijing.
March 19, 1984 – Br. Subran died in Hong Kong.
March 20, 1941 – Br. Pierre died in Beijing.
March 20, 2020 – Mr. Paulo Kang Jeong Ho (Affiliated member) died in Suwon, Korea.
March 21, 1986 – Carlo Kim Heung Soo died in Seoul, Korea.

Prayers please...

- ✚ For all the departed and dearly missed Brothers, Affiliated Members, Family Members, Benefactors and friends.
- ✚ For our sick Brothers, relatives, friends, benefactors, students, alumni, members of the Marist Family
- ✚ For our Brothers working in other countries.
- ✚ For deepening our faith and devotion with God.
- ✚ For more vocation to the religious life.
- ✚ For the vocation of young Brothers.
- ✚ For those who are in need and in trouble.
- ✚ For our schools / universities, students, teachers, administrators and alumni.
- ✚ For the blessings of those affected by the pandemic, that may God continue to provide their needs.
- ✚ For all the birthday celebrants for the month of March.
- ✚ For our own personal intentions.