



AMÉRICA SUR

II REGIONAL FORUM OF MARIST TEAMS AND NETWORKS

Around 100 participants from the Marist regions of South America and Arco Norte attended the II Regional Forum of Marist Teams and Networks of “América Sur”, which was held virtually on 13 and 14 May. Alberto Aparicio, executive secretary of the South America Region, stated that “we can see that meeting together has given us vitality and synergy to continue moving ahead... and it challenged us to continue weaving networks with other Teams/Networks of the Region and beyond, with a great awareness of being a Regional body and acting as a Global Family”.

Representatives of the General Administration in Rome, the members of the Regional Committee, the Vocation Ministry teams, the Network of Schools, Initial Formation, the Post-Novitiate, the Finance Network, the Spirituality Network, the Solidarity Network



general administration

- El On Monday, Brothers João Carlos and Ken, General Councillors, took part in a meeting of the Arco Norte Regional Council.
- On the same day, Brothers Ben and João Carlos, General Councillors, met with the Secretariat for Education and Evangelisation to discuss ongoing initiatives.
- On Tuesday 25 May, Brothers Luis Carlos, Vicar General, Ken and Ben, General Councillors, met to discuss and prepare for the next meeting of the International Mission Commission.
- On the same day, Brothers João Carlos and Ken participated in a meeting of the Preparatory Commission of the Provincial Chapter of Central America.
- On the same Tuesday, Brothers Francis and

Ángel Diego, from the Solidarity Secretariat, participated in the monthly meeting of the 4 Branches of the Marist Family, to continue reflecting and taking steps on the theme of "Ecology".

■ Also on Tuesday, the Secretariat for Education and Evangelisation organized the first meeting of the Marist Education Document Revision Team. The Legal Structures Committee also met on Tuesday.

■ From 25 to 27 May, Br Valdicer Fachi, Director of the Cmi, and Matteo Cavicchioli took part in a series of virtual meetings with the CPVs of the Marist regions to monitor developments in Marist volunteering.

■ On Wednesday 26 May, Br Óscar, General Councillor, spoke in a seminar organised >>

general administration

by the Province of Compostela entitled "Experiences of inspiring leadership". Also Brothers Ben and João participated online.

■ On the same day, Brothers Ben, Josep María and Sylvain, General Councillors, met with the leaders from Asia and Oceania.

■ Also on Wednesday, Br João Carlos, Raúl and Manú, from the Secretariat of the Laity, attended a meeting of the working group on formal commitments and associations of Marist laity.

■ On Thursday 27 May, Brothers Luis Carlos, Ben and members of the Education and Evangelisation Secretariat will meet with the Educa-

tion Coordinators of the Africa, Asia and Oceania regions to discuss the launch of the Marist Schools Network. On Friday the same team will meet with the regions of Europe, Arco Norte and South America.

■ On the same day, Br Ángel Diego, from the Solidarity Secretariat, will participate in the General Assembly of the International Catholic Centre in Geneva.

■ On Friday, there will be a meeting of the Finance Council of the Institute.

On Saturday, Brothers Sylvain and Josep Maria will meet online with the Brothers of Pakistan.

and the Higher Education Network, the Marist Laity, the Marist Patrimony Centres, Specialists and Communication teams took part in the meeting.

The objective of the Forum was to give an update on our different Marist initiatives and to evaluate together the progress made by the South America Region (RAS) in recent years. Among the topics discussed were the general vision of the region, the status of our initiatives and networks, and team meetings. On this occasion, the evaluation included how our strategic plans have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The first day began with a prayer led by a group from the Province of Santa María de los Andes, who invited everyone to feel united and to give thanks for the opportunity of this meeting. Afterwards, the different teams and networks had the chance to present the projects they are running, evaluate their progress and determine the next goals to be achieved. During the day, the common projects between the regional teams during these years

were also given space to enhance coordination of efforts.

On the second day of the forum, the different teams and networks met separately in breakout rooms to discuss emerging issues in the regional context and propose some next steps to be taken by the South American bloc.

Afterwards, gathered again in a single group, participants had a few minutes to express their opinions and ideas on the thrust of the "América Sur" Region, inviting all Marists to be more active in the fight against inequality and poverty, as called for in the encyclical of Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti.

Links to some videos uploaded on Youtube:

- [Opening Prayer](#)
- [Progress as a Region](#)
- [Progress of respective teams and networks](#)
- [Looking to the future](#)

The "América Sur" Region is made up of the Administrative Units present in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay (Brasil Centro-Norte, Brasil Centro-Sul, Brasil Sul-Amazônia, Cruz del Sur and Santa María de los Andes).

SED - SPAIN

The XXX General and Extraordinary Assembly of SED was held on Saturday, 22 May, with the presentation and approval of the budget for the financial year 2021, the 2021 management report, and the Strategic Plan 2021-2024, as well as the election of the members of the Board of Directors.

BRASIL SUL-AMAZÔNIA

To explain the mission of a Marist Brother, the Province Vocation Ministry team intends to present a number of live testimonies on the theme: What does a Marist Brother do? The first will be on 26 May, via the [Farol 1817](#) YouTube channel, with Br Joaquim Sperandio, from the ongoing formation community of Manziana.

BRASIL SUL-AMAZÔNIA**BROTHER DEIVIS ALEXANDRE FISCHER,
NEW PROVINCIAL**

The General Council has appointed Brother Devis Alexandre Fischer as Provincial of the Province of Brazil Sul-Amazônia for the three-year period 2022-2024, following the consultation carried out with the Brothers, who proposed names and the profile desired for the role at this time.

Br Devis will replace Br Inácio Nestor Etges, Provincial since 2015. He will begin his mandate at the opening of the Provincial Chapter, scheduled for 23-26 November this year.

In the letter sent to the Brothers of the Province, Br Ernesto

thanked Br Devis for making himself available: "Thank you very much for your openness and generosity in accepting this mission of leadership at the service of your Province. Your capacity for listening and organising, your closeness to people, your experience as formator and as Vice Provincial for some years, as well as your experience at the XXII General Chapter will be of great help to you. And, of course, the energy that comes with your young age."

The Superior General also thanked Br Inácio: "You have piloted the new Province since its

beginning in 2015, after previously serving as Provincial for 6 years. Your leadership has been characterised by your ready availability and capacity for listening, in the diverse reality that is Brazil. Your close working relationship with the other Provincials of Brazil and South America has also been very valuable".

Ir. Devis Alexandre Fischer

Br Devis has a degree in Pastoral Theology and Philosophy, with a specialization in Sociology and a Master's in Education. Since 2019, he has been Provincial Councilor, leader of the team coordinating Consecrated Life and Laity and Postulant Master in the Mother of God Marist Community.

In his ministry, he has exercised different functions ranging from teacher, coordinator of ministry in School settings, leader of Marist Youth Ministry, before taking up a management role as vice-president of the Marist Network, vice-Provincial and president of the Executive Board of the Marist Union of Brazil, among other responsibilities.

- [See here the complete biography](#)
- [Message of Br. Devis](#)



24 MAY

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF LAUDATO SI'

On 24 May 2021, Christians have a reason to give thanks to God. Every day we have reason to be thankful. As Marists of Champagnat we also want to give thanks for our world, for our common home.

Many initiatives are being developed to foster this special care for our world. Here too, the words of Brother Ernesto, Superior General, can be applied when he invites us to “care for life” and to “generate new life”.



From the Vatican, at the suggestion of Pope Francis, and through the Dicastery for the service of Integral Human Development, we are invited to turn our gaze towards our world, towards our brothers and sisters. They invite us to join the project called “[Laudato Si Platform for Action](#)”, as a congregation, as

communities and families, as educational centres and organisations, as individuals and as groups.

A project to be developed in 7 years, which includes the 7 objectives of Laudato Si. A project that leads us to a public commitment, with an evaluation of the achievements, that walks together with other groups and people, that gives concrete answers to the “cry of the Earth” and to the “cry of the poor” (objectives 1 and 2).

The last General Chapter also guides us in this same line, to “respond boldly to emerging needs (call 5)”, committing ourselves to “care for our common home”, and abandoning “the culture of egos” and promoting “echoes”, which “reduce the scandal of indifference and inequalities”.



Yes, we have reason to thank God, because we are already on this line, because we continue to work on these challenges.

Yes, with small daily actions, individually and as an Institute, we can make real – and we are already doing so – the call to “be the face and hands of your tender mercy”, thus responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.

Yes, even the smallest of actions helps the whole beauty of creation to “blossom”.

Br. Ángel Diego – Director of the Secretariat of Solidarity

marist world

BRAZIL - CHAMPAGNAT MOVEMENT OF THE MARIST FAMILY - RECIFE



COLOMBIA: NOVICIATE «LA VALLA», IN MEDELLÍN



SPAIN: CENTRO CULTURAL VALLISOLETANO, VALLADOLID



SOUTH AFRICA: THREE2SIX PROJECT - JOHANNESBURG



AUSTRALIA: MARIST YOUTH MINISTRY - SYDNEY



KIRIBATI: ST LOUIS HIGH SCHOOL

OCEANIA AND ASIA
ELEVEN MAPAC BROTHERS RENEW THEIR VOWS

At the end of their retreat on May 16th, Ascension Sunday, 11 scholastics of the Marist Asia Pacific Center (MAPAC) in Marikina City (Philippines) renewed their vows. The ceremony, which took place at the Mary Hill Retreat House, Taytay, Rizal, was presided over by Fr. Guido Everaert, CICM.

The brothers who renewed their vows are Nguyen Van Tri, Nguyen Duy Binh, Nguyen Hoang Anh and Tran Dinh Luan (Vietnam), Benjamin Corbafó (East Timor), Robert Howee (Bangladesh), Joseph Xia Baoxuan (China), Steve Vaea (Samoa), Petero Hurley Navuku (Fiji), Engel Freed Java and Romar Dave Rano (Philippines).

Brothers Ray Arthur, Simon Serero and Bill McCarthy, members of the formation team, were also present at the said ceremony.

The MAPAC formation program is good for two



years. The current formation year is ending and many of the brothers – students and formators – are leaving for home. The next batch of scholastics and the brothers who are coming in to comprise the formation team and the date of their arrival because the pandemic will be define in the coming weeks.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

During this month of May we wanted to bring you one of the Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, number 8: “Decent Work and Economic Growth”.

One of the possible dangers of these goals, which are very well thought out and which aim to be ambitious, is that we remain in a formulation of very nice statements and that we are not able to translate them into the concrete lives of people. This is always a risk. The risk of theorising. Theorising to soothe our consciences. Consciences that must lead us to those who are in need. A need to which we want, as Marists of Champagnat, to respond.

Some indicators tell us of a relative improvement, in the global data, in relation to this matter. This improvement, however, should not make us forget the thousands of people who still do not have a decent job. Specific people, sometimes in our closest surroundings, who do not make ends meet, who do not manage to provide adequate responses to the needs of their families. A situation that has been significantly worsened by the consequences that the current pandemic crisis situation has brought and continues to bring us.

As Marists, we may not be directly involved in the creation of jobs, which would allow us to offer sufficiently remunerated jobs in fully dignified conditions. But we are directly involved in the field of education, which gives us a great opportunity to prepare future generations of women and men, an opportunity to offer them a comprehensive education, an opportunity to provide thousands of children and young people with the necessary tools to face their future with sufficient guarantees of fin-

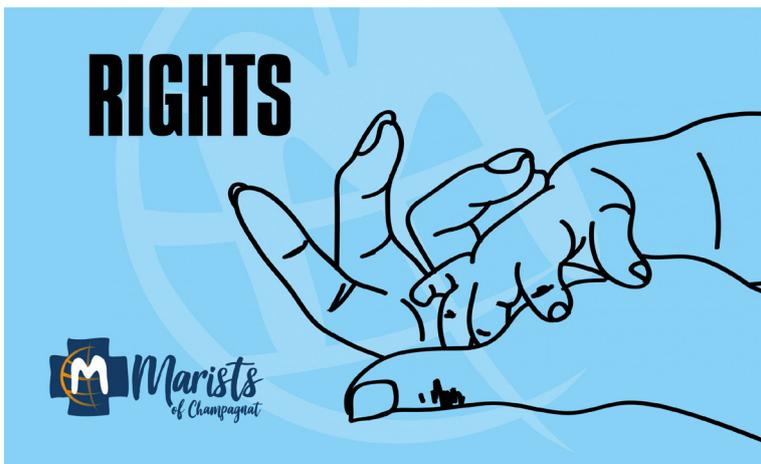
ding a decent job that will allow them to develop to their full potential.

Economic growth must take into account certain parameters. That the wealth generated is distributed among all social classes, especially among those most in need. It must be sustainable, that is to say, the fruit of caring for people and also for our common home. The data, in the world, cannot leave us indifferent. Even some “good” data in so-called “developed” countries should not be a cause for complacency, since poverty and marginalisation are all too often to be found in these countries too, linked in almost all cases to the absence of work or to precarious employment.

Women and children are among the groups who suffer most from the consequences of lack of work or low-quality work. What is our role as Marists, brothers and lay people of Champagnat? We are not going to offer miraculous answers here, but we can think about how Jesus of Nazareth would act, what

would move our Good Mother, what would be the initiatives that Marcellin would promote.

We also find answers in civil society. Many organisations are also looking for new commitments from governments, organisations that mobilise people and resources to serve those most in need. The United Nations has presented a road map to alleviate this situation, which has been aggravated by Covid. Pope Francis also points the way, in his latest encyclical, towards universal brotherhood. We need each other. We need to care for each other as brothers, between countries, between continents, between religions, between institutions. We need a global approach and a holistic view.



RECEPTION OF NOVICES IN TIMOR LESTE

On Wednesday 12th May eight young people officially began their formal entry of novices into the Marist Novitiate, Baucau, Timor Leste. The eight novices had previously commenced their canonical year on 25 March, however due to Covid-related matters, the Community and wider Marist family were unable to gather and celebrate until now.



During the Mass, novices Clementino, Dionisio, Filomeno, Julio, Juvencio, Pedro, Ronaldo and Salvador, each received their Marist cross and the Marist Constitutions from Br. Greg McDonald, and then re-committed themselves to entering fully into the novitiate formation program. Unfortunately, the 9th novice, Zaulino Ruas (formerly at Daceyville), was unable to be present because he remains in lockdown in Dili and is expected to join the group very soon.

The same day, two temporary professed Brothers; Jacinto and Melquiano renewed their vows for one year, during the same Mass. Br. Peter Corr received their vows in the name of the Superior General.

The ceremony saw all the Brothers present, together with postulants, some close friends of the young men and a small nucleus of what is becoming the wider Marist family, including several ICFP staff. Fr Manuel, sdb, the Parish priest, was the presider. [Here you can visit the facebook page of the Marist Brothers in Timor.](#)

Fr. François first Superior General of the Marist Institute

10) THE PROMISE

Gabriel Rivat quickly learned the educational method of the Brothers. Little by little he moved away from the idea of training to be a priest and became attuned to the ideal which Father Champagnat passed on to his Brothers, to be Christian educators for poor children and young people.

On Wednesday, 8 September 1819, Gabriel Rivat put on the distinctive costume of the "Little Brothers of Mary": black trousers, frock coat, collar and top hat, and knelt down in front of the community of the Brothers.

Kneeling before the assembled community, he signed a promise to consecrate himself to God for five years, to work unceasingly for the practice of all the virtues for his personal sanctification and for the Christian education of the children of the countryside. He committed himself to seek only the glory of God, the honour of Mary and the good of the Catholic Church, to teach freely the needy children presented by the parish priests, to obey his superiors without question, to maintain chastity and to share everything in common. From this date, Gabriel Rival became Brother Frances, taking his mother's name, and he was only 11 years old. He will be the sixth Brother and by far the youngest of Champagnat's disciples.

Soon the Brothers' community evolved from catechetical and charitable functions to the running of parish or communal schools, adapting the pedagogical method of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to the rural environment. It is a charismatic community with a universal purpose and not solely parish work. It was during these years that Brother Frances established his status as a disciple and servant of a collective missionary project to which he would dedicate his life.

[Other episodes here.](#)

THE THREE VIOLETS

HUMILITY, SIMPLICITY AND MODESTY

We all know the three little violets, but what do they signify? From where did the symbol come? Let us take a look at this fundamental Marist symbol.



The idea was in fact Marcellin's, and it has been part of our Marist tradition from the earliest days. His proposal was that the type of Christian discipleship he wanted Marists to nurture would be underpinned by three basic spiritual attitudes: those of "humility", "simplicity", and "modesty". These are the heart of what it means to be a Marist.

There was nothing novel about his choosing humility as the first of the three. From the times of the desert fathers and mothers, this has always been recognised as the most fundamental and primary disposition for anyone serious about progressing in the spiritual life. It is to recognise God as God. It is to be awestruck, indeed humbled, before the immensity and infinity of God, God's omnipotence and unfathomable mystery, God's unshakeable mercy and fidelity. It is to trust in this. The proud don't know God – they just can't – the self-righteous, those caught up in their own power and importance, those blind and deaf because they don't allow themselves to see and hear. The metaphors for the spiritual journey often use terms such as thirst, hunger, yearning, dryness – it is for God they seek, but more importantly, know that they need to seek. Blessed are the poor in spirit, is Jesus' opening line in Matthew 5, for theirs is the reign of God.

Simplicity was more novel as a spiritual attitude. St Francis de Sales – one of the key sources of Marcellin's de-

veloping spirituality – was someone who emphasised this. It is to be oneself before God – openly, genuinely, trustingly, vulnerably. It is to hide nothing, to pretend nothing, to mask nothing. It is to not kid oneself or presume to trick God. It is to have an uncluttered relationship with God, something direct and transpar-

ent like any genuinely loving relationship – one not in need of lots of augmentation, or props, or proofs. No secrets, no game-playing, no hidden agenda. It is to use language and symbols that are accessible, even affective and intimate. Some would say that simplicity is the most quintessential of the Marist traits. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.

And modesty. Some people trip up on this because they confuse it with lack of self-assurance or poor self-esteem. Nothing could be more opposite. Modesty is about having a self-concept that is secure and mature enough not to feel any need to intrude or impose myself on another, not to shout them down with my voice, to crowd them with my presence, to use them to satisfy my emotional needs, or to serve my ends. It is rather, to put the other at the centre – respectfully, selflessly, and non-possessively. It is to be focussed on them rather than myself. Where humility is recognising God as God, modesty is allowing God to be God, and to act in my life as God. It is to work to learn about God, to be alert to God's quiet and subtle presence and movement in my life, and to allow myself to be affected by that, even transformed by it. Blessed are the meek ([continue reading here the article of Br Michael Green](#))



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<http://www.champagnat.org>

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