

Tudella Newsletter (November 2021)

... what a year!



- Yes, what a year we have lived! Hope, frustrations, online formation, loss also of a dear friend like Tissaka, gardening, creativity, birthdays, celebrations, lock downs, a big change in our plans and program because of the trials of Covid-19, and experiencing quarantine at home for almost one month.
- At a certain point, we have the impression that everything collapses and we are forced to ask ourselves what remains... and listening inside, little by little, a little voice is whispering... GOD, GOD remains, only GOD remains, GOD who is love, only LOVE remains. We have chosen him as the only Ideal of our life and because of this we have done our best to love, to love one another, helping, supporting, listening, forgiving, healing each other in many ways. In other words, TO BE A FAMILY, a real family. I have the strong conviction that all we have lived, even the moments of struggles, have served to weave among us this strong spirit of family, received from the generations of Marists who came before us, but also developed more by our commitment.
- Now, time has come to go, to go out, to leave the Cenacle of Tudella and to bring everywhere and to everyone this breath of the Spirit, the spirit of family so dear to Marcellin, in his last moment. Let us make the promise to always keep it strong among us, being sure that we always can count on one another. But also let us commit ourselves to give it to the whole world. It is the best gift we can bring to this tumultuous, but so wonderful, world. With the inspiration of Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti, let us commit to make this world one family.



Editorial ...
“Let us be
a family”
(by Réal)

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Our Fraternity Night

(by Gioan)

In our community, with 10 young Brothers and only 1 novice, there are many activities where we encounter one another every day, and one of the special ones is our fraternity night with our Shalom group.

There are four brothers (myself Gioan, Gaspar, Adelino, Isac), one lay Marist (Mateus) and one novice (Sujith).

We gather every two months and I am really happy to have this space only for us, as this is the great opportunity for us to develop our relationships and create the possibility for us to share and enjoy together. 😊

Our 'Mixed' Community (Duc)

On March 25th we had our First Profession celebration, and on that evening, we also had an initiation ceremony for the only novice based here, Sujith Alwis, from Sri Lanka. Due to the issue of traveling, the 10 young brothers are still in the Novitiate community. With the presence of Sujith, the Novitiate became a new-fashioned community, with 1 novice, 10 young brothers, 5 not so young brothers and 1 ex-novice whom we call our one Lay Marist. 😊😊😊 The only element we're missing to be a truly modern community is female members!



Kitchen Renovations (by Duc)

We are all living in the midst of a pandemic, so we have to adapt with the situation when there is any sudden change. The second wave of virus hit Sri Lanka strongly. Therefore we are in lockdown again with a lot of restrictions that follow. We had a mid-semester break, yet we could not organize an outing, so we decided to renovate our kitchen. There was a lot of fun during our work, as seen in some of these pictures!



Marist Studies

(by Rod)

Lockdowns around the world have brought many a deep frustration and loneliness, ... some have been brought to the brink of despair. But Zoom and other platforms have offered a way forward for many in our Marist world, including our young Brothers in Temporary Vows.

We realised here in Tudella that our 11 young Brothers post-profession weren't going anywhere soon, so, as well as teaching our Novices online, we decided to set up a similar online course structure for these Brothers, plus we've invited other young Brothers around the world to join in our sessions.

Over the year we've benefitted from short courses offered by many Brothers and Lay Marists. A big 'thank you' to all of you for the life and encouragement you've brought to our brothers, and no doubt received yourselves in return, most recently by Darren Burge on 'Prayer', Mick Sexton on 'Community', Chris Poppelwell on 'Laudato Si', David Hall on 'Marist Humility', and Ray Arthur with his weekly sessions on 'Champagnat'.



Supplemented by theology programs offered by online Universities and by IFRS in Manila (where the brothers were supposed to go for their post-Novitiate formation), we seem to have made the best of things under difficult circumstances.

So, lockdown blessings from all of us here at Tudella. We're going OK! 7

Our Post-Novitiate Life (by Duy)

Aside from our studies, our work here also includes time to work in the garden, in order to maintain our place. With good rain over the last few months, everything is green. We really enjoy and are thankful to the Lord, for all the goodness that has been bestowed in our life here.



“International Religious Brothers Day”

(by Duy)

Over the last three weeks, my fellow brothers and I celebrated International Religious Brother’s Day, at our local community in Sri Lanka.

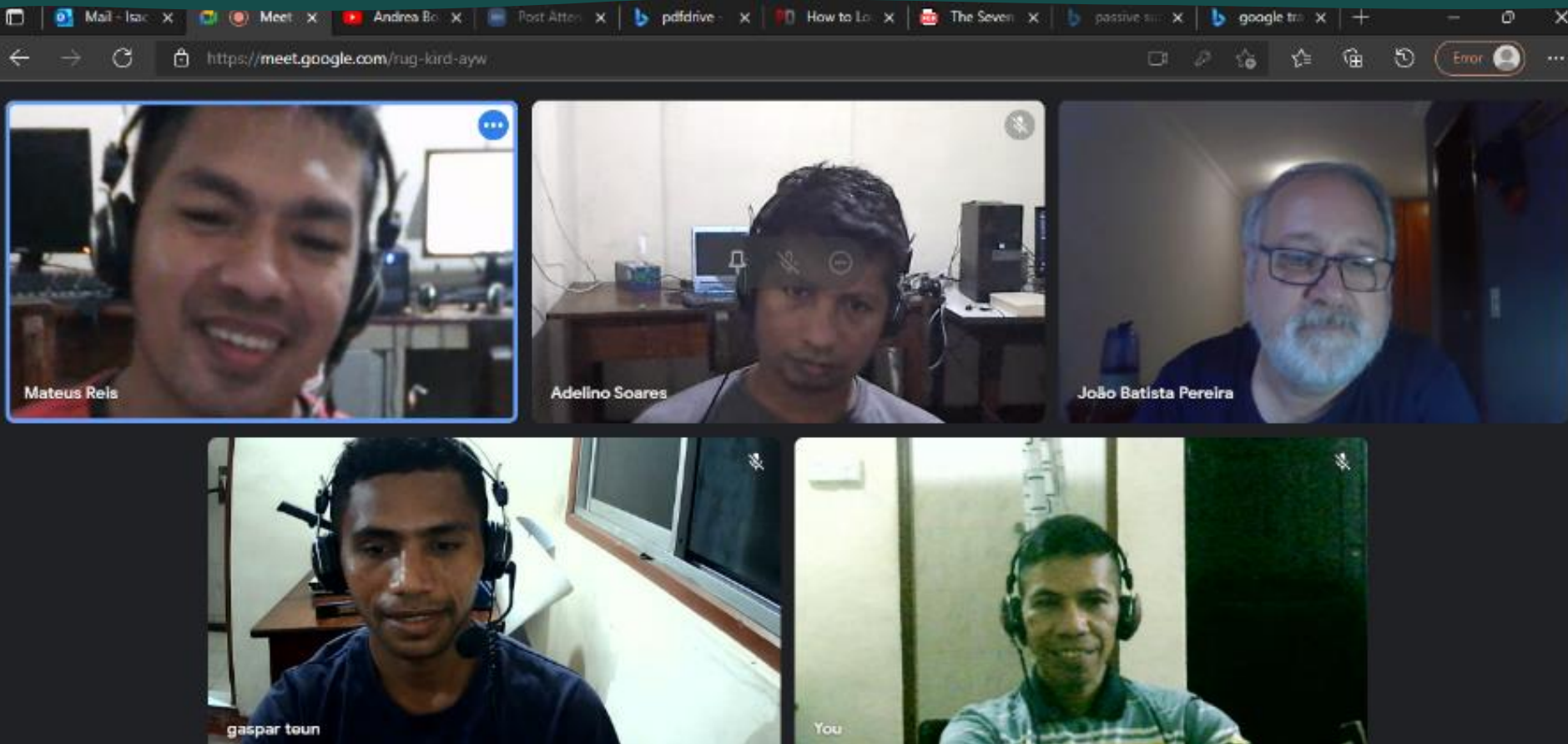
It was truly an amazing experience that I had in life. The reason was that we weren’t given the opportunity to celebrate like this on most days. The Covid-19 pandemic that is currently occurring, didn’t affect us as we had organized the event well.

As a result, we had invited more brothers from other local communities. We shared each other’s company had some drinks together, so it was truly a good opportunity to spend time with the other brothers. In my spare time, I love to spend time with my local community.



Portuguese (by Isac)

- On behalf of the East Timor Brothers, we are very happy to have had Portuguese classes with Brother João from Brazil, taught in Google Meet. We had these twice a week every Monday and Friday at 8:00 p.m. Sri Lankan time and 11:30 a.m. in Brazil.
- We studied grammar, vocabulary and practiced speaking. We give thanks to Br. João who gave his time to teach us during this period. We really appreciated his teaching, even though some of us still find it a bit difficult to express words in Portuguese, but at least we can understand what he has taught us.



- We celebrated Sri Lankan Independence Day earlier this year, on 4th of February. We were very happy in that celebration because it was organized by the Sri Lankan Brothers in our own community and next door, the Hermitage community.
- Particularly we would like to thank Br Chinthana, for all his organising. He brought different traditional objects to display for us. So, all of us in the community were really happy to be involved and we supported the brothers by doing the decorations in the chapel and the dining room.
- As well, at the start of the evening we had a Mass with a Sri Lankan theme, plus at this time we welcomed Br Godfrey to our community.



Sri Lankan Independence Day
(by Adelino Soares)

- [Photo: *Br Remy sharing some of Br Godfrey's story with us.*]

With great sadness ...

- It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our friend and Lay Marist, **Mr Tissaka Perera**. (*below in bright shirt, in a recent family photo*)
- On Wednesday 3rd November, after a minor medical procedure, Tissaka experienced breathing problems (not covid related). Quickly this escalated to a complete collapse.
- We extend our condolences to his family and friends, particular to Yasmin his wife, and his two sons, Shevan and Chamath. May he R.I.P.



A Day in our lives! ... in memory of Tissaka (by Adelino)

- Two months ago we had community work, but due to the heavy rain in the morning, we were not able to go outside. We decided to clean the house, classroom and chapel instead.
- Then in the afternoon when the rain subsided, we went to Tissaka's and Yasmin's house (our Lay Marist neighbours) to clear the tree in their front yard because of the overnight rain and strong winds. They weren't able to do it alone as the tree was too big, so they asked the community for help to cut the tree. So everyone in the community went and spent around an hour cutting the tree together.
- Then after cutting the tree we came back to the community and prepared for sport (5pm to 6pm). During sport, we enjoyed the game very much as all of us were excited to play football on the field. When we finished the game we came back and went for showers. Then we entered the chapel for community prayer.
- Before that we have 20 minutes of meditation, then we continue with the prayer. When we finished the prayer, we went to the dining room for our dinner together. Then we have recreation from 08:00 pm to 09:00 pm. After this, the time for our Examen, then personal studies and sleep. 😊



Rod's Farewell Speech



So Brothers, it's only a few days and we say the first of our 'goodbyes'. In 4 days, this Sunday, our Timorese Brothers will be off to KL, then a connecting flight on Monday, landing in Dili in time for lunch. We'll have to put up with our Vietnamese Brothers for a little longer. So in 2 weeks you will be off to India! Overnighting in Transit, then on to Hanoi, landing on Friday 26th November, in time for lunch as well!

Not to take too long about it, but like in the Gospel this evening, Peter is pronounced by Jesus as 'the Rock'. In today's language we'd call him 'Rocky'. The hero 'Rocky'. Pope Leo the Great was a bit of a rock as well. He died in 461, but not after a bit of quick dialogue, he repelled invaders from the North, the armies of Attila the Hun. Pretty good effort on the part of Leo, 'Rocky' and 'hero #2'!

So tonight we can call you all heroes, too. "Rockies #3." Your memories, like those of Popes of old, are cemented and wooded and painted on most of our walls here! And you have impressed and taught me and the rest of us 'not-so-young' Brothers some very valuable lessons in life.

For instance, you taught us a bit of Tetun, Portuguese and Vietnamese ... who knows, maybe Réal and I will pay a visit to your beautiful countries one day and use some of those words! At the moment we can say "Diak ka lai?", "Bom Dia", "Con ga", "Roi" and "Dau phong". They're a good start, anyway!

Over the last few years we have lived with men, real men. Heroes all of you. Men who could build a garage roof, who could sand and paint and weld and break down walls and lay bricks and concrete, and mend clothes and fix just about anything electrical!

Men who could slash through metre-high grass, collect papayas, climb for coconuts, grow corn, beans, peanuts and lots of green grass ... that you made me eat! Men who could chop down trees, and chop up trees!



Men who weren't ashamed to speak their truth in accompaniment, and cry occasionally when you definitely needed to. Men who could cook, really cook. I've lived with 11 chefs over these past few years. And now Suji, number 12. Amazing all of you!

And even though formators are not supposed to make friends with those they're helping the Holy Spirit to form, I think all of us older Brothers broke the rules a little bit on this one! A real friendship, though, is when we Formators can share more of ourselves, and some of our frustrations and inner struggles. So that will have to wait until we might become a member of a community in Timor or Vietnam one day. (when we get old! 😊)

The last couple of years consisted of some happy memories, wonderful trips around this great country, and also some great projects! There's a lot more to thank each of you for, but just a short little something:

Thanks Ade for the many hours fixing tired muscles, ironing out all those sports injuries, and of course the many things you helped fix around the place.

Thanks Duc for your 101 skills, including fixing just about anything. And all your sewing and gluing, and being generous to a 'T'.

Thanks Duy. Another brother with 101 skills, like wrapping presents, and spending hundreds of hours organising our new music folders, being the medicine man, etc.

Thanks Gaspar for being dependable, and generous, and cutting thousands of pieces of fruit for us! And those soups!

Thanks Gioan, Mr Movie man! What would we have done without you! And thanks for being one of the happiest volleyball players this community has ever seen!

Thanks Hai. Again, what would we have done without you! Our main Computer man. And who could forget one of the most costly community projects we've ever had ... Hai's swimming pool! ... and, of course, all those beautiful fish we love to feed.



Thanks Isac. For your wisdom and leadership, generosity, and speaking the truth, and I was looking forward to you playing at least one song tonight! Maybe soon in Timor!



Thanks Long for letting me win the occasional table tennis game. And for your wonderful cooking, guitar playing, and 1001 other things!

Thanks Mateus for those great haircuts (and thanks for not cutting mine the way you cut Long's hair sometimes!)

Thanks Nghi, another great hair-cutter, and fix-it man, and a bit of a pied-piper with the kids, and who can see the needs of people around us.

And thanks Phuc for progressing along the journey, and like everyone of your brothers here, growing up a bit over these Tudella years. Thank you, particularly, for your witness in showing us how to love those young people who need it most.

So, to finish. All of us survived, and we didn't have a "Luan" with us over the last 2 years, so didn't need to rush anyone to the Emergency Department! But there were times when you risked life and limb climbing a few trees. It was a miracle that no one fell out of one. Oh wait, one of you did... Long! Did anybody else? And there's the tree that fell on the bedroom section. Duy and Long didn't fall from that roof either. Miracles do happen!

Over the last years I've been saying "how long must I put up with you!" Jesus probably meant it of his young and undisciplined disciples, but I DIDN'T mean if of you, my brothers.

GB, save travels, and Réal and I will see you in a few years time. ☺
[or perhaps when one of you is in the General House, and we visit Rome again, we can eat a pizza and drink some nice red wine together!]





• What a great year!



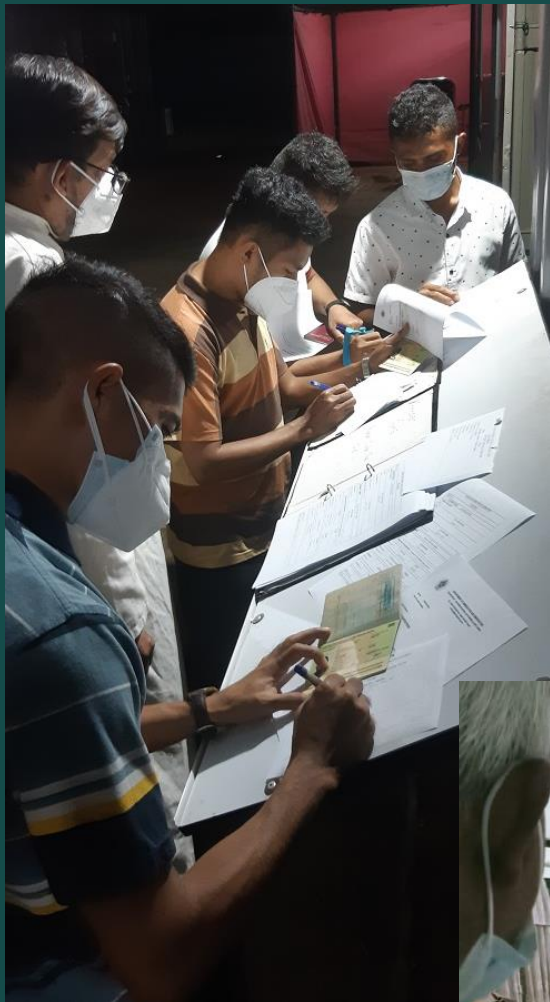


- The farewell T-shirt was a bit big!
- Filling out Transit Visa forms for travel via Delhi. (took all morning to do 😞)



- Farewell presentation and party on Wednesday 11th November.





- **Final Covid PCR test (fingers crossed!)**
- **Commissioning Mass, Nov.11, 2021: Gathered with Mary, Champagnat, and all our Marist Saints, for our final Blessing.**



Goodbye!

