



## PROVINCIAL'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE:

***So, the Lord himself will give you this sign: A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a Son, and She will name him Emmanuel, God is with us.***

***(Isa. 7:14).***



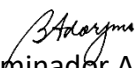
*Rejoice, God is with us!*

As we look back to our journey in the year 2021, we come to realize what daunting courage we had in braving through the tough challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of us might have lost life's conveniences, grapple with the loss of loved ones, and are still dwelling in the insecurity of an uncertain future.

These days, during our last week of preparation for Christmas, we are reminded once again that God is with us! He is here among us to journey with us. The Prince of Peace is in our midst and through Him, we are comforted by the loving embrace of God's protection.

And for us Marists, may we remain by Mary's side in her eager anticipation for the birthing of Her Son, Emmanuel, God is with us!

May all of us have a meaningful celebration of Christmas!

  
Br. Dominador A. Santiago, FMS  
Provincial

# Updates:

## KOREA-JAPAN SECTOR

Bro. Johan Oh Seon Gun, community leader of the Kobe community, came to Korea on Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> to spend some days of vacation in his home country. He had to keep some days of quarantine but afterwards he could move with relative ease during most part of his stay in the country. While at the community of the Educational Center in Seoul, he helped the Brothers to clean the trees and the whole outside area of our property in Seoul. In the photo below we can see the trimming of trees around the house.



Bro. Johan after his vacation returned to Japan on Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>. We will you well and send him our prayers and greetings to him and his whole community in Kobe.

Another Korean Brother working in Vietnam and, at present, in missionary contract with the Marist District of Asia through the program of La Valla 200, Br. Anselmo Kim arrived in Korea for his very much awaited family visit (he could not come before because of the pandemic) on December 7<sup>th</sup>.



Br. Alfredo Herrera also left Korea on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> to spend a couple of months in his country Mexico where he will visit his family.

On the other hand, the Brothers in Korea are closing up the one-year long program of the Pilgrimage of the image of Our Good Mother that every week was hosted by different persons and families to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Marist Brothers in Korea. Here we can see the arrival in a new home for one of the last visits. The Pilgrimage, that started on January 2<sup>nd</sup> will finish on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

Christmas is quickly approaching and so the Brothers are preparing for it. Br. Paul, Agustin and Tony are seen here below arranging the Nativity scene, in the hall of the Education Center in Seoul.

An so that everything speaks of Christmas, Mother Nature has also contributed to put us deeper into the spirit of the season with the first snow falling a few days ago.



*We wish you all a blessed and happy Christmas.  
May Jesus be born deep in our hearts as he  
dwelt in Mary's womb.*



*Greetings from: The Brothers of Korea-Japan Sector*

## MAPAC EXPERIENCES

*"When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around." - Willie Nelson*

I'm grateful that I experienced MAPAC for 5 months; it is short but meaningful to me. There are two things that I want to highlight. First, "presence". When I have free time, I usually mingle with our mission partners. I learned about their story in life the challenges they faced and how they overcome them. I also heard the stories of our neighbor the Missionary Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sisters (Little Workers of the Sacred Heart) who are our classmates in one of our classes in MAPAC. There are some issues and hardships that they experienced which I can also relate to my family, community and prayer life. The things that I can do are to listen and pray for them. I am also grateful to our Vietnamese brothers; they are so enthusiastic and competitive especially in sports. I can't forget them especially when we have events/celebrations. Despite the short time, I am grateful that they became part of my journey.



Second, "Enjoyment"; I enjoy my experience in MAPAC, especially in our classes. I admire Ma'am Marj in our music class because of her patience and passion. I was able to play a music using the organ even just a chorus of a song. For me, it is a great achievement because music is not my forte and now I enjoy playing like I'm listening to the music. I also enjoy our art class with Ma'am Cherrie. We use different kinds of art styles and use different materials. I can see the beauty behind the art of the artist. In our patrimony class, Fr. Bitoy taught us about different spirituality he also shared with us stories, experiences, and learnings he had when he was a young priest till the present time.

I can't deny that I felt bad and disappointed in some occasions but there are things I can't change but accept. I learned that instead of dwelling on those issues I should focus on the different areas which could help me to grow. Therefore, I could say thank you for the wonderful experience. I pray and I thank you, everyone. (Br. Jay Jay Escudro)



While looking back from my experience in MAPAC, I tried to ask myself this question, "did my experience in MAPAC help me grow as a person?" Well, I guess my answer is "YES". I stayed for a short period of time at MAPAC living with Vietnamese and Australian Brothers; different personalities with similar goals. We shared some interesting stories about our own traditions and practices that make us distinct from the other. Lastly, I believe that the insights and concerns we shared nurtured our own faith as a person. (Br. Dave Becislao)



I am really grateful that I experienced MAPAC community as a scholastic, though it's just 11-month journey in this international community. There were a lot of things that I discovered, learned and thankful for as a young brother. It's a bit sad that I just experience a little of the whole formation program in MAPAC due to the COVID-19 pandemic but living in a cultural and diverse community a short period of time gave me the opportunity to enhance and nurture my social and communication skills. Moreover, the accompaniment and formative studies in



MAPAC play a great part for my personal growth and development. All in all, these experiences gave a positive impact as I journey towards my vocation as a Marist Brother.

*(Br. Romar Dave Rano)*

## ENVISIONING LAITY ANIMATION IN CHINA SECTOR

Last December 14, Br. Andrew Chan, China Sector Coordinator, called a meeting which primary agenda was to share ideas on the context and steps forward to establish and strengthen lay Marist life in the sector. The meeting was attended by Agnes Reyes, Laity Desk Coordinator, Br. Tom Chin and Br. Elmer Jandic of Singapore Community.



## FRIENDS OF MARCELLIN AT NOTRE DAME OF COTABATO

Last December 15, twenty-three participants joined the Formation Program for Friends of Marcellin held at the Notre Dame of Cotabato. The participants are those beginning their

Marist life and growing in their understanding of Marcellin's charism and mission. Mr. Jano Dalumpines, the Campus Ministry Coordinator, convened the said gathering. Dr. Angela Undar, the school principal, was present in the concluding activity. She expressed words of encouragement to the participants as they continue the journey of deepening the Marist values.



## COME AND SEE ... AN INVITATION TO KNOW AND EXPERIENCE MARIST LIFE

On December 19, the Laity Desk invited individuals who are interested to know more our Marist life. A simple fellowship and getting-to-know the Marist way started the morning session. Novee Mae Barsatan from Notre Dame of Dadiangas University,



Andrew Cabrera of Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges, Jason John Anino of the Quantum Academy Inc., and Donna Belle Diso-Asido from Buayan National High School were introduced to some brothers of the community. Br. Romy Porras, warmly welcomed the group and Br. Edgar Ceriales, shared with them the Volunteer Program of the Province. The experience was meaningful for the group as they gladly look forward to a similar activity with more people invited to participate.



### Information:

- December 23, 2021 Zoom Link

Topic: [Br Rosendo's Golden Jubilee Celebration](#)

Time: Dec 23, 2021 09:00 AM Asia/Manila Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85107420797> Meeting ID: 851 0742 0797

Passcode: 617584

[Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting](#)

[us06web.zoom.us](https://us06web.zoom.us)

# THE ARCHIVIST'S CORNER

## #61

Br. Romulo L. Porras, FMS



## THE MARIST BROTHERS IN CHINA CELEBRATE 50 YEARS<sup>1</sup>

In 1941, the Province of China celebrated its Golden Jubilee. Had it not been a time of war, Province would have been able to celebrate the way they wanted to. However, to avoid any suspicions by the forces occupying China, all celebrations took place discretely within the walls of the Mother House at Chala-eul near Peking. Among the pioneers who had first set foot in China in 1891, Br. Antonin and Bro. Louis-Michel had the joy of being present to witness this great milestone of the Province.

Fifty years after the Marist Brothers had first set foot in China, the Marist Brothers had 22 schools in this country: five in Peking, five in Shanghai, three in Tientsin, four in the province of Shantung, two in Hebei Province, and one each in Hankow, Chungking and Shenyang. The Marist Chinese Province had a Provincial House, two Juniorates, a



**The Provincial House and House of Formation in Chala-Eul**

*Photo credit: FMS Message, November 1991.*

Novitiate and a wine-making enterprise.

Aside from these, there were also three schools in Ceylon which was part of the China Province. Based on statistics from June 1940, the Brothers numbered 215; out of these, 95 were born in China or in Ceylon. There were 141 boys in different stages of formation.

Though seemingly just drops in the bucket of Christianity in China, these were, without doubt, significant to the work of evangelizing the Chinese people to which countless Missionaries from different congregations had contributed. When the Brothers arrived in 1891 there was an estimated 500,000 Christians in the country. Fifty years later, the number increased to 3.2 million. There were many priests, seminarians and nuns, as well as churches, chapels, clinics, hospitals and schools. For many of the students who had attended the schools of the Brothers, the antipathy once felt towards Christianity had disappeared, as they experienced Christianity

for what it truly was. More than just a religion of conquering foreigners, the Chinese came to see it as a lifestyle that gave value to each person, promoting their well-being as individuals and as a community. In addition, contacts with the parents of their young charges aided in destroying the prejudices that the upper and middle classes once had against Christianity. Had Bro. Marie-Candide lived to see the fruit of the seed that he and other pioneers had planted and cultivated fifty years before, and the great leaps that the Church in China had made, his joy would have been boundless.

Yet he was one of those who had to go ahead and pay the price. Along with him, we remember also all the others whom God had chosen to work in heaven rather than on earth: his two successors – Bro. Elie-Francois and Bro. Jules-Andre; the martyrs of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 – Bro. Joseph-Felicite (along with Bro. Jules-Andre), Bro. Joseph-Marie-Adon Fan, and the postulant Paul Jen; and the Brothers who were massacred at Nanchang in 1906 – Bro. Leon, Bro. Louis-Maurice, Bro. Prosper-Victor, Bro. Joseph-Amphien and Bro. Marius.

### *Remembering the first Local Superiors*

At this point, we pause for a brief glance back in time to remember and pay tribute to the first three local Superiors, who shaped the beginnings and defined the continuation of the community, which, fifty years later, could be described as flourishing.

In its first nine years in China, the young community seemed to have really put in all the basic foundations and gone through all the joys and pains necessary for the birth and eventual growth of a work of God.

We have already written much about Bro. Marie-Candide, the community's first Local Superior. But here, we mention him once more to bring to the fore the remarkable blend of his deep union with God, his tenacity, optimism and charity. In the first years of the community, when the Brothers needed to sow the first seeds of a great work of God in a land that offered them more desolation than consolation, Bro. Marie-Candide was an indispensable figure. His constant conversations with God, his perseverance amidst the odds, his sense of humor and his charity, greatly contributed towards bringing the work ahead, while maintaining the family spirit and ensuring that everyone felt loved and cared for in whatever situation. All these were like a magnet that drew everyone together, closer, not just to him, but to God. He longed to offer his life in martyrdom, for the success of their work and for the conversion of souls. God took him

at his word, not through an instant martyrdom of blood, but through the steady, unhurried challenges of the daily grind, and, at the end of his life, through the exceptional charity with which he cared for and gave his life for his sick Brothers.

Bro. Elie-Francois was just the right person to take the place of Bro. Marie-Candide. In fact, no less than Bishop Arthou himself recommended him for the task, seeing in him the qualities of a true Marist who, like Bro. Marie-Candide, could be a father to the young community of Brothers. He was highly esteemed by the French Minister and the people of Peking. To the Brothers, he was a firm but paternal leader, a model of exemplary piety and an example of one who worked concretely but quietly and who did things at the right moment. He felt a great desire to become a saint, and to contribute to forming saints. But laying his soul bare before God, many times, Bro. Elie-Francois felt his inadequacies and incapacities. Yet, as a true Marist would, he went ahead,



inadequacies and all, believing in God's grace, believing that he was a mere instrument of a great work of God. Against this backdrop of humility, this nothingness in front of God while being open to grace, God, who is Everything, was undoubtedly able to work freely. In fact, in the brief period under his leadership, the works of the Brothers continue to progress and bear fruit.

Br. Jules-Andre had a great zeal for the salvation of souls, but to achieve this, he needed to be an example. He did all things with a great purity of purpose, a remarkable faith and an outlook which made him see God in everything. A humble and modest Brother, he preferred to see God in everything. A humble and modest Brother, he preferred to work quietly, anonymously, for only God to see. But as fate would have it, upon Bro. Elie-Francois' death, Bro. Jules-Andre was tasked to be the third Local Superior. Thrown into the forefront, this man of faith and obedience brought ahead the Marist Community in China in those tumultuous times. He navigated the Brothers through the darkness of a time and place where so few knew God, dealing with the authorities, the Brothers and all sorts of people and situations with much prudence, tact and foresight. He was a man of action and initiative; he looked ahead towards the future, made plans to increase the number of Christian schools in China, so that the kingdom of God could spread throughout the vast empire. He did not live long enough to see these plans materialize. Among the Superiors, it was he whom God picked for a martyrdom of both charity and blood; while trying to save someone else, he was killed during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900.

We would like to look at these first three Local Superiors as men who shaped the Marist Mission in China in different but all essential ways. Bro. Marie-Candide was a relentless trailblazer, ready to tread on new and unknown ground. His leadership opened new horizons for the Brothers and established their work on solid ground. Bro. Elie-Francois worked against the backdrop of his sense of unworthiness and nothingness, giving God all the room to accomplish His plans. Then to complete the foundations, God finally took Bro. Jules-Andre through a physical martyrdom. The contributions and the lives of these three were all of true Little Brothers of Mary, models that the Brothers who remained could look up to and emulate as they brought the China Province ahead, even decades after they were gone.

### *A full-grown tree*

By 1941, fifty years after the Marist Brothers first arrived in China, much had already been achieved in the work of evangelizing the Chinese people. But the Brothers were also aware that there was still much that needed to be done. Within this flourishing Province, there was much promise of a great future for their work in China. The community was full of life, the Brothers were generous and persevering, their works were going ahead.

But unknown to them, dark clouds were forming at the horizon, and no one could have foretold the great storm that was to befall this great province. # # #

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<sup>1</sup>Reprinted from the book *Dawn of the Word in Silence, The Adventure of the Marist Brothers in China*, published in Manila, Philippines by New City Press, 2017, by Mr. Spes Stanley Ku, Mr. Adriano Caballero and the staff of New City Press represented by Ms. Nathalie A. Pasa, principal writer, Mr. Jonas B. Lardizabal and Mr. Romeo Pelayo, pages 124-129.

# *Birthday Greetings to:*



December 20  
Br. Thomas Chin (Hon Man)



December 23  
Br. Elmer E. Jandic



December 24  
Br. Dave B. Becislao



December 25  
Mr. Anthony Poon Yuen Yui



December 27  
Br. Jacobo Song (Chul-seob)

## *Death Anniversaries:*

December 20, 1981 – Br. Augustine Obed died in the Philippines.  
December 20, 1962 – Br. Louis Gervase died in St. Genis-Laval.  
December 20, 1978 – Br. Pablo Adonino died in South Africa.  
December 23, 2014 – Br. Bernard Curtin died in USA.  
December 26, 1991 – Br. Herbert Daniel Dumont died in the Philippines.  
December 26, 2014 – Mrs. Charita Salibio, affiliated member, died in the Philippines.  
December 26, 1930 – Br. Nazianze died in Shanghai.  
December 26, 1947 – Br. Jean Maurice died in Shanghai.  
December 26, 2016 – Br. Paul Sung died Petaling Jaya, Malaysia



*Let us pray...*

- For the sick brothers, affiliated members, benefactors, family members, friends and students.
- For the victims of typhoon Odette in some parts of Visayas, Northern Mindanao and Caraga Region.
- For all essential workers and personnel.
- For all the missionaries around the world.
- For joy in our hearts, hope in our God, love that forgives, and peace on earth.
- For a meaningful celebration of Jesus' birth.
- For blessings to all families during this Holy Season of Christmas.
- For all our birthday celebrants, may they receive God's abundant grace in their lives.

