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# MARIST NEWS

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## MEMORIES OF BROTHERS BASILIO AND FRANÇOIS

### 21ST JANUARY, BROTHER BASILIO RUEDA

On 21 January we celebrate the 26th anniversary of the death of Brother Basilio Rueda Guzmán, Servant of God, whose cause has been presented to the Vatican. The drafting of the Positio has begun to prove his heroic virtues so that he can be declared "Venerable" by the Vatican. Superior



of the Marist Institute from 1967 to 1985, Br. Basilio was one of the most widely listened to and balanced leaders of the years of the Conciliar Renewal, not only in the Institute of the Marist Brothers but in religious life in general.

During the course of his life, Br Basilio put into practice what he so desired: "To Burn my life for Christ and for my Congregation". After a life of dedication to his brothers, to Mary, to Christ and to all the people around him, Br Basilio returned to the Father's house on 21 January 1996.

[Read more about Br Basilio on this link](#)

### 22 JANUARY, BR FRANÇOIS, FIRST SUPERIOR OF THE MARIST INSTITUTE

When Marcellin died on 6 June 1840, Br François decided to be "the living image of the Founder" and asked the Brothers to relive him in their own lives as well.

For 20 years he was Superior General of the Marist Brothers. He inherited from Marcellin a congregation of 280 members and handed it over to Brother Louis Marie, his successor, with more than two thousand brothers. From 1860 he was at the Hermitage, the Marist sanctuary built by Marcellin. Superior of the house, he was for all a model



of prayer and interior life. On 22 January 1881, he died on his knees while reciting the Angelus. The whole neighbourhood said: "The saint is dead".

[Find out more about Brother François at this link](#)

## general administration

- The General Council met on Monday for the "Regular Council".
- From Monday to Wednesday, several members of the Council and of the General Administration took part in the meeting of the International Mission Commission, coordinated by Br. Luis Carlos, Vicar General.
- On Monday and Tuesday, Br Ángel Diego, Director of the Solidarity Secretariat, took part in the meeting of the BICE Management Team.
- On Thursday, the Executive Committee of the Marist Inter-

national Solidarity Network met to continue preparations for the II Assembly of the Network. Brothers Ángel Diego and Francis, directors of the Bureau of Solidarity, took part in the meeting.

■ On the same day, Andrea Rossi, Director of FMSI and Ángel Diego, met with the Bolivia II project team to continue the Universal Periodic Review of the country.

■ On Friday, Br Ángel Diego will participate in the meeting of the Management Team of the International Catholic Centre of Geneva, of which the institute is a member and joins projects in defence of human rights.

PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA

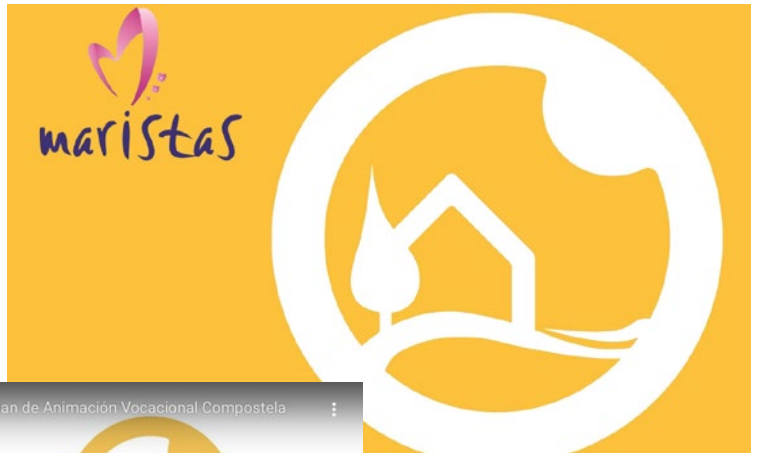
# THE PROVINCE RELAUNCHES A VOCATIONAL ANIMATION PLAN

With the aim of promoting and generating areas where young people can follow their paths of search and discernment, the Province of Compostela has created, in 2021, the Vocation Animation Plan. And now, in view of the Year of Marist Vocations (20 May 2022 – 6 June 2023), the plan is unveiled and highlights the importance of promoting vocation animation in all areas of the Province.

This plan is an invitation to all the people – brothers and laypeople – who make up the Marist family in the Province, to care for and promote the culture of vocations, creating areas where young people can welcome and embrace the calls they feel in their Marist journey. And that, during these experiences, they feel accompanied by those who are their closest contacts.

“It is necessary that the whole community (be it the educational community, the parish, the Province as a whole...) recognise the importance of vocations promotion and commit themselves to it, each one in their own area of intervention. Only in this way can a true vocational culture be created”, reads the introduction to the Plan, which is online.

The Vocation Animation Plan is a response to two great calls. On the one hand, the General Chapter of 2017, which invites



all the brothers to “be more present among young people, accompanying them with proactive vocational proposals and renewing our vocational action plans”. And, on the other hand, the Provincial Chapter of 2018, which calls to care for Marist life and vocation. Presented by the Province’s Youth and Vocation Ministry Team in May 2021, the Plan brings together the reflections and work carried out in vocation animation in recent years.

Br. François first Superior General of the Marist Institute

## 42. FORMATOR

The house at the Hermitage, relieved of its administrative function with the transfer of the General House and the novitiate to Saint-Genis, became a retreat house for some time. Later, it welcomed the brothers who were preparing to take the diploma of educator, that is to say, it became what would later be called a scholasticate.

François wrote in a letter from 24 January 1862: “I have here more than 80 Brothers to direct and form and a great house to look after, like the precious reliquary of Father Champagnat, where each of its stones offers us its religious memory. So, I do not go out, I live as a hermit, and I make neither trips nor visits, for reasons of health and to better fulfil the duties of my office”.

In 1868, it was decided to create a juniorate at the Hermitage. This house of formation received boys of 11 or 12 years of age who wanted to become Brothers but were not old enough to enter the postulancy. It functioned as an upper primary boarding school. It

was these children who began to call Brother François “grandfather”.

Every Sunday afternoon, the Very Reverend Brother François, “Grandpa” as he was called in the house, presided over the naming of the grades. He would take the opportunity to give a short lecture on religious formation.

One of these children would later say: “I remember that, during the first months of my novitiate, we were happy to see the sunset on Sunday. At about half past six, the whole community would gather, and Brother François would give his instruction. It was a source of immense joy for all to listen to his simple but functional words. He often quoted the examples and the teaching of the Venerable Father Champagnat. His instructions were therefore very much appreciated by the Brothers and the novices and produced excellent fruits of health in souls”.

Other episodes

## marist world

PORTUGAL: ASSEMBLY OF MARCHA COMPOSTELA



THAILAND: MARIST CENTRE FOR MIGRANTS, SAMUT SAKHON



CAMEROON: FIRST HOLY COMMUNION IN SAINT ALBERT'S COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGE, BAFUT



SOUTH AFRICA: ST DAVID'S MARIST INANDA



MEXICO: POSTULANCY OF MEXICO OCCIDENTAL



SPAIN: MARIST PATRIMONY TEAM OF MEDITERRANEA PROVINCE

## PROVINCE OF MÉXICO OCCIDENTAL PROVINCIAL RETREAT

The Brothers of the Province of México Occidental held their Provincial Retreat 2021, from 27 to 31 December, under the title "I make all things new" (Revelation 21, 5). The seventeen communities of the province participated both in person and online. The communities of El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, Sisoguichi, Tepic, Villa de Guadalupe, Volcán el Oro, Casa Provincial, Morelia and Kanasín (Mérida) gathered in the premises of Spacio La Valla, in Guadalajara; while the communities of Ciudad de Carmen, Mérida, Ocotlán, Cocula, Tepatitlán, Los Mochis, Monterrey and Mexicali, followed the Retreat via online transmission.

The meditations and reflections were guided online by Fr Javier Melloni SJ, who, from his home in Manresa, Spain, proposed a series of biblical texts for personal meditation.

The retreat also commemorated the Brothers who died during the year 2021 and the fidelity of the jubilarians of the province: Alfredo Moreno, Bruno Cortés, José Guadalupe Aldrete, (70 years of religious life); Eduardo Torres, Elías Pérez, Sigifredo Jiménez, Manuel Villalobos, (60 years of religious life); Miguel Ángel Santos and Juan Manuel Plasencia (50 years of religious



life); and Sergio Cáceres (25 years of religious life).

At the conclusion of the Provincial Retreat, the Provincial, Br. Luis Enrique Rodríguez, shared his initial experience of the last few months as leader of the Administrative Unit. Br. Luis Enrique noted that he found a lot of life in the communities and a new way of being in the works where the "being" is emphasised over the "doing" of the Marist Brother. The provincial also thanked the Brothers for their determination to continue to give audacious responses in the midst of the pandemic situation. The Brothers received the traditional commissioning to their communities with the sign of the tzik'ri (eye of God wírrárika), a symbol representing the ability to see through the eyes of God.

BOLIVIA

# MARIST ENTITIES RAISE THEIR VOICES IN DEFENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

Several organisations of the Marist Institute, led by the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI), have published a letter expressing their concern about the continuing fires in Bolivia and the consequent threat posed to our common home by the deforestation of tropical forests.

The Marists of Champagnat in Bolivia, belonging to the Province of Santa María de los Andes, are trying to insert areas of formation and action in the educational field of the works of the congregation in the country. From this context arises the interest in creating channels of reflection and denunciation, putting into practice one of the institutional priorities indicated by the last General Chapter: “To awaken in us and around us an ecological conscience that commits us to the care of our common home”.

Along with FMSI, the letter reproduced below was signed by the Institute’s Solidarity Secretariat, the Solidarity Heart Network, the Thematic Group Integral Ecology and Care for the Common Home, the Marist Sector Bolivia, the Marist Student Consultative Council and the Marist Solidarity Team Bolivia.



**January 13th, 2022**

**Ref: Statement on Fires in Protected Areas**

Addressing local, national and international public opinion:

The Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI) with representation at the UN, together with other Marist institutions in America, co-signatories of this letter, respectfully address public opinion and the local, departmental and national authorities of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

We wish to express our concern about the continuous fires that have been occurring in different departments of Bolivia, especially in the Chiquitania area, in the Madidi Park, in the Tunari National Park and in the area surrounding the Alalay Lagoon, and highlight the danger that they pose to our Common Home and our Mother Earth.

Let us share some recent figures that illustrate the scale of the problem:

- Bolivia is among those Countries with the highest rate of tropical deforestation in the region and the world. In

2020, Bolivia lost almost 300,000 hectares of tropical forest, the “fourth highest in the world”.[1]

- More than 3.4 million hectares of accumulated burned areas were detected in 2021 at the national level during the period January 1 to October 15.[2] Almost 95% of these affected areas belong to the departments of Beni and Santa Cruz.
- According to estimates, the fire, which has been burning for a month now, has so far consumed more than 450 hectares of forest in the protected areas of the Pllón Lajas Biosphere Reserve and Communal Land, putting the Madidi National Park at risk.[3]
- On October 24th, a major fire in Tunari National Park burned out around 650 hectares of native kewiña forests, pine and eucalyptus plantations. It also burnt crops belonging to the communities of Andrada, Tirani, Pacoya and Ornonipampa.[4]
- On October 26th, another destructive fire around the Alalay lagoon in the

city of Cochabamba caused an environmental disaster. Approximately 40 hectares were consumed in nine hours, destroying the nesting area of a wide range of non-migratory and migratory birds, the most affected species being: night herons, cattle egrets, gulls and ducks; the ashes compromised water quality and the fire razed reed beds and grasslands. The enormous damage left behind was visible: scorched nests, the charred remains of rabbits, reptiles and other animals.[5] It is worth mentioning that the Alalay lagoon is home to more than 60 species of birds, both native and migratory. It was also home to fish such as the platincho, which disappeared in 2016.

In recent years events on this fundamental issue – such as the COP26 Climate Summit held in Glasgow, Scotland – have taken place and diplomatic solutions to the problem are being sought. More than 100 global leaders have committed to ending deforestation by 2030 by signing a

Joint Declaration.[6] We are concerned that the Bolivian state is not a signatory to this document, which is why it is so urgent to bring attention to the current situation in Bolivia.

In the aftermath of this global event, we strongly support the Declaration[7] signed by 40,000 young people, who demand change from decision-makers, recognising that young people are the generation most threatened by climate change and valuing the important role they play around the world in raising awareness and providing innovative solutions on how to address this issue. We seek thus to ensure their continued participation, recalling that they are still under-represented in the consultation processes and implementation of policies and initiatives related to the issue.

We also agree with the statements of Alok Sharma, President of COP26: “Everywhere I have been in the world, I have been impressed by the passion and commitment of young people to climate action. The voices of young people must be heard and reflected in these negotiations here at the COP. The actions and scrutiny of young people are key to keeping 1.5 alive and creating a future of zero emissions”. [8] The theme of Integral Ecology

and Care for the Common Home is important for the Marist Institute. In Bolivia we seek to integrate spaces of formation and action within the educational program of our works, hence our interest in supporting means of reflection and critical dialogue wherever our social co-responsibility requires it.

Without elaborating further, we thank you in advance for your attention and for whatever actions the State, departmental and municipal governments and civil society can propose to address this problem. We send you our warmest greetings.

Yours sincerely,

- Secretariat of Solidarity
- Corazón Solidario Network
- Integral Ecology and Care for our Common Home group
- Marist Bolivia Sector
- Marist Student Consultative Council
- Marist Bolivia Solidarity Team
- Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)

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## PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA

# A BOOK ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

The book “Children’s Rights. A Shared Vision” of the [Institute of Marist Studies of the Pontifical University of Salamanca](#) was presented on 13 December 2021. Jacinto Escudero and Manuel Mendoza, editors, have collected the opinions of forty-five experts on the subject of the Rights of the Child, a broad vision of the Convention approved by the United Nations on 20 November 1989. The authors are of thirteen different nationalities.

The book aims to contribute to children being seen as persons with rights of their own; rights of which children themselves (and not adults) are the real protagonists. At the same time, the text emphasises the need to equip children with the necessary tools to become citizens who know their rights and duties.

The then [Provincial of Compostela](#), Br. Tomás Briongos, attended the presentation. He stressed that minors are not passive subjects in terms of the rules that dictate their rights, “but must be confronted as equals”. To this end, the consideration of children’s opinions and the implementation of initiatives in schools such as, for example, the one developed by the Marist Brothers, “Stand up, give your opinion and participate”, which is “fundamental for the recognition of children’s rights and of



children themselves as active subjects”, he underlined.

Jacinto Escudero, one of the editors, stressed that future teachers have a very important responsibility to ensure that children’s rights are put into practice. Therefore, the book is intended to be a necessary resource for education professionals: “Currently, there are 450 million children in the world living on less than £1.90 a day. Originally, everyone agrees to comply with the rights of the child, but it is a different matter whether they are fulfilled”, he insisted.

**UNITED STATES**

Br Philip Robert Ouellette, General Councillor during the administration of Br Charles Howard (1985-1993), died on Monday in the community of Champagnat Hall, Bronx, New York.

**PROVINCE OF L'HERMITAGE**

On Friday, the 21st, the superiors of the communities of France, Greece and Algeria will meet online. The superiors of the communities of Catalonia and Hungary will meet the following day, Saturday.

**EUROPE**

Representatives of the four provinces of the Region participated on Monday in the online meeting of the European Formation Commission. The team continued to discuss the care of people, trying to imagine what European education will be like in the coming years, considering the challenges, the weaknesses and the existing opportunities. On the same day, the continental communication team met to work on the contents of the new regional website, [www.champagnat.eu](http://www.champagnat.eu).

**UMBRASIL**

The Marists of Brazil join the National Conference of Bishops and Caritas in solidarity with the people of the states of Bahia and Minas Gerais, affected by heavy rains and floods, where thousands of people have lost their homes, other goods and even loved ones.

**SOUTH AMERICA REGION**

**REGION ELECTS REGIONAL PROVINCIAL AND SECRETARY FOR THE PERIOD 2022-2024**



In order to continue the work done in the South America Region and to consolidate the projects outlined by the five administrative units (Cruz del Sur, Santa María de los Andes, Brasil Centro-Sul, Brasil Centro-Norte and Brasil Sul-Amazônia), the regional council has elected Br. Pablo González Franco as the new Provincial for the Region and Leonardo Humberto Soares as the new executive secretary, for the period 2022 to 2024.

Br. Pablo González, currently Provincial of **Santa María de los Andes**, will replace Br. Inacio Etges, former Provincial of **Brazil Sur-Amazônia**, and will be in charge of regional leadership and consultation. Mr. Leonardo, management consultant of the **Marist Union of Brasil**, will replace Br. Alberto Aparicio, from **Cruz del Sur**,

and will be responsible for the coordination of regional initiatives and activities. He will also organise regional work, projects, committees and councils.

During the period 2022-2024, the region will be able to strengthen the joint goals and initiatives outlined by the provinces that have concluded their provincial chapters by the end of 2021.

The South America Region seeks to strengthen the Marist charism through education, health and social work. It also aims to network and promote internationality and exchange of resources between the seven countries of the region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. You can find out more about Br. Pablo and Humberto, [here](#).



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