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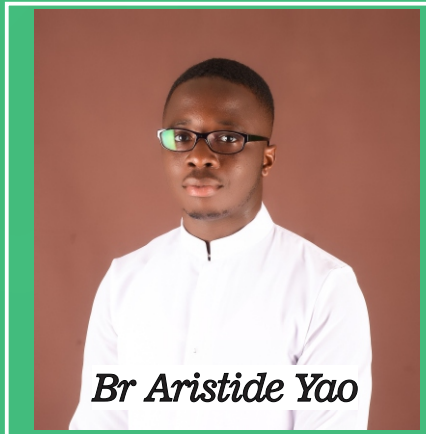
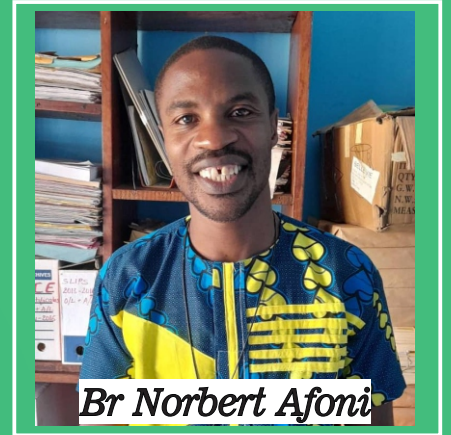
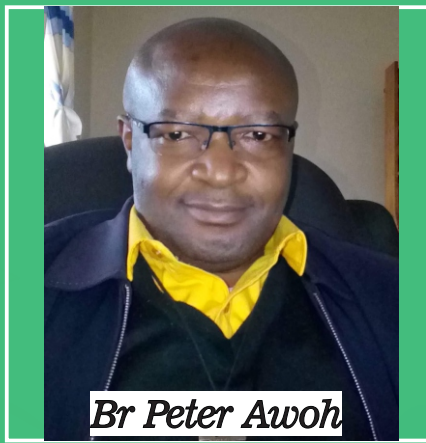
NEWS BULLETIN

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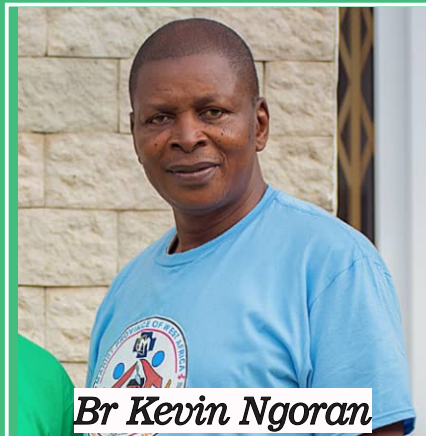
MARIST PROVINCE OF WEST AFRICA

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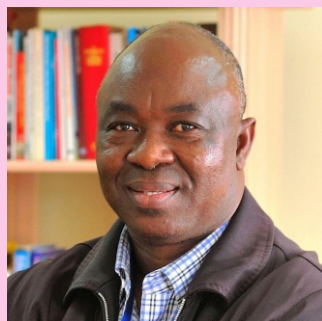
PROVINCE NEWS BULLETIN TEAM 2021 - 2022



From the desk of the Provincial

Be Prophetic Reminders of the People of God

Chapter two of our Marist Constitutions reminds us that being brother is our identity. We are brothers of Jesus Christ, brothers to one another and brothers to everyone. Moreover, our vocation as consecrated Brothers is to be prophetic reminders of all the people of God. As people called “to make Jesus and Mary known and loved”, we strive to live out the ideals of our calling. We devote ourselves to the evangelization and education of children and young people, primarily those on existential peripheries. This is our call, this is our vocation, and this is our life: to evangelize by being witnesses to the children and young people who are confused and distressed by the vagaries of our turbulent society.



What is the quality of our evangelizing and witnessing mission in the Marist Province of West Africa? In Matthew (28:10), Jesus told the women, to go and tell his brothers what they have seen and experienced. Br Oscar Martins (General Councilor) during the Provincial Assembly also encouraged us, encouraging vocations is about inviting young people to partake or share in our experience communion and as consecrated men. Our lives must reflect what we belief and live. What experience do you witness or testify as an educator of young people? How do you share your Marist experience with young people or the brothers in community?

Yes, I acknowledge we all have inadequacies in our relationships. Nevertheless, we can always improve with just a little effort. The apostles had shortfalls, but Jesus viewed their desire and enthusiasm and commissioned them to carry the good news to all the nations. What is your aspiration and passion in living the Marist Brothers way of Life? What is the Marist experience that you testify and witness to the people at your workplace? Do you share the gift you have received and experienced as a Marist Brother to others? We cannot evangelize others if we are not witnesses. We must be first lighthouses before we can evangelize. Otherwise, it will be difficult if we live a dual lifestyle. We must be witnesses of the gospel before we can spread or take it to the others.

Being lighthouses to one another and the children and young people we minister to means being able and willing to share or testify our Marist experience as consecrated men Religious in the Church. A wise man once said that, “if you want to be credible, take a look at your life”. He also said, if you are like every one else, your life is full of unresolved problems, unanswered prayers and faults of various shapes and sizes. But if there is a quiet peace beneath the chaos, if your face reflects the love of God, if people sense your kindness and affection, patience and forgiveness, then you are indeed a great evangelizer and educator and you will have a great chance of touching hearts and winning people for God.

As we enter into another new year in our new Province, let us make efforts to live lives worthy of attracting vocations to the Marist Brothers Institute. Let us be encouraged by Pope Paul VI who said, the “modern man listens more willing to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses”. Try to be witnesses and not just teachers! Be lighthouses to the students and staff in your School and other works. Be a lighthouse for your Brothers in the community too. Being brother is our identity. So let us be brothers to our students, staff and to one another in the community.

May Mary, Our Good Mother, accompany and inspire us in this New Year, 2022.

Br Cyprian Gandebo - Provincial Superior

CHRISTMAS CAROLS SERVICE IN SAINT JOSEPH'S TECHNICAL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, AHWIREN

A Christmas Carols service was held at St. Joseph's Technical Senior High School at Ahwiren on the 15th of December 2021. The program was under the theme "My soul magnifies the lord" (Luke 1:46). The host choir, St. Joseph's school choir, together with guest choirs namely, Christ The King school Choir and St. John the Evangelist youth choirs blessed the day with melodious and soul enriching songs.

The Brothers of the Postulancy Community were also invited to be part of the service. The service started with an opening prayer led by Brother Divine, and was followed by an opening hymn. A welcome speech was then delivered by Mr. Isaac Frimpong, the Headmaster of the school.

The service was aimed at celebrating and recalling the events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ. To bring to mind these events nine Bible lessons were read.

Apart from the different choirs, the Houses (Halls) in the school also presented their songs. The Marist Brothers together with the Postulants presented their carols, which was highly appreciated by the audience. Towards the end, Christ the Christ school chaplain gave a powerful Christmas message on The True Meaning of Christmas. The program concluded by exchange of gifts by students with friends and teachers.

By Wirba Hadrian (Postulant)



St Joseph's Students



The Postulants on stage

The Marist Pedagogy in Psychological Lens (Fifth Input)

For some time now, you and I have successfully established that loving the children under our guidance is essential. The benefits of this love are overwhelmingly great for the giver, the recipient and the school, where this cordial relationship exists. Nonetheless, the dispensation of this love among young people can be challenging; hence, prudence should guide it. St. Marcellin, a great visionary, well anticipated it and firmly advised his disciples to love their children equally (with fairness). The significance of this recommendation is as compelling now as it was in his era. In this write-up, I attempt at highlighting some views on the subject to inform our mode of dealing with young people. Before that, let us understand what Marcellin means by saying love them equally.

Like many psychological constructs, love has affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. The feeling and the thinking dimensions are covert. It cannot be observed nor objectively measured. Hence, there is a higher tendency to skew it to some children than others (subjectivity). The behavioural component, on the other hand, is overt. It is possible to observe and measure. By saying love them equally, Marcellin most likely intended that the manifest component of love towards young people should be discreetly fair. This requires a high level of discipline to fine-tune both the covert and the overt aspects of love. Failure in this regard, will expose us; the negative affective and cognitive dimensions will dominate us. Fairness is a divine nature and an invaluable human quality. Our Lord Jesus informs us that his heavenly father causes his rains and sunshine upon the good and the evil. This shows God's fairness. In his turn, when Jesus invited us to imitate Him, he added, 'act like your heavenly father!' Again, Jesus charged us to do unto others what we would like them do to us (Matthew 12:12). All this good advice might have fed into Marcellin's firm warning to his disciples – love them equally.

How do you feel about teachers who behave unfairly in treating their students? Put it differently, what do you think of teachers who love some students in their class more than others because they belong to a particular race, gender or socioeconomic status? Maybe, your natural feelings about them are discomfort, disappointment and lack of professionalism. The students we teach are likely to have similar sentiments about us when they detect any biases in our dealings with them. Unfortunately, such a feeling jeopardizes trust. Sometimes it becomes almost impossible to restore it. In other words, loving children equally develops and sustains their trust in their teachers. Besides, it is important to note that such a trust is a key to learners' academic performance, as revealed by the work of Tschannen Moran in 2004. Another study conducted by Voltz, Sims, & Nelson (2010) demonstrates that if teachers equally love their students, the beneficiaries tend to extend the same grace to their classmates.

It is certainly not easy to love children in your care equally. Their behaviours, physical traits and socioeconomic background can be sources of discrimination. We, therefore, need to make a conscious effort to cultivate and sustain this attribute of fairness. We can develop it by reminding ourselves in each passing day that “I must love the children in my care equally”. Yes, because God sends his rains on both the good and the evil. Eventually, our attitudes will be patterned in that line of thought. Finally, God's grace is an indispensable requirement. Moreover, we can obtain it through fervent prayers and daily examination of the mind. Through this pious means, we are likely to notice our mistakes and make good of them. May Marcellin, whose desire it was to love children all equally, intercede for us, Amen.

Br Eric Kramo

Christmas Celebration at MIC

Despite the persistence of the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ, at MIC was quite phenomenal. The traditional four-week long preparation for the Lord was marked by several activities organized by the various commissions both at the community and fraternity levels. These activities included decorations, intensive singing rehearsals, outings, and shopping. At the apex of this celebration was the various Holy Masses.

During Christmas vigil the community was ushered into the mood of the celebration. Based on various scriptural passages, the main celebrant shared reflections on the role of the night in the history of salvation. Then, on the Christmas day, the homely was focused on the trust that God has in humans.

It is important to note that, most of the religious institutes neighboring MIC community took part in these Eucharistic celebrations. The preventive and precautionary measures as indicated by the Interfaith Council for the National response to coronavirus in Kenya were religiously observed in the course of the celebrations.

We thank God for this years' Christmas celebration and we continue praying that the Lord may continue watching over us as we look forward for a prosperous year 2022.

Br. Denis Parfait Ngodebo, Fms.

YOUNG BROTHERS' ELECTIONS AT MIC

On the 27th of December 2021, the young Brothers of our Province at MIC had elections to select their leaders. These elections were conducted during their Christmas gathering. The elections that were done through secret balloting resulted in the selection of a four-member executive charged with the responsibility to serve the Brothers of the Marist Province of West Africa at MIC. They were Denis Parfait Ngodebo (Group Leader), Kra Benjamin (Bursar), Etienne Nyuymengka (Secretary), and Kouassi Jules (Prayer Organizer). Br Denis Parfait Ngodebo took over from Br Basil, the outgoing leader. We thank God for the success of the elections and we are grateful to the new team for accepting to animate the activities of the Brothers of our Province here at MIC.

May Mary, Jesus and Champagnat help them in their Mission.



Br Parfait Ngodebo



The new team of servants

Br Njong Basil Ngum

MCS Buokrom concludes the 2021 Academic year

“All's well that ends well,” said William Shakespear and all was indeed well, as all was ending well in December 2021 for St. Marcellin Champagnat School Buokrom. The seemingly timid resumption of many schools after the lockdown was now a thing of the past, as many had accepted the fact that the novel coronavirus had come to stay for a while. Thus pupils/students and parents had learned new ways of schooling amid the virus and so did St Marcellin Champagnat School Buokrom who concluded its 2021 academic year on Friday, December 10, 2021.

Before and upon resumption of schools after lockdown, many, if not all pupils/students and parents had countless fundamental questions in mind as to how the learning was going to take place bearing in mind the fact that the protocols had to be observed. Providentially, the seeming skeptical 2021 academic year has finished so fast like a rocket ship disappearing into space to escape from the earth's gravitational pull and the students and pupils were very happy in the very last week of the said academic year.

A spectrum of activities in this last week marked the closure of the 2021 academic year. These activities began on Tuesday, December 07, 2021, with the Carols day for the school. Wednesday, December 08, and Thursday, December 09 were specially reserved for recreation for the pupils; swimming to be specific and at the same time preparing for the Closing Eucharistic Celebration for the term and year, and graduation on Friday, December 10, 2021, which was the climax for the 2021 academic year.

This climax began with a thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Rev. Fr Isaac Manu, the headmaster of the Catholic Technical Institute adjacent to St. Marcellin Champagnat School. It was indeed dubbed a thanksgiving Mass, for the school had every reason to thank God for the grace upon grace that every member of the school received. The final activity of the day and the year was the graduation ceremony of 56 JHS 3 students and 55 KG 2 pupils. Meritorious students and pupils, both in commendable behavior and academically were awarded prizes to crown the graduation ceremony, thus all indeed ended well.

Br. Conrad Tameh



Life is a circle of CONTRIBUTION

I contribute.

You contribute.

We contribute.

When any party ceases to contribute, the circle will be broken and leakages will be discovered.

Whatever you are enjoying today is someone else's contribution.

Whatever you are lacking today is because someone who is suppose to contribute didn't.

Don't be that person, who because he refuses to contribute, causes leakages to the circle.

Every person on earth is here to contribute to make the world a better place.

Contribution is the essence of living.

You can contribute anything useful.

*You can contribute in knowledge, in understanding, *in wisdom, in love, in peace, in resources, and in finances.*

Also, You can contribute physically, spiritually, intellectually, financially, morally etc.

When you contribute, people will eat, when people contribute you will eat.

_ Ask yourself: _

What is my contribution in that place that I am?

What have you contributed to make progress?

What is lacking as a result of your refusal to contribute?

What is the way forward?

The answer explains the scarcity or abundance in that place.

Your presence is irrelevant if you have nothing to contribute.

In the office where you work, contribute, in the organisation that you are, contribute.

In the school, contribute.

In the house, contribute.

In the places of worship, contribute.

In the team, contribute.

In the training , contribute

In the community, *contribute.*

In the family, contribute...

in your association, contribute

In your street, contribute.

Everywhere try and contribute...

You have something to contribute: Contribute in Love...

Instead of complaining, contribute.

Instead of destructive criticism, contribute.

Instead of being embittered, contribute.

Instead of watching, contribute.

Contribution is the right use of energy...

Nobody destroys where he has contributed to build

*Contribute by passing this to others.

THE WORLD WILL BE WORTH LIVING IF EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES MEANINGFULLY.*

Solidarity Team

'Our call as voice of the voiceless to the poorest poor'.

Marcellin Champagnat lived among young people, loved them with passion, and devoted all energies for them. We in our turn resonate with their aspirations; we are filled with compassion for them, and we reach out to them in all their difficulties. (In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat no. 53). We recognize in this love for all young people, and especially for the poor, essential identifying marks of our Marist mission (In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat no. 55)

The option for the poor asks everyone to pay attention to the plight of those who struggle to survive, and to put the needs of these most vulnerable members of society especially children ahead of individual interest. We can never stop questioning an oppressive system that forces billions of our brothers and sisters in our country and around the world to live in poverty. Positive signs in the contemporary world are the growing awareness of the solidarity of the poor among themselves, their efforts to support one another, and their public demonstrations on the social scene which, without recourse to violence, present their own needs and rights in the face of the inefficiency or corruption of public authorities.

By virtue of our charism, we are called to stand beside our needy and poor students, to discern the justice of their requests, and to help support them without losing sight of their educational needs. As followers of Champagnat, we are challenged to make a preferential option for the poorest of the poor in our schools. To do this school can create conditions for marginalized voices to be heard; defend the defenseless; and

assess lifestyles, policies and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor. The option for the poor calls us to strengthen the whole community by assisting those kids in our schools who are most vulnerable. The Scriptures teach us that, the justice of a society is tested and judged by its treatment of the poor. God's covenant with Israel was dependent on the way the community treated the poor and unprotected-the widows, and the orphans (Deut. 16.11-12, Ex. 22.21-27, Is. 1.16-17).

Similarly, in the Last Judgment, we are told that we will be judged according to how we responded to the hungry, the thirsty, the prisoner and the stranger (Matthew 25.31-46).

Therefore, the preferential option for the poor is not optional.

Preferential option for the poor means that we as Marists of Champagnat are called to look at the world from the perspective of the marginalized and to work in solidarity for justice for marginalized persons in our society.

Br Augustine Njuakom



Final Profession of Br Lawrence Doe

It was a colorful day on December 18, 2021 when Br. Lawrence W. Doe made his Final Religious Profession at St Francis Parish, Pleebo, Cape Palmas Diocese, Maryland County. Br. Cyprian Gandebo, the Provincial Superior of Marist Province of West Africa, received the Vows of Br. Lawrence. Among those who graced the occasion were His Lordship, Bishop Andrew J. Karnley, Bishop of the Diocese of Cape Palmas who was the Chief Celebrant, and some priests and Religious of the Diocese. Also, present were the parents of Br. Lawrence, family members, Parishioners, classmates and other well-wishers.

During the homily, the Bishop expressed a profound gratitude to the Provincial Superior, Br. Cyprian Gandebo and his Council who decided that the final profession of Br. Lawrence W. Doe would be held in his Diocese. The Bishop termed the occasion as a milestone in the history of the diocese since it is the first of its kind for a final profession of a male religious. Bishop Karnley also acknowledged the enormous pastoral and educational activities the Marist Brothers had carried on in Pleebo between 1986 and 1994. It is his fervent hope and prayer that the Marist Brothers will consider returning to Pleebo to continue what they started. Pleebo is considered the cradle of the Marist Mission in Liberia. In fact, he expressed joy that all the present Liberian Marist Brothers are the products of the Diocese of Cape Palmas and he prayed that more young men will be inspired joining Religious Life. Finally, the Bishop thanked the parents of Br. Lawrence for giving their son to God through the Marist Brothers as an educator. In his Address to the congregation, Br. Cyprian Gandebo thanked and welcomed Br. Lawrence Doe in the Institute as a full fledge member with all the rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, Br. Cyprian expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Bishop Karnley, the Priests and religious of his diocese for allowing the Marist Brothers to celebrate the final profession of Br. Lawrence. Similar appreciation was extended to the Parish Priest, the Parishioners and parents of Br. Lawrence for their positive contribution during the celebration of his vows. The profession ended with refreshment!



Br Lawrence and Bishop Karnley



Br Cyprian, Br Lawrence
& Bishop Karnley



Final Profession of Brother Deric



Final Profession of Brother Deric

This Day Was Made By The Lord, We Rejoice And Are Glad.

The 22nd of December 2021 was really a day made by the Lord for the Marist Brothers of the Province of West Africa as one of them in the person of Rev. Br Deric NDI Ngong made his final commitment to the Lord. The solemn occasion took place in the chapel of Saint Albert's Comprehensive College Bafut. The Holy Mass was presided over by the Rt Rev Andrew Nkea, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Bamenda. A good number of priests and religious as well as family members and friends of Br Deric attended the ceremony. The event was also a moment of joy and communion for the Brothers in Cameroon as it was the first major event held at the college since its reopening after it was closed four years ago, as a result of the sociopolitical crisis that saw the closure of schools in the English Speaking part of Cameroon. There was joy at the ceremony as everyone saw life returning in the school campus. The occasion saw the active participation of the few students at the college who thrilled the crowd with dances. The local Christian Community of the Quasi Parish under which the school belongs equally participated actively through a beautiful animation of the liturgy and further entertainment in the hall. The Archbishop also took the opportunity of this occasion to welcome the Brothers back to the college and thanked them for their courage. He also cautioned the local Christians not to let the Brothers ever leave the College anymore.

In attendance at the occasion, were also some Marist Brothers from Cameroon working or studying in Ghana and Kenya. Conspicuously present was Rev Br Vincent Me, the Community Superior of Korhogo community in Côte d'Ivoire where Br Deric has been working since 2019.

Br Norbert Afoni



Br Deric Receiving the Cross



Br Deric and his parents

Silver Jubilee of Brs Teddy and Vincent ME



Workshop on Child Rights and Safeguarding

The Marist Province of West Africa organized a workshop on Safeguarding Children from the African perspective on December 10, 2021 at the Provincial house in Accra. The workshop was facilitated Dr. Nora Nonterah. Thanks to the latest technology at our Provincial house, Brothers from the other countries were able to follow the workshop via Zoom.

In her presentation, Dr. Nora Nonterah identified and explained the various forms abuse of children in Africa. Some of the abuses are usually seen as a taboo and as such, a tendency to protect the relationship between the families and communities concerned at the expense of the victim. In order to safeguard children, she encouraged that there be sexual education in our schools, policies for safeguarding children, training, openness, dialogue and above all cooperating with the local authority wherever there is an issue regarding child protection.

In her conclusion, she remarked that we in Africa still think that child abuse is not our issue and is not happening in Africa whereas it is actually a reality. As such, she called on us to be advocates of child rights and to be at the forefront in protecting and safeguarding the rights of children. She encouraged us above all to have a good pastoral care towards the children who have been entrusted into our care. Indeed, the seminar was an eye opener for many of us and we thank God for giving us such an opportunity to enrich and educate ourselves.

Br Cho Nchang



Noël à la Maternelle de Bouaké

La fête de Noël a commencé en amont à la maternelle par la célébration Eucharistique présidée par le père curé de la congrégation des viateurs de la paroisse Notre Dame de Nazareth, le 14 décembre précisément à 9h00. Cette célébration, fut déroulée en trois étapes (la célébration Eucharistique, l'installation des invités et l'entrée du Père Noël suivi de la distribution des cadeaux) rempli d'émotions et d'enthousiasme avec les enfants. En effet, avec les textes Liturgiques du 24 nuit qui était le réveillon (la vigile), le père curé a édifié les enfants avec une belle homélie parlant de la naissance de Jésus qui était un cadeau de Dieu pour l'humanité.

Après la messe, la deuxième partie de la célébration commença avec l'installation des parents d'élèves, la prestation des enfants qui sont entre autre les chants, les pièces théâtrales sur la nativité de Jésus, les poésies, les concours de danse et l'habillement du père Noël. En guise d'épilogue, le maître de la cérémonie avec son Disk Joker entamaient les festivités avec de très belle musiques pour enfants ce qui fut la joie des enfants dansant.

Le Directeur du centre scolaire Marcellin Champagnat le frère Germain donna l'ouverture de la cérémonie par un message de bienvenue aux parents. En aval après cela, la troisième partie de la célébration fut l'entrée triomphale du Père Noël tant attendu par les enfants sous une pluie d'acclamation et de joie des enfants. Le Père Noël faisant son tour d'honneur saluait et distribuait des bonbons aux enfants. Après cela, le père Noël fut installé pour la distribution des cadeaux à tous les enfants par section commençant par la petite, moyenne et la grande section.

Après avoir distribuer tous les cadeaux aux enfants, le Directeur donna le mot de fin en remerciant les parents pour leur soutiens morales et matériels pour la réussite de la fête.

En outre, ce fut une très belle célébration Noël avec les tous petits qui prit fin au environ de 17h00 par la prière et l'envoi en congé de Noël.

Frère Alex Kouakou



Newly Opened Antonio Community

I am pleased to share the life of the newly created Antonio community at Kpan Town, Margibi County, Liberia.

Kpan Town is located along the Marshall Highway, which is about 25 miles from the capital of Monrovia.

In 2007, Br Manuel Jorque, the then Provincial Superior of the Mediterranean Province and his council decided to acquire a piece of land in each country of the District of West Africa. Following that decision, a 25 acre of land (10 hectare) was bought outside Monrovia.

The beginning of the year 2020, the District Superior and his Council gave the authorization for the construction a 12 unit self-contained bedroom house. Other facilities included a kitchen, a dining hall, a chapel, a laundry and a communication room. In the month of May 2021, the District Superior, and his council decided to open this new community naming it after Br. Jose Antonio Abeijon, the first District Superior. On the 3rd of September 2021, the Provincial Superior, Br. Cyprian Gandebo and his council appointed the first members of this community, namely, Br. Samuel F. Stephens (Community Superior), Br. Lawrence W. Doe, (Community Bursar) and Br. Daniel B. Taylor (National Vocations Promoter) .

Life in the Community

Our life and daily routine is the same as any other Marist Community. There is a life Plan with a theme in accordance with the Province's priorities.

Apostolate

Due to the distance from our community to Monrovia, a collective decision was reached that the three of members of the community be assigned to a nearby school where they work. Br. Samuel F. Stephens teaches Religious

Education from SS2-SS3, Br. Daniel B. Taylor, teaches from JSS1 to SS1 whereas Br. Lawrence Doe teaches Business studies from Ss1 to SS2.

Apart from classrooms activities, each Brother is also involved in the various committees in the school such as Discipline, Pastoral and Psychosocial Counseling. As of now, the community does not have Wi-Fi connection. Our daily communication is through data bundle which is quite expensive. However, we are thinking of having a modem for internet services.

Br Daniel Taylor



Outside Antonio Community



Inside Antonio Community

Memorial mass

The Marist Brothers in Ghana gathered at Ahwiren on December 4, 2021 for a memorial mass in honour of the late Br Michael Oruche. Most Rev. John Yaw Afoakwa, the Bishop of Obuasi as well as Archbishop emeritus Peter Kwasi Sarpong attended the ceremony. The staff and students of St Joseph's technical college together with numerous priests, religious and well-wishers graced the event with their presence. The school choir animated the mass so well that it brought us memories of the life of Br Michael. In his homily, Bishop Sarpong narrated the events leading to the arrival of the first Marist Brothers in Ghana and praised Br Michael Oruche for his hard work, commitment, and fidelity to the Marist mission in Ghana. Also, there were many testimonies from past students and colleagues of Br Michael on the many good things which he did while on mission in Ghana.

The ceremony ended with a meal at the Marist Postulancy Community. Indeed, we are grateful to God for the life of Br Michael. The Marist mission is what it is today, thanks to the seed which our brother sowed many years ago. As we approach the 40th anniversary of the Marist presence in Ghana, we pray that the good work which God started through his servant Br Michael may continue to give hope to many....Amen.

Br Cho Nchang

The mission continues

“Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby country town—so that we can mission there also”. Such were the feelings and thoughts one could read on the faces of Brothers Harry Nyanti and Eric Kramo as they left Buokrom community and Saint Marcellin Champagnat School Buokrom in late November 2021 and late December 2021 respectively. The countenance that they expressed incontestably; mimicked the reply Jesus gave Simon and his companion in Mark 1:38 and a sign of missionary spirit.

The aforementioned Brothers had come to the end of their stay in Buokrom community and Saint Marcellin Champagnat School Buokrom respectively. These Brothers who received the news of their appointments to different capacities had to wait until December to move. It is worth recalling that appointments of the Marist Brothers working in Ghana were withheld until October as per the directives of the Provincial. That was most probably because the academic calendar in Ghana witnessed a shift and now commences in January as opposed to that of the rest of the countries of the province beginning in September. Accordingly, appointments in Ghana had to wait until December to take effect as per the directives and so, did do for Brothers Eric Kramo and Harry Nyanti. Their mission as Brothers continues in Champagnat community, Odenho Kwadaso, and Marist Preparatory School Sabin Akrofrom. Adding to their first and principal call as Marist Brothers, Brother Eric Kramo will also mission as the new headmaster of Marist Preparatory School Sabin Akrofrom and Brother Harry as the new MYM coordinator for the same noble institution.

We are grateful for their contribution to both the community and the school. The unrelenting joy that you brought to the Marist mission here in Buokrom will be remembered with warm thoughts and memories. We wish you the very best in your respective missions as well as working assiduously in seeing that, the dream and wish of our holy founder St. Marcellin Champagnat comes to fruition.

Br. Conrad Tameh

Tatum Community: A light in the darkness

Reflecting on the sociopolitical situation of Cameroon and our environment of Tatum Community, my mind goes to the recent circular of our Superior General Homes of Light, Caring for Life, Generating New Life. I am particularly touched by one of the subheadings in that circular "Marcellin, A Light in the Darkness". One who has been living perpetually in light may hardly comprehend the confusion of groping in perpetual darkness that is both metaphorical and literal.

In the literal sense, surviving without electricity from the main national electricity company for one year in this community is what must baffles anyone in the 21st Century. Coupled with epileptic internet supply that can't enable one function effectively within the digital world, I can only reminiscence the old days of ancient means of communication. With the current dynamics of covid-19 where most international and regional meetings have gone digital those of us caught in this darkness can but find ourselves often excluded.

The young often described as future leaders and society builders are equally caught in this dilemma. As education has come under attack within the context of the sociopolitical crisis in Cameroon, the young are left in the darkness of illiteracy, immorality, mental and spiritual decadence. In the aforementioned circular of our Superior General, he alludes to instances of light at different moments in the life of our founder Marcellin Champagnat. He ends up with a challenging question: "I wonder if, when crisis arise among us and we find ourselves in the middle of a storm, we are able to see the light shining close by, in the form of some event or concrete person". This aptly relates to the situation in which Tatum Community finds itself at the moment. The Christmas Season is usually a period of joy even in the midst of crisis especially for young

people. It is for this reason that Tatum Community has established this tradition of celebrating the birth of Christ with the children in a special way through entertainment. Irrespective of Religious affiliation, hundreds of children within Tatum look forward to this event with anxiety to dance and be entertained with some 'chewables' offered by the Brothers. This is our own little way of generating new life and light in the darkness of the lives of these children. Besides the annual children's Christmas party, the task of reviving the secondary education sector in that area has been a daring venture that is gradually exposing more and more young people to a glim of light. Irrespective of how insignificant these endeavours may seem, the adage that 'it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness' holds true. For if Champagnat had waited for all of France to be in order before founding the Brothers, nothing would ever have been done.

Br. Stephen Kpansa



Br Stephen with the kids in Tatum

Environmental Conservation in Tatum

***ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION THROUGH REUSE OF DISCARDED HOUSEHOLD WASTE IN THE MIDST OF THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CRISIS IN CAMEROON ***

Since the publication of the second encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* in 2015, a lot of discussions have been taking place at different levels to make his ideas more practical for the benefit of mankind. Within our Marist Provincial set up, a commission has been set up to handle this topic and not only hearken to the Holy Father's call, but ensure the wellbeing of our own generation, and of future Marists.

In a culture where proper waste disposal methods are not a priority for a majority of the population, environmental conservation through proper waste control becomes imperative. Following the adage that it's easier to bend the twig while still tender, the best area to handle the problem of proper waste management is the school setup. Still in the heat of the sociopolitical crisis rocking the English-Speaking regions of Cameroon, a teacher in Tatum has used the environmental and science club of the school to teach students not only the importance of environmental conservation but self-help skills as well. This is an initiative that will eventually be replicated in the wider Tatum community to gradually create a culture of proper waste management and environmental conservation.

This initiative equally fits well into our Marist culture of holistic education. Hence, the need to be creative in situations of chaos and disorder as the one Marist Cameroon is going through to continue with education with or without literacy.

Br Stephen Kpansa



Tribute to Br Michael Oruche

“Odupong atutu” - to wit, a mighty Oak tree has fallen. Br. Michael Isidore ORUCHE was the leader of the team of Brothers from the then Marist District of Nigeria, invited by the then Bishop of Kumasi, Most Rev. Peter AKWASI SARPONG, to establish the Marist presence in his Diocese. Br. Michael arrived in Ghana in early 1983 in the company of Br. E d m o n d N W O N K W O (of blessed memory) for this mission. They would later be joined by two other Brothers. On March 19, 1983, the Marist mission Ghana officially took off in earnest, placed under the patronage of St Joseph. These gallant missionaries arrived at the time the political and economic situation of Ghana had reached its worst as a result of the 1981 revolution, which was further exacerbated by the return of Ghanaians driven out of Nigeria (Ghana must go). There were also unprecedented bush fires in Ghana that same year, which ravaged the farms resulting in a severe famine. Life was difficult in Ghana, but our two audacious pioneer missionaries adapted and coped with it all.

Indeed, Rev. Bro. Michael ORUCHE can be fittingly called the founder of this Marist mission in Ghana. He was such a man of faith and daring, a generational thinker, a visionary with a sense of purpose; he was a man of profound fortitude, wisdom, simplicity and modesty. Bro. Mike, as he was affectionately called, was a man of commitment and dedication to duty, at the helm of affairs as Sector leader, Vocations Director, Postulants Master, Novice Master as well as Headmaster of our first Senior High School in Ghana – Bro. Mike, you were the all-in-all of this mission. You were a replica of our founder, Fr. Champagnat, in many ways. Like him, you were very well built and

strong, very hard-working, practical, and “common-sensical”. As a man of prayer, you hardly undertook any task without first commending it to God and would often spend hours praying in the chapel. You were exceptionally gifted and a perfectionist. Like our founder, you combined many roles as a formator, teacher, builder, and supervisor during the construction of the Novitiate at Sabin-Akrofrom in Kumasi and the St. Joseph Sec/Tech School at Ahwiren. You believed in divine providence and would undertake nearly impossible projects with that unflinching trust that God would provide. This trust in providence was clearly at play during the construction of St. Joseph Sec/Tech as you started this major project virtually empty-handed, a venture that turned out to be a dream came true. As a man of service and self-sacrifice, you often denied yourself lunch as you endeavored to procure enough foodstuffs and the other essentials for your Brothers. You were so generous and kind-hearted – a holy man.

Rather than the normal Marist tradition of first establishing a school and getting grounded in the new mission land before any vocation endeavours, the Ghana mission started with the herculean task of first promoting vocations, recruiting and forming these young men into Brothers before the establishment of schools, as requested by the local ordinary. Schools were only established with the indigenous Ghanaian brothers after they were well-formed. All this happened through the instrumentality of Br. Michael, who virtually “broke his back” for this mission. What a task duly executed! But not without a cost, as you broke down before your

return home to Nigeria, after 17 years of a great mission in Ghana. Your 17 years of hard work and selfless service to the Ghana mission produced 17 persevering indigenous Marist Religious Brothers (15 finally professed, 2 temporary professed, 2 novices and with a host of lay Marists).

As a formator, your style was both by word and deed, with which you gave those who were under your tutelage not just a solid and formidable formation but also inculcated in them that ardent zeal for mission. No wonder your pioneer novices (Brothers Francis AMOAKO ATTA and Philip NINFAASIE) later emulated your missionary example as they went on very challenging missions to Cambodia and China respectively. You were our model and hero. Fr. Joseph Mary OFFEH, who left the novitiate to become a Diocesan priest, still fondly remembers you as the one who laid the foundation of his priestly vocation. He says that you made him what he is today and will ever be grateful to you. Alex GYEBO, recalls this beautiful song you taught him as a novice, which for him, encapsulates your entire being:

Like the sunflower, which follows every movement of the sun, so I turn towards you, to follow you, my God. In simplicity, humility, modesty, and fidelity I follow.

John OWUSU (alias Sheboroo), a Dominican monk and your former novice, believes you are a prophet and a saint as he vividly remembers your prophetic words that keep manifesting in his life. Hearing your demise, your bosom friend, Mr. George ASASE BOADI exclaimed, "Great man! I was a dead Catholic until I met Br Mike. Like the many others you converted here in Trede village, you cemented my Christian faith and there is no turning back. You put me through my infant paces and considered me as your brother, friend, and spiritual director, during your time with me here in Ghana. Your words were always puzzling, auspicious, and portentous. Fare thee well!"

As Headmaster, your approach to education was unique; you turned the whole village of Ahwiren where you established the first and only Senior High School of the Marist Brothers in Ghana into a holistic learning center as you taught the leaders of Ahwiren and its environs some basic group dynamics, organized non-formal education for the old and elderly, brought in health personnel and nutritionists to give the villagers some basics of hygiene, health care, and good dieting. You mobilized the entire village of Ahwiren for storytelling at night. You hardly enjoyed your sleep as the villagers kept waking you up at odd hours to carry their women in labor, and the sick to Bekwai, the only hospital in the District capital some 15 Km away. This endeared you not just to the villagers of Ahwiren but indeed, the inhabitants of surrounding villages. You, Br. Michael, impacted on the chief and people of Ahwiren so much so that they conferred on you the chieftaincy title of "Sumpa Hene" – Chief of exceptional service. You were such a repository of wisdom that the people also named you "Kweku Anansi" (the spider) in twi, the equivalence of the "tortoise" in Igbo folklore. Because of your affable and admirable character at Ahwiren and in Kumasi, many families named their children after you. You were such a disciplinarian that St. Joseph Senior High School virtually turned into a borstal home as some parents brought their wards just for rehabilitation.

The spokesperson for the past students of SAJOSTECH (Br Eric KRAMO, fms) has this for you: "But for you, I and thousands of other students who passed through St. Josephs School would have

been Junior School dropouts. You were also such a noble and excellent teacher whose demeanor, actions, and life taught than your words. These attributes made you a model to your students. We are ever indebted to you. May you receive a full reward for your works with your maker". To immortalize your name at St. Joseph Sec/Tech School, the Board of Governors, School Chaplaincy and Management named the first block you built on the school campus after you. The role you played at the level of the Diocese cannot be forgotten. You virtually acted as a member of the senate of consulters. You played an exceptional role before, during, and after the first Kumasi Diocesan synod ever held in 1985. You did not only open the eyes of many priests of the then Kumasi Diocese but also educated the entire Church of Kumasi about the life or vocation of the religious Brother in the Church. Indeed, you gave meaning and brought value, dignity and esteem to the Brothers' vocation through the quality of your life. You did paint a glowing picture of not just the Marist Brother but also of the religious Brother, for the local Church of Kumasi and the church of Ghana. Your contributions to the local development of the Kumasi Archdiocese is written in the indelible ink of gold.

As a Major Superior, you were a pillar of the Conference of Major Superiors of Ghana and acted as a role model, mentor, and spiritual director to many religious - both male and female, resident in Ghana at the time. A former Provincial of a Sisters Congregation and a long time Executive Secretary to the Major Superiors Conference of Ghana could hardly contain her emotions, upon hearing of the sad news of your passing as she exclaimed, "Oh dear! Br. Michael was my spiritual daddy - I remain a religious Sister today because of him."

In 1995 the St. Joseph Community of Ahwiren received a sudden and thrilling message of the invitation of their Superior, Br. Michael Oruche by Pope St. John Paul II, as the only

representative of all African religious to an extraordinary Synod in Rome. Of course, this was a rare honor done not just you, Br. Michael, but also your community of St. Joseph, all Marist Brothers worldwide, indeed, all Religious of Africa.

Br. Michael, be proud of your accomplishment on earth as your great deeds live on after your exit. The missionary seed you sowed in Ghana is striving as the novitiate you built at Sabin-Akrofrom is booming with young men desiring to enter Marist Life. Your School at Ahwiren gives quality education to thousands of students by the year, and the sector you established has just metamorphosed into a Province of West Africa with a Ghanaian, as its first Provincial. The brothers of this new province are very grateful to you for the Marist mission in Ghana. We are fervently praying that you enter into that beatific vision of God for a reward well-deserved.

Today, as you transit into the bosom of the Lord, we want to echo with you these words of St. Paul: "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me but to all who crave His appearing..." (2 Tim 4: 6 – 8). Br. Michael, fare thee well till we meet again!

Ijeoma Nwanem nwoke!

Ijeoma Nwa Chineke!

Ijeoma Nwa Nnewi!

Dayie! Damirifa due!

Bro. Philip NINFAASIE

Birthdays of brothers

February

2nd : Br Martin Nguma
 9th : Br Deric Ngong Ndi
 20th : Br Francis Veye
 22nd : Br Anthony Doe Siryeh
 26th : Br Joseph Kwame M.

March

5th : Br Carlos G. Zamora
 12th : Br Mbiatem Eyong
 13th : Br Simon Kanjam
 13th : Br Lawrence Doe
 24th : Br Tansam Yuonji
 29th : Br Wisenyuy Habib

Provincial 's Itinerary (February & March 2022)

**Fev 07 - 10, 2022 : Canonical Visitation to Postulancy
 Community - Ahwiren**

Fev 15, 2022 : Dialogue with Principals / Headmasters (Virtual)

Fev 16, 2022 : Dialogue with Community Leaders (Virtual)

Fev 19, 2022 : 2nd Quaterly Financial Report

(Provincial Bursar) + Commissions Reports

**Mar 03 - 04, 2022 : Provincial Council (virtual) Teams /
 Commissions 2nd Reports**

Mar 7, 2022 : Travel from Accra to Rome

Mar 08 - 26, 2022 : General Conference - Rome

Mar 29, 2022 : Travel from Rome to Accra

PHOTOS OF INTEREST

Kids of Tatum during Christmas Celebration



Brothers celebrating Christmas in MIC



Graduation at St Marcellin Chamapgnat School - Buokrom



Inside Antonio community - Liberia



**MARIST PROVINCE OF WEST AFRICA
PROVINCE MARISTE DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST**

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