NOVEMBER 20

WORLD CHILDREN’S DAY

“What are we holding in our arms? Simeon took Jesus in his arms” (Homily of Pope Francis, February 2, 2022, at the Mass for Consecrated Religious).

In his message to consecrated people, Pope Francis offered a few ideas that also have a lot to do with the celebration of Universal Children’s Day. Although directed at consecrated people, these suggestions can, I believe, be taken up by all Christians serious about their faith and baptismal commitment.

The story of the dear old man Simeon, as told in the Gospel, gives us some clues for our annual celebration. God has placed his Son into our arms because accepting Jesus is the heart and centre of faith. God gives the beloved Son to us, to each one of us Christians and Marists, to the whole of humanity. And God does this in the person of a defenceless, needy, innocent, trusting, tender baby with all of his life ahead of him. Shouldn’t this be our attitude when we meet a child? Shouldn’t tenderness overflow in our hearts every

general administration

- From Monday to Friday, the Executive Committee of the International Marist Solidarity Network will meet in Mexico, with the participation of Br. Ken, General Councilor, Brothers Ángel Diego and Francis, directors of the Secretariat of Solidarity and Andrea Rossi, director of FMSI.
- On Monday, brothers Luis Carlos, Vicar General, and Ben, General Councilor, met with Br. Beto, Director of the Secretariat of Education and Evangelization, to plan the sequence of the revision of the document In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat.
- On the 16th, the meeting of the International Commission of the Marist Mission was held via zoom, with the participation of several people from the General Administration who make up the group chaired by H. Luis Carlos.
- On Thursday, the general councilors linked to the Oceania region began their visit to different realities of the Marist presence in Australia, which will last until December 15, including participation in the first chapter of the new Estrella del Mar Province, which it opens on December 8. That same day, Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, participated in the webinar "Vocational Culture", promoted by the Province of Mediterránea.
- From November 17 to 22, Br. Luis Carlos participates in the Marist formation meeting (FORMAR) and communities in Guatemala.
time we encounter a child or young person? Isn’t this what Marcellin wanted for each one of us? Isn’t this what each of us would do if every time we are with children and young people we see the face of Jesus Christ in their faces? Shouldn’t we let ourselves be led by the Spirit in our work and activities on behalf of children? Shouldn’t the compassionate gaze of God be ours as Marists, brothers and lay-people?

The Pope, in the homily mentioned above, invites us to two types of gaze that can help us to be true Champagnat Marists in our mission of protecting, caring for and educating the thousands of children and young people in our schools. Pope Francis calls us to have “a gaze that can look within” and “one that can see beyond surface appearances”. He counsels us to discover “the cracks of fragility and failures” in the young, because in such places we can also discover the presence of God.

As the Solidarity Secretariat, we want to remind us all of the importance of this day, of doing something visible that shows our commitment to children and young people, especially those most in need. So, we invited the Province delegates for Solidarity and Rights around the whole Marist Institute to celebrate this date by some concrete action, linking up as a “global family” on our journey “with children and young people” to show our firm commitment “to promote and defend the Rights of the Child” (Message of the XXII General Chapter to Champagnat Marists) using the hashtag #ChildRights_Maristas.

May we take this opportunity to thank you for all you are doing in your particular context through your life and ministry on behalf of children and young people, especially those “on the margins of life”. Thank you for who you are and what you are doing. Thank you for being, so often, the face and hands of God’s tender mercy towards our children and young people. Thank you for having a tender gaze, like Simeon, towards the child-God in the person of each girl and boy in our educational centres.

Br. Angel Diego García Otaola
Director of the Solidarity Secretariat
**Norandina**

The Marists of Ecuador celebrated on November 4 in Catoococha the 65 years of Marist presence in the country, and remembered the arrival of the 4 brothers in 1957: Luciano Gutiérrez García, Alberto Canón Presa, Jaime Martínez González and Isidro García.

**Brasil Centro-Sul**

The Marist Memorial of Curitiba has just made two publications available to the public: "Rules of life: an itinerary to live the Gospel from the Marist perspective", by Br. Sebastião Ferrarini (Marist Studies 4) and "The Rule of the Little Brothers of Mary - 1837" (Marist Sources 3).

**México Occidental**

From November 10 to 12, the Provincial Meeting of Local Child Protection Coordinations was held at Spacio La Valla in Guadalajara, Jalisco. The participants had the opportunity to share good practices and plan actions that allow "caring for and generating Marist Life" in educational works in favor of Boys, Girls and Adolescents.

**Madagascar**

On November 12, the admission ceremony of 13 candidates to Marist religious life in the postulancy of Ampahidrano took place, presided over by the Provincial, Br. Michel Maminaina. The formation house also has another 6 young people, who have started their second year of postulancy.

**GENERAL HOUSE**

**MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING**

From the 31 October to the 2 November the International Commission of Child & Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding held a meeting in the General House in Rome. The Commission welcomed two new members, Elizabeth Gallagher from Australia and Fernando Dominguez from the province of Mediterranea. Both have brought considerable experience to the commission and their input to the work of the commission is greatly valued.

The Commission discussed various important themes as we looked at the needs of the institute in the important area of the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Much time was spent discussing the need to ensure that provinces had developed and implemented their own child protection policies.

The importance role of the provincial protection officer was also looked at. There was also some discussion around the various experiences of compensating victims of childhood sexual abuse.

The members of the commission are: Br. Ben Consigli, General Council; Fernando Dominguez, Europe (L’Hermitage); Br. Fortune Chakasara, Africa (Southern Africa); Elizabeth Gallagher, Oceania (Australia); Br. Ken McDonald, Chair – General Council; Nancy Camilleri – Europe (West Central Europe); Br. Óscar Martín, General Council; Br. Rogerio Mateucci, América Sur (Brasil Centro-Sul).
IBÉRICA
UNICEF RECOGNISES FIVE SCHOOLS AS LEADERS IN CHILD RIGHTS

Five Marist schools of the Province of Iberica have been recognised by UNICEF as Benchmark Centres in Education for Child Rights and Global Citizenship. In this year’s round, the fourth, UNICEF Spain has awarded such recognition to 149 public, private and state-subsidised schools throughout Spain. These join those already certified in previous rounds, making a total of 186 centres.

This means that almost 100,000 students in infant, primary and secondary education attend schools every day where Child rights are known, promoted and defended, and which have made the Convention on the Rights of the Child the basis of their educational project.

Five of these schools belong to the Marist Province of Iberica: Champagnat School in Guadalajara (which has improved its status, moving up from the initial to the advanced level), Santa María la Real School in Sarriguren, Navarre (which has achieved recognition at an advanced level at its first attempt); and Maristak Durango (Bizkaia), Santa Maria Maristas de Villalba (Madrid) and Our Lady of Guadalupe de Navalmoral (Cáceres), which have achieved the initial level in this round.

Other Marist schools were recognised as “Benchmark Centres”. In Catalonia, 9 schools and 12 in the Province of Compostela.

Benchmark Centres in Education for Child Rights and Global Citizenship

The programme establishes three status levels (initial, advanced and excellent) depending on the degree of incorporation of the Convention that they have achieved. Each school is accompanied throughout the process by a UNICEF Child Rights Education advisor, who provides information and tools to schools according to their needs. This recognition remains valid for two academic years.

In this programme, UNICEF offers training in Child Rights and Global Citizenship to the teaching staff at educational centres and encourages the development of procedures for the greater participation of young people in the life of the schools. The programme also promotes the creation of an environment for the protection and well-being of students and an improvement in the school climate through mutual respect and relationships within the educational community.

See other details.
KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

THE PROVINCES OF MEDITERRÁNEA AND L’HERMITAGE PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT

The Mediterranean and L’Hermitage European Marist Provinces have participated in the Keeping Children Safe international summit that took place online from November 8 to 10. The summit, entitled “Faith and Organizational Child Protection”, aimed to bring professionals and researchers from around the world together to exchange ideas, experiences, challenges, and good practices on child protection in religious organizations or those inspired in faith.

On behalf of the Marists were Fernando Domínguez and Raimon Novell. Fernando Domínguez, Delegate for the Protection of Children of the Marist Mediterranean Province, spoke about the “Empowerment of Children, protection and creation of safe environments in religious socio-educational works”.

Raimon Novell, Coordinator of the Child Protection Team of the Champagnat Foundation and Marist Province of L’Hermitage, spoke at the conference on “Children’s Rights and safeguarding within the framework of a religious organization”; the moderation of the panel “Transformations in organizations for a cultural change regarding safeguarding” and the “case of the H3 program in Spain and Portugal”.

In the panel on “Program H3: Transforming heads, hands and hearts”, moderated by Irene Salgado (Porticus) and Raimon Novell (Marist), were known the answers of Catholic organizations for the development of a culture of protection and good treatment in Catholic organizations that work with children in Spain and Portugal.
The International Finance Council held its regular half-yearly meeting from 7 to 10 November in General Santos City, Philippines. The members of the Council, chaired by Br. Jorge Gaio, Bursar General, attended – plus Mr. Jonathan Montovani, who has been helping with the financial analysis of DOMUS – PLANUS, and Br. Danny, Bursar of the East Asia Province.

At this meeting, the accounting and financial situation of the Institute was reviewed using the information that the administrative units have registered on the Domus – Planus programme. In addition, the planning of the next meeting of bursars of the administrative units to be held in October 2023 and their experience of a prior immersion in another province were reviewed. Some time has also been dedicated to reflecting on the financing model of the General Administration.

During the meeting, the importance of continuing to consolidate the progress of the sustainability project and the importance of the Bursar General’s working closely with some administrative units of the Institute were noted. Some time was also spent in getting to know a number of the apostolic works and communities in the Philippines.

After the Council meeting, Brothers Jorge Gaio and Goyo Linacero continued their visit of the East Asia Province.

Following the 1999 independence referendum in Timor-Leste, Brothers from the Melbourne Province arrived in 2000 at the request of the Bishop of the Diocese of Baucau to commence a teacher training college. Under the leadership of successive Brothers, the College, officially Instituto Católico Para Formação de Professores (ICFP), has developed and grown in stature and reputation. The ICFP is regarded as one of the tops performing tertiary Institutions in the country.

Over the past 22 years, Marist connections with East Timor have grown and deepened. Australian Marist Solidarity (AMS) has provided funding for a range of projects, including reconstruction of schools, post-school skillling, social support, and inclusion opportunities. Negotiations to establish a Marist school in East Timor started over 15 years ago. They have now been successful, and a school is being built in Lautem within the Baucau Diocese.
Since the Australian Province decided to accept East Timorese candidates, 12 young men have taken First Vows. Half of these are studying at ICFP and another six will pursue further formation at MAPAC in Manila from the start of 2023. There are currently eight second year Novices, and five first year novices.

In addition to the East Timorese, three Brothers administer or teach at the ICFP. One Brother is the Master of Scholastics, one Brother directs the Aspirancy programme, and one Brother directs the Postulancy programme. Another Brother is the Director of Vocations and co-ordinates the Come and See programme. The Brothers also maintain a close interest in the ongoing projects co-ordinated by AMS.

Brothers from other Provinces have worked in East Timor over the years. This includes Brothers from New Zealand and Brazil.

Marist Life and Mission

PJM (Pastoral Juventude Marista) or Marist Youth Ministry group is comprised of students, Scholastic Brothers and professors from ICFP. The group meets regularly for prayer, formation in youth ministry and Marist spirituality and participates in outreach to needy families and vulnerable people in the Baucau District.

The Marist Brothers administrate the ICFP, that belongs to the Diocese of Baucau. It is an institute of higher education and conducts an accredited Bachelor of Education programme (Primary) supplying teachers for the country. Staff at ICFP have begun to participate in online Marist spirituality and formation programmes conducted by the Marist Mission and Life Formation Team of the Province of Australia.

The first Marist co-educational school is presently undergoing construction at Lautem in the Diocese of Baucau. It is envisaged that the school will become operational in January 2024.

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MARIST YOUTH FROM BRAZIL CENTRO-SUL

After two years of online meetings due to the pandemic, young people from all parts of the Marist Province of Brazil Centro-Sul held the VI Youth Assembly in person from 20 to 22 October in Curitiba. Their purpose in gathering was to elect a new Province Youth Commission.

The Provincial, Br Bene de Oliveira, stressed that “our duty and mission is to guide them, support them and
contribute something in this important stage of their lives, so full of possibilities and creativity, and to work alongside them in the youthful adventure of chasing their life dreams towards a new civilisation of love”.

In his words of welcome, Br Miguel Fernandes, the Director of Identity, Mission and Vocation of the PMBCS, spoke about the importance of the Commission: “When we speak of the Commission, we are talking about young people being represented in Marist decision-making forums. This is very important for the Institute because it makes it possible for us to be in touch with the reality of young people, to understand their needs and together with the Commission we can address these issues.

Those elected to the Commission for 2022-2025 were announced on 21 October during a celebration held at the Marist Champagnat Centre. Following their election, the new Commission met to briefly discuss challenges for the coming years.

SCOTLAND

BIOGRAPHY OF BR. WALFRID, FOUNDER OF CELTIC

More than 100 people gathered at Celtic football ground in Glasgow on the evening of 8th November to celebrate the publishing of a biography of Brother Walfrid (Andrew Kerins), an Irishman who lived and worked in Great Britain. Brother Walfrid founded Celtic, now a world-famous football team, in 1888 when he was Head Master of one of the Marist schools in Glasgow in order to raise funds to provide breakfasts for the poor children attending his school.

The biography was written by Dr Michael Connolly, now a lecturer at Stirling University in Scotland and was originally his doctoral dissertation. Dr Connolly gratefully acknowledged the help he had received from the Marist Brothers in his research for the dissertation. In particular he was grateful for the opportunity to visit L’Hermitage and Saint-Genis-Laval, where he consulted the archives of the former Province of Beaucamps, to which Great Britain and Ireland had belonged in the middle of the 19th century. Only the covid lockdown had prevented him from visiting the General Archives in Rome.

At the celebration on 8th November, the Marist Brothers were represented by Brothers Alan Hargan and Colin Chalmers. Brother Colin spoke to the audience about Walfrid’s Marist life. He said that Walfrid was a true son of Marcellin. Both had become aware of the needs in their environment and responded to those needs. He also said that very few Brothers in the world today knew that Celtic Football Club had been founded by a Marist Brother. Brother Colin said “we Brothers are often very bad at identifying our own heroes.” Thirsty Books