



Year **XV** - Number **759** | 14 DECEMBER 2022

MARIST NEWS

MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT | GENERAL HOUSE | ROME | WWW.CHAMPAGNAT.ORG

BLUE MARISTS

LETTER FROM ALEPPO NO 45: A DYNAMIC OF THE PROVISIONAL

These days, the eyes of the whole world are on the soccer world cup. This is the subject that occupies almost all the pages of social networks. For a month, the TV channels offer us to attend the matches and the media to comment on them and

thus divert us, as they are used to do, from the essential. As I write this letter, it is Black Friday that invites us to consume, and to continue consuming. The climate summit has gone unnoticed, news of the wars



general administration

- Brothers Ernesto, Superior General, Ben and Josep María, General Councilors, continue until Wednesday participating in the chapter of the Star of the Sea Province in Mittagong, Australia.
- On Monday, Brother Valdicer, director of CMI, finished an accompaniment visit to the LaValla200> community in Syracuse.
- Throughout the week, the directors of the Secretariat of Solidarity, Brothers Ángel Diego and Francis, will be in Geneva, where they take part in meetings with the CCIG, Edmund Rice and the Salesian Sisters.
- The directors of the Secretariat Brothers Today, Ángel Medina and Lindley, begin on Tuesday a visit to the Philippines, starting with the novitiate in Tamontaka.
- Brother Óscar, General Councilor, finishes his visit to the Province of Brazil Centro-Sul this week. Till Saturday we will

be in Florianópolis, taking part in the Provincial Assembly and Retreat.

- On Thursday, Brothers João and Ken, General Councilors, will participate in a meeting, via Zoom, with the Provincial Council of Norandina.
- Beginning Friday, the newly-formed formation team of the Marist Asia Pacific Center (MAPAC) is having its first face-to-face meeting at the Tamontaka novitiate. Br. Ángel and Br. Lindley will be part of this meeting. MAPAC is expected to re-open in January 2023 after being closed for 2 years because of the pandemic.
- On Friday, Br. Beto Rojas, director of the Secretariat for Education and Evangelization, will meet virtually with the board of directors of the Marist International Network of Institutions of Higher Education.

in Ukraine and Syria fade into the background, the economic situation of the poorest countries is of no interest to anyone and yet 200 billion US dollars have just been spent to organize this 2022 world cup.

In less than a month, this page will be turned. And the Western media will focus on the Christmas and New Year festivities.

Is our world progressing in a dynamic of the provisional? Are we forced to live the present moment without thinking and planning the future? Should we accept everything the media offers us without filtering? Who decides which news should be covered?

In this context, our country is largely overlooked by the media.

Helping families

One of the principles we have for helping families is to establish a relationship with them. For this, we start by visiting them to know their daily life.

I share with you concrete examples that we have recently discovered:

A family is made up of the grandmother who has no news from her husband, missing for several years. With her, in the same room of 9 m2, live her son who is unemployed and his pregnant wife, the family of her daughter whose husband is a ragpicker with their three children and a

single daughter. In total, more than 10 people aged 1 to 65. The unmarried girl had to drop out of college, unable to afford even transportation to college. A battery powers an LED lamp. During the war and even after, they moved several times. The house does not belong to them. Friends lent it to them. They need everything: everything that would help them live with dignity (clothes, diapers and milk for the baby, foodstuffs, medicines, etc.). Confronted to this misery, we cannot stand idly by, we must act.

Another family we recently visited lives in another very poor part of the city. That night it was raining. The entrance and the kitchen are covered by a tarpaulin that lets the water through. In the well-heated bedroom, a 17-year-old paraplegic is lying on the floor. When asked how he manages to heat, the dad shows us a big bag filled with pieces of fabric and tells us: « There is no fuel oil. The government has promised to distribute 50 liters per year and per family, but what can 50 liters do with a harsh winter? How to heat and heat water for a bath? Families burn plastic, pieces of fabric, anything... The rooms are damp and cold. And this can cause very serious health problems. We know that the shortage is due to the sanctions imposed on the

country and we suffer from these unjust measures ».

In front of the situation of extreme poverty reported by United Nations agencies, many of our citizens live in resignation. So, the question becomes urgent: "Are we living in a dynamic of the provisional which could change one day or are we living in a dynamic of the status quo, which goes on forever? »

Could you, dear friends, be our voice and talk around you about the situation of the forgotten Syrian people? We are counting on your support and your solidarity to break the structures of injustice that are crushing us!

We, the Blue Marists, do not want to stand idly by. We act, we move towards the frontier of misery to try to reach out to others, to lift them up and restore their dignity. A young girl came to see me and told me: "It is true that we are simple people, downcast and hopeless, but you are helping us to get

up, to dare and to continue the journey".

Visit of the Provincial

The last months, we have received several foreign friends; some coming on behalf of their organization and others seeking more truth about the daily reality of the Syrian people.

Likewise, last week, we received the visit of Brother Aureliano Garcia, Provincial of the Marist Brothers, accompanied by Brother Manuel Jorques.

We had a lot of time to discuss and reflect on the reality of the Blue Marist and on the future. Significant questions have been raised. They touch on the importance of the presence of the Marists in Aleppo and the continuity of the work in the service of the suffering Syrian population.

Bro. Aureliano has just published a letter sent to all the Marists of the province. I copy with his permission, these few words: "Your presence is the presence of the Church next to those who suffer. Your mission makes the disciples of Jesus visible in the land from which the first Christian communities emerged at the beginning of our history. Your daily life is also, without a doubt, a commitment to dialogue and brotherhood with the Muslim world. Thanks! »

About this dialogue and brotherhood with the Muslim world, a Muslim lady, a Marist volunteer, asked me to pray for her and for her family who are going through a difficult time. She said to me: "I know that on Sundays you go to mass and you pray, please keep me present in your prayers. »

Projects

Our various projects are well underway.

On the way to Christmas
 Lord, help me to start going to the path,
 The path of human being, of every human being.
 The path of humanity...
 Lord, help me to listen,
 To the cries that rise towards you
 The cries of the hungry and the voiceless...
 Lord help me smile
 A smile that comes from my heart
 Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



The 26 young people who distribute the hot meals of the “Sharing Bread” project continue to provide the 250 elderly and vulnerable people with a daily hot meal. Their relationship with the elderly goes much further than the simple delivery of meals. These days, the ladies in the kitchen prepare good dishes for the traditional feast of Saint Barbara and start planning Christmas meals.

The children of the educational project “I want to learn” and those of the psychosocial support projects “Lotus and Bamboo”, fill the whole house with life. They are here at 9 a.m. Supervised by well-prepared and trained facilitators, they feel happy living with us. We celebrated with them the “Children’s Rights” world day.

Their parents have already had two training meetings on essential themes for the education of their children. The waiting list for these three projects is very long and unfortunately, we cannot respond to all requests.

“Ghosn” “Branch” is a psychological support project for women. Twice a week, 24 ladies divided into two groups meet for a time of talk and share.

The “Women Development” project brings together, twice a week, 60 women in two groups around themes that are useful to them with quality speakers: doctors, psychologists, experts in the history of our country and our city, trainers in social and religious sciences, trainers in the culinary arts and manual skills.

Twenty women attend the “Cut and Sew” session. They are all motivated to learn sewing and thus be able to support their families. For four months, pencil in hand, they draw models then cut and sew skirts and shirts under the direction of an expert.

The “MIT” center continues to provide training on various themes, the latest being “The foundations of self-development”

in which 22 young people participated.

More than 45 adults are currently benefiting from the two projects “Vocational Training” and “Microprojects”. Learning a trade guarantees young apprentices a future of dignity. Similarly, launching “your own small project” is a chance not to fall into begging and dependence.

The seamstresses of “Heartmade” work with their hearts. The Christmas and New Year holidays are approaching and this is an opportunity to participate in exhibitions to sell the maximum of their production. They are always unique pieces, of extreme beauty and very fine quality.

More than 800 families wait eagerly every month for the Food Basket that we distribute. This is an opportunity to listen to how essential this basket is to them in these times of incredible rise of the prices of basic foodstuffs.

This year again and thanks to friends, we have relaunched the School Support project for students and university students. This is to help parents to pay the tuition fees which have undergone a considerable increase. Some parents cannot even cover the cost of school supplies and transportation. We firmly believe that instruction and education are the path to peace for the future.

Powdered milk continues to increase in price while becoming a rare commodity. Yet, it is essential for the development of children. We seek by all means to ensure it for some 3,000 children under the age of 11 through the “Drop of Milk” project. And what about the Medical project. The reality is catastrophic. The costs of surgical procedures or treatment amount to unaffordable figures. We participate with other Catholic organizations to support the sick and their families.

Brother Georges Sabe, For the Blue Marists
December 4, 2022

HERMITAGE

MARISTS OF CATALONIA GATHERED AT RUBÍ

More than 600 people, including educators from schools and social works, administration and service personnel, Brothers, monitors and animators from Catalonia, attended the Marist Meeting held on November 26 at Rubí, with the aim of being together, after several months, and feeling part of a Marist Family.

Brother Gabriel Villa-Real, Provincial of the Hermitage said during his speech: "To think big means to think about what is worthwhile and what gives life and gives us life (...). Let us invite each other to live the present with optimism, confidence, serenity and hope, and this will help us to grow and walk with energy". For his part, Brother Lluís Serra, President of the Board of Trustees of the Marist Foundations and Provincial Secretary, recalled that "Marcellin Champagnat thought big from his personal humility, because his dream was bigger than his own reality". Both brothers expressed the need to change to evolve and appealed to the importance of all the people who form part of the Marist family so that the Marist educational project may continue to advance.

One of the important moments of the day was the presentation of the axes of action which should mark the route

taken as Marists of Catalonia. A "Route of Commitment and Courage" comprising the following axes: people, differential innovation, efficiency and advocacy. These axes were addressed by the Director General of Maristas Catalunya, Loreto Rubio.

Valentí Alarcón, director of the Colegio Maristes Rubí, the host center, welcomed all the attendees. And the animation of the festive day was the responsibility of Brother Jose Molina and the musical group Ubuntu, which was born in the Marist environment.



STAR OF THE SEA PROVINCE

On May 10, 2021, Brother Ernesto, Superior General, informed the brothers of the Province of Australia and the District of the Pacific that the two Administrative Units would form the new Province, that was inaugurated on December 8, 2022, and consists of 11 countries: Australia, Cambodia, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Samoa.

Brother Peter Carroll is the new Provincial and begun his mandate during the First Provincial Chapter, that was hold in Mittagong, Australia, from 9 till



The New Provincial Council of the Star of the Sea Province: Brothers Peter Carroll (Provincial), Graham Neist, Peter Horide, John Hazelman, Darren Burge, Gregory McDonald and Sefo Une.

14 December 2022. From the General Government, were present Br. Ernesto Superior General, and Brothers Ben Consigli and Josep Maria Soteras, General Councillors.

In that page you can read all information about the inauguration of the new Province and its first Chapter.

<https://champagnat.org/en/province-star-of-the-sea/>



SECRETARIAT OF SOLIDARITY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Interdependence, rather than isolation and independence, must become the new normal for us as Marists. We are called to be witnesses of unity and hope" (22nd General Chapter)

The message of the XXII General Chapter ends with an invitation to interdependence. An invitation that is extended, in the third call, to be bridge builders. An invitation to promote networking, within the Marist world, and with other organizations of civil society and the Church.

Five years have passed since the end of the General Chapter. We could now ask ourselves: have we advanced in the establishment of alliances, to achieve the objectives proposed by the Chapter? Without a doubt we will say yes, and at the same time we will say that we continue to walk in this direction.

Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

I invite you, brothers and lay Marists, to go one step further.

I invite you to ask ourselves not only about the objectives set by the General Chapter, but also to reflect on whether we have made progress in developing and fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals. I invite you to think about how our alliances have been in recent months or years, to discover if they

have been profitable or if we can further enrich each other to a greater extent. The desire to establish alliances has to lead us to come out of ourselves, first individually and later as a group. Alliances that go beyond our Provinces, alliances that intertwine at the regional level, alliances that weave institutional networks. Alliances that come out of ourselves and our comfort zones, alliances established with governments, with civil society groups, with ecclesiastical institutions and with other religious congregations. Alliances, why not, established with groups that are "different" because of their culture, their religion, their social position... And all this based on our Christian and Marist

values, which are universal values. We know, in theory and in practice, that establishing alliances to achieve an objective, or objectives, produces great benefits for all the participating parties. We are also aware that alliances need to be experienced based on conviction and concrete actions so that they offer their full potential.

Establishing alliances means enriching oneself, expanding horizons, knowing other realities, discovering other ways of doing things. Establishing alliances supposes, on the other hand, making efforts, leaving a part of ourselves, opening ourselves to the other, considering what is different as a value and not as a barrier.

And specifically, what can we do? Become aware of the Sustainable Development Goals; form Marist adults and children and young people; include these objectives within our strategic plans; mark concrete, quantifiable and time-limited actions, and initiatives; evaluate our presences from this point of view... Many possibilities open before us, for each one of us,

regardless of our reality.

General Chapter calls

We join the third call of the XXII General Chapter, asking God-Trinity, that he "Inspire our creativity to be bridge-builders" making our fraternity a "prophetic

sign" that answers "to the cries of today's children and young people", through "our committed" and all this by establishing alliances, networks, bridges with a simple style, and "where everyone is heard and valued".

Some alliances based on the best that we have and know, that is, through our work, in and through education and through our being and our presence as a "global charismatic family", called to be a "beacon of hope in this turbulent world".



Br. Ángel Diego García Otaola
Director of the **Secretariat of Solidarity**

INDIA

OPERATION RAINBOW PROJECT CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT HIV ON THE WORLD AIDS DAY 2022



In line with the World Health Organization, Marcellin Trust - **Operation Rainbow Project**, in Trichy, India celebrated the World AIDS Day 2022, on December 1, under the theme “Equalize”. The event aimed to end all forms of inequality which hinders to stop AIDS, to create awareness about HIV/AIDS and advocate that every child deserves the right to education and health care in all circumstances.

Within this framework, Marcellin Trust – Rainbow Project organized an advocacy campaign to mark **World AIDS day**, and many activities were carried out on that day to create awareness about HIV / AIDS.

Sr. Poorana Sheela (Principal of the Servite College of Education for Women), Br. Johnson Gnanasekar (Marist Higher Secondary School – P.Udayapatti), Br. Suresh Durai (Treasurer of Marcellin Trust), Br. Saul Placious and Br. Rajakumar (Director of Marcellin Trust) were present in the awareness program,

presided by Dr. Parameswari, Counselor of Child Protection Unit, in Trichy, who talked about the violence against children and how to safeguard them. Teachers and students of Servite College of Education, Government Middle School and Servite matriculation School (in Thogaimalai) participated at the outset, in the tree plantation and pledged to create awareness about HIV infection and prevention and achieve AIDS-free generation. During the celebration, the students also gave a stage performance about HIV/AIDS and created awareness through Mime, dance, and song. Operation Rainbow Project also organized a HIV/AIDS poster making contest for the college students and HIV awareness picture coloring and balloon popping for school students.

Marcellin Trust

It is a Marist Center that help people on the margins regardless of caste, color, religion, community, sex and culture

in India. Marcellin Trust works with generosity, love and commitment, and strive to improve and transform peoples’ lives socially and economically for better. Marcellin Trust accompany children at risk with our attentive care, guidance and support and help young people to realize their dreams and live their lives with dignity and social conscience.

Operation Rainbow

As a ‘community-based’ project (under Marcellin Trust) works for the welfare and guidance and support of people who are both infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The project ensures the rights of children regarding their education and health care. The activities also include awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS and STDs among young people, and fight against social stigma and discrimination. Operation Rainbow provides “Care and Support for Children Affected by HIV / AIDS” in and around Trichy district in Tamil Nadu, South India since 2003.

marist world

BRAZIL: ASSEMBLY OF THE PROVINCE OF BRASIL CENTRO-SUL, IN FLORIANÓPOLIS



ZAMBIA: PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



BANGLADESH: SAINT MARCELLIN SCHOOL – GIASNOGOR



CENTRAL AMERICA: FIRST PROFESSION OF BROTHERS GERARDO RIVERA AND MESVIN MARROQUÍN



MEXICO: VISIT OF THE BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE TO THE CHAMPAGNAT COLLEGE



GUATEMALA: CULMINATION OF THE PROVINCIAL RETREAT 2022 OF CENTRAL AMERICA

FRANCE

XXI OIEC GENERAL ASSEMBLY & WORLD CONGRESS

On the XXI General Assembly of the International Catholic Education Office (OIEC), held in Marseille on November 29, 2022, the Marist Brothers were called to participate in the election of the new President, Secretary General and Executive Council of the mentioned Organization. Bro. Marciano Guzmán Moriana, on behalf of the Director of the Secretariat for Education & Evangelization, Bro. Carlos A. Rojas Carvajal, participated in the voting. The Assembly concluded with the election of Father Jawad Alamat as the new President, Hervé Lecomte as the new Secretary General and the Marist Brothers were appointed to the Executive Council of the OIEC.



Subsequently, between 1 – 3 December 2022, the Palais du Pharo hosted the XXI OIEC World Congress with representatives of Catholic Schools from around the world. The purpose of the event was to showcase the various testimonies in the field of Educational Innovation, highlighting the need to continue the integration of the Global Education Pact within it. On this occa-

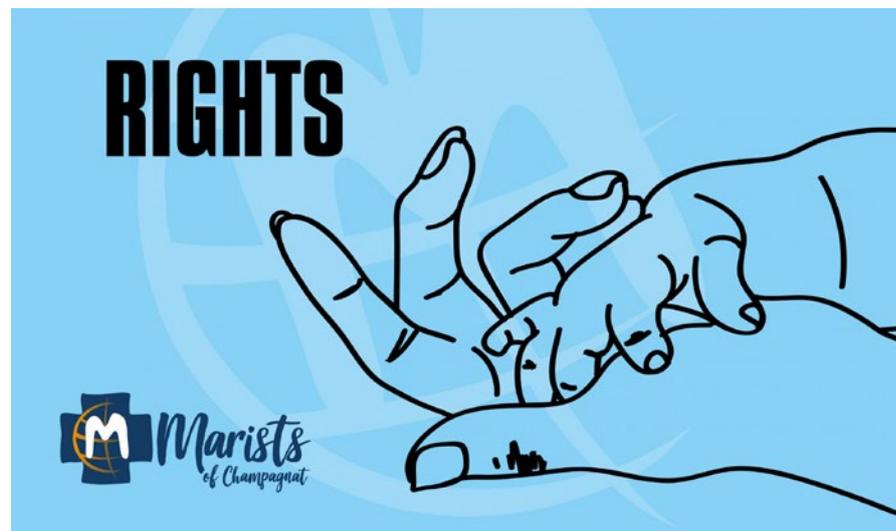
sion, the Marist Global Family also counted on the participation of the Secretary of the Secretariat for Education & Evangelization, Mr. Diugar E. Madera Buscarini, who noted the great motivation of the organizers and participants of the event.

The evening of December 3, 2022, concluded with a dinner to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the OIEC, with the participation of important figures such as Monsignor Paul Tighe, Secretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education (Culture Section), and the film director Evgeny Afineevsky, who made the documentary on Pope Francis in 2020.

DECEMBER 10

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This day is commemorated every year on December 10 with high-level conferences, cultural events and exhibitions organized across the world to raise human rights awareness. Even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not make any reference to the spiritual nature of the human person as the basis of human dignity, it nevertheless, maintains that all persons are born with equal and inherent dignity regardless of their ethnicity, religion, gender, language, political opinion and national or social origin. While maintaining that the image of God is the basis for human dignity, the Catholic Church, however, recognizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a true milestone on the path of humanity's moral progress and calls on all governments to ratify it and consider their promotion as a Christian vocation. Conflicts and wars continue to force people to leave their homelands and seek refuge in other places where they often become targets of traffickers. It is unbelievable indeed that these atrocities continue to happen seventy-four years after the UN declaration of human rights. It is equally surprising that human rights are not respected today when almost everybody agrees that humans have equal and inherent dignity. Believing that things can change, Pope Francis, in his encyclical,



cal, 'Laudato Si', calls for a renewed emphasis on the dignity of the human person by intensifying our stewardship of creation. Similarly, convinced that human condition changes, and that international solidarity is indispensable for peace and harmony in the world, Human Rights experts also continue to call for a spirit of unity among individuals, nations, and civil rights organizations to create an enabling environment for fundamental freedoms. They believe that no sustainable development can be achieved unless countries end inequalities, improve governance, embrace the voices of civil society, care for the environment and respect civil liberties.

As Marists of Champagnat, our involvement in human rights advocacy and activities are in line with the call of our XXII General Chapter to be bridge-builders. This call invites us to be a prophetic reminder of the common dignity and

fundamental equality of the entire People of God as well as agents of change and messengers of peace transforming the lives of young people through an integral education. In this way, our commitment to human rights is an integral part of the demands of the Gospel.

Affirming that a human being is created in God's image, the Catholic Church highlights his centrality as a "person" to be treated as the protagonist of all economic, social, cultural and political life. Thus, the fight against unjust societal structures is at the heart of the Church's pastoral action. From this perspective, the Church exhorts governments to defend and promote human rights by creating a social environment that offers citizens the possibility of truly exercising their human rights and fulfilling their corresponding duties.

Brother Francis Lukong
Secretariat of Solidarity



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