



EAST ASIA MARIST LIFE Newsletter

December 15, 2022, Volume 01, Issue No. 13

Featured Community

MARIST BROTHERS KOTA KINABALU COMMUNITY

Malaysia

The Marist outpost in the “Land below the Wind” was manned by Bro. Andrew Chan and I, volunteer teachers at Maktab National- a private secondary school of the archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu. We live at number 17, Lane 15, Kingfisher Park, Likas, Kota Kinabalu.

The year 2022 started off to finish the last and remaining term of the school year 2021/22. This third term began on January 10, a delay of one week because of severe flooding in several states of Malaysia. With more than 95% of the students vaccinated, Maktab students were allowed to return to school for face-to-face learning. However, strict face-masks rules, social distancing, and other standard operating procedures (SOPs) were imposed. Despite all these, all were happy to be back to school. I noticed many students had put on weight after a prolonged period of confinement at home. Some were visibly seen with their uniforms bursting at the seams, result in lack of physical activities. Besides the usually scheduled classes in school, I continued with online tutorials after school for some who were weak academically. I was given the subject of Mathematics to teach in the weakest class, a challenge to handle and teach.

The Chinese New Year break started from the 29th of January to the 5th of February. During the holidays, I took the opportunity to visit our community in Sibul, Sarawak. It was a difficult experience to be investigated by the immigration officers for having overstayed in Sabah. They let me off after I showed them my teaching permit from Maktab but advised me to apply for a work visa after my return from Sibul. Thanks be to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph for saving me at this critical moment. Otherwise, I could end up as a resident of the “Red House” in Menggatal- a detention center for undocumented immigrants. In Sibul, besides the fraternity with the brothers, visiting friends, and teachers, I also took the opportunity to address my tooth extraction concerns.

The school reverted to online teaching and learning on February 16 after a spike in pandemic cases, due to more traveling during the Chinese New Year period. This continued until the end of the school year of 2021/22, on February 25. A three-week break was observed at the turn of the new academic year. I did not go anywhere for I needed the time to spend addressing the academic concerns of some of my students.

The new school year 2022/23 started on Equinox Day (March 21). Orientation for new incoming students was on the 18th and 19th of March. It has been a practice that at the opening of the new academic year, self-introduction, the orientation of course content, and the manner of its delivery were given to students. For my class, I use Google Meet and Classkick.

Last April 4 onwards, we were back to face-to-face teaching and learning. We were delighted to be able to interact and see each other in real person. Teaching was better as class management can be done more effectively.



On June 24, the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, a local boy was ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Kota Kinabalu. Fr. Sylvester Wong Yun Chong (picture- at the forefront), was given among his first assignments, to celebrate one Mass in every religious community of the archdiocese. He came to our community on the evening of Monday, July 18 to fulfill this obligation. Joining us for Mass, and the fellowship dinner thereafter were two staff members of St. Simon Education Complex, Mr. Mozus, and Mr. Vester. At dinner, we learned much of Father's vocation story, especially his work in Singapore before entering the Seminary.

Bro. Allan de Castro, our new Brother Provincial, made his canonical visit to the Kota Kinabalu (KK) community from August 20 to August 22. I was fortunate to see him again on August 24 in Kuching. He went to Sibul after KK, and to Kuching on the 24th, the same day I arrived at Kuching for a long-awaited school break. Arriving at Kuching were also three young Brothers (Bros. Cyril, Engel, and Jick) from the Philippines and Bro. Abraham Kang from South Korea. Together with Bro. Robert and Bro. Emil, members of the Kuching community, we were blessed to be together for some pre-arranged occasions organized by the Kuching community.



Armed with a machete on one hand and a strong glove on the other, I battle with the weedy patch of our garden every afternoon. Stabbed deep into the ground to loosen the soil, I uprooted the entire weed by brute force. Gathered, these biomasses would be dumped into a compost heap, which will turn into organic fertilizer a few months later. This is a perennial job of an endless loop - as one part of the garden is cleared, the others started their new growth again. These few weeks, I am fighting a losing battle as it rained every afternoon. I can only watch in despair when heaven showers them with free water, while I was kept indoors. Gardening, however, helps me to touch base with Mother Earth and to reflect a farmer's spirituality- of taking care of creation, of good and bad life forms, of seasons, of waiting and patience...and more....

My other past-time activity is weaving baskets from plastic wrappers. It is my small effort to respond to the call of "Laudato Si" to save Mother Earth by recycling plastic. Perhaps, a number of sea animals would be saved too by this work. Recently, two of the baskets (in the photo) were sold at the Monfort Charity Bazaar. All proceeds went to the Monfort Youth Center. This center is operated by the Gabrielite Brothers (founded by St. Louis Marie de Monfort, a French contemporary of Fr. Champagnat, they shared much similar Marian Spirituality of that era) - a private vocational training institute, here in Kuching, KK. Since it is a private institute, they receive no funding from the government and had to raise funds from the public to finance the place. The Gabrielite Brothers were also our first benefactors as they were the ones who housed us and orientated us into this place when our pioneering Marist Brothers first arrived here.

As we enter the Advent season and await the coming of Jesus, let us look forward with new hope for a better and more blessed year to come. The pandemic these past years had taken a heavy toll on all of us, especially our students, whom we tried hard to serve and love. Let us continue to realize this dream of our Founder as his true disciples. Malaysia had just had her 15th General Election, and a new prime minister in the person of Anwar Ibrahim was sworn in on the 24th of November. On that same day, our Bro. Thomas Chin messaged in our WhatsApp group this prayer, which I quote:

"We pray for our PM, all politicians esp. those holding high public offices, that those who are just and genuinely care for the good of the rakyat be steadfast in their righteous path. That those who used to be corrupt and heartless be converted ... Amen"

Lastly, may I also use the encouraging words of St. Paul to the people of Thessalonica: 23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

Amen. God bless Malaysia, and God bless all of you. May you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to come.

By: Bro. John Tan Wee Eng, FMS.
Nov. 27, 2022, First Sunday of Advent. KK, Sabah.

You are invited,
join us.

Year of Marist Vocations ON FIRE! 2nd Marist Family Encounter



ON FIRE!

2nd Marist Family Encounter
DECEMBER 22, 2022, THURSDAY, 9:00AM - 3:00PM
Venue: Province Center, Lagao

MEETING ID: 834 7467 6688
PASSCODE: 222977

*"Caring for and sharing our
Marists vocations!"*

As part of our celebrating the Year of Marists Vocations, the Vocation Committee organized an event that will take into action the objectives set forth for our celebration.

The event ON FIRE! MARIST FAMILY ENCOUNTER with the theme: **Caring for and Sharing our Marists Vocations**. The program aims to ignite among the participants the value of living our Marist vocations and to share this gift of vocations with others. This will be an online and a face-to-face gathering on December 22, 2022, THURSDAY, and the venue will be at the PROVINCE CENTER, Lagao.

Our Zoom Meeting ID: 834 7467 6688
Passcode: 222977

Birthday Celebrations



December 3:
Br. Eugene Pius Tajo's
87th birthday celebration
in Lagao Community.

December 12:
Advance Happy Birthday
Celebration for Bro. Cristino
Sta. Ana. We were happy to
be joined by the Fourvier
Community, Marcellin Home
and Br. Albert from Malutok,
Palawan.



Provincial's Visits in Photos



December 1-3:
Visited the brothers of Kobe (Japan) Community. Members were Brothers Yohan Oh (Korean), Bernard Yamaguchi (Japanese), Joseph Yoshida (Japanese) and Allen Timola (Filipino). In the photo are members of the Provincial Council.



December 7-8:
Visited Mr. Shawn Hutchinson, the Lay Marist Principal of Marist International School in Kobe, Japan. Together in the picture are Brothers Joseph Yoshida and Allen Timola.



December 5-6:
Visited the Lay Marists of Marist Kumamoto School namely the President, Mr. Toshiharu Iwanaga, and the Principal, Mr. Shuho Matsuyama.



December 9:
Visited Archbishop Thomas Aquino Manyo Maeda of the Archdiocese of Osaka together with Br. Yohan Oh and Br. Joseph Yoshida



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Marist
VOLUNTEERING
 EAST ASIA PROVINCE



Marists
of Change



CELEBRATES
206th FOUNDATION
 ANNIVERSARY

An Invitation
OF THE MARIST INSTITUTE

When the Spirit Sings, the Dance of Mission Begins
A Foundation Day & Missioning Mass

Marist Volunteers as Cultural Pilgrims of Hope



NOTRE DAME OF MARBEL UNIVERSITY

MARY JOY A. ALAVE

Project Fratelli
 Lebanon



MARIST SCHOOL, MARIKINA

MA. LIEZEL N. IGOY

Lavalla200 Malawi
 Africa



NOTRE DAME OF MARBEL UNIVERSITY

KIMBERLY A. CAMIRING

Lavalla200 Mount Druitt
 Australia



NOTRE DAME OF DADIANGAS UNIVERSITY

ARIANNE JANE V. YLARDE

Lavalla200 Malawi
 Africa



MARIST BROTHERS
EAST ASIA PROVINCE

www.facebook.com/bercfms



Meeting ID: 844 5123 3910

Passcode: 713910

With Special Message from

BR. VALDÍCER CIVA FACHI, F.M.S.

Director

Collaboration for Mission International



JANUARY 2, 2023 MONDAY 09:30 A.M.

St. Marcellin Chapel, Notre Dame of Dadiangas University
 General Santos City, Philippines

Repost from Br. Edgar Cerales' Facebook Page

MARIST LAITY DESK UPDATES

December 02, Friday: Marist Formation for newly hired personnel of Notre Dame of Dadiangas University.

Twenty-Five (25) participated in meaningful conversations about Marist life. Succeeding sessions were scheduled on December 06 and December 07, respectively.



December 05, Monday: Meeting with the Notre Dame of Marbel University recollection co-facilitators. Agendum was about the preparation for the University recollection scheduled on the 7th of December.



December 08, Thursday: CMMF Memory Community celebrates Feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Thank you, Elma, for leading us reflect on the significance of the event and to Br. Albert for sharing with us Marist life in mission.



December 07, Wednesday: NDMU personnel recollection with the theme: Listening, Discerning, Renewing: Our Synodal Journey with Mary.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROTECTION DESK (CYPD)

Updates

December 11, Monday: Meeting with Fr. Joel Aliligay and the principals of the Diocesan Schools of Marbel. The agendum was on the implementation of Cybersafe schools.



December 11, Monday: Thirty-Two (32) youth participated in the Cybersecurity Training: Co-creating a Safer Cyberspace. Thanks to the lead trainers Claire Laude and Arvin Caga from Notre Dame of Dadiangas University and Keithe Ben of the Social Action Center, Diocese of Marbel. Bro. Crispin in his welcome message spoke of the importance of taking active role in the protection of children and the young. Indeed, the Advent Gaudete Sunday means Rejoice! Today, we all rejoice for partaking in God's mission of protecting those most vulnerable from all forms of threats in cyberspace! Let the advocacy continue.

A Glimpse of the Province

REMEMBERING MARIST SCHOOL IN ITS 25TH YEAR

The following is an excerpt from the article written by Br. Manny de Leon as published in the AMIHAN NEWSLETTER of the then Philippine Province, for August-September 1989 issue entitled Marist School on its 25th Year. Br. Manny was writing as president of Marist School.

Br. Joseph Damian Teston during his last sentimental visit to the Philippines, a special treat for his Golden Jubilee Year, narrated how the Marist property was acquired from the Tuazons. He said that it was the Oblate Fathers who first wanted to buy land in the Marikina area. However, some Fathers were also thinking of buying land in the Caloocan area, near the Parish Church. Finally, they decided on the latter and approached the Brothers about the offer of the Tuazons. The Brothers showed interest and were thinking of acquiring no more than two hectares for the scholasticate. There was no plan of establishing a school.

However, the Tuazons wanted a school established and were willing to dispose a maximum of 15 hectares at a very low price. The insistence of the Tuazons on the establishment of the school was due mainly to the fact that the presence of the school will raise the value of their land. Plain, simple logic!

Whether to buy only two hectares or fifteen hectares was a decision to be made. Br. Joseph Damian, the superior then, said: "there was no ready money for two hectares and none for the fifteen hectares. Whether it's 2 or 15 there was a need to raise money, so why not settle on 15." Finally, the Brothers decided to buy at least 13.5 hectares on condition that a school will be opened. The property was bought at Ph2.50 per square meter.

Br. Bernard Curtin arrived here on April 22, 1964, as Director and Master of Scholastics. He too has some stories to tell. He fondly remembers how the Benedictine Sisters were very helpful to the Brothers even in registering the first students, doing shopping for our community, and inviting us on their family celebrations. He too remembers the help extended by the Jesuits of the Ateneo like Frs. Frank Dolan, Francisco Claver, Frank Glover, and William Schmitt acted as Chaplains. The Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Sienna continued their tradition begun in Mindanao and proved themselves to be friends.

Sr. Patricia of Maryknolls, Bishop McSorley of Jolo, the Oblate Fathers, La Salle Brothers, San Beda Monks, RVM Sisters were the first visitors who gave encouragement to the Brothers.

The Fathers Club was his brainchild. Br. Bernard made them work hard in providing the G.S. Library with books and 40 typewriters. They did this through an annual Christmas Raffle and outright donations. He too had invited different personalities such as politicians and showbiz people like Tia Dely, Rosemarie Gil, Chichay, Pepito Gonzales, Cong. Frisco San Juan, Mayor de Guzman, Mrs. Josefa Edralin Marcos, etc. Cardinal Rufino Santos came to bless the school and the convent some years later.

Br. Bernard stayed for 6 years and in 1970, Br. Pius Tajo took over as Director/Principal. It was during his term when the first batch of seniors graduated from Marist High School in 1972. In June 1973 he was transferred to Dadiangas as Principal. His was a time of student activism known as the First Quarter Storm.

Br. Crispin took over as High School Principal in 1973 and we officially appointed President in May 1975. He stayed in office for 9 years. It was during his term that the high school began its PAASCU Self-Survey. The H.S. gym, swimming pool, parking lot, and the extension of the administration building were all done during his term. Br. Crispin's legacy at Marist is Academic Excellence, the Baseball and Swimming Teams, and the Photography Club. Definitely, his 9 years of accomplishments is unprecedented.



Marist School Today

Br. Paul Meuten took over in August 1982. He finished the work on PAASCU and formally earned accreditation for the high school during his term. He began the computer craze at Marist. Br. Paul is best remembered to have raised the salary scale of Marist employees. His effort on the Administrative, Faculty, Staff Manuals made it easier for his successors. His forte is statistics. His decisions are always grounded on data. The Science Lab of the grade school was built during his term. He earned notoriety, though, when he decided to withdraw from PRADA, an athletic association.

Br. Jess (Agbuya) took over in 1986. He only served for two years. But it was during his first year that the grade school was first accredited through the able assistance of Br. Bernard Curtin as the PAASCU Coordinator. In his second year, the high school was re-accredited. Before he left, he negotiated the construction of the two-storey Science building which is now functional.

The Marist School Community remembers him as a quiet and hard-working fellow. His loss was greatly felt for nobody had any idea of his plans of leaving.

When I took over in 1988, I felt that I was filling the big shoes left by Jess. His ascetic mood was a big contrast to mine. However, I survived the first year. What will happen next - Que Sera Sera!

To give you an idea of my perspective of Marist School, I believe that we need to develop an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation among the parents, teachers, and staff together with our lay administrators in providing quality education. I define quality education as not merely academic excellence but the total development of persons who will be better equipped to become future leaders in their respective communities. We need Christian leaders who will effect positive values in the Philippine Society. To do this, we have to train them to be men of knowledge, faith, and character.

Let us accept the fact that our students belong to the middle class. Definitely, they are not the "least favored." How to reconcile that seeming contradiction with our charism is a challenge we have to address on the province level.

I hope that we see the potential and even the great contribution of Marist School to the whole educational system in this country. Marist School is a school with a difference.

To the Brothers who have been assigned to Marist School - CONGRATULATIONS !!! You set the foundation and we can only say that we will continue the tradition - MARIST, EVER FOREVER. - by Br. Manuel V. de Leon, fms



CALENDAR						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Provincial's Schedule

December 16 to 31, 2022

December 16: Face-to-face MAPAC Staff meeting at Tamontaka

December 19: Online meeting of Asia-Oceania Leaders' Meeting

December 19: Marist Province Center Christmas Party

December 20: Marist Asia Conference Online Meeting

December 22:

3rd Joint formation of brothers and lay in relation to the year of Marist Vocation to be facilitated by Br. Angel Medina, FMS, and Br. Lindley H. Sionosa, FMS of the Secretariat of Brothers Today at the Province Center

December 22-31: Marist Province Center



Happy Birthday

December 25

Br. Dave B. Becislao

December 25

Mr. Anthony Poon Yuen Yui
(Affiliate Member)

December 15

Br. Cristino M. Sta. Ana

December 20

Br. Thomas Chin (Hon Man)

December 23

Br. Elmer E. Jandic

December 27

Br. Jacobo Song (Chul-seob)



Prayer Intentions:

- For a meaningful celebration of the Season of Advent.
- For all travelers returning home for the holidays, that they may be protected from all harm.
- For all our school personnel and students and those who are in our non-school ministries, may we celebrate Christmas in advance with immense joy and peace.
- For the repose of the soul of Mr. Peter Heng, brother of Br. Joachim Heng, of China Sector
- For the full and speedy recovery of Fr. Thomas Chong, Parish Priest of Saint Therese Church, Melaka, Malaysia.
- For peaceful and meaningful celebration of Christmas.