



EAST ASIA

MARIST LIFE

Newsletter

April 15, 2023 Volume 02, Issue No. 07

Provincial's Message



Dear Marists of Champagnat,

Greetings of a Happy Easter!

As we conclude the Easter Octave celebration, we attune ourselves to the deep message of the celebration of the Divine Mercy Sunday.

The life-giving hope in the risen Jesus has challenged us to be the Easter people of our time today. With our Lord and in the way of Mary, may we continue our work with a renewed zeal for mission for the children and the young in most need.

Relying on the grace of the Divine Mercy, may we all become life-generating and faith-nourishing in all our encounters as brothers and sisters for one another. May His grace flow through us and among us so that, living in the memory of the risen Jesus, we find the "great value of our being Marists today."

Fraternally,

Allan J. De Castro

Br. Allan J. De Castro, FMS
Provincial

Jesus is alive

CHAMPAGNAT HOUSE COMMUNITY Singapore

Champagnat House Community is the only community of the Marist Brothers in Singapore located at 15 Flower Road Singapore 549404. There are two brothers in the community, namely: Br. Elmer Jandic (Community Leader) and Bro. Thomas Chin (member). Both are working in the Catholic Kindergarten with Bro. Thomas as the Supervisor and Br. Elmer as a Support Staff. The latter is directly involved in the Catholic Kindergarten programs where he helps the teachers in assisting pupils during their arrivals and dismissals. He also helps the K1 & K2 teachers and children during the Phonics classes, outdoor play, indoor games, and some other activities.



Brs. Thomas and Elmer

Aside from his class schedules, Bro. Elmer helps in preparing teaching materials, checking of children individual assessment and many others. Bro. Elmer is the “big brother” of the Catholic Kindergarten. Children fondly call him Uncle Brother and sometimes mistakenly called him Papa among the Playgroup and Pre-Nursery children. Bro. Elmer derives great satisfaction, joy, and happiness from working with children, especially seeing them grow and develop in the several aspects of their life.

Bro. Elmer is presently enrolled in Asian International College at Lifelong Learning Institute in WSQ, doing a Specialist Diploma in Special Education Needs (Preschool). Hopefully, by the first week of May 2023 he will earn his Diploma. Obtaining the Specialist Diploma in Special Education Needs can be a significant help for the Kindergarten towards an Inclusive Kindergarten. Catholic Kindergarten caters to some suspected and diagnosed children with special needs. Hopefully, differentiated learning and designing Individual Educational Plan can be part of Catholic Kindergarten Curriculum.

Br. Thomas is currently the Director the Marist Brothers Singapore Pte. Ltd., Chanel Education Center Pte. Ltd., Maris Stella Pte. Ltd. At the same time, he is also a member of the School Boards and Management of Maris Stella High School and Catholic Kindergarten. As a Director, Bro. Thomas regularly attends either physical or online meetings. Bro. Thomas is also in-charge of Catholic Kindergarten finances.

Two Brothers living in community can be challenging and interesting. Many things need to be sacrificed, especially if one of the brothers is away (overseas) or not feeling well. Community living is affected in this case and at times, this results in a brother living alone in the community. However, the brothers are lucky enough to have some Lay Marists and Brother’s family friends who are ready to help and spend some time just to ensure that the brothers in the community are all right. There are also Brothers and Lay Marists from overseas coming over to stay at the Brother’s community; either during transits, hence took the opportunity to visit the Brothers for a few days. These short visits add life to the community especially when they spend 2-3 days in the community. Recently Brothers from Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, and Lay Marists from Marbel and Sri Lanka stayed with us in the community and visited some places of interest in Singapore. The brothers are delighted with their presence.

Currently, the brothers are not working directly in Maris Stella High School except Bro. Thomas as Board of Director and School Management Committee member. However, if there are Masses held at Maris Stella High School, either Secondary or Primary, the Brothers make sure that one of them joins in the Mass Celebrations and other religious activities as well.

The Catholic Kindergarten is the only ministry of the Marist Brothers in Singapore. Currently, the school has 334 children in both 6 hours and 3hrs programs from Playgroup to K2 aged from 18 months old to 6 years old. There are about 25 teachers in English and Chinese, 1 Supervisor, 1 Accountant, 5 Administrative staff, three cleaners, and one cook. Recently, the renovation of the old Kindergarten building was completed, and it was named St. Marcellin Block. This newly renovated building is used for the Kindergarten Enrichment and Little Explorer programs.

Continuation..

We need your prayers for the sustainability of the Catholic Kindergarten as a mission school of the brothers and that it stays relevant in today's ever-changing preschool landscape. Do pray, too, for the school administrators, teachers, staff, and Brothers.

Xie Xie, thank you very much and Maraming Salamat!



MARIST ASIA

MARIST ASIA CONFERENCE (MAC) MEETS IN MAPAC

Due to the epidemic, the MAC members met in person for the first time in four years on April 11-14, 2023, in MAPAC in Marikina, Metro Manila.

The group examined the Marist Asia Strategic Plan 2018-2027 and proposed a new program structure that is thought to be more helpful in accomplishing the objectives of the plans and programs.

Through an online connection, Br. Farancis Remahat from Pakistan spoke about Marist Mission, while Mr. Andrea Rossi from FMSI in Rome discussed the organization's operations. He emphasized the capacity for mission and development and provided the opportunity to learn how to write funding proposals via online. The challenge is looking beyond: Leaders at the service of global Marist Family.

The General Administration provided MAC with presence and accompaniment through Br. Josep Maria Soteras, the link General Councilor for Asia. Furthermore, Br. Josep facilitated reflections and sharing on the possible reconfiguration for One - Asia.

The MAC members also met with the 11 scholastics of MAPAC to listen about their experiences and intuitions for the possible One-Asia reconfiguration.



“Caring For and Generating Marist life” Retreat

Originally published in "maristascompostela.org". Article written by Br. Lindley H. Sionosa.

Thirty Brothers from the Compostela Province gathered at the Marist Residence in Valladolid for the Holy Week Retreat 2023. Br. Lindley Sionosa, co-director of the Secretariat of Brothers Today, facilitated the retreat, which focused on the Year of Marist Vocations and the theme "Caring for and Generating Marist Life."

The retreat sessions began on Easter Monday, April 3, through Easter Sunday, April 9. Each day there were two presentations, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The rest of the time was devoted to personal reflection and reading the supplementary materials, which included references to the Rule of Life and the Constitutions.

One of the most important aspects of the retreat was that the brothers recalled, reflected on, and shared their respective vocation stories. It was reinforced by the simple gesture of remembering the significant persons who were part of those stories.

Deepening the experience of the spirituality of the heart also marked the retreat. Each morning, the brothers gathered in the chapel for a contemplative moment. Breakfast and lunch were eaten in silence to maintain the reflective atmosphere.

In addition, the brothers were fully immersed in celebrating the different liturgies of Holy Week. The Brothers of the Residence community joined in these celebrations.

The Brothers of the Champagnat Residence of Leon connected online during the conferences.

In the final session, Br. Lindley invited the Brothers to look beyond, to continue to care for and generate Marist life, and to always trust that the Good Mother "will not let the work she began in Marcellin parish".



MARIST ECOLOGY MINISTRY



“Little Daily Actions”

Help popularize the Holy Father’s suggested “little daily actions” highlighted in *Laudato Si’* passage 211 in campuses and community partners.

--A Call for Unity and Action amid a Climate Emergency and Planetary Crisis, CBCP 2022

Nobility in Caring for Creation through Little Daily Actions

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle. Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as

- avoiding the use of plastic and paper
- reducing water consumption
- separating refuse
- cooking only what can reasonably be consumed.
- showing care for other living beings
- using public transport or car-pooling
- planting trees
- turning off unnecessary lights
- or any number of other practices.



All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.

-Pope Francis: *Laudato Si’*, 211

PHILIPPINE SECTOR RETREAT

Marist Asia Spirituality and Mission Center (MASMC)

Wherever You Go (The Marist Brothers Rule of Life)

Holy Week – the most sacred time of the year – happened on April 2 to 9, 2023. This was also the time for our sector (the Philippines) to gather for the annual retreat at Marist Asia Spirituality and Mission Center (MASMC) in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.

This year's retreat master was Br. Jose Maria Soteras, one of the congregation's General Councilors. He is currently the link-Councilor for Asia and the Pacific Region.

The theme of the retreat was on the Brothers' Rule of Life. Based on what was presented to the group, there were four tenets on which the Brothers needed to understand and perform. The four tenets were *Lectio, Meditatio, Oratio, et Contemplatio*. The idea of "come and see" was to see life from another perspective and be "here and now." These were ways and means for the Brothers to reconnect themselves with the present apart from the past and the future.

The idea of the Brotherhood was to know who we are in the Church, in Society, and in the World in general. We are Brothers because we are brothers. This was an understanding of a "moment of presence." As Brothers, we are in the realities now and here – to be aware and to be awake. This is a presence beyond emotions, but this is the moment of time when God is touching them.

One striking part of the retreat was the way we understand the conversion of Saul to Paul. Paul fell when a light struck him. But this fall was interpreted in diverse ways by artists and commentators. Out of nowhere – the presence of a "horse" came in as depicted in some Medieval paintings. The horse was nowhere in the Acts of the Apostles. Yet – it appeared in the imagination of people. People imagined a thing that did not exist. When people failed – they tended to blame "imaginary" people or situations which they knew were not there to justify themselves. However, no matter what, the mission of Paul came clearly with his fall. He understood when his eyesight was restored. He finally knew what he would become after seeing Jesus in his fall.

The other item presented was the Community. This is not a place but the interaction among the members of the said community. In the Bethany Community – three people whom Jesus loved had given the brothers the knowledge of the distinct roles the community members held. But these roles can change from time to time. Yet – in the center of the community is Jesus. Martha had the lead role in the beginning, with Mary as the contemplative sister. Lazarus represented the weak member of the community. But Lazarus achieved his significant role after Jesus raised him from the dead. In general – in applying this to the brothers – three different realities existed inside us.

Brothers can assume the leadership role, the contemplative or prayerful part, but there is that weakness in each of us. In the community – there is the community leader and the prayer warriors, but there are also the sick members of the community.

In the final analysis, the brothers' reality and their mission could be seen in the light of Jacob's ladder, where the stairway to heaven had nowhere to go. What the future holds is not for us to know as of here and now. The Ascending and Descending Angels can come and go in our life, but we remain what we are today – in the present. That is the essence of who and what we are. Brothers of today!

In following the Holy Week activities – the brothers attended the Holy Thursday Last Supper and Washing of the Feet rituals in St. John the Baptist Parish Church in Lake Sebu. The Good Friday Seven Last Words, Veneration of the Cross, and Stations of the Cross were held in Divine Mercy Shrine in Lake Sebu.

The last afternoon of the retreat was devoted to the Sector Assembly. Br. Allan de Castro, the current Provincial, presented the sector's situation at the present time. Br. Danilo Sevilla, the province economer, showed the financial situation of the sector. Br. Rommel Occasiones highlighted the Formation Commission's activities and plans. Br. Manuel de Leon reported on the Ministry Commission's accomplishments and present activities.



The last activity of the retreat happened during the Easter Vigil mass presided by Fr. Romeo Buenaobra, an 84-year-old diocesan priest. This was the renewal of vows of the four Filipino Brothers of the Philippine sector, two Brothers from the Marist District of Asia (MDA) and two Brothers from Star of the Sea Province. The Filipino Brothers were Bro. Jick de Leon, Br. Jay-jay Escudero, Engel Freed Java and Dave Romar Rano. The Brothers from MDA were Br. Pedro and Br. Rubel, while the Brothers from Star of the Sea were Br. Steve and Br. Petero. The two non-perpetually professed Brothers – Br. Aljon Yonder and Br. Cyril Sumugat – will have their final profession sometime in October of this year, 2023. All the perpetually Brothers devotionally renewed their vows as part of the activity. Two aspirants, Jude and Jake joined the Brothers during the retreat.



On Easter Sunday, after breakfast, the Brothers left Lake Sebu to go back to their respective communities.

Br. Manuel P. Uluan, FMS



ON FIRE! MARIST FAMILY LENTEN ENCOUNTER

The Season of Lent calls for a time for meaningful reflections and faith sharing. To ensure that this occasion was formative and enriching for Champagnat Marists, the Laity Committee, spearheaded by Ms. Elma Rafil, organized a Marist Family Lenten Encounter last March 31-April 1 at the Marist Asia Spirituality and Mission Center, Lake Sebu. The twenty-eight participants came from Notre Dame of Cotabato, Notre Dame of Dadiangas University and the CMMF members of Marbel. The event nurtured once more the “fire” of Marist Spirituality as the reflection-sharing process deepened the theme of Pope Francis’ message: Lenten Penance and the Synodal Journey.



*Happy
Birthday*

**Birthday Celebrations of
Br. Edgar R. Ceriales
and
Br. Rustico S. Lumbo**



Photo News

April 1, 2023:
Jecheon-Chungju Community. The Brothers in Jecheon-Chungju Community were preparing their garden.

Br. Dominique Ryu is planting potatoes, hoping to produce a bountiful harvest.

On April 10. Brs. Tim Song and Anthony Choi cultivated the field to prepare for the plantation.



Br. Dominique fixed the faucet.

April 14:
As part of the on-going dialogue on the proposed One-Asia Province, Br. Allan, Br. Josep Maria Soteras (Rome), Br. Canisio Willrich (MDA), Br. Paco Garcia (MDA), and Br. George Valle (MDA) visited Go Vap student-brothers' community in Hôh Chi Minh City, Vietnam.



REMINISHING THE PAST OF TWENTY-SIX YEARS AGO

The following are excerpts from the article I wrote for ARPEE'S NOTES published in the AMIHAN Newsletter of the Marist Philippine Province Newsletter dated November-December 1997, found on pages 34-36.

1. December 6, 1997, was the blessing of two buildings at NDDC (now NDDU), namely the Br. Leonard Sonza Hall and the General Paulino Santos Museum. The former is the new four-story college building which houses the administrative offices and auditorium on the ground floor and part of the second and third floors as a library. The rest of the three floors are classrooms. The museum is a renovated part of the building, which was formerly the students' center. NDDC is privileged to be given the responsibility to preserve the memorabilia of the late founder of the settlement, which was later named after him.
2. Nine aspirants were proclaimed postulants on November 22, 1997. They are Gideon Alegria, Romel Ambayon, Florante Casuyon, and Christopher Talandron of the Diocese of Malaybalay; Olivine Balili, Erwin Robleza, and Lito Suplido of the Diocese of Marbel; Gilbert Espejo of the Diocese of Kalinga; and Melchor Villarta of the Diocese of Butuan.
3. On December 27, 1997, three Brothers celebrated their Silver Jubilee. They are Brs. Wilfredo Lubrico, Paterno Corpus and Jose Torrecampo. The venue was the new NDDC auditorium, with Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez, bishop of Marbel, as the main celebrant.
4. The Province Assembly was held on the afternoon of December 27th at the Holy Cross Spiritual Center in Calumpang, Gen. Santos City. The purposes of the gathering are the following: to present the achievement of the Council with regards to the mandate of the April 1997 provincial chapter; to disseminate the planned activities for the Jubilee year; to inform the Brothers of the commissions' activities and plans; to be informed of our efforts to deepen our Marist Apostolic Spirituality in our communities and schools; and to celebrate the festive 25th year of Bros. Pat, Joe, and Willy through our family spirit and legacy as Champagnat's Brothers. Present were 36 professed Brothers, six novices, and 5 MAPAC student Brothers as guests/observers. Special guests were the Marist Missionary Sisters (SMSM).
5. Twelve Marist Brothers were present during the third and last night of the golden jubilee celebration of Notre Dame of Lagao. The Brothers who were graduates of NDL were given recognition together with the rest who joined other priestly and religious congregations. There were several Marist Brothers who graduated from NDL because they were Juniors (high school students who were recruited to study and finish high school in Lagao to prepare them to become postulants in Tamontaka). The Brothers who graduated from NDL are Briccio Baynosa, Edilberto Mallorca, Wenceslao Paterno, Romulo Porras, Rosendo Yee, Jose Torrecampo, Wilfredo Lubrico, Rene Reyes, Rustico Lumbo, Manuel de Leon, Noel Fernandez, Lindley Sionosa, and Allan de Castro. Among those who became priests are the following: Fr. Elinio Isip, OMI, Fr. Roberto Alegre, CP, diocesan priests Fr. Andy Litigio, Fr. Floro Litigio, Fr. Rosalio Munasque and Fr. Jose Antonio Paez. From OP Siena, there are 20 Sisters who are NDL Alumni, while 11 are from other various women's congregations.

- Br. Romulo L. Porras, FMS





Provincial's Schedule

April 15 to May 10, 2023

**April 15-24:
Visits to the Marist Communities
at Marist District of Asia as part
of the dialogue for the proposed
ONE ASIA PROVINCE**

**April 25 - May 10:
Community visits to CHINA
SECTOR**



Prayer Intentions:

We pray for the grace of God's Divine Mercy:

- For the Pope and all Church leaders for their good health and strength in carrying out their leadership roles.
- For the healing of the children who are abused and suffering from wounds inflicted deep within them.
- For the grace of forgiveness and peace to reign in our hearts.
- For the gift of increased vocations to Marist life.
- For the healing of the wounds of all creations.