



EAST ASIA

MARIST LIFE

Newsletter

July 15, 2023 Volume 02, Issue No. 13

Featured Community

MARIST BROTHERS SEOUL SECTOR (Korea-Japan) COMMUNITY

Seoul, Korea

The celebration of Br. Alfredo's birthday took a very communitarian twist with several interesting activities. After morning prayer and breakfast, we started our community manual work by cleaning the surroundings of our house. We pulled out the unwanted and invasive plants which grew wildly in our garden during the hot and rainy seasons. On this day, a drizzle of rain softened the grounds, making it easy for us to pull out the weeds. Br. Jacobo had already organized us into three different teams to clean up three different areas in our surroundings. Organizing this way allowed us to finish all our work in about an hour, giving us more time to do our personal concerns. We enjoyed these days of working together because it helped us experience the joy of our being together. But the celebration did not stop there.

Later in the day, Br. Jacobo invited all the brothers and some ladies who were working with us, and others who happened to be present that day to eat "samgyetang" in a nearby restaurant. 'Samgyetang' is a hot, steaming, delicious dish that features a small chicken stuffed with rice, ginseng, garlic, and jujube in a tasty soup. This dish is traditionally served in Korea during the summer, so we all went out to enjoy the meal and the company of one another.

To complete the day, we gathered again at 8:00 P.M. to continue the celebration, sharing the cake given as a gift by the ladies to Br. Alfredo. It was, indeed, a very fraternal and happy time together.



Apart from the birthday celebration, each brother continues to do his ministry. Br. John Vianney is busy accompanying young people with relational or mood disorders, helping parents to deal better with their troubled children, supervising counselors in training and attending updating workshops.

Br. Jacobo, as Sector coordinator, is always taking care of the brothers and the different Sector business. These keep him always either on the move (visiting Brothers) or bound to his desk preparing documents, making accounting work or writing letters and mails. He finds the time to help Br. Alfredo in giving retreats to the Pastoral Council members of the Song San dong parish who came to our Center to have a day of prayer and reflection.



Br. Laurencio Park employs his time doing repairs to ensure that the “Small Fountain” retreat house in Kapyon can be used by people looking for a day of silence and solace. Br. Pio is always involved in the Local Children Center. He not only takes care of the children, making sure that teachers and volunteers come to help them with their schoolwork, but also, he has to deal with the necessary documentation and repairs of the building as demanded by the local administration. For Br. Damaso, finding enough rest time was not easy for him. He has been working on different jobs: the cleaning and maintenance of the Education Center; helping Br. Paul runs the place and does retreats with young people; promoting the gathering of lay Marists in a group called ‘The Little Champagnat’; trying his best to promote vocations and ensure that he remains connected with young people.



Br. Paul, in charge of the Marist Education Center here in Seoul, is always attentive to what is going on in the Center. He looks for ways in which the facility is not only in good condition for the groups that come to have different programs. He also ensures that the facility really serves its purpose of promoting Christian, civil, and conscious people through different activities and projects possible.

The work of Br. Moses is a challenging one and not very visible. He is in charge of the Benefactors Association. His approach has been to establish a much more personal, attentive relationship with as many as possible benefactors. He ensures that his connection is not only limited to thanking them for their monthly contribution. Because of this, he spends a good amount of time visiting them or meeting with them in some other way. He also finds time to be present with the children that come to our Local Children Center with whom he has established a very warm relationship.

Br. Abraham is assuming a role we fondly call “joker”. It is not because of his jokes, but because he is doing many of the odd jobs that are always necessary in a community. This is so because of his particular situation. This year he prepared for his perpetual profession and, since he had to make the 30-day retreat and other preparations it was not possible for him to have a stable, full-time apostolate due to the breaks that he had to take. He remains, then, in a kind of “floating” situation, doing different jobs during the mornings and spending the afternoons of Thursdays and Fridays to do some apostolic work with the children living in a Group-form facility with whom he spends time, sometimes talking with one of the boys; playing with the whole group, and organizing outside activities whenever possible.



As you can see, the community is very diverse. We make the effort to pray together, share our meals when possible, and work together. We do these respectful and supportive of the different activities that each one of the members of the community is engaged in. We ask the Lord His blessings upon our work, and we firmly believe that Marcellin looks at us with fatherly concern and approval as we strive to follow his footsteps in “making Jesus and Mary known and loved”. Blessings to all.



MARIST IDENTITY IN EDUCATION: AGENT OF GOODNESS FOR THE WORLD (Highlights from the Marist Educators' Congress 2023)

The Marist Education Council (MEC) convened the 2023 Marist Educators' Congress on June 29-July 1, 2023, at Greenleaf Hotel in General Santos City, Philippines. This congress, which carried the theme, "Marist Identity in Education: Agent of Goodness for the World," was a gathering of Marist educational institutions in the Philippines. It was participated by Marist educators and guests and invited personalities from different sectors.

The first day was the opening of the congress, and it commenced with a Eucharistic Celebration, which was then followed by the program proper. Delegates from different Marist institutions were welcomed, Marist symbols were presented, and esteemed personalities both from Marist and non-Marist communities took the stage to deliver their special messages. On the spotlight was the video-recorded special message from Br. Ernesto Sanchez Barba, FMS, Superior General of the Marist Brothers. His message centered on encouraging Marists to be more committed to carrying out the mission of St. Marcellin in the Philippines, particularly to the needy, and on challenging Marists to look for ways to move forward and become more relevant to the ever-changing times. The afternoon session featured a keynote speech that delved into the congress's core topic, Marists as Agents of Goodness for the World, and the two TED Talks, one focused on Marist Identity, and another, Awareness of Marist Identities. The first day of the congress was made lovelier with the Marist Magical Night, where participants donned their formal or smart clothes, showed their glamour, socialized with fellow Marists, enjoyed a gastronomic feast, and danced their hearts out in the beat of "Kulturang Marista" (Marist Culture).

The second day's theme was centered on providing more up-to-date information about Marist-related programs and activities and engaging in vibrant well-packaged talks. Dr. Evelyn Dollete, Executive Director of Notre Dame Educational Association, Inc., presented NDEA updates. This was followed by a talk on Journeying as One Marist Community, which shed light on the foundations of Marist community and essential elements defining Marist as a Community. This talk, furthermore, elucidated that the Marist Community in a journey is invited to become tireless searchers for meaning, have a preference for the poor children and the young, become bearers of hope, and be radical in taking action to the concerns of our common home. This talk was then followed by engaging conversations where participants shared about journeying together as Marist Community. The morning session culminated with a presentation on the year-long celebration of the Marist Presence in the Philippines. A Marist prayer concluded the morning session.

The afternoon was jam-packed with sharing research-based ideas, education-related issues, environmental-relevant concerns, and youth-related information. The plenary talk on UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focused on those that are relevant to education, namely SGD 8 (Decent work and Economic Growth), SGD 9 (Advocacy, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SGD 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). SDGs are relevant policy framework that can be used as a reference for institution-policy formation. Other themes delivered in the succeeding talks were: Challenges of Quality Education, Challenges of Climate Action, and Issues Affecting Young People. The input left the participants the challenge and hope for Catholic schools to be "Spaces for New Evangelization".

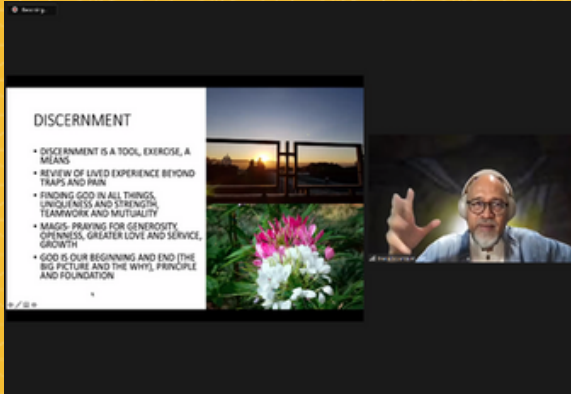
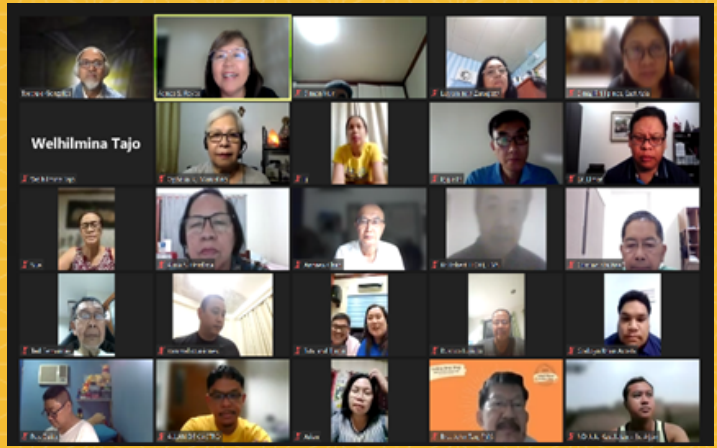
Day 3, which began with a Marist prayer, served as a wrap-up of the three-day congress. The Congress Statement draft was presented for comments and suggestions. The overall synthesis and closing message were delivered. This day culminated with a Eucharistic Celebration, a thanksgiving for a very fruitful three-day Marist Educators' Congress.

Overall, the Marist Educators' Congress provided an enriching experience for all participants, fostered meaningful discussions on Marist identity, and shared innovative ideas on improving Marist educational landscapes. The event indeed served as the driving force of Marist goodness for a brighter and more promising world!

By: *Dr. Jose Dagoc*

Photo News

July 2:
Monthly Province Reflection in deepening the calls of 6th Provincial Chapter – ON PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT



July 4:
Br. Elmer, together with the Old Boys of Br. Joseph in Catholic High School and friends of Brothers in IHM Church offer prayers at the niches of Br. Joseph in IHM church Columbarium. Particularly, they also remembered the 2nd Death Anniversary of Br. Joseph Dufresse Chang, FMS.



July 5:
Faith Living camp for Junior Catholic boys of SFXC Hong Kong



Br. Jo-An Legaste visited the Kobe community from 5 July to 11 July. It was such a joy and blessing to have him with us. Br. Jo-An enjoyed visiting historical sites, tourist spots, and the cemetery of the Brothers.



Photo News

Br. Yohan Oh returned to the Kobe community on 7 July after making the pilgrimage to the Hermitage and the Camino de Santiago Frances. The journey began at St Jean Pied de Port on 25 May and arrived at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela on 24 June. He continued to walk to Fisterra, where the Romans believed the end of the world. The journey ended on 2 July in Muxia, where Virgin Mary landed by a stone boat, according to a legend, to help Saint James convert the locals.



July 8 to 10:
School Year End meeting of Temporary Professed Brothers in Active Ministry at Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines



LAITY DESK UPDATES

Last July 03, the Laity leaders core team met to finalize program for the training of Marist Lay Formation Facilitators Training which will be held on July 17-19, 2023 at the Marist Asia Spirituality and Mission Center.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROTECTION DESK (CYPD)

Last July 8, Fifty-five (55) student leaders, child protection officers, and a program team coming from 10 NDEA member schools in Tacurong area attended the training on the advocacy against online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC). Student leaders were engaged in planning steps to increase awareness of protecting children from all forms of cyber risks in their schools. The workshop output was hope-giving.



MARIST PALAWAN - MALUTOK MISSION: THE BENEFITS OUTWEIGH THE RISKS

By Br. Albert Bolibol, FMS

Moving up the next ladder of education is the best feeling ever. Best feeling because despite the challenges, one is able to reach his or her goal at last.

Last June 29, Twenty-one (21) kids had their moving-up ceremony in our level one education system at Binikyat extension school. These kids come from nearby areas, some are a 20-minute walk away, and others are two mountains walk away from our school. And worst, some kids (with their parents) risk safety by crossing flooded rivers through a log footbridge, walking under heavy rains, and some wake up at 5:00 in the morning just to reach the school to study basic writing, reading, and arithmetic. They risk themselves daily with the aim of learning. I felt that for these kids, it is more than the best feeling ever but more of an achievement because, despite the risks, they made it through. Seeing that these kids are interested in studying despite the risks is encouraging. They are the kids of our indigenous people, brothers and sisters. They are the real people in the peripheries; poor but determined children.

During the ceremony, Maam Libeth emphasized (in Pala'wan language) the importance of continued/further education. She said, "Further education is important so that we will have a wider knowledge of the world around us - we have to go out of our comfort zones and explore." She also emphasized the importance of being a role model to the younger generations. She also said it is important to enjoy while learning and try not to be affected by the challenges.

Our visitor, Sir Danny Sabino, spoke of the importance of preserving and being proud of one's identity and culture - not being ashamed of being a Pala'wan. The need to preserve the environment, the rivers, the forest, and the land. He also emphasized the importance of further education.

Oca Emil Buntang, the Edukasyon Leader (in Pala'wan language), encouraged the kids to continue their education despite the difficulties they experienced. There is a need to continue so that they will have and their families a better future. They need to have the courage to step into the next ladder of their education journey so that they will learn more. Like the others who spoke with the kids, he thanked the presence and continued support of the brothers and the lay people to the Pala'wans, particularly in the education of the kids, emphasizing that without their help, their kids will never reach where they are now.

They also made mentioned of the effort that our Para-teachers exerted every week, enduring walking for five hours back and forth, sometimes catching colds and fever walking in the rain just to bring basic education to the kids. With that said, education is powerful; it conquers difficulties and challenges and is more than a tool to learn - it is a way to get out of the dreaded situations of poverty of mind and spirit.

On a personal note, we would like to thank everyone who helped our mission in Pala'wan for almost twenty-three years now. We owe you all the successes of our mission here. To all the brothers and lay people who had been assigned here, we cannot thank you enough. We can only ask God to bless you more so that you can be more of a blessing to others despite your needs and circumstances in life.



INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF MARIST YOUTH – LISBON 2023

<https://champagnat.org/en/ymm-lisbon-2023/>



The International Gathering of Marist Youth (IGMY) began with a youth festival in Australia in 2008 prior to World Youth Day (WYD) and continued in Madrid (2011) and Rio de Janeiro (2013). In 2016, in Lyon, France, and again in Guatemala City, [Guatemala in 2019](#), the four branches of the Marist family held a joint gathering with young people from our religious families. The same experience will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, from July 26th to July 31st, 2023, prior to World Youth Day (WYD).

An International Preparatory Commission chosen from the 4 congregations has been working on this proposed gathering. Under the motto « INTO THE DEEP », 200 young from the 4 Marist congregations will gathered in Portugal.

For the Marist Institute, in keeping with past experiences, the commission offers to each Provinces and Districts the possibility of sending three young people as participants to this International Gathering.

The Externato Marista de Lisboa will welcome young people taking part in the WYD to foster our family spirit and to support all the Marists participants with a place to call "home" during that time. A **Marist Youth Festival on the 31st of July** open to all Marist participants.



The East Asia Province will be represented by Dr. Wilter C. Friaes (Philippines) and Br. Abraham Kang from Korea-Japan Sector.

Into the Deep – Lisbon | 26-31 July 2023

Birthday Celebrations



July 3:
Birthday celebration of Br. John Chong in Hong Kong Community

July 12:
Br. Dems' birthday at Notre Dame Hermitage, France.



Glimpses of the Past

THE SHORT STORY OF THE MARIST BROTHERS IN CHINA

By Spes Stanley Ku¹

This article is a reprint from **MARIST NOTEBOOKS, #38, May 2020, pages 61-82.**

Second of the Five Series

MARIST CHINA MISSION BECAME AN INDEPENDENT PROVINCE

In 1908, seventeen years after the arrival of the first pioneer Brothers in China, the Marist mission in China became an independent province. Br. Louis Michel was nominated its first Provincial. Prior to that date, the China mission was a District attached to a Province thousands of miles away, something that not all convenient. Practically all important decisions were made in France, and at that time the correspondence from Europe to the Far East took about two months. Moreover, the mother Province later could not send any more Brothers. The China mission proved it was able to survive by itself both in terms of resources and personnel. To facilitate its administration, it was thought more advisable and reasonable that the Chinese sector should become its own Province.

BUILDING OF THE CHALA PROVINCIAL HOUSE

Plans for a vast building were drawn up, which for many years to come ought to be able to house the Provincial administration as well as training facilities. The building had a northern facade of 95 meters, with three wings running the south, the center one being the Chapel. It was a three-story construction, including the ground floor, and was able to provide independence in living arrangements to the different communities housed there. Though the building looks imposing, there was no element of luxury in its furniture and fittings. Trees that appear small in the original photographs had already reached imposing sizes, particularly the plane trees near the entrance gate. Large outdoor recreation spaces were available for the use of juniors and novices.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHINA PROVINCE: LOCAL VOCATIONS

Simply becoming independent, would not guarantee further development of the Province or its survival. It could not prosper without having a sufficient supply of personnel. A training center for those aspiring to join the Marist life had to be established.

From the beginning, the pioneer Brothers were looking to recruit locally. In fact, in Br. Marie Candide's very first letter to the Superior General, he expressed such intention: "Belong long, we hope to have some novices, which the Fathers have prepared for us from among the most intelligent..."

Both the Vincentian Fathers who had invited the Brothers to China and the Brothers themselves knew that it was essential to have local vocations to help them if they wanted to succeed in their work of evangelization. All the Fathers on his Council urge us to recruit novices... as all agree that we must have Chinese Brothers, for they all realized that in order to have genuine results in their efforts to evangelize they must have Chinese Brothers. However, it was not opportune to commence on this hastily, for it entailed many issues. They had to ensure that they had enough funds as well as qualified personnel. The Brothers had been in China for barely a year, and needed to become familiar with the local culture and customs. Besides, up to 1908, before the Province became independent, they depended on their Mother Province for practically everything. So, much as they recognized the need of local vocations, and much as they wanted to start a formation house, they could not immediately do much. It was not until a year later that their dream would be realized.

The next year, Br. M. Candide wrote to the Assistant General saying that, with Brother Superior General's permission and his support, he would try to get together some novices and would test them seriously and give them particular care." If you grant us permission, we will try to receive a few novices, one or two and perhaps three postulants."

Two months later, he wrote again, confirming the establishment of the novitiate.

“Our novitiate was finally established set up yesterday 15 August, with five excellent young men whom we have known for two years. They may not be eagles but, as far as I can judge, very pious, very simple, very straightforward.” Our novitiate is firmly and seriously established. In this regard, we have every reason to give praise to Divine Providence, which has permitted circumstances to unfold that delayed this important foundation until today. For more than a year, the novitiate question has arisen, and on more than one occasion we tried to bring it to a suitable conclusion; but it was all premature, and it could have failed. Now, all seems to promise success. With five novices who have today have been postulants for a year or more, you can easily understand that we are in a position to do excellent work. We know one another and we know what we want. We are going to try to find five more, and we will place them in the College de Nantang, where we will observe them and train them....

By the year 1949, there were 215 Brothers working in the China Province. Of these, 109 were Chinese and the others were missionaries from European countries such as France, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Ireland, but by far most of them were from France.

DIFFICULTIES FOR MISSION SCHOOLS

The Brothers were conducting more than twenty schools in many cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Wuhan, Qingdao, Chongqing. But, the Good Lord had his own designs. Or as the saying goes, “Man proposes, God disposes” Everything seemed to be going on prosperously, with many local young men were aspiring to join the Brothers and dedicate themselves to evangelizing the youth especially the underprivileged through education, all the schools functioning well, and plans for even further development in southern Provinces, when finally the civil war ended and a new government came into power. On 1 October 1949, the People’s Republic of China was established.

In 1949, the policy of the new government forwards schools run by religious was initially tolerant. No drastic measures were taken. But not long after, the government began to take over the schools step by step. First, the Directors of the schools were sent to designated centers to attend re-education courses for months. In certain cases, the Director was arrested or even imprisoned. Some were even sent to the extreme north of Manchuria or to other had labor camps. Another measure taken was the assigning of an instructor of political science to each school. This instructor was to act also as the conscience director for both the students and teachers. He was to mastermind the eventual total takeover of the school when opportunity arrived. Eventually, the authorities interfered in the management of our schools in such way that it became clear that religious teachers could no longer continue their apostolate among the youth entrusted to their care. Finally, it became extremely difficult or even impossible for any religious to operate any schools. Really, it was a turbulent period full of future uncertainty.

To Be Continued

¹ Marist ex-student of St. Francis Xavier’s College, Hong Kong and author of the book, ‘Dawn of the Word in Silence, The Adventure of the Marist Brothers in Asia’, (2017).





Provincial's Schedule

July 14 to 31, 2023

July 14-16:
Week-end Gathering with 2017 La Valla Pilgrims-Mindanao Based

July 19-23:
Travel to Singapore for Maris Stella High School Founder's Day Celebration

July 24-27:
Family Break

July 28-31:
Marist Province Center



July 16:
Br. Joachim Heng (*Hee Tiam*)

July 17
Br. Melchor Nowelle P. Solinap, Jr.

July 21:
Jake Wilson S. Rollenas
(Postulant)

July 25:
Br. Christopher C. Gorit

July 29:
Br. Ignatius In (*Tong-wan*)

July 31:
Br. Roy R. Deita

Prayer Intentions:

- For good health and well-being of Pope Francis.
- For the increase of vocations to Marist life.
- For the poor members of our society.
- For the success of the Marist Formation Facilitators' Training on July 17-19.
- For the continued commitment to protect our Mother Earth.
- For the protection of those at risks due to natural calamities.