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**SPECIAL  
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# MARIST NEWS

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LISBON, FROM JULY 26 TO 31, 2023

## INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF MARIST YOUTH

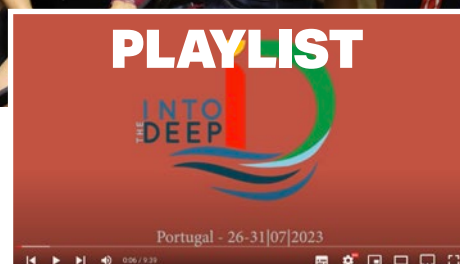
**A**t the end of July, the Marist Province of Compostela welcomed young people from all over the world in the schools of Carcavelos and Lisbon, where the VI International Gathering of Marist Youth (IGMY) was held. The event was organized by the 4 branches of the Marist Family. This special edition of Marist News is dedicated to this gathering and intends to be a memory of the dreams lived by more than 200 people from all over the Marist world. On the Institute's website it is possible to find complete details about the (IGMY, such as the participant's guide, photo albums of each day, and several videos.



### MARIST YOUTH

**T**he young Marist gatherings, which take place on the eve of World Youth Day, began in 2008 in Sydney, Australia. Since 2016, with the fourth meeting, the initiative began to be organized jointly with the Marist Fathers, the Marist Missionary Sisters, and the Marist Sisters. The inter-congregational commission that organized this event wanted the meeting to be an opportunity to:

- Embrace the precious gift they are for God, for the Marist Family, for the Church and for the world.
- To live an international and intercultural experience, guided by the Holy Spirit and the spirit of Mary.
- To consolidate the experience that took place in Guatemala, 2019.
- To offer an experience of Marist prayer, community, family and mission.
- Discover ways to deepen and live their personal call to discipleship.
- To begin to understand what it means to be a pilgrim walking with others.





## INTO THE DEEP

«Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch» Jesus' invitation to Peter at Lake Galilee (Luke 5:1-11) is the invitation addressed to the youth of today. The motto of the meeting "IntoTheDeep" reminds us that Jesus is near and calls us to sail further and cast our nets. And the youth, courageous, answer: "Master, we have toiled all the night, ... nevertheless at thy word, I will let down the net" "May your greatness not intimidate us, may your mercy embrace us, may it give us strength in our weakness, and may the fire of your calling ignite within us, like in Mary. Yes, like her! To serve those who suffer the most in this world."



## PARTICIPANTS

Young people and companions from all over the world were invited to participate in the IGMY, representing the different realities of the Marist congregations. 223 people participated (109 women and 114 men). Most of them were young people involved in Marist family ministry, but there were also members of the councils of the four congregations and adults accompanying the young people. There were 163 young people distributed as follows: 10 linked to the Marist Missionary Sisters, 21 to the Marist Fathers, 7 to the Marist Sisters and 124 to the Marist Brothers. There were 61 coordinators: 8 from the Missionary Sisters, 6 from the Society of Mary, 4 from the Marist Sisters and 43 from the Marist Brothers.

It is important to highlight the presence of the 4 superior generals, together with some members of their councils. Representing the General Government of the Marist Institute were Brothers Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, and General Councilors Ben Consigli, Josep Maria Soterias and Óscar Martín. One of the protagonists was Br. José Sánchez Bravo (Br. Pepe), director of the Secretariat for Education and Evangelization, who animated most of the gathering assuming the work of the previous directors of the Secretariat, Br. Carlos Alberto Rojas and Br. Mark Omede, who also participated in the meeting.



## LOGO AND HYMN

There are four symbolic elements in the meeting's logo:  
4 Waves: Four very similar colors representing the 4 Marist congregations.

Red, green, and yellow: The colors of the Portuguese flag.

The "i" in "Into," translated as "towards." It also represents a person, each of the participants, and the reference to the founders, Mary and Jesus.

The "D" in "Deep," translated as "deep." The "i" and the "D" form a boat sailing over the waves.

The hymn of the meeting is entitled "Vamos al Encuentro", written by Brother Fábio Oliveira, who died recently, was presented. It is a call to encounter. The refrain goes like this: "Let us go in haste to the encounter! It is the Lord who sends us. We are the Church going out, we are the embrace of love". The "embrace of love" is Mary's embrace of Elizabeth, an embrace that communicates authentic life and joy.

["Vamos ao Encontro" \(MP3\) | Spotify](#)



## PREPARATORY COMMISSION AND HOSTS

At the beginning of 2022, a preparatory commission was appointed to prepare the gathering. Initially, it was made up of Akenesa Afoa (Marist Missionary Sisters), Anne McCabe (Marist Sisters), Carlos Alberto Rojas (FMS), Fabio Oliveira and Rui Pires (FMS), Juan Carlos Piña (Marist Fathers) and Marcos Omede (FMS).

Due to the changes in functions within the congregations, the commission that was in charge of carrying out the event was finally made up of Akenese Afoa (SMSM), Anne McCabe (SM), José Sánchez Bravo (FMS), Juan Carlos Pina (SM), Maria Silvia Sanz de Diego (SM) and Rui Pires (FMS). Representing the Marist Province of Compostela, in addition to Br. Rui, Lucia Gómez, Marisa Temporão and Ricardo Homem also participated in the commission.

The realization of the meeting was only possible thanks to the efforts of the Colégio Maristas de Carcavelos and the Externato Marista de Lisboa, who made available to the participants their structures and services necessary for young people. All this was promoted by the Marist Province of Compostela, which spared no effort to make this gift to the Marist Family. A special thanks to all the brothers and lay people of the province who encouraged the gathering, and especially to Brother Máximo Blanco, Provincial, always present and attentive to every detail.





## JULY 27: BELIEVE

The first day of the International Gathering of Marist Youth, July 27, was dedicated to the theme of faith, animated by the Marist Brothers. “On the one hand, it is a very easy topic, because faith is a gift. On the other hand, living the faith is a great challenge, because there are more and more things that go against it,” stressed Brother Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General of the Marists of Champagnat.

This day was preceded by the official inauguration of the event, which took place on the evening of Wednesday, July 26. The opening was marked by the reading of the text from Luke 5, when Jesus invites the Apostle Peter to cast the net to the other side. This Gospel passage inspires the meeting, motivating the young people to put out “Into The Deep”. Thursday began with Mass. After, at the beginning of the work, Brother José Sánchez, Director of the Secretariat of Education and Evangelization and member of the commission that prepared the meeting, thanked everyone for their presence and introduced the participants. He also introduced Brother Máximo Blanco, Provincial host of the meeting, and the director of the Marist College of Carcavelos, Prof. Félix Lopes.

Brother Ernesto then took the floor to motivate the participants to deepen their understanding of the theme of the day, which was “to believe”. He invited the young people to reflect on how Mary can inspire them in their journey of faith, especially moved by the will of Our Lady, after the Annunciation, to go out quickly to meet Elizabeth, in an attitude of service.

At the end of the morning’s work, the participants were divided into small communities, which will be a fraternal space for dialogue and growth during the meeting.

In the afternoon, the four Marist Brothers General Councilors, who are participating in the meeting, accompanied the young people in the process of discernment and deepening of faith. Brothers Josep Maria Soteras and Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, proposed to the young people a discernment of the reality that they have had to live in recent times, highlighting situations that challenge them, such as pandemics, the ecological question and wars. How do these situations affect faith? How can we see God in these negative realities? How can we believe that He is there? These are some of the provocations that emerged from the reflection and were the basis for the meditations in the small communities, which were then shared with the whole group through drawings that these communities presented.

Brothers Oscar Vicario and Ben Consigli presented the theme of interiority. Brother Ben showed the connection between interiority and faith, believing. Believing has to do with trust, trust in God. He does not expect everyone to be perfect, but he wants trust. Brother Oscar used the image of connection to explain the essence of life: living connected is the true life, which should mean intense moments of fullness, often marked by moments of relationship. It is about living connected to the essential.

The reflection on interiority led to the concrete experience of silence, of the encounter with God, realized individually and in small communities. To conclude the first day of the meeting, the hosts organized a typical Portuguese feast, an “arraial”, with an open-air dinner and the animation of a folkloric group that presented Portuguese dance traditions.





## JULY 28 – ADORE

On this day, the theme proposed by the Preparatory Commission for the International Gathering of Marist Youth was “ADORE”. The animation was provided by the Marist Sisters. “Today we will go deeper. We are going to Adore”, said Sr. Sylvette Mané, Superior General, during her motivation. The day began with Mass. Afterwards, everyone gathered in the meeting space and the Marist Sisters began the animation. It was a day of many activities aimed at motivating to deepen the life of faith, trust in God



through the example of Mary. Sister Sylvette emphasized this point in her presentation to the young people. She reviewed the life of Mary and invited the participants to point to the “upper room” where the disciples and Our Lady received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Like Mary, the young people were invited to live a simple, ordinary, generous, trusting and humble life. Mary allowed herself to be transformed by God and this is the fundamental attitude for those who want to embrace the Christian life in depth.

Next, Sister Regina de Oliveira, from Brazil, proposed a reflection that showed what it is to adore. She highlighted two key elements that identify this attitude in the Christian: the presence of the Holy Spirit and thanksgiving, which is the Eucharist. He emphasized the Marian appellation “Stella Maris” and asked everyone to reflect on the star that guides their lives.

This was the motivation that led the 22 groups to work on identifying Marian characteristics that could be considered as guiding stars for their own lives.

In the afternoon, the young people lived a very intense spiritual experience. Sister Silvia Sanz de Diego, General Councilor, who was also one of the organizers of the meeting, reflected on the Magnificat and proposed that each one imagine their own. Through individual and group reflection, an artistic presentation synthesizing the reflection of each group was presented to the plenary.

To end the evening, the sisters proposed a long period of adoration, followed by the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament.

After supper, the whole group was invited to meditate on what they had experienced during the day, in a moment of contemplation on the beach of Carcavelos.





## JULY 29 – FATIMA

On Saturday, the participants in the IGMY made a pilgrimage to Fatima, the place where Our Lady appeared to the three shepherds in the last century. The group left Carcavelos early in the morning to travel the 150 kilometers that separate the two cities. The buses left the group in front of the John Paul II Stadium, where there was a time for breakfast and the first reflection in the groups. Afterwards, the young people and their companions went on a walk of about 5 kilometers to the Shrine, passing by the house where Sister Lucia de Jesus was born and lived. Along the way, the youths reflected on the Wedding at Cana, as told by St. John. After arriving at the Shrine, the group attended Mass at 11:00. Afterwards there were times for personal meditation and a visit to the shrine, as well as a group photo.

The entire journey that day was animated by the Marist Fathers. After lunch, which was served in a structure of the Divine Word Missionaries, the Marist Fathers motivated the group to create attunement with Mary. Each one received a rosary and all were invited to make this prayer a common practice in their lives, as it was in the lives of the founders of the Marist congregations. The underlying theme that was highlighted that afternoon was that Mary is the one who directs each one to her child, Jesus.

This message was also underlined by Father John Larsen, Superior General of the Society of Mary. Considering the context of Fatima, he recalled the simple origin of the children who meet Mary. Through the choice of these children, simple people, it is possible to understand how Mary works in us. Mary introduces herself to the poorest children in the area and calls them to meet and embrace her son Jesus. They were then sent to convey a message to the world of that time, a world characterized by war and materialism. This is a model through which we can see Mary's methodology. This is also evident in Guadalupe, Aparecida and Lourdes. She chooses the poor to show the message of Jesus. The same happens in the story of the Wedding at Cana. All the characters are addressed to Christ through Mary. The dynamics were concluded leaving the question: what action is Our Lady asking to do, as Marists, to bring the Good News of Jesus to the world today?

Around 17:30, the group returned to the College of Carcavelos. In the evening, the young people still had energy to promote a Marist Got Talent festival.



## JULY 30

**S**unday, July 30 was the last day of the youth in Carcavelos. The day's activities began at 8 a.m. with a biblical meditation on the passage of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45). The Marist Missionary Sisters were in charge of motivating the young people that day. The Superior General, Sr. Georgeanne Marie Donovan, gave the first motivation, emphasizing the theme of love linked to Mary's example. An invitation made with love leads to action, Sr. Georgeanne stressed. This was the case with the "pioneers" of the Missionary Sisters, who had the audacity to accept the invitation to be Christians in Oceania. In this regard, the Superior General recalled the history of the Congregation. Then, emphasizing the Marian spirit, she recalled how Mary was obedient, an obedience that translates into listening. It was only because of this that, when she was invited to carry the message of Christ to the world, she was able to say "yes".

The second part of the morning was characterized by a tour on the Marist mission. Several rooms were set up detailing the missionary work of the 4 congregations and the young people, divided into groups, spent 10 minutes at each "station" discovering what Marists do around the world.

After lunch there was a panel in which the 4 Superiors General answered questions from the young people. It was a very rich moment of dialogue. The young people asked many questions. One of them was their concern to remain attached to the charism as they grow up and leave the institutional environment of the school.

At 17:00, the closing Mass was celebrated by Fr. John Larsen, Superior of the Society of Mary. At the end, the 4 Superiors General anointed the participants, sending them out to pass on the message received during the meeting.

Finally, there was a special moment of thanksgiving. Thanks are due to the Preparatory Commission that organized the meeting and to the host Province of Compostela, which spared no effort in welcoming the young people, especially the Marist College of Carcavelos, which was a place much appreciated by the participants.



## JULY 31 – MARIST FESTIVAL

**A**fter finishing the activities in Carcavelos, the 230 participants of the International Gathering of the Marist Youth moved to the Externato Marista de Lisboa, where more than 1000 young Marists from all over the world arrived and stayed there to participate in the World Youth Day, from August 1 to 6. The educational community of the College welcomed the participants, preparing the premises of the structure to make everyone feel at home. The morning was mainly dedicated to the welcome. From 15:00, the Marist Festival began, consisting of moments of animation on the stage in the central courtyard of the college, many games and workshops, as well as visits to exhibition spaces on Marist life throughout the world.

At 17:30, with live transmission, the International Network of Marist Youth Ministry was launched. This was followed by the celebration of the Mass. Then supper was served in different kiosks in the courtyard area, with typical Portuguese products. Finally, the BandAlegre, a musical group from the Marist Province of Compostela, entertained the youth group until around midnight. The International Gathering of the Marist Youth, which began in Carcavelos and ended in Lisbon, was a very special moment for all Marist youth.





## INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF MARIST YOUTH

The network is the fruit of a process of several decades.

Recently a commission, led by the Secretariat of Education and Evangelization, worked for this launch, the first stage of a process that will continue towards the implementation of guidelines and lines of action. The team that worked on the construction of this network was formed by representatives of various Administrative Units. The final team was formed by: Brother José Sánchez Bravo (Brother Pepe, Director of the Secretariat of Education and Evangelization), Br. Daniel Martín

(America Central), Diogo Luiz Santana (Brazil Centro-Sul), Br. Euclides Nangolo (Southern Africa), Fernando Ocana Rus (Mediterránea), Laura Alejandra Miño Perez Santa María de los Andes), Miguel Fernandes Ribeiro (Brazil Centro-Sul), Omar Iván Chacón Meza (Mexico Central), Wilter C. Friaes (East Asia).

"With the International Network of MYM, we want to foster synergy and promote the interaction of all those involved, providing a broad vision of Marist life and mission through a common project. This is being part of a Global Charismatic Family," said Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General.

[Read here more about the launch of the Network during the Marist Festival, in Lisbon, on July 31, 2023.](#)



## XXXIII WORLD YOUTH DAY

The presence of young Marists in Portugal was motivated by WYD. After the Marist gathering, the young people and their companions followed almost 1.5 million people, who gathered in Lisbon from August 1 to 6. The gatherings were very significant moments, especially the one with Pope Francis. The young people took many memories, and the final message of Pope Francis, at the closing mass, in Parque Tejo:

Dear young people, I would like to look into the eyes of each of you and say: Do not be afraid. I will tell you something else, also very beautiful: it is no longer I, but Jesus himself who is now looking at you. He knows each of your hearts, each of your lives; he knows your joys, your sorrows, your successes and failures. He knows your heart. Today, he says to you, here in Lisbon, at this World Youth Day: "Have no fear, take heart, do not be afraid!"



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