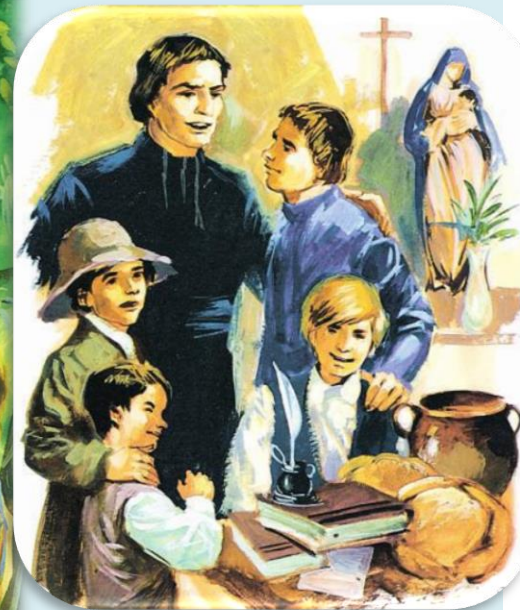




WALKING Together
Choosing Life



Marcellin, a man of deep faith, never ceased to seek the will of God through prayer and dialogue with the religious authorities and with his brothers. Very conscious of his own limitations, he counted only on God and on the protection of Mary, his "Good Mother", "Ordinary Resource" and "First Superior".



Marist Province of South Asia

Newsletter

August 2023

From the Editor's Desk!

The World Youth Day is over. When reflected upon the enthusiasm and vitality of the youth who attended from all over the world anyone wonders and questions as to why this keenness found in the youth cannot be secured. The huge churches in the Western World are now more or less museums. Will this be the same fate for the churches in Asia and elsewhere? 'Is Jesus missing or absent in the churches? Or have people particularly the youth lost faith?' are common questions. This should be discussed. On the other hand, Pope Francis has said that the churches should not be museums where there are many old statues and monuments but they should be hospitals where people get cured.

The most powerful message of World Youth Day is that Jesus Christ is alive and moving in the hearts of young people. One teenager who took part in the event described the beauty of World Youth Day thus; "To know that people from all over the world-not just people but YOUTH, teenagers such as myself-are going to the World Youth Day, reminds me how easily God can capture a heart, even a rebellious teenager's heart. Nothing is impossible for Him." And for many "rebellious hearts," teens and adults, the World Youth Day marks the turning point.

Jesus makes all things new. Or, perhaps it's more accurate to say that he makes all things "young." Youthfulness has little to do with age, in a spiritual sense. It flows from an encounter with Jesus, "the eternal source of your youth" (Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day 2011).

Pope Francis urged more than 1.5 million young people who gathered at least 10 times not to be afraid, to listen, and to let themselves be seen by Jesus, who knows their hearts. For us religious there is an invitation to reflect upon our mission for the youth like Mary who went in haste to help her cousin Elizabeth and the way Champagnat Our Founder went in haste to anoint little Montagnat. As Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32). In the same way, the



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Holy Spirit acted through young Montagnet who inspired St. Champagnat to begin initiating his mission let us also be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Let us approach and motivate our youth to voice against injustice, crimes, corruption, bribery, cheating, abuse of power, disobedience to parents and teachers, lack of faith, destruction of nature, and selfishness. In this way let Jesus be the light where there is darkness. This is high time to be among the vulnerable youth and to be a beacon to guide them to the correct path in society.

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi

Dear Marists of Champagnat,

Living in the presence of God

I know you would agree with me that there are many ways of living in the presence of God. I would like to reflect on one.

I believe that God is present to me always and everywhere though I may not be present to HIM at times.

Psalm 139 Verses 7 – 10

expresses this so clearly:

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

This presence of God to me **is a reassuring presence of His love, protection, and guidance, etc. and not a passive one.**



The 1st Letter to Thessalonians Chapter 5 verses 16 to 18 invites us to

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

I understand that if I am conscious and convinced of this presence of God then it makes easier for me to adhere to this invitation from 1 Thessalonians:

"Rejoice always", "Pray continually" and "give thanks in all circumstance".

I ask also of God, and I desire with all my soul, that you be constantly faithful to the devout practice of the presence of God, which is the soul of prayer, of meditation, and of all the virtues;
(Spiritual Testament of Fr. Champagnat)

I observe that God who is present to me is in constant communication with me. On the other hand, my response to God seems to be either,

- ✓ Living in the awareness of God's presence, listening to Him, and giving my response or
- ✓ Being unconscious of God's presence and remaining ignorant of God's communication to me.

Hence, growing in quality of being aware of God’s presence would really help me to “Rejoice always”, “Pray continually” and “give thanks in all circumstance”.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us keep on growing in the consciousness of “Living in the Holy presence of God”. This was in fact one of the favourite exercises of Fr. Champagnat. Getting used to an exercise of this nature will surely inspire others to see us as a group of

- People filled with JOY. (Rejoice always)
- People filled with God. (Pray Continually)
- People filled with Gratitude. (Give thanks in all circumstances)



Bro. Nicholas Fernando, Provincial

Celebrating the Feast of Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary with Marists

On Saturday, August 12th, 2023, the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary was celebrated along with the 77th Independence Day of India at St. Marcellin Community Hall in UKT Malai, Trichy. This event was organized by The Marist Brothers and was attended by over 100 people, including men and women from different religious congregations, diocesan priests, parishioners, friends, Marist lay members, mission collaborators, and all the Brothers in the sector.



The event began with a Eucharistic celebration and was followed by a fellowship meal. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the company of one another and had a lot of fun and fraternal sharing. It was truly a time to share the Marist spirit with one another and encourage each other to live our lives like Mother Mary with audacity, courage, humility, and inner joy.



The attendees joined hands and prayed together for all the Marists in the world. The brothers, sisters, and staff members were thanked for meticulously planning the event and providing beautiful decorations, delicious lunch, and fraternal support. Everything went on well and it was indeed a time of celebration and thanksgiving to God while celebrating the feast of our Good Mother Mary.



The legacy of St. Marcellin Champagnat continues to inspire and guide so many people around the world. It was a beautiful and memorable day for everyone who attended.

Bro. Raj Kumar

Brothers in India Sector Reflect on Prayer and Service at Shanthivanam.



A two-day recollection for the Brothers in India sector was organized from 19th to 20th August 2023 at Saccidananda Ashram at Shanthivanam, Thannirpalli. The recollection was an opportunity for the Brothers to experience silence and interiority and contemplate on their call to religious life.



The recollection started at 11.00 am on the first day with a short prayer and a talk by Fr. Dorathick OSB, a Benedictine monk who lives at the ashram. He gave some inputs on prayer life for personal reflection. Brothers spent time in silence and contemplation, following the monastic rhythm of prayer. They also joined the community at the ashram for prayer and Holy Eucharist.



The second day began with morning prayer and followed by Holy Eucharist at 7 am. The second talk was given at 9.30 am, which focused on service as an expression of love and faith. The speaker shared some insights on how to serve others with joy and humility, following the example of Jesus and Mary.



Shanthivanam is a place where the Christian faith is lived out through Indian culture and Hindu way of searching for God. It is a place of inculturation and harmony, where one can encounter God in nature and in the sacred scriptures of different religions. The ashram was founded by Fr. Bede Griffiths OSB, a pioneer of interreligious dialogue and Christian-Hindu spirituality.



The Brothers enjoyed the simple and vegetarian food served at the ashram. They also appreciated the hospitality and friendliness of the members of the Ashram.

Before the end of the two-day recollection, the Brothers had a sector gathering to discuss about the Golden Jubilee of Marist Presence in India, which will be celebrated in May, 2024. A preparatory committee was formed to plan and organize the program. The Brothers expressed their gratitude to God for His blessings and guidance throughout their journey as Marists in India.

The recollection concluded with lunch. Everyone dispersed to their respective communities, feeling refreshed and renewed in their vocation. The Brothers thanked each other for their availability and cooperation, and prayed for God's continued grace and protection.

Bro. Rajakumar

TONGUE

Our tongues have the power to emit more than just bad breath; they can also release harmful words. Unlike bodily emissions, our words have the potential to positively or negatively impact others, depending on how we use them. Careless and poorly constructed speech can cause greater damage than any bad smell from our bodies. A single irresponsible tongue can shatter familial, communal, or national harmony. Sharp words are akin to swords, capable of piercing the hearts of those around us. The harm caused by hurtful words is incurable. Therefore, it is crucial to be thoughtful and intentional about the words we use, ensuring that they are positively impactful and constructively structured.

The tongue that is encouraged by one's positive attitude, disciplinary formation, healthy environment, accurate knowledge, genuine beliefs, self-discipline, etc. articulates pleasant words. Similarly, the negative characteristics can motivate the tongue to pass judgments and to make baseless accusations and negative comments that even can destroy a life. People who carry tales may not think about the disaster they commit. Haters carry tales. Fools accept them. Idiots spread them but gossip dies when it hits wise men's ears. People who are ignorant may not bother to know what is true and what is untrue. They begin to accept even a lie as true and a lie is no more a lie when it is repeatedly pronounced. What great damage do they create? In such instances, we begin to understand that better be alone than in bad company. Real wisdom comes in the association of great personalities who have the right wisdom and the insight to guide us and answer our questions that can really pierce through the various layers of ignorance in our hearts. Let us reach someone of such calibre but never a!!!

We have learned that *kasthuri* known as deer musk, is attar that's originally derived from a male deer belonging to the Moschidae family. The musk gland is found only in adult males. It lies in a sac located between the genitals and the umbilicus. These innocent animals are killed for the musk. According to Buddhist literature, the poets question god as to why he didn't hide *kasthuri* in the tongue of the liars instead of hiding it in the navel of the innocent deer that is killed for musk. This is how the liars are condemned, humiliated, and criticized in Literature.

It is very ironic to observe people with 'double tongues'. One is twisted and articulated in the presence of others to flatter them and the other is twisted and articulated in their absence to destroy the other. Such tongues are full of venom. A venomous snake usually stings one at a time but a venomous tongue can sting countless people. The disaster a small tongue can do is unimaginable. Some turn and twist their boneless tongues for their survival, their benefits and to save their positions. The bending backbone and the twisting tongue are qualifications and added advantages for position hunters. Being dumb is more graceful rather than being a man with a dirty tongue.

Pope Francis in his Lent Message says, "If you cannot control your tongue better you bite your tongue hard. So the tongue will swell and you cannot speak any longer."



Ajith Perera

Ph.D. in Linguistics at European Continental University USA

The Assumption, the Patronal feast of the Institute

The Church celebrates the feast of the Assumption of Mary on August 15. This day is also the patronal feast of the Institute of the Marist Brothers. The Assumption is one of the four dogmas proclaimed by Pope Pius XII on 1st November 1950. The Assumption Day commemorates the belief that when Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, died, her body was "assumed" into heaven to be reunited with her soul, instead of going through the natural process of physical decay upon death". This feast has great significance to the Marist Brothers as it is considered the patronal feast of the Institute.

For Marcellin Champagnat, Mary, the Good Mother, was his constant inspiration. He had great devotion, admiration, and love for Mary, inculcated in him, by his mother and aunt, right from his childhood. His love for Mary, is obvious through the life and ministry of Marcellin.

After the ordination, Marcellin took the road to Fourvière to offer his Priestly life and ministry to consecrate himself, at her feet. On his first appointment to Lavalla, he went there to begin his sacred ministry on the feast of Assumption, so that Mary will bless the first fruits of his undertakings.

We read in the "Life of Joseph Benedict Marcellin Champagnat" about his devotion to the Blessed Virgin and how much love and devotion Marcellin had for her. We note various practices and things he did and how he encouraged the Brothers to practice growing in their love for Mary. It is written, "The institute professes a special place to Mary and numerous practices of piety are prescribed by the Rule, to honour her and merit her protection, (pg. 335)".

Marcellin further, "justified his exhortation to the Brothers to look upon Mary as their Mother, their Patroness, and their Model; moreover, he wanted them to have towards her the feelings appropriate to a Mother, a patroness, a Model and a first Superior. It was based on these principles that the practices which we now record, were established in the Society in order to honour Mary, (pg. 337)".



It is in this spirit, our Constitutions tell us, “that our ways of being and acting draw their inspiration and guidance from the attitudes that made Mary the perfect disciple of Christ (cf. C 4)”. It is with this spirit and attitude that we, the Marists of Champagnat, every year, celebrate all the feast days, especially the patronal feast day with great love, devotion, and reverence.

In honour of this feast day of the Assumption, Sargodha community celebrated it in a simple manner yet with great devotion. The Brothers joined the local community of St. Anthony’s Catholic Church to celebrate Mass. Fr. Mukthar Alam celebrated the Mass. Brother Farancis proclaimed the first Reading. After the Eucharistic celebration, it was time to greet the local people and spend time with the Dominican sisters.

Br. Hadayat who was away for his home visit was unable to make it for the feast day. The rest of the community ‘gathered around the same table’ to mark the day, with additional dishes and ice cream.

In concluding this article, I wish to share the words of Sean Sammon, from his circular, In her arms or in her heart.

“I ask Mary to give to me and to each one of my Marist Brothers that attitude of attentive listening, prompt obedience, simple commitment to people, trust, strength, humility, and serene joy. In times such as these, we are prompted to say with Father Champagnat: ‘She has done everything for us.

Bro. Paul Bhatti



Two Generations - Two Brothers but One Unit

Educational Media Unit Maris Stella Negombo.

Surin Fernanado the elder son of Mr Sujith Fernando, a mathematics teacher in the secondary school of Maris Stella College Negombo was appointed the Sinhala compering coordinator of the Educational Media Unit Maris Stella College Negombo for the year 2021-2022 by the Principal Rev. Bro. Michael De Waas.

His younger son Pranath Fernando was appointed the Secretary of the Educational Media Unit at Maris Stella College Negombo for the year 2023-2024 by the Principal Rev. Bro. Sunanda Alwis.



My experience in MSC Negombo.

I am very happy to gather some new experiences during two and a half months at Marist Stella College in Negombo. My experiences during this ACEP (Apostolic Community Experience Program) are three folds. First, the students are really impressive, in terms of their discipline and respect. They are skillful, life-sharing, and especially they are really joyful children. They are special gifts through which I could sense the presence of God because I felt loved. Second, I have learned many things from the school and the teachers. There are many different activities in the school that I didn't have a chance to learn when I was a schoolboy. And it helps me to have some ideas about school activities in the future. And with the teachers, I could feel the connection between themselves and the students. They share all their knowledge with love and care as if they are their second parents. And I was surprised that some teachers work overtime. Third, Marist Stella College is such a big school and the brothers are really busy with the school, but personally, I don't feel the disconnection between myself and the brothers in the community. Especially I feel loved, cared for, and protected by the brothers in the community. This is how I feel the family spirit, which I could imagine was alive in the first community in Lavala.



Finally, I am really impressed and joyful with this Apostolic Community Experience Program and I will use this experience to make Jesus known and loved like the brothers here are doing.

Joseph Reun Pech

MSC Football

Football is a very popular game in Sri Lanka and it has become the second game to Cricket. Maris Stella College Negombo won several championships under the leadership of our coaches Mr Sugath and Bonifes Perera and masters in charge of Rev. Br. Sasmika Fernando and Mr. Navod Deshan. This is a collective effort of all that led to victory.



Unbeaten Maris Stella College in the Arena of Athletics



The athletes of Maris Stella College, Negombo have placed an indomitable record of being victorious over the past seven years consecutively. Our College athletes have brought glory not only to the College but also to the precious concept of the Pioneering Founder Brothers of our College who believed that a school without a playground is incomplete.

Though ours is not a sports school, our playground is always busy with sports and games. Yet our students have maintained the balance between classroom activities and play field activities. They perform well in both spheres and contribute immensely to accruing credit and honour to the College.

Under the able guidance and blessing of Rev. Bro. Michael De Waas, the Principal and all the other past Principals, and the direction of Mr. Susan Thamel and Mr. Tony Silva our athletes accomplished many championships with ground records and bagged numerous medals. We gratefully remember Mr. Philip Ranjith, the Chief Coach for his tireless efforts and the non-academic staff for their assistance.



Winning the Championship of the Western Province for 5 years consecutively, the Junior Championship for 4 years consecutively, the Senior School Athletic Championship for 5 years consecutively, and the Championship of the National Relay Carnival for 3 years in the recent history proves the accurate techniques, superb skills, outstanding mechanisms, and excellent discipline the athletes have mastered and the number of endurance and blessings they are in possession. All this is incomparable.

Maristonions namely Ryan Wickremaratne, Ushan Thiwanika, Wenura Lakmal, Udith Chandrasena, Yohan Sewwanda, Promod Madushan, and Chanuka Sandeepa are proud products who represented Sri Lanka in the international athletic arena. By now the name Maris Stella is synonymous with championships. This record will definitely continue in the years to come.

Let this be a tribute to all those who have contributed to the incomparable achievements in numerous ways and be an enrichment for the present athletes to bring glory to the College.

Vikum Abeysinghe



Marist Lumino

It was yet another magnificent day at Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa. 'Maris Lumino' is an Overnight Star Gazing Camp organized by the committee members of the Science Union 2023 and the teachers in charge. The iconic event was held on Friday, 28th of August 2023, at the grounds of MSCT under the guidance of the Marist Brothers.



The camp was conducted by The Institute of Astronomy with the assistance of two members of the Planetarium Colombo. From 4.00 p.m. onwards, nearly 500 students from Grade 6 upwards were registered with the help of the teachers and the A/L students of Science Union. Entrance tokens and hand bands were issued to the students and they were divided into 24 groups.



The event started at 6.30 p.m. with the opening ceremony. After singing the National Anthem, the opening prayer was conducted and the oil lamp was lit by the Guests, the Marist Brothers, and the student representatives. The Secretary of the Science Union delivered the welcome speech and Rev. Bro. Mervyn Perera, the principal of MSCT addressed the gathering.

As a starter, a lecture was delivered by a member of the Sri Lanka Planetarium. Various presentations were displayed on the projector for better learning. Around 7.30 p.m. students were directed to the main ground for moon observation, as groups along with their group leaders. As there were 8 telescopes all students were able to enjoy observing the celestial objects conveniently. Students enjoy their dinner.



Before the next lecture was delivered by a member of the Institute of Astronomy (IOAS), students were provided with materials for a group activity. They were instructed to make a parachute by using eggs. During the lecture, questions on astronomy were posed in order to create interest in the subject. Students were again taken to the main ground by 2.30 a.m. for deep sky observation. Students were fortunate to observe the planets, Saturn with its rings and Jupiter with its natural satellites. The Marist Brothers too enjoyed observing the planets through telescopes.



A valuable booklet was distributed among the students. Some refreshments were provided by the Science Union and the entertainment programme broke the monotony of the students.



The next morning water rockets were made in groups and they were launched in the playground amidst the applause of the Marist Brothers, teachers, parents, and students. The winners of 'Water Rockets Launching' and 'Egg Drop Challenge' were awarded.

'Maris Lumino' the Star Gazing Camp was concluded successfully with the delivery of the vote of thanks by the President of the Science Union and the singing of the College anthem. It was another milestone of the Maris Legacy and a great achievement of the Marist Brothers.

Master Jeswald Anthony
The Secretary of Science Union 2023.

Sanhinda - the Glamour of Tradition

The Annual Arts Day organized by the students of Advanced Level Arts Union was held on the 4th of August 2023 at the main hall of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa. The purpose of the celebration of the Art Day was to highlight our students' creativity and to showcase their talents.



The Chief Guest was Mr. Mahinda Prasad Jayalath; an award-winning novelist and poet. Mrs. Kaushalya Jayalath; an award-winning poet and Mr. Nipun Heminda Basnayaka; a Lecturer at the Department of Sinhala, at the University of Kelaniya were the Guests of Honor. The students from neighbouring schools added color to this spectacular event and they participated in different competitions. They performed various cultural items to make the programme more interesting and meaningful. The winners were awarded prizes. The Chief Guest delivered an interesting speech to the audience.



Ms. Sujani Silva
MSC, Thimbirigaskatuwa

Day out with Marist Aspirants

Ambuluwawa Temple is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful observation points in Sri Lanka, situated in Gampola. It is a must-visit place in hill country. Ambuluwawa Bio-diversity centre and Ambuluwawa Temple both refer to the same. It is situated on the peak of the isolated mountain, Ambuluwawa. It is considered as the fourth botanical garden in Sri Lanka. It is a multi-religious centre where followers of all faiths practiced in Sri Lanka come to practice their religion. It consists of a Buddhist Temple, Hindu Temple, a Church, and a Mosque.

I had the opportunity to visit this amazing place with our aspirations and with two novices. It was our long waited day out and we travelled by bus and train.



Journey to the top of the mountain, climbing the tower, facing misty wind on the top of tower, the sights from the tower and everything about the place is wonderful. Vast area can be seen around from the tower. And the sights are absolutely amazing.



We were fit enough to walk all the way to the tower. We enjoyed a lot and I am thankful to the Novices and aspirants for all of their contribution of planning, arranging, singing, dancing, cooking and presence. I felt truly the vitality of the young Marists and their family Spirit.

Br. Sasmika Fernando

My experience in MSC Negombo.

This is the first time I came to M.S.C. Negombo and I feel very happy in this place. Everyone welcomed me, and continue to make me feel at home, through the brothers, teachers, and students whom I met here.

I want to mention the different dimensions of my ministry here in M.S.C. Negombo over the last three months I am here: The first is about my mission, the second is about my fraternity, and the third is about my interiority.



In my Mission: I have accompanied one teacher in Grades (6 A-E). Every time I have to be present with the students in the class. The lady teacher always made me feel very special and important in the class. If she didn't come to school for some reason I had to take the class. The students were very happy when I taught them because they wanted to play with me. Also, I feel very happy because, with my poor English, I can still teach the students. Through those experiences, I have learned how to be present, patient, and active in my class.



In my fraternity or community living: I see all the brothers trying to be together as one group because I know that in the M.S.C Negombo community, all the brothers are Apostolic religious ... they are always going out. That is the reason why they didn't have time to be together all the time. Some brothers are working in their office, some are working with students, and some need to be present with the students in the field to support them in their team with football, volleyball, cricket, and some other games too. For me, in my community, I have played guitar, cricket, football, and volleyball, with the aspirants and the boys from M.S.C Negombo school. I also teach the aspirants to learn Guitar sometimes. And also I have been involved in some entertainment with the old Brothers at the Provincial House by playing the guitar and making some fun with them.



In my interiority with my personal prayer: I have my personal prayer at 3 p.m. in the chapel or prayer room. Also in the community, we have morning prayer and evening prayer by following the Office book. And also I involve myself in the liturgy by choosing the hymns and playing guitar for Mass every Tuesday and Thursday in our school chapel. Finally I was feeling happy and enjoyed my ministry here in M.S.C Negombo with all the things that I have already mentioned. Thanks very much.

Simon M Maia

The Annual Medical and Traffic Camp 2023

The Annual Medical and Traffic Camp 2023 organized by the Marist Red Cross Society Negombo was held on the 1st of August from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm at the school premises. There was a significant number of student representatives from the Red Cross Societies of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskayuwa, St. Nicholas' International College, Negombo, and Ave Maria Convent Bolawalana were present. There were two main sessions. The first session was on first aid and was conducted by Mr. Dulitha Fernando, the President of the Red Cross Society Gampaha District, and the second session on traffic control was conducted by a police officer at the Negombo police station. In conclusion, the year plan of the Marist Red Cross Society for the year 2023 was presented.



Bro. Benedict Soorya

“From Prefect to Leader, Navigating Four Years of Growth and Impact”

It is with great pleasure and a touch of nostalgia that I write this article to share my experiences as the Head Prefect of our esteemed college, as well as my journey of growth and leadership over the past four years.



Four years ago, when I was appointed as a probationer, I didn't have the faintest idea on how this would go on to change my life. It was during the probationary period that I learned the true essence of leadership and discipline through hardwork. Every task, no matter how seemingly small, was an opportunity to demonstrate my dedication to the association. Probation Period was full of memories as I was appointed as the Project Vice Leader in the Junior Promotion Project 2019. It was initially a great opportunity for me to show my capabilities as a leader back then.

After completing a successful probation period, I was promoted as a Junior II Prefect in 2020. Among the various chapters of my journey as a prefect, one that will forever remain etched in my memory is the period when the world was grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic brought along with it unprecedented challenges, which lead us to adopt accordingly.



“Maris Invictus”, the Senior Promotion Project of year 2022, was a tremendous source of inspiration for my journey especially since I had the privilege of being chosen as the Project Leader for this ambitious endeavor that granted me a wide aspect of teamwork and leadership.



After completing 3 years in my journey along with a successful Senior Promotion Project, I was entrusted with the role of the Head Prefect. This was a moment of immense pride and determination. As Head Prefect, I recognized the opportunity to foster positive change within our

college community. From coordinating events and managing responsibilities to ensuring effective communication between students, each day brought a new challenge and a new chance to learn and grow.

Throughout my tenure as the Head Prefect, challenges were inevitable. Balancing academics with duties, mediating conflicts, and driving initiatives in the face of constraints were just a few of hurdles. However, each challenge became an opportunity to test my resilience, patience and problem-solving skills.



But it wasn't all about challenges. There were moments of celebration and triumph that will forever be etched in my memory. We succeeded in reviving Probation Camps, Sports camps, Trips and many other activities for prefects after a long hiatus due to the pandemic. “Maris Cricket Fiesta” emerged as a convergence of Young Leaders in the School Network . Beyond the boundaries of the cricket pitch, this event encapsulated the values of teamwork, sportsmanship, and the exchange of ideas. “Maris Feedfire’23” the street food extravaganza was yet another remarkable accomplishment that attracted the massive crowd and captured the vibrant spirit of our college community. This will forever serve as a reminder of the power of teamwork and the incredible impact of young leaders of our Alma Mater.

Four years as a prefect, to me, were not just about leading others; they were also about discovering my individuality. The role propelled me beyond the boundaries of my comfort zone, helping me develop interpersonal skills, time management, and the ability to empathize with diverse perspectives.

Last but not the least, my experience as the Head Prefect of Maris Stella College has been a transformative and enriching journey. It has taught me that leadership is not just about authority, but about service, responsibility, and the opportunity to make a positive difference. I am grateful and blessed to be appointed as the guiding beacon of the student body. To the future leaders who will step into these roles, I offer you my wholehearted encouragement for a successful journey ahead. As, I step down from this position, I carry with me the invaluable lessons learned, the friendships forged, and the memories that will continue to inspire me. **“We Create the Future”**



Julian Jasith
Head Prefect , (2022-2023)

A Lifetime Experience

“Memories are the past experiences that are with us forever, and what moulds us to whom we are today.”



‘Should be a College Prefect’ is one of wisest decisions I have ever made. The training, guidance and experiences received moulded me and brought me thus far in my career and life on the whole. Joining the College Prefects’ Association as a probationer on 12th March 2019, opened me and my fellow prefects to learn and experience many things that many other students were not privileged.

On 23rd August 2022, was a red letter day in my school life as I was appointed the Deputy Head Prefect at Maris Stella College, Negombo. I was entrusted with duties and responsibilities to serve my fellow friends and my Alma Mater.



Conducting and organizing camps for our fellow prefects, organizing school events and different projects brought me a number of experiences. Time management, handling and managing expenses, coordination with fellow prefects and teachers are a few to name.

Within the past three years I was able to develop leadership qualities, values, ability to solving problems and organizing different events which enriched my personality. This is of immense value in my future.

Being an active member of the College Centenary Celebration, delivering the vote of thanks at the Annual Sports Meet and having the privilege to carry the College Flag on the day of the sports meet were the highlights during my tenure at office. Being recorded as the Deputy Head Prefect for the year 2022/23 (Centenary Year) in the College history was yet another achievement.

This was a hard journey full of experience. We as a team faced all the obstacles successfully ended our year on a high note. I would like to thank all of the outgoing prefects for working collectively and using their talents for the common good and for the well-being of the College.

I would like to thank our Principal Rev. Bro. Sunanda Alwis, Deputy Principals, Masters in Charge, Academic and non-academic staff, our beloved parents and all other individuals who helped us to be successful in this journey.

Mario Vanderhoven
Deputy Head Prefect (2022-23)

First Holy Communion at Maris Stella Thimbirigaskatuwa



The Holy Communion is an important way to understand Jesus' love for all humanity. This sacrifice made all of us to understand our heavenly Fathers' love for his children. At the last supper He took the bread and gave it to His disciples and said to do this in memory of Him. From the day of our baptism we are gradually growing in the graces. Little by little we learn the importance of communication we can see and we grown ups must have experienced how the little ones go for mass with their parents kneeling down with their parents to receive communion or after their parents received how they try to take communion out from their parents mouth. It shows the eagerness. With this enthusiasm little grade four Maristonians from Thimbirigaskatuwa prepared to receive the Holy communion They took a great interest with their teachers to welcome Jesus into their hearts. At the dawn of 1st of July 2023 too they dressed in white with decorated candles in their hands with much love they knelt down and received Our Lord into their hearts. That event looked like heavenly with beautiful hymns.



Jayangika Miranda
Teacher at Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa

First Holy Communion at Maris Stella College Negombo



MARIS MOTOR RALLY 2023

Maris Stella College, Negombo is a leading private boys' school in the country managed by the Marist Brothers since 1922. It has a proud record of



producing high caliber, exemplary and distinguished citizens to the country over many years. The Old Boys' Association (OBA) was established in 1928 and had been instrumental in supporting its Alma Mater in many ways. The OBA membership of over 3000 which includes prominent public & private sector professionals, academics, top executives, businessmen and many other distinguished personnel in different fields.



Maris Motor Rally (MMR) which is a TSD (Time, Speed and Distance) rally organized by the Maris Stella College Old Boys Association. The rally normally start from Maris Stella College premises plying a distance of approximately 100Km challenging the limits of courage, grit, passion and discipline of participants. All vehicles were scrutinized before the journey and the participants had to pass through nearly 12 marshal points. Points were given at these points. MMR has established it's

name as the most prestigious motor sports event in the Western Province since 2009.

MMR started as a Maris Friendship Motor Rally under the leadership of late Mr Ranjith Fernando who became the President of OBA in 2016. In 2010 and 2011 the event was named as Maris Fun Rally under the leadership of Mr Mahesh Fernando.



In 2012 MMR had a paradigm shift when Mr Primal Vithana became the Project Chairman. Many value additions introduced and rebranding has taken place. Progressing a step further, in 2013 under the project leadership of Mr Dinnuke Jayawardana a mega beach party was introduced with a colourful award ceremony. MMR became the main fund raiser of OBA and progressed till 2018 under the leadership of Mess. Dinnuke Jayawardana, Primal

Vithana and Disney Fernando with the help of Committee of Management of OBA.

The event was not staged in 2019 due to the Easter Sunday attack. As the Covid 19 pandemic spread throughout the country MMR was also not held in years 2020 and 2021.

In 2022 as Maris Stella celebrated it's centennial year under the presidency of Mr Ajith Weerasinghe organizers introduced two days with one night stay for the motor rally. Digital monitoring system was introduced in 2022.



Under the presidency of Mr Pradeep Peiris, in 2023 MMR leverage it's presentation in different ways. The organizing committee introduced Ranjith Fernando Memorial challenge trophy for the winner as a tribute to late President who initiated MMR in 2009. Musical extravaganza was held one week after the Motor rally and it was a huge success. The well experienced Mr Primal Vithana acted as the Project Advisor and Mr Shimantha

Perera was the Project Chairman. For the first time a VVIP area was introduced and the project was a huge success. As a tradition the organizers will conclude the project by an alms giving for the poor.

Primal Vithana
Project Advisor

Shimantha Perera
Project Chairman

The Nation Builders Par Excellence!

(This column 'The Nation Builders Par Excellence!' is a tribute to the veteran teachers who have immensely contributed to the growth, progress, and success of Maris Stella College Negombo. Their incomparable contribution to the development of the nation, the propagation of the Catholic Church, and the advancement of the World at large should be admired.)



What an excellent achievement! 59 years at Maris Stella College, Negombo! What a long period! Can this be gone unheard? No, not at all. Here is the story of Mr. Sri Lal Fernando.

Young Sri Lal was admitted to grade 4 at Maris Stella College, Negombo in 1963 when Rev. Bro. Peter Berchmans was the Principal and Rev. Bro. Gerard Peiris was the Principal at the Primary School. Sri Lal developed in all spheres of life under the able hands of the teachers and the Marist Brothers namely Rev. Bro. Clifford Perera, Rev. Bro. Kumarasinghe and Rev. Bro.

Francis Anthony, Rev. Bro. Joseph Fonseka, Rev. Bro. Linus Fernando etc.

Having completed his school education successfully with the Advanced Level Examination in 1975 in the Biology stream, he was called to join the academic staff at his Alma Mater in 1977. He started his career as a Science teacher under Rev. Bro Gregory Aloysius; the then Principal and Rev. Bro. Clinton Perera, the then Deputy Principal.

During his long period of service, he has climbed the ladder of profession slowly but steadily with the aspiration of serving the College with true commitment. He was appointed the Sectional Head of Grades 9, 10, and 11 in 1996. He was also the Master-in-Charge of the College Prefects, football, badminton, and Red Cross Society and was the Secretary of the Teachers Guild.

In appreciation of his committed service and unwavering loyalty to the College and recognition of his leadership and managerial qualities and capacity, he was promoted to the position of the Deputy Principal of Administration in the year 2004. He was the first layperson to hold this position in the annals of the College. It is quite certain during his 18 years of faithful service in administration, he should have rubbed his shoulders with fellow staff members and administrators to steer the College from success to excellence. Although he bade adieu to the government service in 2013, he rendered his service to the College in the same capacity until 2022.

After retirement he is actively involved in the parish activities at St. Francis de Sales church, Udugampola, and also enjoys home gardening which is a pleasure-filled activity. He is father of

a daughter and a son and his son; Shashanka Fernando, a Maristonian, belongs to the 2008 batch.

What wealth Mr. Sri Lal is in possession of ! The nostalgic memories of 59 long years at the College rejuvenate and rekindle him to live longer. All his experiences and memories cannot be presented in brief yet this appreciation would make him feel that he is still fresh in our memories.

Unlike in any other profession, there is a unique value in teaching. This is a blessing to only those who are genuine and honest in the profession. Mental satisfaction not only after retirement but even before stepping down from the profession is ensured for those who live a healthy life with students and colleagues, doing justice to all, and placing the thumb on the pulse of others to understand their feelings.

All the readers wish you God's choicest blessings, God's grace, and good health, and also remember you and your family in their prayers.

Ajith Perera

Ph.D. in Linguistics at European Continental University USA

A friend who came home....

"Come on! After how many days you have come to my house! Palanivel welcomed friend Swaminathan with enthusiasm by saying "Ukkarunga". (ukkarunga means – be seated)

Palanivel smiled inside himself as Swaminathan sat down and saw things scattered in the reception room.

"How is the company going? I guess that seven twenty-four hours you will be thinking about the company! It's great that you had time to come to my house!" Palanivel said.

" What to do? I am not able to sit at home after being retired like you. A lot of problems arise in the company. I am also going to be seventy years old. It is hard to deal with. That's why I have come to talk to you for a comfort. "

"Your boy is there, He is taking care of it. You can also be at rest in your home like me! "

Palanivel's wife Ganga, who came with coffee in hand, said "How are you? It has been a long time. You could have come with Sumathi too, right?" she said as she served the coffee. Back to Palanivel, "You don't need another cup of coffee." She said to Palanivel, "You drank your coffee twice already" and she smiled.

"We both would visit you for another day! Are you all fine? Swaminathan took the coffee cup in his hand as he asked Ganga.

"All are fine. Keep talking! I will be back in a minute!" Ganga left for the kitchen.

"Don't wanna talk about my boy" Swaminathan continued the conversation by answering Palanivel's question. "I thought he would take care of the company and us, I left the company in his charge two years ago and stayed home. But I kept watching what was happening in the company. His administration is not right. So, I am going back to the office. Still, he is MD. I

have no post in the company. But I am the one running the company. I am dealing with every problem. He looks like a dummy. "

"Didn't you make him a dummy? "

"Can I keep quiet after seeing that he didn't run the company properly? This is the company I raised!" Swaminathan said with emotion.

"Swaminatha! I do not deserve to suggest you. I retired from a simple job. Sometimes when I was at work, I felt like what my bosses were doing was not right at all and I needed to do it differently. But I had no power! I could not even suggest to correct even if they asked me. So, I was doing my best.

It has been ten years since I retired. Still my company is doing well. Even now, sometimes if I go to the office, I feel that things are not right. Now the manager is my junior. If I tell him something he will listen with his ears and let go. So, I'm not saying anything. I am already retired from that job, then why should I be involved in company affairs, because of that I usually come back conversing with something else. "

"That's not your company! So you can come back quietly but I can't be like that! "

"Maybe, if you mind! Your boy going to take care of your company after you are no more. What is wrong with letting him see the reality now? Guide him if he asks your advice. If not, then keep quiet."

"He will not ask me for suggestions even! He thinks he knows everything. That's the problem, right? Swaminathan said with anger.

"That's how you are. That is the problem!" Palanivel says with a smile. "What do you say? "

"This is a common attitude we all have. Thinking that we can do anything right! We think that if what others do is different, it will not be right. Everyone has their own unique. They will act accordingly. Example the way you handled the workers problem. Your boy can try to handle differently"

"That's what happened! How can you tell it as though you had seen it with your own eyes" Saminathan said with surprise.

"I gave example of an issue that all companies have. That's it. Otherwise, I do not know what problems with your company are. But we think that we know everything, when we think that way we can do it only in our way, it will be ours to get a hold of it and we can't get over it. So we will have problems. Whatever may be the matter, at some point we must leave it" Palanivel said,

"You are speaking like a great spiritualist! Do you read a lot of spiritual things? " "Not all that. Everything is learned from experience! "

Is it an experience? "

"Experience means not the experience of running a company like you. My experience of managing in my own home! I used to interfere with home management earlier. I'm the one to decide about where things should be and how orderly it should be. Look at, how the things lying around here! I would bleed if I see this before. "

"Yes. I even noticed. You are a man who thinks there should be discipline in everything! "

"If something doesn't go right in the past, I thought it's me to fix it. And then understood. If I rush and don't interfere in everything, the rest of the house will fix it. What, they can put something else. Let it be and go. Why should I think the way I put is right? Everything is mine, I changed myself slowly when I realized that the way I do could be done differently. I don't know if these are the problems now. I don't care if things are stuck like this. People on their own begin to fix it as they desire. Even if someone comes and takes them away, what is the big deal, that was not an issue! While walking, you must walk carefully without stamping anything. That's it! "

Swaminathan was looking at friend with an idea.

Ganga came with two plates in hand, "Eat dosa! " She put those plates on the table.

" No. " I don't want" said Swaminathan.

"You have visited us after a long time. Will I let you go with just a cup of coffee? Eat at least two dosa. It is so thin. Wait. Let me bring water!" said Ganga and went inside.

"In the past, if someone comes home, even before they sit, " Ganga! Bring on the coffee! I will say." Ganga had reminded me many time that would she not serve water or coffee without being shouted. People might think that I serve coffee or water only after you instructed me.

"Now, I don't say anything but now you see, she brought coffee first and now tiffin as well. This happens without my advice or order. Eat it up!" Palanivel said.

"What do you say? That's why your wife told me that I have to eat and go!

"Are you displaying your ego by saying that you are better person to deal with company problems?" said Palanivel. "Most probably, Yes." Nodded Swaminathan and continued, "I decided to leave my ego after talking to you. Who the hell are you? You hit the nail on the head." Said Saminathan and started consuming dosa with a smile.

Ganga, who came with water tumblers, smiled at her husband after listening to what Swaminathan said.....

Questions to reflect

1. Do we as a province give adequate room for young Brothers to be creative in their leadership?

If not, what is blocking us?

2. Does our province really interested in welcoming young people to follow our way of life? If yes, what is your motive? If no, what stops you?

3. Did we ever take effort to understand the current young generation? Or do we simply blame them to be irresponsible generation?

4. Are you (Am I) prepared to take the Marist life and mission to next generation of youth? If yes, what is your (my) initiative? If no, prepare for the end.



Bro. Jesudoss K.

"Love beyond boundaries of Religions and Race "

An Inter-Religious Educational Exhibition and a Cultural Programme for Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, and Muslim Sunday School Children in the Negombo area was held on the 30th of July 2023 at Maris Stella College, Negombo. This was organized by Seth Sarana Caritas Colombo together with the Department of Christian Religious Affairs Ministry in collaboration with the Department of Buddhist Affairs, Department of Hindu Religious and Culture Affairs, and Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs Ministries.

The Religious leaders representing the four major religions, the minister for Buddhasana Religious and Cultural Affairs, and the Directors of respective ministries graced the occasion.



Copied from Seth Sarana – Caritas Colombo

The Feast of Assumption of Our Lady- Hanwalla Parish

It was a red letter day for Bro. Sujith Dilepa Alwis on 4th August during the evening vespers of the Church feast of his parish celebrating the assumption of our Lady. Bro. Sujith had the privileged of crowning the statue of our Lady enshrined in the high altar of Hanwalla Parish Church. The event was organized by Rev.Fr. Shelton Dias parish priest of Hanwalla Parish.



Parents children enrichment programme and meditation on songs

Brothers Chamara and Sujith conducted a programme on "parents children enrichment programme and meditation on songs (Geetha Bawana) at Thambakanda Parish at the invitation of the parish priest Rev. Fr. Stanly Peiris on 12th August from 3.00pm to 7.00pm. Nearly 200 children with their parents participated in the programme. It was done in keeping with the vision of St. Marcellin Champagnat to make Jesus known and loved by Children and youth. All who participated and the parish priest were happily appreciative of the outcome of the programme.



Patronal Feast Day Celebration at the Novitiate

On August 15th our Marist International Novitiate Community celebrated the Patronal Feast Day of the Marist Institute.

We started with a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Rev. Fr. Joseph Chaminda TOR, and it was attended by Marist Brothers of nearby communities, Lay Marists, our Aspirants and neighbors.



In the Reflection, Bro. Rod explained to us the significance of the feast for Marists. He explained how the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary shows us that there is a very thin line between heaven and earth, that Mary and all the Saints have, as it were, have "one foot on earth, and one foot in heaven". Being human and the "First Disciple", Mary, especially, goes before us, showing us where we will follow.

After the Mass there was a celebratory dinner, enjoyed by all.

Prathap Ranasinghe (Novice)

Negombo Divisional Sports Meet

Maris Stella College Thimbirigakatuwa has won the **Overall Championship** for the first time at the Negombo Divisional Sports Meet held recently. Rev. Bro. Mervyn Perera, the Principal, Mr. Anton, Mr. Roshan, Tharuka, Chamara, Kasun, and Ferdia are gratefully remembered.

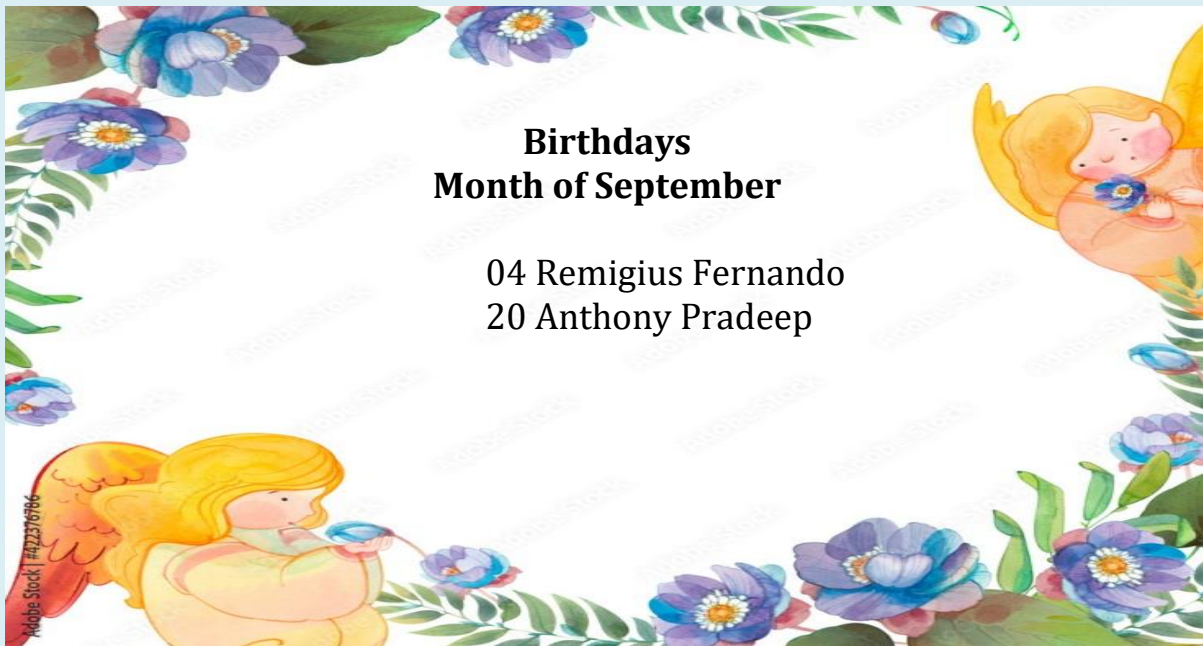


Anton Niroshan

Photo of the Month

"You can be more fragrant than this flower and your fragrance can attract one and all in the same spirit of peace and harmony."





Birthdays
Month of September

04 Remigius Fernando
20 Anthony Pradeep