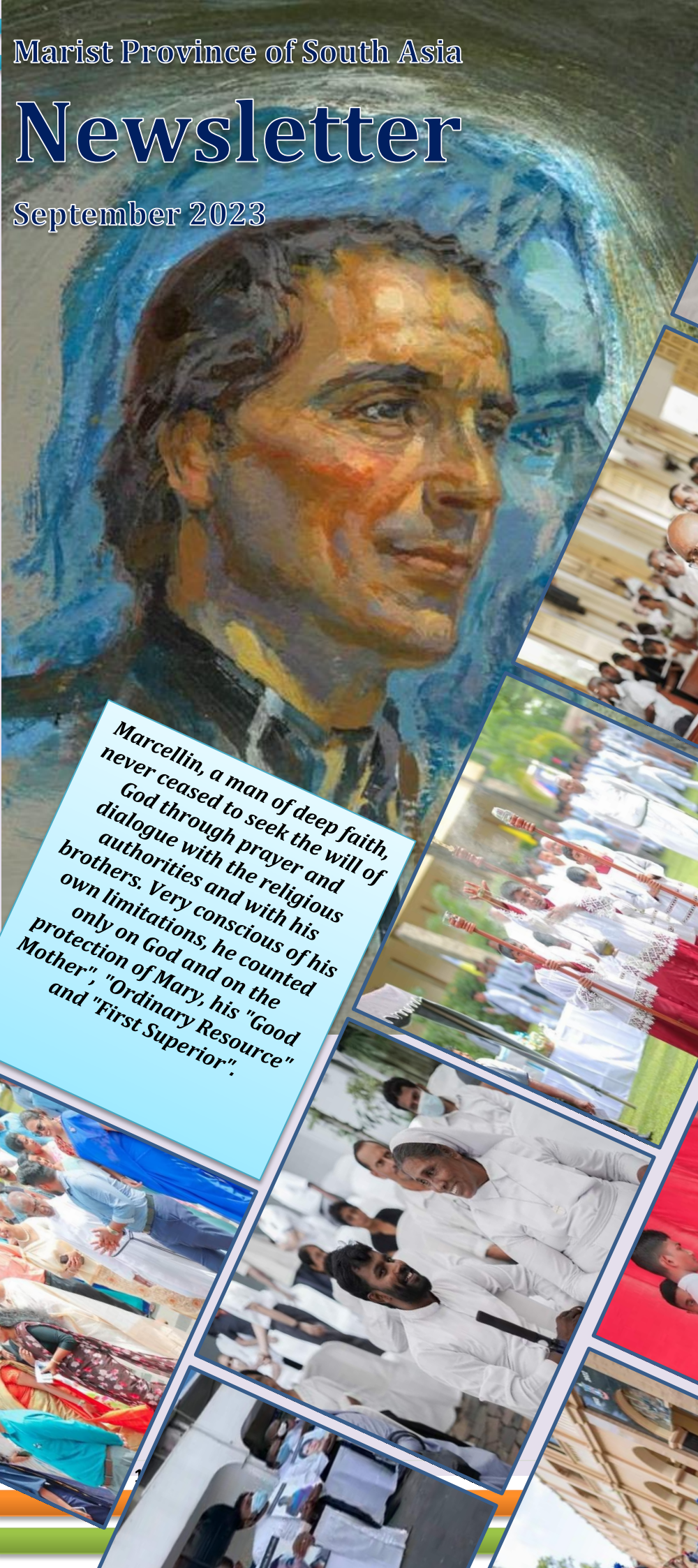


Newsletter

September 2023



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".



From the Editor's Desk!

Can there be a possibility of enjoying love without unity and or unity without love? Love and unity are the power; it could be natural power or metaphysical power. They are the power for reformation and transformation of the weak and tired who seek and embrace unity in Christ. We, the Followers of Christ, are invited to be the role models of unity in Christ. Therefore, we who are inspired by the Holy Spirit, have a paramount to be the springs of unity and love where we are.

Two of the same kind are more powerful than one. When the number increases gradually the power increases. When we are united in the name of Jesus for a worthy course we do not consider the differences of others but we make it a blessing to do anything differently. We pool our thoughts and act upon them in unity. That is the beauty of any human community. Let this beauty spread in our communities too.

When this beauty is a wonderful fragrance it will undoubtedly attract the youth to follow in our footsteps and to continue our mission in Christ. Let our communities be a haven for the community in general. Let us pray with fervent faith to the Holy Spirit to bind us in unity and walk in the light to accomplish our duty before we pass off.

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi



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Dear Marists of Champagnat,

CONTEMPLETIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE HOLY MASS

Sometime back, I was motivated to ponder how I could participate in the Holy Mass in a spirit of contemplation. This inner yearning was renewed recently, when I had to accompany the two Brothers -Pradeep and Dulaj - back home from a programme they were following in preparation for their final vows.

The programme was facilitated by Fr. S.M. Selvarathnam OMI. It was conducted in an atmosphere of Contemplation. Before saying goodbye, I asked him how I could be of assistance to these two Brothers in their ongoing formation. His clear and straightforward answer was to encourage them to commit themselves to at least twenty minutes of contemplative silence daily.

Possessed with this encouraging background, I resumed my reflection on celebrating the Holy Mass in a contemplative manner. I believe that my active participation needs to be an act of love answering to God's call. In other words, responding to the invitation given to me.

- by God,
- by the whole of humanity
- and the whole creation.

The invitation as I understand is to 'lose' myself in God, in the whole of humanity and the whole of creation and become one with them. It is a privilege moment to lose my false self, that I had built on my ego and experience my real identity found in my inalienable connection with God, the whole humanity and the whole creation. When I lose my false self then I experience my real self in total reality.

In this process, I begin a journey of deepening my relationship with God, whole humanity and whole creation. I become conscious of my relationship with those present with me at the Eucharistic celebration and all others all over the world in spite of their differences of being poor or rich, learned or unlearned, Christians or non-Christians. In other words, lovingly accepting all as my sisters and brothers going beyond those differences.



“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” is what St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12: 27). This communal celebration is a great opportunity to grow into the awareness of that concept realizing that I am part of Christ's Body. This participation in

the celebration of the Eucharist enables me to become compassionate towards all humanity including the ones whom I think harm me.

Another disposition necessary for contemplative participation is my effort in growing in mindfulness in every moment of the celebration. The responses that I utter, the hymns that I sing and the active listening during the celebration... all these involve my engagement of the total self: body, mind and spirit.

If we pay attention to the Rite of the Holy Mass, one can notice it is only on two occasions that personal pronoun "I" is used. In the penitential act of I confess...and the Prayer before receiving the Holy Communion: Lord I am not worthy.... Except the personal prayers of the celebrant, all other instances in the Rite, it is the pronoun "we" that is used.

Concluding my reflection, I pray that our contemplative participation in the Holy Mass may help us to come out of the narrow ghetto of "I" and be integrated into the ultimate reality of "WE" (God, whole humanity, whole creation etc.)

Bro. Nicholas Fernando
Provincial

English Classes for youth

Br. Paul Bhatti has been conducting English classes for two students over a month. One class is conducted online for a young woman, a trained staff nurse, Faryal Shoukat, preparing for his English Language course exam. The second student is young man, Aneeq Javed, an intermediate passed student. He is from a deserving family. He works in a hospital to assist a heart specialist. He comes daily to learn English. The class is held in the community sitting room.



Bro. Paul Bhatti



Tudella Novitiate, Sri Lanka

Coming Back from ACEP (Apostolic Community Experience Program)

At the beginning of September, the second-year novices returned from their three-month placement in various communities in Sri Lanka: two were with the Brothers in Kalpitiya, two at Maris Stella College Negombo, one in Maris Stella Thimbirigaskatuwa and three with the Sisters of Charity in Nugegoda (Daya Mina School).

After celebrating and sharing some experiences with the rest of the Community, we spent a few days at the Subodhi Retreat Centre integrating and evaluating all that had happened for them. It was really interesting to hear what they had to say about the challenges they faced, their ability to leave their comfort zone to forge links and make friends across language and cultural barriers, and, for most of them, their success in adapting to new situations, including teaching in a secondary school and working with poorer communities or young people with "different abilities."

Everything is formation and the school of life is probably one of the best universities, even if sometimes the price is quite high. I would like to take this opportunity to say a special thanks to all Marists, Brothers and Lay, and to the Charity Sisters, for their wonderful welcome, their presence and their personal support of the novices during this period of time.

Kalpitiya



Daya Mina (Nugegoda)



Negombo





Our visitors

The novitiate community is always happy to receive visitors. A few months ago, Br Remi left us to join the Provincial House community, followed a short time later by Br Godfrey. But I believe that part of their heart remained in the novitiate. It was a great joy to see them again on September 21 for a lunch with us and to take our official Community photo. Also a big thanks to Br Nick who came to spend two days with us. We could see in him the same enthusiasm he had as a Master of Novices.



We also welcome Br Chinthana, staying while Br Kumar is away, and in a few days time, Brothers Canisio, Peter and Nick for our upcoming Novitiate Council meeting.

Another visitor came to spend a week with us ... Ali Belayachi, a young Muslim Marist from Algeria. He is a friend of mine as he has lived for several years with the brothers in Quebec. He came to immerse himself in our Marist community spirit again. As he is a chef, he prepared a nice dinner for us with some Algerian specialties.

Photo de Ali

Community Building

After the return of the second-year novices from ACEP, it was necessary to renew the dynamics of the community. So, on September 25 we had a Workshop day focused on community building. It was a time of discernment around two questions:



1. What are the community's current challenges?
2. Can you suggest some possible actions that will enable us to move forward?

Some important suggestions were made, such as punctuality, respect for our times of silence, more creativity in prayer, etc., but above all everyone was invited to share his own contribution to the community, then symbolically place some LEGO blocks to construct our community 'house'. This is an ongoing work, which we'll return to over the next few weeks.

Some daydreams from the Novices

Reflecting on the encyclical Fratelli Tutti, in which Pope Francis shares his dream of universal brotherhood, I asked the first-year novices to share their dreams. Here are a few of them.

Shovo: "To Be Fishermen" (Bangladesh)

From the beginning of my journey as a Marist, I have had a dream to work with poor children. Through education, I will help them and make their future bright. Gradually I realised that many young men don't know the love of God and they are going far away from God. Then I asked myself what I can do for them instead of academic teaching. Eventually I decided that I will 'catch fish' for Jesus.



Shohel: "To Be a Social Worker" (Bangladesh)



...There are so many dreams in my life and today I share one of my dreams with you, "I would like to be a Social Worker as a Marist Brother." A social worker is a trained professional who works with all types of vulnerable people, groups, and communities to help them learn to live better lives. Social workers tend to work with populations suffering due to poverty, discrimination, or other social injustices.

Prathap: "Brothers and Lay, Journeying Together" (Sri Lanka) .

.. As Marists in future, we are working with Lay mission partners who are sharing the Marist Charism, so my dream for Marist would be that we should become people who are contemplative in action to accompany and co-journey with all of our brothers and sisters in the world.



Bomes: "To Build an Orphanage (Papua New Guinea)



My dream as Marist is to serve in most remote areas where most people are neglected from education. And the other thing is to build an orphanage home for those with disabilities because I have seen this as the most important contribution, I can bring to achieve my dream.

Bro. Réal Sauvageau fms

PRESS RELEASE

Negombo Springboard Development Initiative Launched to the delight of Maristonians Springboard, a skill and capacity building initiative aimed at grooming a well-rounded citizen for the future was launched at Maris Stella College in Thimbirigaskatuwa, recently. The Old Boys Association of Maris Stella College put together the programme to support the holistic development of the school children in becoming well accomplished citizens.

The springboard is a practical approach to children's development led by well accomplished corporate icons, who are active leaders in the community.

Expressing his ideas about the event, President of the Old Boys Association of Maris Stella College Pradeep Peiris said that 'It is important that children as young as schoolers are brought into contact with the world at large where they will have to choose their path in life. It is important that their passion is not compromised in choosing a sustainable occupation.'

Maris Stella College is a haven that has produced bright minds that are now prominent figures, highly skilled professionals who testify on the dynamic and progressive efforts of the school. Springboard is a blueprint to showcase that a bright future is assured to each Maristonian.

The programme that is planned to be conducted over the course of a month is spearheaded by Old Maristonian, Sudath Fernando – Project Chairperson of Springboard Development Initiative. The inaugural session was conducted by eminent corporate personalities Olington Fernando, Sangeeth Wasantha Silva and Nishan Perera who are proud Old Boys of Maris Stella, Negombo



The Maristonian Athletes

The Maristonian athletes have emerged victorious at the Zonal Meet 2023, securing 1st place. Their dedication and talent have shone brightly, making their Alma Mater proud.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to:

Mr. Susan Thamel (Coach, MIC, POG)

Mr. Philip Ranjith (Head Coach)

Mr. Ajith Priyantha (Physiotherapist)

Mr. Lalith Silva (Coach)

Mr. Herath (Coach)

Mr. Shenesh Chanuka (Coach)

Mr. Guneratne (Coach)

...for their invaluable contributions to this success.



Susan Thamel POG

“Maris De Facto”

Maris Stella College, Thimbirigaskatuwa enrolled her first Advanced Level batch in 2017, which consisted of students who sat for the A/L in 2019. Currently, it is the 6th consecutive batch of the Commerce Stream. The Commerce Union of Maris Stella College, Thimbirigaskatuwa owns a heritage of a proud history making its mark at Maris Stella College, as this is the first advanced Level union in the school. The Commerce Union took its



first step in the year 2018 by creating a motto of “Beyond the Destination” and appointing its first committee members. Today society is successfully moving forward focusing on developing commerce literacy among school members as well as the social community. With many ongoing and upcoming projects, the society aims to develop business knowledge, fellowship, stronger personalities, and leadership qualities to enhance the future careers of the students as well as the social community.



‘Commerce Day’ stands out to be the best event which is hosted by the Commerce Society. It is a continuing event called “Maris De Facto” which carries out many commerce events such as competitions and other entertaining programs which enhance the skills and abilities of the students.

The first commerce day was held in 2019 with the theme of “A Greener Future” by focusing on sustainable development whereas the second was held in 2020 with the theme of “FUTUREPRENEUR” by focusing on entrepreneurial development of the world. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented society from hosting this event for about two years.



The third annual Commerce Day was held, on the 1st of September 2023 in a glorious way with the participation of 21 leading schools in Negombo educational zone. The Guest of Honour and the keynote speaker was Dr. Kishu Gomes, the CEO of a number of local and multi-national companies. The Commerce Day theme of “Moderno Creara”-winning the modern business world with creativity and competitiveness, was well explained with a

remarkable speech given by Dr. Gomes, highlighting the appropriateness of a business skill set for an individual with his insight and perspective and the entire participants were well engaged with the speech.

The event was further made colorful by several entertainment programs such as traditional dances, songs, and comics, presented by the students as well as inter-school games specially designed to enhance the creativity of the schools. The first, second, and third places in this competition were won by Newstead Girls College, Negombo, Dankotuwa Girls' College, and St. Thomas International College, Seeduwa respectively.

Further nine students who had performed excellently in G.C.E (A/L) in the Commerce Stream,



were awarded special trophies by the Guest of Honour Dr. Kishu Gomes.

The head of the Commerce section Mr. Indika Rodrigo, together with the teachers and students, thanked all the invited schools, well-wishers, sponsors, Rev Bro Principal Mervyn Perera, and all the staff members for making this event a grand success.



Indika Rodrigo
Sectional Head, Commerce Section

Leadership Programme for Sunday School Students

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi and Bro. Sujith Alwis with the participation of the Parish Priest of Kalpitiya Rev. Fr. Sampath Prasanga and the Assistance Parish Priests organized one day programme to develop leadership skills of 100 prefects of the Sunday Schools in Kalpitiya namely Kudawa, Kurakkanhena and Palliyawaththa. The programme was successfully conducted at the premises of the Kalpitiya parish church on 19 August 2023.



The programme was conducted throughout the day under the guidance and assistance of Bro. Lal Fonseka, the Founder and the Superior of Kalpitiya Marist Community.



The first session of the programme; duties and responsibilities of a prefect was conducted by Bro. Chamara and was embellished with games and group work on problem-solving, decision-making, communication skills, etc.

Bro. Sujith led the session on prayer and reconciliation in front of the Blessed Sacrament. The prefects renewed their oath to be responsible youths in the parish.



This whole effort was commended by the Parish Priest of Kalpitiya.

I extend my warmest greetings and wish you all a Happy Children's Day. In addition, let's celebrate this day with joy and fully appreciate the gift of childhood that has been given to us. However, let us also remember the responsibility we shoulder to make Sri Lanka better. Bro. Chamara began his workshop by addressing our students at Kalpitiya. Children's Day was celebrated on 09th September at Kalpitiya Parish.

We believe that children should be given the utmost love and affection, as nurturing them and raising them in the right way would determine the future of society and Sri Lanka as well. They are the leaders of tomorrow! 'I am a good child, I love my friends and I love Jesus' were the three main areas of the session full of fun activities such as singing and dancing, etc.



Bro. Sujith elaborated on interconnectedness with others, nature, and God. At the end of the session, the children made a parachute, sang songs, and danced joyfully.

Bro. Sujith Alwis

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.)



When we walk down memory lane, we feel how blessed we are to be guided and moulded by many teachers and the Brothers at Maris Stella College, Negombo. We were blessed with a staff of versatile teachers. We trusted and entirely depended on them. Finally, we excelled at the national examinations.

The teachers of our time were noble, gentle, and duty-conscious. They set us an example of unity and harmony. We have seen how they enjoyed themselves at school, especially in the staff room. There were teachers who organized matches, tours, and gatherings to enhance unity among teachers. One such character is Mr. Don Nimal, the guitarist of the staff. He too is a proud product of the College and the Marist Brothers.

He is the eldest son Mr. Hubert Fernando, who joined the staff of Marist Stella College in 1956. He was admitted to the primary school in 1958. Mr. Hubert was a veteran English teacher who rendered an invaluable service to the College. Having completed his Advanced Level in 1973, Mr. Don Nimal joined the academic staff of his Alma Mater at the request of the Brothers Gregory Aloysius and Clinton Perera, his Principals in order to replace Bro. Francis Silva, who left for France for the second novitiate. To fill up the vacancy in the Science subject he assumed duties on the staff in 1974. He initially taught Agriculture and Science but later on, he taught only Science until his retirement in the year 2011.

During the long period of 37 years of service, he was appointed to initiate cricket in the College in 1974 by Rev. Bro. Clinton Perera. He holds the record of being the first-ever Master in Charge of Cricket in the College. He rendered an indelible service to College Cricket for nearly 12 years. "I'm happy and grateful to Bro. Clinton Perera that I was

chosen for the mission of introducing cricket to the College. We could produce a good number of national players starting from Graeme Labrooy (former Sri Lankan Cricketer and current Match Referee) to Dasun Shanaka (the Captain of the National Cricket Team).

Having felt the need for a Western Band Bro. Clinton Perera, the Principal took the initiative to form a band and Mr. Don Nimal was appointed the Master in Charge of the Western Band. Rohan Jayalath (Jayasri) was a member of the first players in the band. He was also the House Mater of Lewis House and Anthony House. His two brothers Don Hemal and Don Kamal were also the old boys of the College. His two sons Don Shanaka Nilanga (2001 batch) a dentist and Don Shehan Niluka (2003 batch) M.B.B.S. doctor were also proud products of the College.

Let us wish Mr. Don Nimal every success in his future endeavours. May the Good Lord touch him with good health, peace, and happiness!

Ajith Perera

Ph.D. in Linguistics at European Continental University USA

Awards Day Speech



Our Chief Guest Prof. Nandana Fernando, Rev. Brothers, Invitees, Staff Members, Parents, Past Maristonians & Present Maristonians,

First & foremost, a warm & brotherly Welcome to Prof. Nandana Fernando, a distinguish Old Boy, a loyal & close friend of the College.

As we celebrate the Hundred Years of foundation of Maris Stella College, we are on the Mission of Journeying Together as a Marist Family, spreading the Boundless Marist Legacy in the entire world.

It has been a Vibrant Journey that we have been engaged in for the last 100 years. The College has emerged as one of the foremost educational institutions in the island. The College has produced outstanding clergy, professionals and community leaders of repute. All throughout & more prominently, in recent times the College has seen to produce nationally renowned sportsmen as well.

Always keeping the realities that surround us, we are in the mission of harmonizing our relationship with (a) oneself (b) other human beings (c) nature with being aware of the realities that surround us. Our pedagogical relationships are based on the 5 Pillars of Marist Education, namely (1) Presence (2) Simplicity (3) Family Spirit (4) Love of Work (5) In the way of Mary.



The three beast - Tamers

The three beast-tamers that are employed at Maris Stella College are aesthetics, Sports & religion all of which together prevent educational programmes from producing intellectual monsters. The curriculum includes an intensive pedagogical programme that exposes our students to these three agents of humanization.



Sports : We are happy that the international Olympic Committee has recognized five humanizing elements in Sports, after losing sight of them for centuries. Recently they have declared what they call "five Educational Values of Olympism : (1) The joy of effort, (2) Fair Play, (3) Respect for other (4) Pursuit of Excellence and (5) Balance between Body, Will and Mind. These have been the educational values that Maris Stella College, has been striving hard to inculcate in its Students for the last 100 years. All kinds of sport equips the human personality with the much desired psycho-physical equilibrium. On the other hand, art & music "soothe the savage beast" in humans.

The Religion which is taught here at Maris Stella College is not restricted to rules & regulation, do's and don'ts, rites & rituals or doctrinal theories. The student is invited to taste the joy of being a good human, each according to his own religious tradition, so that they learn to see in the horizon something beyond this life - this life which is bracketed by birth & death. Following the long-standing tradition of Asian cultures, we maintain that, education must necessarily include moral discipline. Religious education is meant to turn out humans who are "gentle as the doves but astute as serpents, (Mt. 10:16). i.e. endowed with both "karuna" & "pragna"



The Dough is rising into Bread, Omega at Maris Stella, College, where we have started sharing our Hundred Year Life Story with the world!

*We at Maris Stella spread passion & joy to all, quietly creating a new world
Dropping soft, secret love bombs when no one is looking,
Academics, Sports, Music, drama, dance, meditation, prayer,
Hugs & smiles, kind words, random acts of kindness;
We are in the "business" of changing the world,
By changing our minds & hearts, listening to the "gurus" of the world.
We know quietly & humbly
We have the power of the oceans combined.
The talents & challenges are enveloping us all willynilly,
But The Dough is rising!*

Br. SunandaAlwis
Principal, MSC Negombo

A Journey Through the Lens:

From Member to President - Navigating the Media Unit's Extraordinary Path

As I sit down to reflect and pen these words, I find myself on a remarkable journey that has profoundly influenced not only my college years but also my understanding of Leadership and Media. Serving as the President of our college's Media Unit has been an incredible experience, one that I am both honored and privileged to share with you.



Four years ago, I embarked on this journey as a Member who's a wide-eyed freshman, brimming with eagerness to explore the captivating realms of Journalism, Photography, and Broadcasting. At that moment, I never dreamed that this path would ultimately lead me to the prestigious position of the President of our esteemed Media Unit. It was a journey marked by countless instances of personal growth, continuous learning, and the creation of unforgettable memories.

My team, comprising dedicated individuals, was entrusted with a peculiar type of responsibility of continuing the legacy of the Educational Media Unit at our college. This journey began for us as the newly appointed Senior Batch for the academic year 2022-2023, commencing on the 16th of September 2022.

One of the significant challenges that I encountered as the President was the task of enhancing the abilities of both Junior and Senior students within the Media Unit. To tackle this challenge, we undertook a successful transformative 3-day media workshop for 50 fellow students. This achievement was made possible through the invaluable guidance of Mr. Jude Preman, our devoted Master In Charge. It's very significant since our alumni of the 92 batch offered us the generous contribution to make this venture a success.



Another substantial issue we confronted within our association was the limited workspace at our disposal. Fortunately, with the unwavering support and intervention of Rev. Bro. Sunanda Alwis and Rev. Bro. Pradeep Kumara, we were granted a new, spacious room where we later on collaborated with the members of the Unit and creatively transformed it to cater to our specific needs accordingly.

Seeking funds to coverup the technical equipment became a salient point . In this context, we successfully executed the Annual Project "UTOPIA '23" Raffle Draw. This endeavor was made possible by the wholehearted contributions of both students and teachers from our school. It not only fulfilled our financial requirements but also set a promising precedent for the future Senior teams.

As the former President, I take immense pride in assuring you that the Educational Media Unit diligently fulfilled its role, providing comprehensive media coverage for all college events and executing its responsibilities with the utmost dedication. Throughout this extraordinary journey, we were not only taught valuable life lessons but also gained experiences that have enriched our lives in ways we could never have anticipated. It has been a journey of self-discovery, and the realization that great leadership is a collaborative effort that involves nurturing the talents of all team members.



In conclusion, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who supported and believed in our journey. It is through your unwavering encouragement that we were able to navigate this extraordinary path, transforming challenges into opportunities and forging a legacy that will inspire future generations.

Kalana Mel,
President of the Academic Year 2022-2023,
Educational Media Unit

‘The Student Often Spotted With the Camera’

The journey that led me to be ‘the student often spotted with the camera 'spans way back to the year 2017 as a 13-year-old lad navigating all the possibilities of an object that could capture a moment.

Little did I know that this very camera would be a non-detachable object in my life. I guess I could be completely honest by now to say that ever since my involvement as a photographer in the Media Unit, every experience has turned out to be a core memory that I’d deeply cherish during my tenure as a member to being the Secretary.

Well, as expected ever since 2017 to 2022 my passion and duty led me to being one of the characters in the media unit who’d barely be out of sight. Each and every event gave me the chance to capture distinct moments that neither of us wanted to completely forget, especially the highly anticipated 100th year anniversary of the Alma Mater. I was also actively involved in significant events of the school such as the First Holy Communion Masses and other special occasions. I’m also reminded of all the tireless efforts we, as a team exerted during the Annual Athletic Meets where wouldn’t miss the opportunity to capture those exhilarating moments of adrenaline.



The academic year of 2022-2023, was a period that turned out to be a turning point in my life as I was ensured by the title of being the Secretary of the esteemed Media Unit of Maris Stella College. The journey has been bittersweet which involved both astounding success along with its own trials and tribulations.



There's a quote that says "If you want to learn what someone fears losing, watch what they photograph". Back as a simple kid, I'm sure I was the epitome of this quote. The first event that I was involved in as the Secretary of the EMU was the 100-year celebration sports meet. With hard work and dedication, I am proud to say that it was one of the most successful events we've ever had.

As the annual project of the Educational Media Unit, we organized the "UTOPIA '23" Raffle Draw. It was an exceptional event that not only fulfilled our financial requirements but also gave us the experience of organizing a successful event by ourselves.

As time went on, we came to the end of our year as seniors and bid farewell on the 17th of August 2023, a day filled with joyful tears and hugs. Brought back memories of every moment that taught us precious life lessons and experiences that molded us into who we are today.

In conclusion, I want to thank my teachers, teammates, and all the students for helping me make the BEST memories during my time as a member of the Media Unit. I express my gratitude to all those who believed in me and encouraged me to turn every obstacle into a new opportunity.

Danochana Fernando
Secretary of the Educational Media Unit
Academic year 2022-2023

How Hilarious People Are!!!

Sri Lanka is an island where chanting of prayers and blessings is heard in every nook and corner from dawn to dusk. Some people are keen on the auspicious time when beginning something new. Very strangely they cannot do away with the auspicious time. If the auspicious time is the best time to begin anything new, Sri Lanka should be one of the superpowers on earth, especially in terms of economic prosperity. Yet on the contrary we have hit the records of bankruptcy and are on top of the list of corruption. If the auspicious time is the best time and if well begun is half done how can many things in Sri Lanka go wrong and do wrong? If there is no auspicious time for the birth and death of a person, how can there be any ideal time for anything in between and why should people worry about the auspicious time? Isn't it hilarious?

There is yet another hilarious belief that makes the blind followers poor but the soothsayer or the sorcerer milliners. They are made to wear rings with different colour stones to get rid of misfortunes and evil spirits. Some Sri Lankans become very sentimental and can be fooled easily by the tricksters. When they are made to believe that the ring with a blue or red stone solves all the problems and brings fortune they spend lavishly to get such a ring made. Talismans with oil, ashes or any other metal

inscribed with pictures or words have a great demand. The psychology of the bearers plays a vital role in such a scenario because these useless rings or talismans can do nothing but the bearers are blindfolded that everything is under control. This is merely misleading the irrational victims.

Isn't it hilarious to learn that some people do not seek medical assistance but the prayers and blessings of the healers? There's no doubt that prayer can do wonders and Jesus can heal us. It is wise to seek medical assistance first and then to pray to Jesus who can protect us from danger. The healers go to doctors when they fall ill but the blind followers go to healers. When valuables are stolen people go to a 'poosari' (the clergy at the kovil) but when the kovil is looted he goes to the police to lodge a complaint. Isn't it hilarious?

With dignity Sri Lanka is called the land of *Dharmadveepa*; the island of religions. There is a huge competition in erecting statues to prove how religious the devotees are. If there is a Christian statue at the entrance to a city or a province a larger statue of Lord Buddha is installed and it could be vice versa. Isn't it hilarious? Statues are also installed by the roadsides to avoid dumping garbage and to discourage leaving offertory items after certain witchcraft and black magic.

People, who erect statues, do not forget to fix a till at the foot of the statue. The main purpose of installing statues should be to honour the saint and to remind the faithful to pray for the intercession and also to follow in the footsteps of the particular saint. Is the statute a source of income? Isn't it blasphemous? Isn't it hilarious and disgusting to drive the saints to the plight of beggars? How long would it take the Sri Lankans to understand the bitter truth of their false beliefs?



Ajith Perera

Ph.D. in Linguistics at European Continental University USA

"Rainbow Project's One-Day Picnic to Mukkombu Park: A Day of Fun and Joy for Beneficiaries"

Rainbow Project organized a one-day picnic to Mukkombu Park for its beneficiaries on Sunday, August 27, 2023. The event was attended by 90 people from 45 families. The Rainbow staff and Marcellin Club members prepared lunch in the morning at the Brothers house, while the families reached the place on their own from their respective places in advance. The group reached the park around 11 AM and enjoyed various fun activities such as playing sea-saw, merry-go-round, swing, and games at the theme park. The beauty of Kaveri river and water spring added to the charm of the day.

The group had lunch around 1 PM. After lunch, the beneficiaries received their rations, traveling allowance, and other medical supplies. The group was enthused and cheered up with lots of fun and going around the park and enjoying the beauty of nature, plants, flowers and so on. It was a wonderful and mesmerizing day.

Bro. Rajkumar FMS

UTOPIA

Utopia is a 2023 group project of the College Education Media Unit, and a raffle draw was held in order to raise funds to provide the Unit with some relevant accessories.

Utopia is Plato's hypothetical or imaginary state. Plato was compelled to hypothesize an ideal social system as the existing social system and social circumstances were not moral.

He believed that there is justice, fairness, peace, equality, love, and human dignity in this particular system. There is no room for lies and fraud in this system. Neither does anyone endure any pain nor suffer any pain nor cause injuries. Everyone is honest, humble, and kind.

Dear students, from such a point of view Maris Stella College is a utopia for you. She is a mother who guides you to be a person of such virtues and values. It is our fervent wish that the College be so. We wish you to be disciplined, wise, and productive people in the future. You have ample opportunities at school for this. Education Media Unit is yet another opportunity for you.

This raffle draw was an avenue for you to gather numerous experiences in your life and they will make you stronger and more confident in life.



Jude Freman
Master in charge of MIC Media Unit

The National Level Choir Competition

We are happy to announce that St. Marcellin's Choir of Maris Stella College Negombo successfully participated at the Choir Competitions organized by the Ministry of Education for the year 2023 held at NIE, Maharagama.

The Choir was able to achieve the following places at the Provincial and National level competitions.

Senior Choir

Provincial Level - 1st place
National Level - 3rd place

Vocal solo- Senior
Provincial Level - 2nd place
National Level - 2nd place

Open Ages Choir

Provincial Level - 2nd place
National Level - 2nd place

Junior Choir

Provincial - 4th place

Dear students this victory remains solitary gladly seeing your diligent work and devotion. This honor makes you sparkle in the middle of names and fame. Continue going in your life and accomplish your every dream with your diligent work. congratulations on your accomplishment.”

You are genuine legends and motivation to every one of us.



Shenya Perera
Music Teacher
MSC Negombo

"Education is living. Growing. Renewing experience. So it is a Social Process."

Following the above statement of John Dewey, a famous philosopher and educator, Maris will provide new experiences in the educational process, develop them, and organize various meaningful programs and activities not only for children but also for teachers and other staff to live as social activists. It can be named "Refresh Day" launched on July 28, 2023.

This program which was conducted in a new face instead of the annual Retreat. This program which was organized under the theme of "How do we develop strength in doing stepping into innovation?" Rev Bro. Sunanda Alwis, Principal of Maris Stella College Negombo, in his speech said that the need to recharge the mobile phone that is near everyone is equally or more necessary for us to refresh ourselves as teachers.

Everyone participated in the basic tai chi practical exercises, which were given to bring the universal energy closer to life as well as remove stress from life and relax the body by engaging in activities specific to the art of tai chi. The exercise series was conducted by Mr. Ruwan Basnayake

Mr. Bhatia Arthanayake, a motivational speaker delivered a meaningful speech based on "Teachers energy to make the future leaders. " In his speech he explain his childhood experience to prove the theme. This speech was not only a very timely speech, but it was also presented in a very interesting manner, which made its specialness even more intense.

After that, Jayantha Modarage and Mahinda Paris, the teachers of the Maris Stella College Negombo and Thimbirigaskatuwa, focused us on two songs and ended the refresh day with a brief commentary on the song and the enjoyment of music Marking the end of a special day.

Mrs Christina Fernando
MSC Negombo

BRAVO !!!

BRAVO !!! All credit to Our Athletes who secured the 2nd Place in Relay Championship with 29 points & Overall Meet 4th Place with 64 points in All Island Senior John Tarbet Championship @ Sugathadasa Stadium, Colombo, among the participation of 360 Boys Schools through out the island.

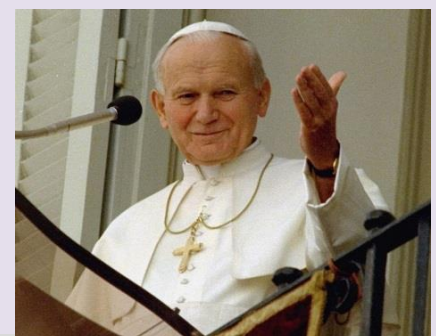
Our Thanks to Mr. Susan Thamel (POG), Mr. Philip Ranjith ((Head Coach), Mr. Ajith Priyantha (Physio), Mr. Lalith Silva (Coach), Mr. Herath(Coach), Mr. Shenesh Chanuka (coach), Mr. Guneratne (Coach).



DID YOU KNOW?

That St. Pope John Paul II was a Pope of Records? (From Reliable Sources)

- i. He met 300 million people.
- ii. He travelled three times the distance from the earth to the moon or put it differently, he circled the globe 29 times.



- iii. He earned the title 'The Pilgrim Pope'.
- iv. He was the only world leader who always kissed the ground on landing.
- v. He increased Christ's fold to cover one billion baptized Catholics worldwide.
- vi. He beatified and canonized almost 2000 people.
- vii. He was the first pope to enter a synagogue and a mosque.
- viii. His book Crossing the Threshold of Hope sold over 20 million copies.
- ix. He was instrumental in bringing down the walls dividing East and West.
- x. He was an outspoken critic of the perverse capitalism of rich countries, which preys upon the poor countries.
- xi. The most loved Pope had become an icon of fatigue, suffering, and physical frailty.
- xii. The first Pope to come from a communist country. His pontificate, one of the longest in the history of the Church, lasted nearly 27 years.
- xiii. People admired his spirit of forgiveness which stood him in great and endeared him to millions worldwide. The Pope said, "Mehmet Ali Agca (the assassin), you are my brother. I forgive you from the bottom of my heart."
- xiv. He made 104 pastoral visits outside Italy and 146 within Italy. As Bishop of Rome, he visited 317 of the city's 333 parishes. He had more meetings than any of his predecessors with the People of God and the leaders of Nations. More than 17,600,000 pilgrims participated in the General Audiences held on Wednesdays (more than 1160), not counting other special audiences and religious ceremonies [more than 8 million pilgrims during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 alone].



Janith Jayamaha

Dancing and Singing Competition 2023

Maris Stella College, Thimbirigaskatuwa shines at the Ministry of Education Dancing and Singing Competition 2023, securing the top spot in the Western province and outstanding positions across the whole island in several categories

All Island

Western Dance - 1st Place
 Choir (Junior) - 2nd Place
 Solo Singing - 3rd Place

Western Province

Western Band (Open) - 3rd Place

Western Dance - 1st Place

Choir (Junior) - 1st Place

Solo Singing (Senior) - 3rd Place

A big round of applause to the incredibly talented students and their dedicated teachers who put in the hard work and passion to make this achievement possible.



Media Unit Thimbirigastakuwa

Sing Along

MARIST STELLA COLLEGE OBA COLOMBO BRANCH held a successful Sing Along - the "10th Starry Starry Night" at the Grand Monarch Battaramulla on the Evening of 29th July 2023. There were over 300 guests and a band in attendance. Tickets were reasonably priced at Rs2,500/ with meals purchased separately by the guests. Special invites were Principal MSC Negombo Bro. Sunanda Alwis, Bro. Nicolus Fernando (Provincial) and Bro. Chinthana Nonis. Also Special invites from Negombo MSC OBA was represented by its President Mr. Pradeep Peiris & Mr. Elmo Rowell and other committee members who graced the occasion. The Project was in aid of developing the College educational and sports activities. The President Mr. Shirley Jayakody together with the Executive Committee of the Colombo branch OBA MSC, thanks each and every one for participation of the event.



Mithra Weerakone
Secretary MSC OBA COLOMBO BRANCH

Tai Chi Meditation Exercises

Tai chi was originated in ancient China. It is an effective exercise for good health and mental well-being. Tai chi is a series of gentle, graceful movements designed to exercise the body and clear the mind.

Our Marist laity with all their enthusiasm has started Tai Chi session on Wednesday evenings at Maris Stella Auditorium. It is for reading the signs of the times that the society is stressed due to economic crisis, political issues, job issues, hectic work load etc. Participating in Tai Chi is a way of building the wellbeing of a person. Our Marist Laity invites all to participate and gain its virtues.

You are cordially invited to Maris Stella College Indoor Stadium to enjoy Tai Chi that's especially meant for a relaxing mind and a flexible body.



Jude Preman
Marist Laity

A Page From of Diary...

Sumedha is a centre for renewal of body, mind and spirit through the integration of insights and practices from psychology and spirituality. In Sanskrit, Sumedha refers to a healthy brain that controls the entire body-mind system.

It is time to welcome winter in Punjab Province in India. Yet the schedule at the Sumedha Sadana where I am actively involved permits me no time for climate change. We commenced the day with a prayer and a song leading us to meditation along with a Gospel passage that was read aloud.



The somatic meditation and QI Gong exercises and Surya namashkar exercise warmed the body up and made it flexible. We opened up ourselves to the East to absorb the positive energy from the universe and gave away the toxic energy that was in our bodies and minds.

The morning session began with invoking God's Spirit to fill the earth with his loving presence. A discussion on the movie "Doubt" made us realize that doubts in mind and heart could cause so much damage in others' lives, but having empathy, compassion, and understanding could build a person, a family, a community, and society at large.



I have made it a point to reflect and search for myself. I realize that everything happens for the good of all. This particular programme has enlightened me on how to move forward slowly but steadily.

As per the day's Gospel, I wish to be like Martha who was busy with many things. So like Mary was at the feet of Jesus. Giving priority to the presence of God and being awakened to the loving presence of God I become a more spiritual being filled with peace and joy. St. Theresa of Avila reminds me of "God alone suffices" and to keep them in mind and awareness I am Thankful to God for giving such a wonderful day to experience God's love and to live and share Love.



Br. Chamara Hettiarachchi

Photo of the Month

The more we are humble before God, the more we understand how powerful God is. The more we accept how sinful we are, the more begin to understand how merciful God is. The more we surrender before Him, the more we are blessed.



Birthdays Month of October

- 01 Chinnappan Devadoss
- 02 Sasmika Fernando
- 09 Noel Fonseka
- 20 Sales Fernando
- 24 Charles Fernando
- 27 Joseph Peiris
- 28 Sunanda Alwis

