



NEWSLETTER

Marist District of Asia

OCTOBER 2023

Editorial – br. Kikko

GROWTH IN INNER FREEDOM INTEGRATION AND HEALING

With a feeling of uncertainty in the face of the current reality of the world, with conflicts, wars, natural catastrophes, and the search for peace and a better life for thousands of people around the world, our novices are participating in a workshop with other novices from 10 different religious congregations.



There are 53 young people: postulants, novices, and temporary professed Brothers and Sisters, who are accompanied by 10 formators and our facilitator.



The program, which lasts 10 days, is called MBSI, which may be familiar to some of you. Body, mind, and spirit integration.

This program is a moment of grace for each one of us to continue to grow in inner freedom in our discernment process and to continue to heal our wounds. This is a time of *intimacy with ourselves, of digging into our reality, in our personality, self-discovering, and therefore deep self-knowledge.*

Two words have sounded strongly in the presentation of the program: *growth in inner freedom* and *integration* of the three dimensions in harmony.

How are we living our lives at this time? Do we perceive ourselves as brothers and sisters who are on the way to integration? Furthermore, are we taking care of our body in terms of food, sports, rest, entertainment?" Are we taking care of our intellectual capacity, our relationships, our studies, our personal and community commitments...? Are we taking care of our relationship with God, our prayer, meditation, and contemplative practices? Do you consider yourself in the process of integration? How

would you notice it? Do you feel inner peace? Are you aware of your feelings and emotions and are you able to express them in a kind way? Are you cultivating human and spiritual accompaniment and sharing your ups, downs, frustrations, progress, achievements, and joys?

All of us are invited to find every day, if not yet, some time for your contemplative prayer, silence, and spiritual reading and review your day with an attitude of surrender and joy. Have a joyful journey.

“Laudate Deum” (Praise God) is a living spirit in Tudella Novitiate

The people are immersed in the spirit of Laudate Deum, praising the Creator in caring for His wonderful creation.

“... a healthy ecology is also the result of interaction between human beings and the environment, as occurs in the indigenous cultures and has occurred for centuries in different regions of the earth. Human groupings have often “created” an environment, reshaping it in some way without destroying it or endangering it. The great present-day problem is that the technocratic paradigm has destroyed that healthy and harmonious relationship. In any event, the indispensable need to move beyond that paradigm, so damaging and destructive, will not be found in a denial of the human being, but include the interaction of natural systems “with social systems”. (Laudate Deum, paragraph 24).

May our lives be a continuous Laudate Deum!

Br.Canísio J. Willrich



MLC – La Valla Home / br. Duc

After four months of waiting for the renovation of the building, we reopened again our centre. This year we welcome more students and more teachers. We have 228 students and 21 staff members.



Due to the lack of space and no playground for the students to play sports, so we are working in cooperation with Salesians to give students a place to play. We take students to the Salesian centre every Friday to play sports after a long week of study. Many thanks for the help of the Salesians.



During this time, we also welcome two short-time volunteers, Mr. Ben from UK and Miss Celine from Germany. We also welcomed Miss Assumpta from Myanma to our MLC and La Valla home. She will be helping us for a year. We thank for the presence and work of the volunteers. We also had a visit of Marist Fathers. It was good to share our mission with Marist Fathers. We hope that we will work in collaboration with them in Thailand.



Even though we started the academy year later than the Thai school but we tried to catch up with them. Therefore from the 16th of October, our students started doing 1st semester exams.



A story from br. Tri

Apart from my academic commitments, I actively looked for volunteer work on weekends. I decided to join the Xaverian Missionary Priests to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged children living in a slum area. With volunteers from Vietnam, France, Mexico, and Thailand, our team was very diverse with each person contributing their own stories and talents. We frequently started our days with a simple prayer that gave us a sense of unity and direction.





Afterward, we work together to organize different groups, bringing material needed and going into the local community.

Later, when we collected the kids, their eyes would light up with excitement as we introduced them to a variety of fun activities, such as coloring, puzzle creation, domino games, Uno, and Pictionary. These times spent with the kids were not only enlightening but also served as a reminder of Marist Charism to the children especially those underprivileged.

Cu Chi community news / br. Duy

Ceremony of our aspirant in Cu Chi, Viet Nam

We welcomed Mr. Son to our community for the rant program. It was on the 20th of September. We had a meaningful ceremony with different brothers from the other two communities and people from the parish. May the Lord, our Mother, and St Marcellin accompany us as we move beyond ourselves to the glory of the Lord.



Visiting our Lady of Nui Cu

There is always a tradition in the aspirant program that is having a visit to Mary. At the beginning of October, we took a trip to the shrine of Mary. We had a nice moment of visiting a wonderful place and spent time praying with Mary.



Celebrated mid-autumn in the parish.

We had a wonderful celebration of mid-autumn with the youth in the parish where we are doing our ministry. Mr. Son and I tried our best to be involved in the different groups making stars. We enjoyed ourselves very much, particularly being with children.



'70X74'; A short story from our community of Ho Chi Min / br. Juan

It was Sunday and the community was having supper. One of the members brought out some news from the Aspirancy house. Br. Pietro after hearing the news from the Aspirancy said: "Tomorrow I will go to visit the Aspirancy and see how they are." I heard the same news but for me, it was something simple, without any other repercussion but for him it was a call to move on...

The next day early in the morning He went to Cu chi a place located around 35 km from his house. He went there, passed the day with the aspirants, and in the afternoon He was back.

Another 35 kms. He had made 70 km. Travel in his electric Bick. I stayed in shock to see the energy and capacity he has to continue being an apostle of the youth. 70 km at the age of 74...I asked myself how many kilometers I could ride on a bicycle if the needs of the brothers required me. and I felt embarrassed to answer.

On the contrary, I felt proud to see that the elder brother in our community is challenging all of us to be attentive to the needs of our brothers and respond to their needs not only with words but with actions.! Congratulations Pietro you are a real fisherman.!



Photos from br. Pietro





- 1- We shared Easter lunch with Dung. This young man continues to be in contact with Thuong and me. And he oriented towards Marist life once he finished his university studies in Hue.
- 2- A young man from Huang Khe who often comes to visit us
- 3- Long and Trung (ex-postulant), who come from Dak Mil
- 4- Chung and Binh, two young people from the parish of Huang Binh
- 5- Tan Nhat, brother Hung's cousin, visiting our community. He would like to join us, but he has not finished his studies.

6- Cam and Rang, relatives of brother Hung, visiting our community

7- Viet, very interested in the Marists

8- Canh Tran, Luan's brother, is preparing to leave for Australia

9- Duy, Quang, Luan, young people from the parish where I go to mass. Every day we have a short chat on the bench in front of the church. They attend high school

10- Hoang Ngoc, from Nghe An. First year of University. His brother was our candidate. Very interested in Marist life

11 and 12 – Huy. Enrolled in the first year of University. Twice a week he comes to our house for conversations in English. He met brother Nghi in Mondolkiri where his parents live and work. He is the eldest of six siblings, living with his paternal grandparents in Dak Nong. His maternal grandparents are from Ninh Binh, North Vietnam

13- Grandchildren of Mr. Hao who I met a few times at their house

2pm and 3pm – Our neighbors

16 to 22 – Young people I met in the parishes where they attend mass

New mission in Nam Nung, Dak Nong Province. / br. Nghi

Dear brothers and lays, today, I would like to share with you the news in Nam Nung Parish, Dak Nong Province, where br. Luan and I researching the new Marist Project.

Actually, we just arrived here a few days ago but we felt happy when the local priest and the people welcomed us. The local priest arranged for us to stay together with him and another seminarian in the same parish.

At the moment, we just observing and collaborating with parish priest and seminarian to adapt the new environment and make friend with local people. By next week, we will enroll in teaching catechism, English and other activities



according to the need of local people and our capacities. And by the appointment of parish priest, I will work in this parish with him to teach catechism and help catechumen people here, brother Luan will go to the other sub-parish, it's around 9 kilometers from here to help the people there.

Besides all our enrollments in the parishes, we also have some free times to study and commit ourselves for community's schedule.

So dear brothers and lays, we feel very welcome and happy here, we try our best to do accordingly to God will and our talents, and we also ask you to continue to support and pray for us in this new mission.

Finally, on behalf, I wish you all the best and be happy in your vocation.

Yours sincerely bro. Nghi.

Mymensingh Formation Community 202



The new formation and vocation community of Mymensingh was officially created on the first day of the month of September. It is made up of Bros. George E. Valle, Philippines, Cesar Barba Gomez, Mexico and Robert Howee, Bangladesh. George, a former member of the school community of Giasnogor, moved in right on the same date and as the newest member, took over the place of Bro. Alex

while Cesar and Robert were appointed as bursar and assistant bursar respectively. The preliminary meeting of the three-membered community was held on the 29th at Mymensingh in order to look after the practical and immediate needs of each member and the young men under their care. The October 20th and the 21st morning meeting will be for the formulation of Personal & Community life plan as well as the budget prior to the country retreat at the Holy Cross Fathers' place in Badun, Dhaka city.

Below are the highlights of the community only on the month of September or *Herbstmonat* meaning **harvest** month in Switzerland.



The arrival of 6 young men on September 17th, a day after George arrived from the inauguration of St. Marcellin house and the council meeting in Talit, West Bengal, India. Due to the delay of their Secondary School Certificate or SSC results, college admission was delayed too

for more than a month. Out of the 6 of them, 1 is an incoming aspirant, who had passed his Higher School Certificate or HSC recently while the other 5 are candidates who are college students in class 11. Postulant Timash Howee, Bro. Robert's relative on the fathers' side, took care of training and orienting them on how to do marketing, cooking and other house chores as well as leading the prayers in Bangla.



Departure of Bro. Alex back to his home province of South Asia and the Lone Aspirant Timash Howee to Davao Postulancy House, Philippines. Timash left Mymensingh on the September 2 with Alex accompanying him until the 16th.

A day before his departure, Bro. Vigilio, the country coordinator of Bangladesh, booked a farewell get-together dinner with the community in one of the restaurants in Mymensingh. After settling all that need to be settled with the community, Alex departed on the 25th.

Have a fruitful new mission to Bro. Alex and Postulancy year to Timash!



What does this picture remind you of more than 200 years ago?

George

Good news from India!

br. Jose Maria

JULY 2023:

On 3, July we received the good news of the appointment of the new bishop for our Diocese of Asansol, Fr. Elias Frank. Next day some priests and religious welcomed him in the Pastoral Centre of Chetana. On July, 6th. Brother Jiji returned from Rome to our Community from the Course Gier (for the Brothers that did last five years the perpetual profession).



In this month of July, we started a mini-project of six months with the Marist NGO FMSI from Rome. This Community Project is the preparation for the three-year project that will start in different villages around us. Now the Project starts in the villages of Nawatola, Dangatola, Chandul and Talit. And with the idea to start soon in the other two villages of Guskara and Sirampur. The activity consists of daily classes of two hours and the Tailoring class in Talit.



On July 12, Wednesday, a new Marist Candidate arrived to our Community. His name is Shital Toppo from Jalpaiguri in North India. He is 22 years old and he started three months "Come and See" experience. In October, he will pass to the new Marist house like Marist Aspirant. On July 15, Saturday, we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Convent of the Apostolic Carmelites in Burdwan. At eleven thirty we had Holy Mass and after a good lunch. We had the opportunity to share life with the different religious communities around us and it was a joyful and intense day for all of us.



On Sunday, 16, we visited the mother of the Brother Monoj Kumar Hasda and the parents and brother of the Brother Augustin Suny Nayak. It was an intense moment to share life, problems, and vocation and to know the real situation of the families. On Sunday, 23, the two Spanish volunteers: Elena and Cristina arrive at our house. They belong to the N.G.O. S.E.D. (Solidarity, Education, and Developing). They will stay one month with us helping the Hostel boys. They will live with the Talit Marist Community. They will teach to the boys of the Hostel and different activities and games. It's the second time that they come to our house, and they enjoy the relationship with the Santali children.



On July 28th, Friday, the two volunteers, Elena and Cristina returned to their country Spain. An unexpected familiar problem forced them to return. In the week they stayed with us, they made some activities with the children of our Hostel. They enjoyed the welcoming of the Marist Community and we enjoyed their presence and service. On July 31st. We celebrate the dead of St. Ignatius Loyola. The Jesuits of Burdwan invited us for this celebration. Many Religious communities and neighbouring priests came to the celebration. It starts with a prayer service, and it finished with a fellowship meal.



AUGUST'2023:

The month started on the first of August with the birthday of Brother Augustin Suni Nayak. We started the day with a special prayer, and we had a festive celebration in the lunch with the gift and the cake. We celebrated with sinaras with the boys of the hostel and after supper, we had a special competition of cards.



The new formation house is almost finished, and we are preparing for its inauguration next September. On August 5, all the brothers of Talit Community we see the situation of the work. We expect that at the end of August, all the work will be finished.



SEPTEMBER '2023:

On September 9th, Saturday we celebrated the inauguration of our Formation House, near the village of Chandul. This important event started with the processional entry with a Bengali dance and the Brothers Jiji and Malangmei carrying an image of Mary and Champagnat. The District Leader, Bro. Canisio Jose Willrich cut the ribbon and discovered a marble plate remembering this important event. After, Bishop Elian Frank blessed all the dependences of the house with holy water. Lightning the Indian candelabra and after some speeches, the Eucharistic Celebration started. The main celebrant was the Bishop of Asansol Elias Frank. Also, accompanied him, the Emeritus bishop, Ciprian Monis, and many Diocesan and religious priests and sisters.



The religious celebration started at ten thirty. Some Marist Brothers traveled from the different communities of our Asian Marist District and from Tamil Nadu. From our Asansol Diocese came many priests and Sisters. Also, came

the Boys of our Marist Chetana Hostel, Teachers, friends, and some people from the surrounding villages, especially from Talit and Chandul. After the celebration, all the people were invited to a fellowship meal. Next days, the MDA Marist Council will have a three-day presential meeting in the new Formation House. The Marist Brothers who came for the inauguration of the new Formation House will have an outing to know Kolkata. Also, the District Councillors will have a meeting with the Community of Talit knowing its situation and challenges. We inaugurated



the new chapel and we started to pray every day in it. The District Councillors had one day of recreation after the meeting. We have one encounter between the District Councillors and the Talit Marist Community to analyse the situation of our community and the new challenges in the future.

OCTOBER'2023

On October 3rd, Brother Jiji suffered a surgery in Trichy (Tamil Nadu). Now he is recovering properly with the helping of the Brothers of South Asia Province. He will return at the end of this month.



Also, at the beginning of October arrived to our Marist Community a new Candidate: Bisnu Baxki; a new Lay Marist: Robin Hansda and Brother Jose Maria from Spain. We started to be a large community.



MARIST NOVITIATE – TUDELLA

1. COMMUNITY BUILDING SESSIONS. (Shovo)

For every community, it is important and healthy to take some time to evaluate, review, adjust, and renew our commitments and practices in community life. Here at the Novitiate, we try to do this periodically throughout the year.

We had a wonderful session, which was led by brother Kikko. The theme of the session was **“Community Building”**. We summoned our session with the silence moment where we tried to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. Then we divided into a small group where we shared our thoughts and ideas on how to improve our community life. Different people had different perspectives about community building.

We talked especially how to build a good community with the challenges and difficulties we have been facing. With the marvelous ideas of community members, we were able to conclude our wonderful discussion. At the end of the session, each of us put plastic building blocks with a small individual reflection and formed a wonderful community, where we are all stones that support our community life, with our personal talents, gifts, values and sensitivities... The session was continued over the next few weeks by the committee and the community so that the conclusions are in coordination with our novitiate “Mission statement.”



2. NOVITIATE COUNCIL MEETING, MOMENT OF COMMUNION (Real)

In the second week of October, in our community of Tudella, Sri Lanka, we had the chance to receive Br Peter Carrol, provincial of Star of the Sea, Br Nicholas Fernando, provincial of South Asia, and Br Canisio Willrich, leader of MDA district, for their novitiate council. It is always a nice moment to evaluate the life of the

novitiate, to support the present life, and the ongoing process and to project the future, insofar as possible.

They took the time to listen to everyone, formators, and novices, personally and as a group. Once again, I've experienced how our leaders are people with remarkable listening skills and the ability to bring out the best in everyone. Moreover, we can say that it is this quality of listening with patience that creates communion. With them, we have lived real moments of communion and feast. So, in this sense, we can say that they live well the synodal invitation of Pope Francis to listen with the ear of the heart. As a matter of fact, he says: "Communion is not the result of strategies and programs but is built in mutual listening between brothers and sisters". (In the Message for the 56th world day of social communications)



3. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION WORKSHOPS (CUONG)

The workshop was run by Br Rod and Br Real and had different congregations present. Spiritual direction is meeting with a trained and experienced guide to consider how God is present and active in our life right now, and about how God might invite us into a deeper relationship. God is the one who is guiding us. The one who is our spiritual director or guide acts as a channel through whom the Holy Spirit works, inspiring us and helping us discover what God is doing through our daily experiences.



The content of spiritual direction is simply our life: any aspect, story or experience that touches us can lead to prayer and reflection. It is us who seek, together with the one who guides and the Holy Spirit, meeting in holy conversation. Above all,

our spiritual director listens and helps us come to understand the suggestions and possibilities, the invitations, and the “impulses” of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

4. ACEP EXPERIENCE (Pech)



I am so happy with my experiences at Marist Stella College in Negombo. And it has taught me many things and given me many different experiences during these two and a half months. There are 3 areas that I want to share according to what I feel during this ACEP (Apostolic Community Experience Program).

First, the students are really impressive, with their discipline and respect, they are skillful, life-sharing, and especially they are really joyful children according to what I have seen in these two and half months. They are such a special gift through which I can see, touch, and feel the presence of God with me because I feel loved and joyful during this ACEP.

Second, I have learned many things from the school and the teachers. There are many different activities in the school which 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 Lavalá. 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.

5. MEETING OF THE “INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE NEW FORMATION GUIDE” (Kikko)

The meeting took place from August 25th to September 2nd. Almost all the members of the International Commission for the New Formation Guide (Br. César, Br. Ataide, Br. Fabien, Br. Pere, Br. Kikko, Br. Angel, Br. Lindley, Br. Oscar and Br. Joao) met at the Marist University Residence Gelmirez, in Santiago de Compostela, Northwest of Spain. Our main objective was to finalize the first general draft of the New Formation Guide.

Two days before the meeting we gathered in Santiago with the idea of spending two days together, visiting some Marist communities, privileged places, enjoying delicious meals, walk around the city especially the Cathedral, were the remain of St. James are present, according to the tradition, etc...



We began our work with a decided, committed, and passionate spirit. The work in groups, the sharing in the assembly, the prayers, the family spirit, the reflections, etc., were the elements of the daily work. Finally, we were able to finalize the different sections of the 3 main cores of the New Formation Guide.

At the end of the 9 days, the evaluation carried out was totally positive, since we had completed the first general draft of the New Formation Guide, which would be



presented at the plenary sessions of the General Council, in September.

I had also the opportunity to meet our beloved brothers, José María Sierra and Luis G^a Sobrado...it was great...

6. FIRST YEARS' RETREAT "INTO THE DEEP"(VINH)

From August 6 to 9, the first-year novices had a retreat at the Salesians' Novitiate Community, near Kandy. It was run by Brother Kikko with the theme of "Into the Deep". Our first-year novices were practicing how to go into their hearts, using many



methods, such as doing a walking meditation, an attentive meditation, using mantras, etc. At the end of the retreat all novices had learned some new ways to go deeper into their heart. For myself personally, one method I found that fits for me is repeating a mantra while using prayer beads.

7. CREATIVE PRAYER WORKSHOP (KY)

Prayer is an amazing gift which strengthens our relationship with God; it has the power to change us and the world around us.

When we pray at all times, in all circumstances and for all things, we see God's Kingdom come.

At novitiate time, our Brothers always encourage us, teach us, and guide us how to find the new way of prayer or the other way to say that, creative prayer.

Our Brothers said that: *Creative prayer bring real life things into prayer, making prayer more meaningful and connected to daily life and bringing our prayer closer to our God.*

So, on the second October, we had workshop about **creative prayer** with the other congregations.



That was a very good time for me, for our brothers and the other brothers and sisters also, we had changed to share and discuss about the advantages of creative prayer and how it affected in our daily life.

Then, many ideas came out, such like: *Offer our daily tasks to God and sing after each prayer, prayer around a fire, write words or symbols on small pieces of paper, drawing on the small rocks,... We need to find resources in books to incorporate into prayer,...*

So, creative prayer is great way for me to develop my relationship with God, it's also something that is both mysterious and very attractive to me, it helps me see and feel God's presence in daily life and prayer time.

8. SEMESTER BREAK (SHOHEL)

Semester Break means, after a long time relaxing and spending time with our friends and family differently. So, we had that opportunity to experience this special moment after ??? weeks. It is a great chance to get a jumpstart on your study for the next stage.

This is our second 'Semester Break' and for us, it was a good chance to check our house and show love- also it was very enjoyable. During the break, we tried to take care of our Novitiate, especially our garden areas. I found the unity of our Novices through the work and respect the decision of each other. We showed our talents and completed the work quickly and it proved that we can work like our founder. I am thankful for our formators, because they guided us in many ways, like- instructing us about the work by spending time with us, providing good tiffin during the break time, and planning an excellent 'Time-table'. This time we were able to spend more time personally to do personal work and prayer. I saw everyone try their hardest to use the time in the proper way. We watched two movies and got more time for recreation after supper.



I like to give thanks to you God for this great opportunity in this time to take a break and rebuild our community through different activities. Lord, be with us always, help us to continue our journey, and prepare ourselves for the future.

MDA VISION-MISSION STATEMENT 2023 – 2025

We, the Brothers and Lay Marist of Champagnat,
 Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Mary and Marcellin Champagnat
 Become faces of hope that look beyond
 And promotes a Global intercultural family
 In places where we have taken roots.



In our quest to live our vocation as Marists
 And responding to the emerging needs of our respective mission places,
 We strive to build homes of light where everyone feels welcome
 And strengthen our human resources through formation
 And training to ensure vitality and sustainability in our various ministries.