

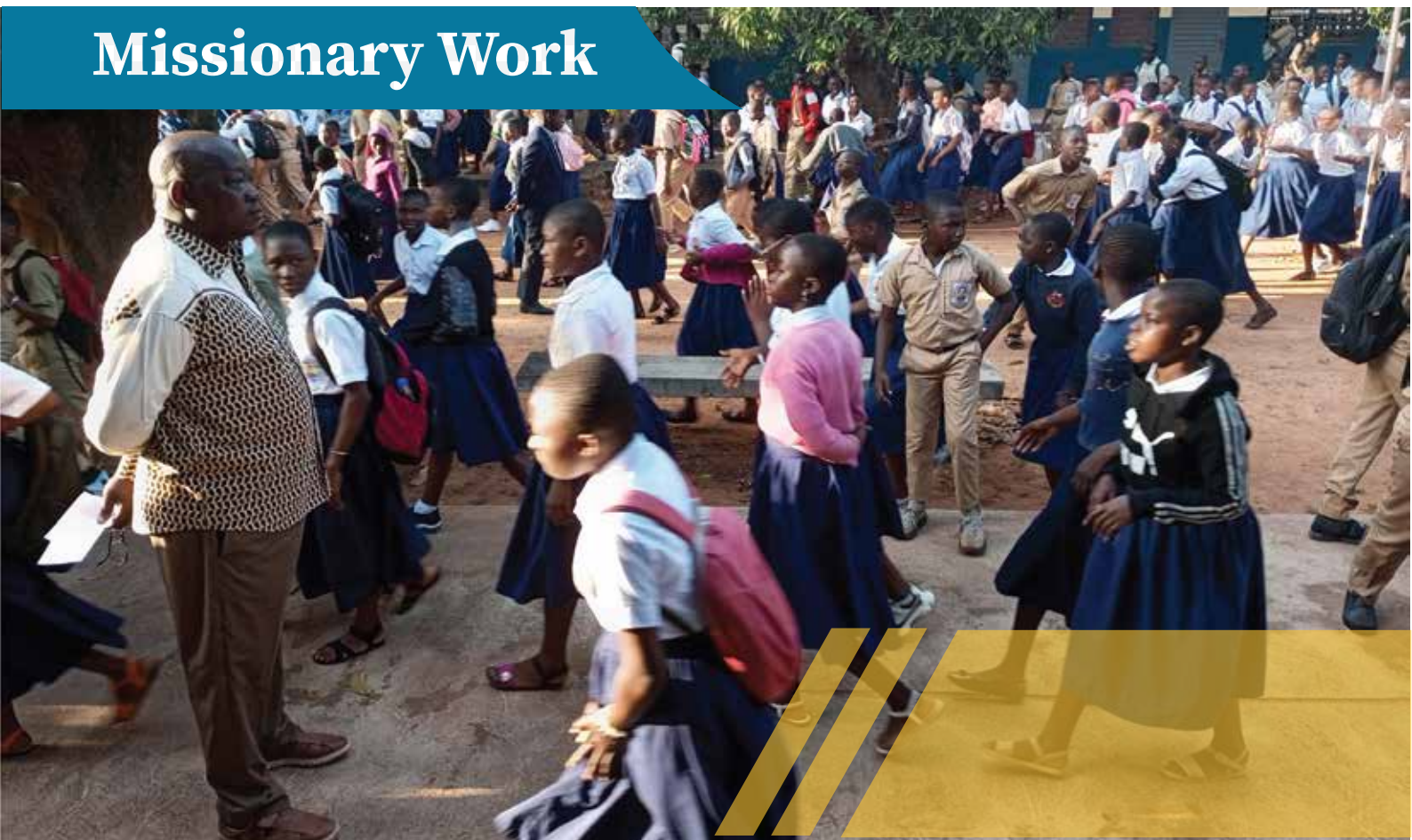
# NEWSBULLETIN

CAMEROON - GHANA - CÔTE D'IVOIRE - LIBERIA - TCHAD

Marist Province of West Africa



## Missionary Work



**October 2023**

- \* Echoes in Mission: Marist Life
- \* Book Launch
- \* Thanksgiving Mass
- \* Humanitarian Support
- \* Synodality

### Team Members

Br Meyanui Valentine  
Br Conrad Tameh  
Br Ndi Derick  
Br Jean Bertrand Alex  
Br Cylas Yenwong  
Br Nobert Ndilon

# Humanitarian Support

27.10.2023

Students of Our Good Mother School, Ashalaja - Ghana  
on a mission to support flood victims of the

## Akosombo Dam Spillage



# Echoes in Mission: Marist Life

Br. Tererai Gijima (Province of Southern Africa )

Last summer (in August) I got a surprise visit from a former student of Marist Nyanga whom I last met back in 2017 in Zimbabwe. I was excited to meet Victory but, at the same time, I kept wondering what he had become after so many years. In the conversation at our reunion, Victory surprised me. He remembers fondly the relationships that fostered the values he cherishes today. The young man volunteers, in summer, to give his services to the less privileged out of 'love of work'. I couldn't be less proud to be in the company of this engineering student from the prestigious Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, USA.

This story is one of the many beautiful experiences in my Marist life. Our numerous schools dotted all over the world, tell a story of spirituality, service, and community in 'the way of Mary' as we make 'Jesus known and loved'. We are engaged every day in leadership animation, instruction, retreats, and faith formation among other duties. Boys and girls like Victory go out of our institutions every year almost in the manner of a conveyor belt production system except that this is much more than that if, by any terms, it could be referred to as such. While the response to the Marist mission in the periphery shouts the loudest in the calls to establish the schools, some of which have become large campuses in many realities of the Marist world, the emerging needs we answer today go beyond just providing education and catechesis to the poorest and vulnerable. Young people today seek more meaningful relationships characterized by compassion and marked by encounters with themselves, God, and others. The Brothers and Lay provide a relational milieu where all are welcome to the Marist family and spirituality in various programs.

The Weekends I spent at Marist Brothers Center at Esopus for camps, encounters, and La Valla weekends have exposed me to another level of creative Marist Youth and Young Adults ministry. Groups of visibly

diverse young people from Marist Schools and affiliated groups, individuals meet for retreats and experiences with, in the Marist Charism. The Marists (Brothers and Lay) collaborate in a plethora of creative dynamics that engage the young people in liturgy, self-reflection, being and becoming, active response to different calls of faith and life as well as collaboration with others in the Marist Charism. These young people are passionate about being Marists, not just in their schools but in their life beyond high school.

I am apprised of the great strides we have made in child protection with regard to awareness, policy-making, and protective accommodations and procedures in the Marist institutions. Through many workshops that have been taking place, the staff and students have been conscientious, informed, and empowered for affirmative action in this important dimension of mission. What better practice outlines Fr Champagnat's appeal, "To educate children well, first of all, love them, love them all equally.?"

When Victory left, I reflected on why he had asked me about what I would be doing after I finished my post-graduate program. Apparently, I had hardly responded to him explaining I felt rejuvenated to be back in the classroom and teach when he interjected, "Yes, we need Brothers in schools!" For a moment I thought I heard the echo of Fr Champagnat's voice on the same call and yet even more: collaboration in the mission.

# PASTORAL



## Thanksgiving Mass

On the 8th of October 2023, St. Albert's Comprehensive College, Bafut celebrated the Thanksgiving Mass of Sr Mbu Philomena Biwesi (Middle of the photo above) an ex-student of the first batch of the School. She is the first female to become a Rev Sister in the Congregation of the Sisters of St Anne. It was a great and memorable event in the history of our College. We thank God for His love and goodness as we keep her in our prayers.



# FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Br. Linus Ngam

We are whole persons, both human and Christian, in our fundamental experience of ourselves. This is because we can understand and respond to the Christian message. Anthropologically, this implies not only knowledge but freedom and responsibility from the fact that we are hearers of the Christian message. In this light, human freedom is part and parcel of our nature. It is so natural that we cannot isolate it from our experience. Each individual takes freedom differently, but this experience of freedom is transcendental because it is alive in the whole of our daily and particular experiences. Given that our experience is one, unified, and whole our transcendent freedom is not completely hidden from us. Thus, transcendent freedom is present through our daily experiences.

One thing is clear to us we cannot for certain grasp the ultimate reality or truth about ourselves and our freedom. Every one of us strives and hopes but we are always unsure about the result of our judgment and choices. “Specific actions and choices indeed are the only bearers of human freedom, but as its partial, always ambiguous signs; they are

incapable of analysis.” (Carr, Anne E. 1989, *A Word of Grace*, p24)

Freedom is what we are in the family and the community at large and who we are in acceptance or rejection of the unlimited and mysterious horizon of our existence. Our attitudes and worries, fashions and values are included in what we do with our life in freedom and responsibility. We can indeed project our actions and choices onto people or happenings that are uncontrollable. Equally, we can also shift responsibility to our friends, and superiors, for what others have done to us or are unable to do. This very attitude of refusing our freedom and responsibility confirms the fact that our refusal itself is the transcendental freedom whereby we are responsible for our lives. This implies that the majority of our freedom has to do with the way we are ourselves as total persons. Freedom is not the ability to do this or that, but the power to decide about and actualize ourselves. (Carr, Anne E. 1989, *A Word of Grace*, p24)

# Beginning of Year: Eucharistic Service

10.10.2023



Centre Scolaire Saint Marcellin  
Champagnat Bouaké  
had the Opening Mass  
with the primary School pupils

Mass with the Kindergarten Pupils



Mass with the Secondary School Students



18.10.2023

18.10.2023



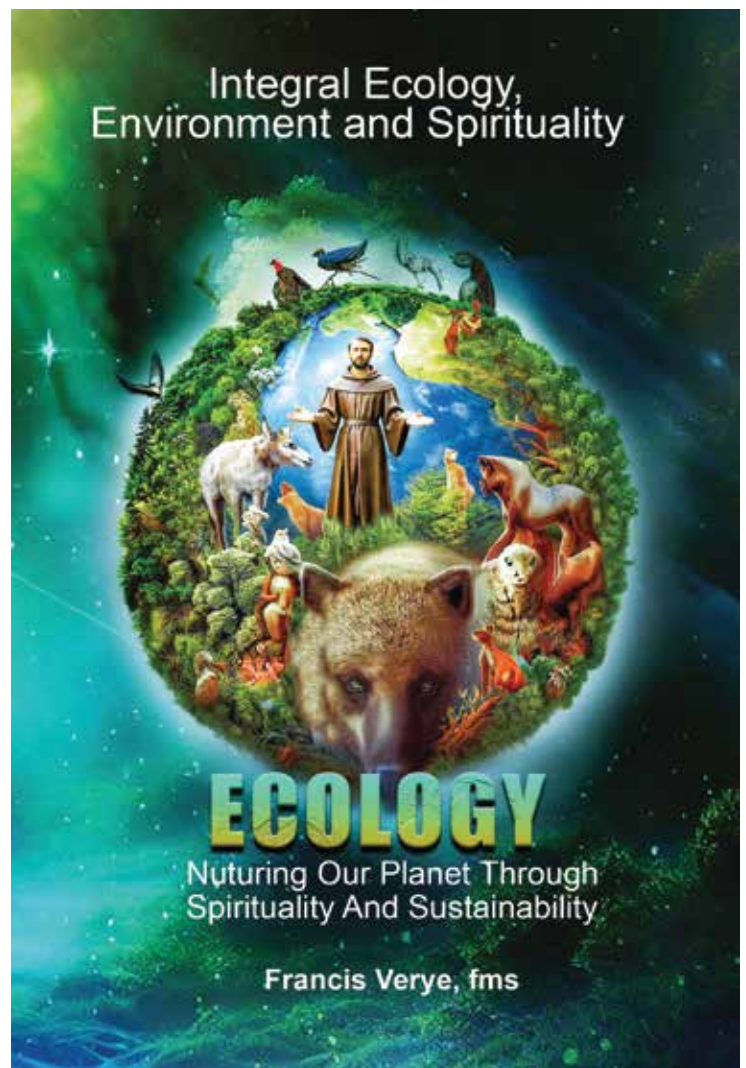
Collège Catholique Marcellin Champagnat, Korhogo having  
an open air Eucharistic celebration



## A Mini Book Launch

It was Sunday the 22nd October 2023 at the St Martin De Porres Catholic Church (South-Suntreso) Archdiocese of Kumasi Ghana. during the Eucharistic celebration when Br Francis Veye, fms in company with his Brothers of Champagnat community, Odeneho Kwadaso presented his newly published book on ecology. He thrilled the Congregation with his famous quote "When we plant trees, we plant seeds of peace and hope," said Wangari Maathai, the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Br. Francis raised a thought-provoking question that kept the attendees spellbound. "What is happening with the "Garden City of Africa?" This Ever-green City is constantly being robbed off its natural beauty by our cruel and unfriendly human activities. Kumasi in the days of old was *the garden city of Africa*. He went on, without mincing words, "we should all listen to the cry of the Holy Father, Pope Francis on environmental degradation and disrespect of other God's creation, and to value our interconnectedness." The human race is on the verge of extinction if serious care is not taken. The thrust of this wonderful book is on our interconnectedness and care for our Common Home and all of God's Creation. This a book to read by all; a simple story simply told.

**WIRBA HADRIAN BERINYUY**



**Integral Ecology, Environment and Spirituality."**

# Marist Pedagogy: From a Psychological Lens (11)

- Br. Eric Kramo

How does the Blessed Virgin Mary perform on the personality factor of Agreeableness? This is our preoccupation for this write-up. Again, we do so from the viewpoint of the theorists -MacCrae and Costa. Let's start by considering their description of Agreeableness. They opine that highly agreeable persons are soft-hearted, trusting, generous, acquiescent, lenient, and good-natured. Contrary, persons of low Agreeableness tend to be ruthless, suspicious, stingy, antagonistic, critical, and irritable. We attempt to identify instances where the Blessed Virgin Mary manifests some of these personality attributes.

We can recognize an attitude of trust in Mary's discourse with the Angel Gabriel in the Annunciation. Water from the Rock (51) affirms, "Mary is surprised by the forceful entry of God into her life. She is afraid. Then she comes to be at peace because of her intuition of the presence and love of God for her. Without having all the answers to her questions, she trusts and commits herself to a God who inspires trust." Mary demonstrates faith in God, hence yields to his message in these pious words, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to your words."

She also manifests trust at the Visitation. She believes the angel's message that her old kins lady, Elizabeth, was six months pregnant. Mary supports her faith with action, so she moves hastily to the hill town. The Blessed Virgin Mary shows strong faith in her son God, Jesus Christ, at the wedding at Cana. Not knowing how, yet, she trusts he could turn the couple's situation around. She accordingly appeals to him – "They have no wine!" Indeed, her simple invitation to Jesus brings a huge relief to the couple.

Her acquiescence is unmatched. This is what the Rule of the Ten Evangelical Virtues says, "The Virgin Mary was always most obedient not only to God but for God's sake, also to men." Examples of her obedience are not far-fetched. At the Annunciation, she has a choice to make but submits to God's will. She

welcomes God's message and willingly obeys it. Mary devotedly cooperates with God for the revelation of His ancient and most perfect plan for humanity, salvation. The Blessed Virgin Mary, in her weakness, nine months pregnant, obeys the decree of Emperor Caesar Augustus and travels to Bethlehem to register. We equally see in Mary a sense of obedience at the Presentation of the Lord at the temple. She follows the religious prescriptions and acts accordingly. In a word, her submissiveness permeates all through the New Testament.

Mary is a generous and soft-hearted woman. For the salvation of the world, she let go of her son. As an itinerant preacher, Jesus spends little or no time with his mother. I guess it is not a bother to the generous Virgin Mary. Again, we refer to the newly-weds in Cana. Mary's soft-heartedness manifests flagrantly. She feels their trouble and makes a conscious attempt to help them by taking that first vital step. Her final reaction makes her movement worth it.

The collected comportment Mary exhibits at the foot of the cross is nothing short of extraordinary. Her bravery and determination to defy the odds must have been a testament to her faith. Despite the circumstances, one might have expected her agreeable nature to manifest in a contrary manner, displaying traits such as ruthlessness, antagonism, criticality, or irritability. However, the scriptures make no mention of such sentiments regarding her son's murderers or even towards God himself, who hailed her as "blessed among all women!" during the Annunciation. What a truly remarkable individual! In light of these observations, it is reasonable to conclude that Mary demonstrates a high degree of agreeableness in her personality.



## Lycée College Marie Ke Tal, Koumra - Chad

Schools in Chad resumed on October 2nd, 2023, and Lycée College Marie Ke Tal was no exception. The program began with welcome speech by the Principal, Br Success Ngardoum. This was followed by a word of prayer led by the School Chaplain, who sought God's blessings for the staff and students as they embarked on a new Academic Year.

Amongst them was Br Cho Nchang who had joined the team. The Principal then issued some instructions for the New School Year and the students proceeded to their classrooms to officially commence with lessons. We are grateful for the start of the academic year and seek His protection for all our students and the staff.

*Br Cho Nchang*



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## ST. MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT SCHOOL Buokrom - Ghana

The school was closed on the 14th of September, 2023 for a two-week vacation and resumed on Tuesday, 3rd October, 2023. The reopening day always serves as a day for cleanup exercises done by the student body. The students also interacted with each other since they spent weeks without seeing each other. It was the beginning of a new academic year 2023/2024. Following his transfer and appointment, Br. John Kusi-Mensah is the new headmaster of St. Marcellin Champagnat School.

The school also opened its doors to admit new students as well as recruit new teachers. Academic work resumed thereafter. An opening Mass was held on the 11th of October, 2023 which was led by Fr. John Amoah to entrust the term and its activities into the hands of the Lord. The academic year started well and all the students and staff are looking forward to a 12-week successful and fulfilling term and academic year.

*Mary Antwi B.*

# SYNOD ON SYNODALITY 2023

## “A glimpse to listen TO THE HOLY SPIRIT”

Br. Linus Ngam, fms

The Synod on Synodality 2023 carries the theme: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission. To help highlight the experiences and contribute to a richer way to the Synod on Synodality, the Pope has invited the Christian faithful of the universal Church to reflect on various themes, such as the journeying companions, listening, speaking out with courage and parrhesia (that is, integrating freedom, truth, and charity), celebrating the Eucharist, co-responsibility in the mission, dialogue in Church and society, the dialogue between Christians of different confessions, discernment and forming ourselves in Synodality. The purpose is to learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, and give strength to our hands. Hence, I would like to comment briefly on the theme “A glimpse to listen to the Holy Spirit” and to one another as has been spelled out on the theme of Synod on Synodality. Pope Francis’ prayer before the Synod on Synodality articulates beautifully the importance of listening to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the growth of the Church “Come, Holy Spirit! You inspire new tongues and place words of life on our lips: keep us from becoming a ‘museum Church,’ beautiful but mute, with much past and little future. Come among us, so that in this synodal experience we will not lose our enthusiasm, dilute the power of prophecy, or descend into useless and unproductive discussions. Come, Spirit of love, open our hearts to hear your voice! Come, Holy Spirit of holiness, renew the holy and faithful People of God! Come, Creator Spirit, renew the face of the earth! Amen.”

### What exactly is a synod?

A Synod is a gathering, traditionally of bishops, that helps the Church to walk forward together in the same direction. The word “Synod” comes from the Greek syn-hodos, meaning “the same way” or “the same path.”

### What is synodality?

Fundamentally, synodality is about journeying together. This happens through listening to one another to hear what God is saying to all of us. It is realizing that the Holy Spirit can speak through anyone to help us walk forward together on our journey as the People of God.

### Listening

Pope Francis said, “Speaking of a ‘Synod on Synodality’ may seem something obscure, self-referential, excessively technical, of little interest to the general public,” but it is “something truly important for the Church. Precisely at this time, when there is much talk and little listening, and

when the sense of the common good is in danger of weakening, the Church as a whole has embarked on a journey to rediscover the word together,” (Pope Francis Aug. 26, 2023)

Listening is another step that requires an open mind and heart, without prejudice. The synodal process necessitates that we, first listen with an open heart and open mind to where the Spirit is calling us and discern to whom we need to listen and what steps need to be taken to more fully live out our mission as Christians. ‘To journey together as Christians is only possible through the approach of a listening Church, open to gathering and reflecting on the lived experiences of all its members, including making space for those often excluded and discarded’. (Vademecum, nos. 1.5, 5.3). The Psalmist says, “Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” (Psalm 34:11). We are in this Psalm 34:11, encouraged to experience God for ourselves and to open our eyes and see the goodness of God that is all around us.

There is no doubt that God wants us to believe and listen to the Holy Spirit. These are the qualities that we must learn, indicating that we do not possess these characteristics in us by nature. When we are discussing important issues, we often leap right into the business, sometimes, without listening to one another and without listening to the Holy Spirit. As members of a Synodal Church gather, it is important to listen to what is moving in the hearts of people.

Despite facing rejection, Jesus does not allow Himself “to be imprisoned by disappointment,” but instead looks to the Father, remaining “serene even in the storm,” says Pope Francis. Therefore, Jesus invites us to be a Church that contemplates God’s action and discerns the present; “A Church that does not face today’s challenges and problems with a divisive and contentious spirit but, on the contrary, turns its eyes to God who is communion and, with awe and humility, blesses and adores him, recognizing him as its only Lord.” (Pope Francis)

# Workshop

International Marist Servant and Prophetic Leadership Course in the Philippines



This program brought together English and French-speaking participants from nine provinces of the Marist World. The group comprises Brothers and lay who serve as Principals and Community leaders. The participants had already completed the program's first phase, which had started six months earlier online. The second, face-to-face, phase of the program planned to

give participants the opportunity to interact with facilitators, hands-on activities, and practice started on Monday, the 23rd of October and is expected to end on Friday, the 4th of November 2023. Brothers Etienne Balma and Augustine Teye Naatey are currently in the Philippines following this program.

**Br Augustine Naatey**



We welcome your valuable input. Your feedback and ideas are essential in helping us improve. For Comments, Suggestions and sending of articles, contact:

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Next Publication - **30<sup>th</sup> November 2023**