



Marist Province of South Asia

Newsletter

October 2023



The motto attributed to Champagnat by his biographer, All to Jesus through Mary, all to Mary for Jesus, captures this close relationship between the Son and the Mother and our Founder's attitude of confidence in Mary, which we are invited to live (Water from the Rock, 25).



From the Editor's Desk!

Holding the Crucifix and recite the Apostles' Creed. On the first bead, say an Our Father. Say one Hail Mary on each of the next three beads. For each of the five decades, announce the Mystery (perhaps followed by a brief reading from Scripture) then recite the Our Father. October is passing and the month is dedicated to the Rosary. How the Catholic Church is rich in spirituality to keep its faithful in the spirit of prayer and feel the presence of God with the people with this simple yet powerful Rosary.

The Rosary is a Scripture-based prayer. The word "Rosary" means a chain of roses and the roses are prayers. The Rosary Prayer reminds us about the life of Jesus and his Mother, Mary. In the Church, the month of October is, by custom, the month of the Rosary but people do use this prayer all year round.

The most powerful experience throughout the world reported reciting the Rosary is the strong hope for a renewed society characterized by increasing economic poverty, has been manifested through the power of the rosary. Filipinos experienced socio-political changes through what we call the "rosary revolution." Thousands of Filipinos took to the streets in 1986 when Jaime Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila called for prayer to bring about change in leadership when Ferdinand Marcos could no longer govern the people.

In January 2001, thousands of Filipinos once again gathered before the Edsa Shrine following the accusations against President Joseph Estrada about plundering the national treasury. Jaime Cardinal Sin called for a "rosary revolution" for a change of leadership and power. Praying the rosary becomes a powerful weapon for a peaceful solution to a political crisis like the ousting of a president who does not have the moral ascendancy to govern.

For Catholics, we have a weapon not for killing but for living and giving hope for life which is a gift. Let us promote the value of the Rosary wherever we are and wherever we go. The simple faith is much stronger and pleasing God.



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Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi

Dear Marists of Champagnat,

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. (1 John 4:16) We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

Dear brothers and sisters, If one has taken seriously the above quotations and try to live according to them he/she is Blessed; he/she is Happy. The secret of happiness is:

- ✓ To be sensitive to receive GOD'S LOVE that one is immersed in
- ✓ Keep on loving all, unconditionally, at all times.



It is a deplorable situation, when one experiences unhappiness, finds fault with other, rather than examining the quality of one's experience of love: love received and love given.

Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'(John 4:14)

Fr. Champagnat is a great example for us. He was really filled with God's love. Nourished by this God's love it out poured to others, especially to children. The article 2 from our former constitutions expresses this reality very powerfully.

Led by the Spirit, Marcellin was seized by the love that Jesus and Mary had for him and for others. His experience of this, as well as his openness to events and to people, is the wellspring of his spirituality and of his apostolic zeal. It made him sensitive to the needs of his times, especially to the ignorance concerning religion among young people and the poor circumstances in which they were placed.

His faith and eagerness to do God's will led him to realise that his mission was to "make Jesus Christ known and loved."¹ He often said: "Every time I see a child, I long to teach him his catechism, to make him realise how much Jesus Christ has loved him."² It was this attitude that led him to found our Institute for the Christian education of the young, especially those most in need³.

In my experience, one of the methods that has helped me to grow in experiencing God's love and give it to those around me is the practice of loving kindness meditation, that is found in Buddhist tradition. I am sure it will help you as it has helped me. I suggest to you that you search in YouTube "Loving Kindness Meditation" and follow it. Links that you find below too will help you to be acquainted with the Loving Kindness Meditations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDi40FQcaIU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9C4RICQ7oh>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLGh2e0enIA>

May you experience God's Love abundantly, share it with all those around you, and thus be Happy!

Bro. Nicholas Fernando, Provincial

Why Should We Keep The Rosary Under The Pillow?

Keep a Rosary, even of the little ones, under the pillow.

Since I took that habit, I solve problems more easily, and it is a good method for those who have insomnia, they will see that they wake up with the Rosary in their hands and have had a good rest!

Meaningful actions gain more strength when their origin is known.

A beautiful story....

Why do you not know the history of the Holy Rosary?

I always asked myself: Who would have thought of repeating the Beads of Mary so many times? What's the point?

Now it is understood and each time they pray it, each Hail Mary is a precious rose for the Virgin. I am sure we all know this beautiful prayer that is the Holy Rosary.

A legend tells that a Lego Brother (who was not a priest) of the Order of the Dominicans, could not read or write, so he could not read the Psalms, as was the custom in the convents of the time.

Then, when he finished his work at night (he was the doorman, the sweeper, the gardener, etc ...) he went to the convent chapel and knelt in front of the image of the Virgin Mary, and recited 150 Hail Marys (the number of the psalms), then he retired to his cell to sleep.

In the morning, at dawn, he got up before all his brothers and went to the chapel to repeat his habit of greeting the Virgin.

Brother Superior noticed that every day, when he arrived at the chapel to celebrate morning prayers with all the monks, there was an exquisite smell of freshly cut roses and he became curious, so he asked everyone who was in charge of adorn the altar of the Virgin so beautifully, to which the answer was that none did, and the rose bushes in the garden were not missing their flowers.

The lay brother became seriously ill; the other monks noticed that the altar of the Virgin did not have the usual roses, and they deduced that it was the Brother who put the roses. But how?

Nobody had ever seen him leave the convent, nor did they know that he bought the beautiful roses.

One morning he was surprised that he had risen, but they could not find him anywhere. At last, they met in the chapel, and each monk who entered was amazed, for the lay brother was kneeling in front of the image of the Virgin, ecstatically reciting his Hail Marys, and each one that addressed the Lady, a rose appeared in the vases

Thus at the end of his 150 greetings, he fell dead at the feet of the Virgin.

Over the years, Santo Domingo de Guzmán, (it is said that by revelation of the Blessed Virgin);

He divided the 150 Hail Marys into three groups of 50, and associated them with the meditation of the Bible:

The Original Traditional Mysteries :

The Joyful Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries and the Glorious Mysteries

LOAD YOUR ROSARY EVERY DAY

- When you carry your Rosary, it is a headache for Satan
- When you use your Rosary, Satan collapses
- When he sees you praying the Rosary, he vanishes.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

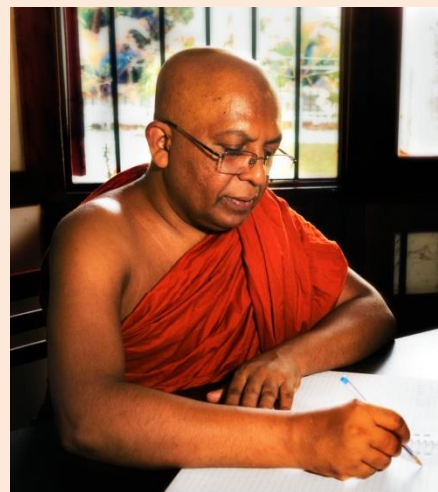
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen

A Speech Should Not Go Unheard

Whoever would be the next President of the country, must create a society where there is no social, political, and religious discrimination. National security does not mean strengthening the forces with arms or placing warships right around the island. Instead, he should create an environment where people respect, love, and care for each other.

Further, he should take positive measures to make the system of education not exam-oriented but to make people sensitive to nature, and to enrich social and spiritual development.

Our future does not depend on a boastful history of war victories or destroying our enemies but on a society full of human values, love, and respect. In such a beautiful society there is no boasting about defeating another community and accomplishing the military tasks. Such a mentality motivates hatred and vengeance. Therefore, he should build a community full of love and care for healing people who have suffered enough.



Galkanda Dammananda Thero

Greetings from Manziana.

Brother Kumarasinghe and I arrived on the 22nd September. We are fifteen Brothers and three priests altogether including Michael Green, our Director, and Barry Burns the Assistant. Apart from the two of us, there is one from the Philippines, one from USA, one from South Africa, two from New Zealand, and the rest from Australia some are stationed in other countries as missionaries. On Sunday Brother Ernesto, the Superior General addressed us and wished a fruitful stay in Manziana.



Third Age Group at Manziana with Br Ernesto (far left)

After a day for course orientation, we shared our journeys giving an account of who we were and also something about our apostolates. During the second week, we had guest speakers on Healthy Ageing for men religious. Brother Brendon Geary from Scotland spoke about Living Affectively in the elder years.



During the weekend, we had a day out to a place called Tarquinia to explore the Tuscan Civilization.

Entrance to a Tuscan Tomb



Ceramic Artwork outside the SGs rooms in the General House

On Thursday 5th October the Third Age Group visited the General House and we were given a tour of the place. There we met the Spanish Brothers who are currently doing a Third Age Course. For the coming week we will have the privilege of Br Emili Turu who will talk to us about the Interior Journey. On the weekend we will go to Subiaco where St. Benedict spent most of his life in a cave. Both of us remember you Brothers and Marist Lay in our prayers and request you to do the same.

Bro. Shanthi Liyanage

The International Bursars' Meeting in France

Being inspired by the characteristics of St. Marcellin Champagnat as a great economer I was able to actively participate and share my experiences at the International Bursars' meeting in France.



The opening theme of the programme was La 'Valla to L 'Hermitage. While experiencing the journey physically I was able to contemplate the spiritual journey as well.

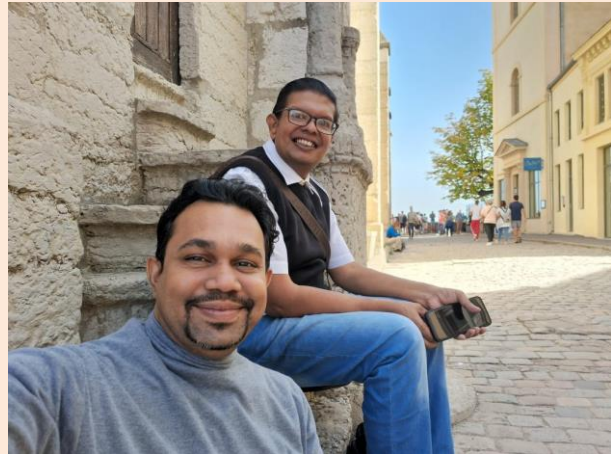
St Marcellin Champagnat's vision of sustainability of Life, Mission and Finance of the brothers were truly amazing.

As a leader his audacity, ability to free himself from sentimental attachment towards material things, vitality and viability to reach sustainability, thinking out of box and strategic planning were very attractive and many lessons to be learned.

The Following topics were discussed in detail throughout the sessions.

1. The importance of innovation
2. Adaptation to face challenges
3. Ensuring the sustainability of the institute through strategic and servant leadership
4. Collaboration of the Marist World
5. Strategic initiatives of the Econome General to achieve great efficiency at all levels of the Institute
6. Domus and other financial data gathering systems
7. Future challenges of the Institute at all levels.

I thank the Econome General and General Council for the arranging such a fruitful programme to help understand the current needs of the Institution.



Damith Mendis

From La Valla to Hermitage

We were sixty-eight gathered at the Hermitage France from 9th October to 15th October. The slogan was “from La Valla to Hermitage”. Bro. Ernesto Sánchez, SG could not come for the meeting as he was participating in the synod at Rome. Bro. Luis Carlos welcomes us and presented the main themes of the meeting namely. sustainability, leadership and innovation.



To establish instruments for the effective and efficient coordination of our potential and resources, at the service of Marist life and mission is define as sustainability. Our

leadership thoughts were to promote an open and trained servant leadership to address the emerging realities of our Institute and the world. innovation is described as to promote and share best innovative practices (networks, think tanks, exchanges, connections between Regions, etc.)

Then the meeting went on to reflect the spirituality [Marist coming from Champagnat] and economy. The session was led by Bro. Michael Green. There we were able to see Marcelline as an excellent manager and an entrepreneur who has characteristics such as

- High risk-appetite, but diligence and attention to details
- Approach to loans, funds-raising and creditors
- Tough negotiator
- Concern for welfare of brothers and students and quality education

In short five traits of Marcellin's management styles were

- Mission driven
- Audacious
- Diligent
- Collaborative
- People-focussed

A tour from La Valla to hermitage gave a fist hand experience of that beautiful and life-giving journey of our founder and first Marists.

Second day, animated by Bro. George our econom general. We concentrated on Viability and vitality of Life and Mission. As this topic unfolded there were four salutations that was discussed. They were

- sustainable mission where mission is very good and it has all the resources [human financial and spiritual]
- Strategic mission where mission is vital but the resources are less. Then the planning is very much need
- Static mission, this type of mission has all the resources possible but the mission is not focused or articulated properly.
- Non- sustainable Mission, this has no vital mission or the resources [human, financial and spiritual]

Third day the focus was on strategic and servant leadership. Reflections were led by Bro. Ben Consigli. He stated with a reflection by Pope Francis. "For leadership there is only one road: service. There is no other way. If you have many qualities, the ability to communicate, etc., but if you are not a servant, your leadership will fail, it is useless, it has not power to gather [people] together. Leadership must enter into service, but with a personal love for the people."-Pope Francis, 12 May 2014

Then Principles of Servant Leadership were dealt on. They were

- Listening - listen receptively to what is being said (and not said)
- Empathy - put yourself in the shoes of the other person

- Healing - desire to be compassionate
- Awareness - tune in to what is happening around you
- Persuasive - build consensus. Convince vs. coerce compliance
- Conceptualize – conceive a desirable vision, then lead in that direction.
- Foresight – Look into the future and anticipate the likely impact of current decisions
- Stewardship – acknowledge and care for God’s gifts
- Cultivate followers – help followers grow beyond their current skill levels
- Build community – create a deeper desire for belonging, a bond that goes beyond a traditional organization

Another interesting topic discussed during the session was the qualities of the strategic leader. There were three qualities

- Adept strategic leaders have cultivated a special skill set beyond the obvious ones being trustworthy, developing a strategic plan, and delegating often cited in business textbooks and blogs.
- Skills centered around emotional intelligence, the soft “people skills,” are the traits that allow strategic leaders to successfully adapt to an ever-changing economic and technological climate and remain forward-looking
- Passion, purpose, and conviction are what make strategic leaders “visionary.”

Bro. Luis Carlos was to be animator of the fourth day, but unfortunately his father was called to eternal rest and he had to leave the assembly. International finance commission members took the challenge to animate the day. They did a good job. The climax of the presentation is -Time to make... the path, the experience....to

- Touch and feel
- Discover subtleties
- Listening to voices
- Renewing the gaze
- Generate the new

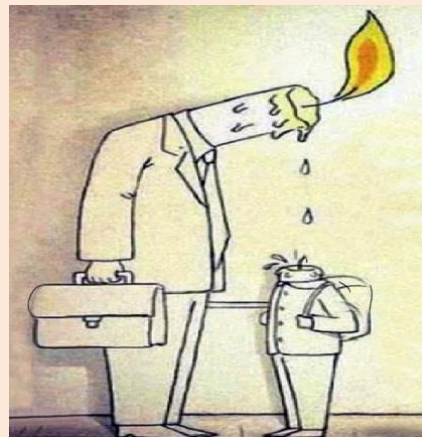


The following two day were given to share our province or district stories related to the bursar’s office at regional level. It is very life giving.

Bro. Chinthana Nonis

To Mark the World Teachers Day on 06th October The Candles

Candles have a miraculous power. They can not only dispel pitch darkness but also bring hope and happiness. One single candle in darkness can be seen from far and people in the darkness begin to be impressed and attracted. When the light of the candle is shared the light begins to grow and the darkness is diminished. Illuminating the lives of others is a blessing and a deep satisfaction. Genuine teachers are such candles that illuminate others selflessly and inspire their students to excel in life.



Light is divine. Illuminating others while melting the wax is a Divine Call. It is not at all a job that accumulates wealth but a service through which the learners are developed in all aspects of life and are energized not to walk abreast with the teachers but to go past them higher and higher. Genuine teachers do not feel jealous of their students but admire and inspire them. Such teachers see each student as their child, but not as a diagnosis; see their class as individuals, not as a drawer full of case files. Keep their sense of humour against all odds and deal with disappointed students, clueless subordinates, and pushy parents with grace and dignity. They are flexible and creative but know when to make a stand and when to choose their battles. They see parents as allies, but not as enemies. Effective and efficient teachers give nobody any doubts as to why they went into teaching. They love their job and earn due respect.

Preparing the students for future opportunities is a challenge. Harnessing curiosity and thirst for knowledge in them is a greater challenge. Genuine teachers challenge the challenge of maintaining a healthy rapport with students and maintaining team spirit with the staff. Those who make a difference become positive and change themselves. They don't do the same thing over and over again and expect different results. Such candles illuminate the students to be innovative and creative.

Students trust such teachers and come in search of light for life. Teachers' attitudes, approaches, and behaviour MUST NOT leave any room to disappoint the students. If the students lose faith, no one on earth can convince them again and no light can show them the way.

Pure candles do not let the students go through but grow through their school life. In this world of consumerism full of jealousies and hypocrisies, teachers need to produce 'Happy and Honest People' instead of 'Rich and Successful People.' If the students are happy and honest, they will make others happy. But if some are rich, they hardly need to make others rich. When there is a big gap between the rich and the poor, none of them would enjoy life. The rich would live in fear of being robbed and the poor would curse for their misery. So guide students to minimize the gap and enjoy the bliss of sharing and caring. Otherwise, either party would not enjoy life.

Teachers should not strive to produce prominent personalities only. They should make students understand that even if they become ordinary workers, they should work with a self-esteemed mentality for the good of the country. Teachers are responsible for

inculcating such attitudes in young minds. They should convince the students, 'When a street sweeper sweeps the street, he should sweep the way Michael Angelo painted, Beethoven composed and Shakespeare wrote. Then the host of angels in heaven will say, "Here is a great sweeper." The teachers must produce duty conscious nation and sensible human beings like the street sweeper not the armchair bureaucrats with numerous designations with mere lip service.



Ajith Perera

Ph.D. in Linguistics (USA) - University Lecturer

Marist Life in Asia-Oceania

It was a great opportunity for me to take part in the Formation Programme for Vacation Animators from 8 to 15 October 2023 held in the Philippines.

The Brothers were very friendly and I had a warm welcome. Soon I felt at home and comfortable, and was able to actively take part in the sessions.

Our respective Participants;

- The Marist District of Asia
- South Asia
- East Asia
- Star of the Sea

What we talked about;

- Formators at the service of life
- Asia and Oceania continents full of life
- Knowing the reality
- Caring for Marist life
- Generating Marist Life
- Identify Gen Z generation and how to work with them
- Sharing vocational promotion plans and sharing experiences

The Formation Programme was very educative and full of information helping me to carry out my bit of contribution of helping young people to find their vocation in the spirit and charisma of St. Champagnat.

I am as a Lay Marist and as the teacher in-charge of School Champagnat movement at Marist Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa was immensely inspired and have acquired a better understanding of becoming a committed and passionate vocation animator.



After the Formation Programme my approach towards the young boys with potential Marist vacation has been very lively and vibrant and full of vigour.

I also believe the expertise and the experiences that I was able to learn from the other participants have enlightened me to be more diligent and enthusiastic about focusing and finding the right candidate to carry out and continue the work of salvation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the spirit and charisma of St. Champagnat.



Niroshani Fernando
Lay Marist, MSC Thimbirigaskatuwa

Enriching Southern Sri Lanka Journey

A Tapestry of Shared Experiences Lay Marists, along with their family members, had their annual trip to southern parts of Sri Lanka from 29th to 30th September 2023. Brothers Nicholas, Sunanda, Sasmika, Sajith and new lay community members Mr. Sasanka, Ms. Gayathri, Ms. Wasana, Ms. Sawmya, Ms. Rukshani along with their families, took part in this journey. Altogether, there were 56 participants for the adventure.



Group spent almost half a day among the glorious spectacle of wildlife at Yala National Park. They also visited multi religious pilgrim site of Kataragama and the significant pilgrim site for Budhists, the Monastic settlement of Sithulpawwa. Here are few experiences shared by the participants;

Mrs. Wasana (new member): We had a great evening with everyone and enjoyed it immensely. Marist Lay unity was well seen. Children had the opportunity to learn a lot by visiting multi-cultural, multi religious temples. We hope to go on another trip like this in the future, as this was a memorable experience.



Ms. Thushari: Experienced the newness with new lay family members. We have identified each other's potentials and capabilities. Embraced the Marist spirit abundantly by sharing in a communal feast. Mr. Roy and Ms. Priyanthi: The trip was filled with many happy experiences, fun and a strong sense of brotherhood.

Bro. Nicholas: It was well organized, with the aim of enhancing fellowship and brotherhood. Everybody remained steadfast even in the face of some obstacles encountered during the journey. It was good for healthy community life enrichment.

Ms. Gayathri (new member): First of all, it was a great opportunity to step away from the usual responsibilities and spend time with the family and friends. The places we

visited, especially our time in nature, was exiting and relaxing. My family and I had the chance to get to know the other members of the lay group, as we were new to Lay Marist community. I believe that the time spent together strengthened the bond between all the members. It remains as a long-lasting positive experience in my memory.

Ms. Niroshani: Thank you for organizing such a wonderful journey. Happy to see new faces joining our Lay community. Everyone was so obliging, and shared the time with each other, which was so beautiful to see. Really enjoyed the songs sung along the way, the music, jokes and ideas shared as a team.



The annual trip to southern Sri Lanka in September 2023 brought together Lay Marist members and their families, creating a rich tapestry of experiences and memories. Amidst the wonders of Yala National Park, the spirituality of Kataragama, and the serenity of Sithulpawwa, participants forged new connections, strengthened bonds, and embraced the Marist spirit of fellowship. This journey will forever stand as a testament to the power of togetherness, shared adventures, and the enduring sense of community within the Lay Marist family.

Chalana Pragraratne

A Journey of Togetherness: Lay Marists Explore Yala National Park Amidst Challenges and Bonding

Azizah Al-Hibri once said, "The minute we become an integrated whole, we look through the same eyes and we see a whole different world together." These words resonate with the experience of our Lay Marist Community who embarked on a memorable journey to Yala National Park. This trip was not just about exploring the beauty of nature but also a testament to the power of unity and togetherness.

The Journey Begins

Amidst heavy rainfall and a sense of excitement, the group gathered at Maris Stella College, Negombo, with some members caught in the rain's downpour. The journey began around 1.30 AM, but the unforeseen challenges lay ahead.



As we entered the Galle highway road at Kerawalapitiya, an unexpected problem with the bus's air balloon arose. In the face of this adversity, the group turned the situation into a joyful birthday celebration of Mr. Mick. A new, more comfortable bus was eventually found, as if it were a part of a divine plan.

Exploring Yala National Park

With the rain having eased off, we set out into the Yala National Park around 8.30 AM. Our breakfast, enjoyed at a concrete shelter deep in the jungle, allowed us to escape another heavy downpour that started shortly after reaching there. The exploration continued, enchanted by the natural beauty and interrupted by human interventions now and then along the way.

Due to the park's gate closing at 12.00 PM, we began our journey back but were blessed with skilled drivers who ensured the best experience possible.

Kirivehera in Kataragama

After a quick break at the guest house, we ventured out to Kiriwehera in Kataragama, where we braved heavy rainfall to witness various religious activities. The atmosphere was filled with the fragrance of incense, music, and the devotion of the people, creating an enchanting experience.



Upon returning to the guest house, we all gathered for a fellowship that continued late into the night. The evening was filled with songs and a strong sense of togetherness. When all our tunes attuned to one another we felt togetherness and vibrations of our hearts that always kept us as one Marist family.



Sithulpawwa and Return

The following day, we set out for Sithulpawwa, where we had a unique encounter with a majestic elephant. I still remember the screaming and the excitements that filled the air in the bus. This unexpected visit from nature only added to the excitement and wonder of the trip.

The journey back to Negombo was marked by fun activities in the swimming and the delicious meal at a restaurant, a fitting conclusion to our memorable expedition.

Conclusion

This journey to Yala National Park was more than just a trip; it was an opportunity for our Lay Marist group to come together, connect with nature, and create lasting memories. The challenges faced along the way only strengthened our bond, and the experience was a testament to the power of unity and togetherness.

The Lay Marists express their gratitude to Rev. Bro. Nicholas, Rev. Bro. Sunada, Rev. Bro. Sashmika and Rev. Bro. Sujith who joined the trip and to Mr. Jude Preman who shouldered the great part of the organizing the trip and his team that supported him in various ways to make our trip memorable. It was, indeed, a journey to remember, one that deepened the sense of family among the Lay Marists.



As Azizah Al-Hibri's words suggest, through unity, we can look at the world with the same eyes and witness a different, more beautiful world together. This journey to Yala National Park was a perfect example of that unity and shared vision.

Madura Bulathsinghala

Owa Sililare Continues for the Seventh Time.

The Teacher's and Children's Day Celebration of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa, was held on the 13th Friday of October 2023 at the College premises. It was organized as a continuation of the Owa Sililare programme introduced by Master Deneth Manjula and his team in the year of 2016. Owa Sililare has been the main theme for the teacher's and children's day celebration of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa for over 7 years now. The theme was introduced to go parallel with the theme song composed by Mr. Hiru Amaraweera who was then a talented poet and lyricist who also happened to be a teacher of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa.

This time, following the footsteps, Owa Sililare continued for the seventh time. Introducing a new tradition the programme was started with a Holy Mass conducted by Rev. Father Herman under the purpose of giving that spiritual touch the Marist pillars promise us. After blessing the little Maristonians and the staff members it was then the programme came to its complete glory.

The teachers as usual after taking their portraits by the College Media Unit were accompanied to the open stage area where the event was held by the College Western Band. They were warmly welcomed by the students and to give the event a fresh start, a group of young vocalists staged the theme song "Owa Sililare". Ever since the composition of this song Owa Sililare has been able to touch the hearts of our teachers with it bearing the meaning that in their most gracious advises we would swim to the deepest of oceans and still be satisfied. Thereafter, to show the gratitude the students have for their teachers the Deputy Head Prefect of Maris Stella College, Master Praveen Adithya gave a heartwarming speech addressing all the teachers and thanking them for the wonderful 13 years of our lives. It was followed by a wonderful song by our beautiful teachers which the students adored, and in my point of view one of the most touching piece of this agenda was appreciating the non academic staff of our College. The cheer the students gave for them showed their true gratitude and awe they have for the beautiful souls who help us with our day to day activities.



Mr. Sampath Thamel emphasizing on the idea that students are wonderful creations gave a great speech addressing all of us. The event was short and sweet and lasted for not longer than two hours. It was concluded by Rev. Bro. Principal Mervyn Perera with his speech on what true Maristonianism looks like. The day was lit and meaningful and was a great day that made the teacher-student bond in Maris Stella College much stronger.



To give the event the final touches, 'Momentum' a College group of senior vocalists and instrument players entertained the Marist grounds with their rhythmic and energetic Melodies and it was further pastelized by Mr. Navodya Perera an Old boy of our college with his mesmerizing tones. The day came to an end in wonderful terms with the band concluding the whole event with their beautiful harmonies. Not only students but the members of the staff too mingling with their students danced to the melodious upbeats and I found it very fiery and something to rebuild some broken bonds.



All in all, Owa Sililare 2023 was a great success. The students, teachers and even the members of the non academic staff found it very touching and they enjoyed it in their own ways.



Thatsara Fernando

Grade 12 Science, Class C, Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa

In Memory of Marist Educationalists Scholarship Program

Maris Stella College OBA Colombo branch organizes each year a scholarship program for both the schools and this year the OBA gave ten deserving students cash donations to uplift their education.

The Award Ceremony was held at the MSC Negombo Assembly Hall with the participation of Principal MSC Bro. Sunanda Alwis and Vice Principal MSC



Thimbirigaskatuwa Bro Joseph. The President Mr. Shirely Jayakody together with the Exco members of the OBA Colombo branch with their spouses as well as the parents of the Scholarship holders participated in the program.

MSC Old Boys Project

The Athletics Championship

The Athletics Championship of the All-Island Schools Games continued at the Sugathadasa Stadium last week of October 2023. Thushen Silva in action in the Under 18 boys' pole vault. The Maris Stella College jumper established a new record.



All Island School Games



Maris Stella College Negombo's Maris Athletes outshone the competition at the All Island School Games, securing the ultimate title being Champions Of The Event.

We're overjoyed and grateful to our athletes for their dedication and passion. It's a historic moment for our school, and we're proud to be crowned the champions of the All Island School Games.

- ✚ Our school secured the Boys Champion title with a remarkable 90 points.
- ✚ Our Under 16 and Under 18 athletes dominated their categories.
- ✚ Our relay team displayed exceptional teamwork, earning the runner-up spot.
- ✚ Special recognition to Mas. Thushen Silva for setting a new pole vault record.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our remarkable athletes, the Master in Charge, the Prefect of Games, and our beloved Principal for their unwavering support and guidance in achieving this remarkable feat. Your dedication has brought honor to our school, and we thank you for your extraordinary contributions.



Media Unit MSC Negombo

DID YOU KNOW?

Things Queen Elizabeth II could do that no one else could

- i. Drive a car without a license and a license plate and have a private ATM.
- ii. Speed limits do not apply to the monarch when she's being officially escorted.
- iii. She has sovereign immunity, and therefore cannot be prosecuted. (avoid getting arrested)
- iv. The Queen can dismiss a prime minister. She can't vote or state her political opinions publicly.
- v. Open Parliament in the UK.
- vi. As sovereign, she's exempt from paying taxes, but she reportedly voluntarily pays taxes on income, assets, and gains that aren't used for official royal purposes.
- vii. Keep her finances private. The Queen and the royal household are exempt from the act and therefore aren't required to disclose any private matters, such as finances. Even so, the royals do disclose their use of public money each year.
- viii. Travel internationally without a passport.
- ix. Avoid jury duty.
- x. Celebrate two birthdays. Her real birthday is privately celebrated on April 21 and her royal birthday is marked on the second Saturday in June.
- xi. Go cashless - The only time the Queen leaves the castle with a few bills in her bag is on Sunday, so she can donate to the church.
- xii. Put her face on the currency in multiple countries. The Queen Elizabeth is pictured on the currency of 35 countries around the world. She was the only monarch to have her likeness on so many different countries' coins and bills and holds the Guinness World Record for most currencies featuring the same individual.
- xiii. Give out knighthoods. She can bestow a knighthood upon any citizen for their achievements or service to their country. The ceremony that takes place is called an investiture and is carried out by the Queen at Buckingham Palace.
- xiv. Decide when dinner ends. There's no time to waste when dining at Buckingham Palace. That's because, when the Queen is done with her dinner, the meal is over, according to royal etiquette.
- xv. Approve royal marriage proposals. The first six members of the royal family in line for the crown must have consent from the Queen to marry.
- xvi. Declare war. Remember those royal prerogatives? Well, the special powers bestowed upon the crown also say that the Queen can declare war and peace. She can also commit troops to an area of armed conflict.



Janith Jayamaha

Maris Stella College Negombo '73 Batch' - 50th Anniversary Celebrations

Our classmates who did G.C.E. O/L in 1973 ('73 Batch') at Maris Stella College Negombo celebrated their 50th Anniversary (Golden Jubilee) last Sunday (22.10.2023) in grand style commencing with the Thanksgiving Holy Mass at the College Chapel and thereafter fellowship at the hotel Suriya Resort Waikkala. Indeed, our batchmates are very proud of this event which is a remarkable achievement of togetherness and the continuation of the unity of

the fellow students of that era. As the Leader of the '73 Batch' I'm very proud of the enthusiasm and support extended to me in organizing these events by my classmates and friends in the same batch who are living in Sri Lanka and abroad.



The most notable and important thing is it is not that we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee this year, our batch has been continuously grandly celebrating this batch get-together from time to time and we have all the photographs and records with us. Also, we are very happy to mention that as per the records, this is the first time a Batch of MSC has celebrated a Golden Jubilee, thank you very much for your request for the details of this Golden Jubilee celebrations to be published in the Marist Newsletter for south Asia.

Nimal Fernando

'73 Batch' Leader Maris Stella College Negombo

"Rhythmic Celebrations at Maris Stella College Negombo For Teachers and Children Day"

On October 6th, the indoor auditorium of Maris Stella College Negombo came alive with the spirit of celebration as students and teachers joined hands to commemorate Teachers and Children's Day. The event was a grand success, marked by a series of captivating musical performances.



Students and teachers showcased their incredible musical talents, captivating the audience with their renditions of popular songs and melodious compositions. The air was filled with melody and rhythm, and the atmosphere was electric.

The highlight of the evening was a special performance by the renowned musical band "Millions." Joining them were two illustrious alumni of Maris Stella College, Navodya

Perera, a finalist from 'The Voice Teens Sri Lanka,' and Pramuk. The audience was mesmerized by their talent and cheered enthusiastically.

The musical extravaganza was thoroughly enjoyed by the students, making it a memorable celebration of both Teachers and Children's Day. It was a testament to the incredible talent nurtured at Maris Stella College Negombo, making the event a grand success.



Hamzah Faleel
MSC- Negombo

A New Experience Deserves Sharing!!!

At the invitation of Rev. Fr. Neville Coonghe, the Founder of Ladani Foundation in the Diocese of Chilaw, I shouldered the responsibility of teaching English to post-OL students in Mulativ in the district of Jaffna. It was a multiple challenge for me. The language barrier was on top of all as the students were non-Sinhala speakers and I am a non-Tamil speaker. Challenging the challenge is a greater challenge and I accepted this challenge for three weeks with good intentions.



I consulted a few professionals in this subject and their guidance was very supportive to facilitate the group of 20 girls, who were quite enthusiastic to learn English. The activity-based method was quite applicable and successful. Gradually the students became free in their expressions and there were many occasions full of laughter. That was another sign of learning. Indoor games, language games, and some lesson-based activities enhanced the quality of the teaching and learning process.



In addition, I had the opportunity to meet the war victims and a few youths who were LTTE members. They are quite positive in their attitudes and that's a great achievement.

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi

Called to Serve

It is a great vocation we receive in our childhood to be an altar server and it is true that all are not called to become an altar server. Remember the seed of most vocations are planted at the service of this sanctuary. Isn't it the first step of most religious and clergy?



An altar server attends to supporting tasks at the altar such as fetching and carrying, ringing the altar bell, helping bring up the gifts, and bringing up the liturgical books, among other activities. They carry incense and censer and present the bread and wine along with the water to the priest during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people. Servers assist in the washing of hands by the priest, and assist the priest and deacon as necessary.

TOP TEN REASONS TO BE AN ALTAR SERVER!

- 1) Opportunity to serve God
- 2) Become more involved in Parish Life
- 3) Grow in respect and understanding of the Mass
- 4) Make great friends
- 5) Strengthen your relationship with Jesus

- 6) Learn valuable life skills
- 7) Opportunity for leadership
- 8) Learn more about vocations
- 9) Opportunity to get to know our clergy and volunteers
- 10) Best seats in the house!



Br. Sujith Alwis took over the responsibility of the Association of Altar boys at Kalpitiya Parish recently. Since then, there is a vast growth of the altar boys both spiritually and enthusiasm. We wish Br. Sujith to form them as a team and respond to God's love through their voluntary service. According to Br. Sujith it is a faith building community that we are moulding the leadership and he is more aware that it allows them to become the messengers of God's love for those who are away from the Church. We wish Br. Sujith to be a blessing for the people at Kalpitiya.

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi

Celebrating an Exceptional Achievement: Maris Orchestra Shines in National Level Competition.



In the ever-evolving landscape of musical excellence, it is our great pleasure to spotlight the remarkable achievement of the Orchestra of our college, in the recently concluded National Level Group Playing Competition (Senior) organized by the Ministry of Education for the academic year 2023, which was held on 7th of October 2023 at Royal College, Colombo.

In a fierce and highly competitive environment, The Orchestra of our college was able to give away an exceptional performance. We congratulate the members of the Orchestra on this remarkable achievement and look forward to more students following in his footsteps. It is through such accomplishments that we continue to uphold our commitment to academic excellence and growth.

This achievement wouldn't have been possible without the guidance and unwavering support of Mr. Hemantha Liyanapathirana, Master in Charge of the Orchestra of our college for his dedication to our students' success and for helping them achieve their full potential.



Stefan Raveen De Rose

A Budding Artist of MSC Negombo wins National Award

In the world of art, the canvas becomes a stage for creativity, expression, and imagination. It is with immense pride and excitement that we announce the outstanding achievements of three talented artists of our college, Mas. Hiruna Cooray, Mas. Hasaral Fernando and Mas. Dishantha Chamuditha, who brought home honors from the Art Competition organized by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Buddga Sasana Religious and Cultural Affairs for the year 2022 and the Award Ceremony of the competition was held at the Maharagama Youth Service Council with the presence of the minister of Cultural Affairs and many other artists in a grand manner.

The competition, which attracted artists from all corners of our island, is renowned for its high standards and rigorous judging. However, our young Maris talents demonstrated their mettle and left a significant mark.

These students' achievements would not have been possible without the guidance and mentorship of the dedicated staff of our college. A special thanks goes to all the art teachers, Rev. Bro. Principal, Vice Principals, Sectional heads and all the supported teachers of our college for their commitment to nurturing artistic talent and inspiring creativity has played a vital role in



our students' success. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their unwavering support and guidance.

Congratulations to these remarkable young talented artists for their well-deserved honors, and a heartfelt thank you to Mr. Chamara Edirisuriya for his dedication to nurturing the next generation of artistic talents.

Stefan Raveen De Rose

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.)

'Early to bed and early to rise' and leaves home in the dark and returns home in darkness. I used to travel early in the morning to work. It was a hop step, and jump for her to the Chilaw Negombo road, and the bus stop and she was waiting for a bus alone in the darkness. I have witnessed this many a time and I have seen her returning home late in the evening. She made such a sacrifice not for a day or two or a year or two, she did it for 42 years for the development of Maris Stella College, Negombo, and for the well-being of a massive crowd of students.

Ms. Calista Lowe, an old girl of the Holy Family Convent Marawila, joined the academic staff of Maris Stella College, Negombo in 1980. She was a teacher at the primary school in the main school for 22 years. In recognition of her valuable services to the College, she was promoted to the post of Primary Principal in 2002 and was the first ever laity to hold this position. She not only engaged in classroom activities but also in extra-curricular activities. She was the teacher in charge of scouts from 1980 to 2005. Under the guidance of the late Bro. Joseph Fonseka, the Primary Principal who was a scout himself, began her new mission.

She retired from the government service (the main school) in the year 2008 but continued her services at Maris Stella College at Thimbirigaskatuwa at the invitation of the Brothers. She was appointed a Sectional Head at the beginning and later was promoted to the post of Primary Principal in 2014. She shouldered all the responsibilities in her capacity until she left the College in 2021. Undoubtedly she rendered a yeoman service to both Colleges. She served both Colleges in various assignments namely religious committee, Champagnat club, Champagnat Vidu Piyasa (afternoon school for deserving children), and a member of the Marist Lay Association. After retirement from formal duties, one should be engaged in some kind of activity that keeps the person moving. She has chosen to serve the poor in her village. She is an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Joseph's Church, Wennappuwa, her parish church.

"I enjoyed my life at Maris Stella College where I feel at home. The experiences I gathered at the Colleges are invaluable. I had the privilege of working with several

Brothers and teachers and maintained very cordial relations with them all. We were a family. It was a privilege to have taught a large number of students and served Maris Stella College. I love Maris Stella College.”

May the Good Lord grant her peace, happiness, and good health!

Ajith Perera

Ph.D. in Linguistics at European Continental University USA – University Lecturer

A Night to Remember...

The event took place at the Ave Maria Auditorium, Negombo on the 21st of October 2023. The evening was starred by Kasun Kalhara, Raini Charuka Goonatillake and Navodya Perera along with the legendary Naada band.

This amazing event was organized by the Welfare Association - Maris Stella College, Negombo & Thimbirigaskatuwa to raise funds in this year.

We would like to thank everyone who gave their support to make our fundraising project a success. We really appreciate all the help you gave us.

Thank you..!!



Organizing Committee,
Welfare Association - Maris Stella College, Negombo & Thimbirigaskatuwa

Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa Celebrates 5th Prefects Induction with a Focus on Maris Values



Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa celebrated its 5th Prefects Induction on September 27, 2023, with great enthusiasm and a commitment to instill Maris values in its student leaders. The event, held on the school grounds, featured Rev. Bro Sunanda Alwis as the esteemed chief guest.

The highlight of the ceremony was the appointment of the new student leadership team. Master Malith Nirmal was named the Head Prefect, while the roles of Deputy Head Prefects were bestowed upon Master Lasith Beeshan and Master Praveen Adithya. These young leaders will play a crucial role in guiding the school through the upcoming academic year.

The theme of this year's induction ceremony revolved around the concept of leading the school by embracing and embodying the Maris values. These values are central to the school's ethos and include principles such as integrity, empathy, and responsibility. The school administration and staff emphasized the importance of these values as a compass for the newly appointed prefects in their leadership roles.

Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa has a long-standing tradition of nurturing well-rounded individuals who excel not only in academics but also in character and leadership. The Prefects Induction is a significant event in the school's calendar, marking the official beginning of the student leaders' tenure and their dedication to upholding the school's values.

The ceremony was attended by students, teachers, parents, and well-wishers who came together to support the newly appointed prefects and to celebrate the school's commitment to fostering a nurturing environment for its students. The event ended with a sense of optimism and excitement about the academic year ahead, as these young leaders embark on their journey of service and responsibility.



Romain Perera
Teacher, MSC Thimbirigaskatuwa

Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa Celebrates Teachers' and Children's Day with Joy and Meaning

Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa came alive with enthusiasm and appreciation on October 13, 2023, as it celebrated Teachers' and Children's Day. The day was marked by a series of heartwarming activities that left a lasting impact on both educators and students.

The celebrations commenced with a special Holy Mass, setting a spiritual and reflective tone for the day. Following this, the school witnessed a series of inspirational speeches delivered by both teachers and students. These speeches served as a platform for the school community to express their gratitude and admiration for the invaluable contributions of educators.



Variety entertainment was a highlight of the event, showcasing the diverse talents of the students. The performances, ranging from music and dance to drama, left the audience spellbound, reflecting the creative spirit and vibrancy of the school.

In a gesture of gratitude, the teachers were presented with tokens of appreciation, recognizing their tireless efforts in shaping the future of the students. These tokens served as a reminder of the profound impact educators have on the lives of their students.



On Children's Day, the students were treated to a delightful surprise – ice cream and a pen as gifts. This gesture added a touch of sweetness and thoughtfulness to the day, creating smiles and lasting memories.

The day also featured a remarkable musical performance, with students showcasing their talents in a musical show. To make the celebration even more special, the school welcomed Mr. Navodya Perera as a guest artist, who added his own unique flair to the festivities.

The combined celebration of Teachers' and Children's Day at Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa was a meaningful and heartwarming occasion that brought the school community together in a spirit of appreciation and unity. It served as a reminder of the deep bonds between teachers and students and the significance of education in shaping young minds.

This special day left an indelible mark on the hearts of all those who attended, and it will be cherished as a memory of gratitude and togetherness in the Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa community.

Romain Perera
Teacher, MSC Thimbirigaskatuwa

Maris Karate Legacy



of the team Mr. Charka Fernando.

In the history of Maris Karate legacy and of all the victories of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa has achieved from other sports, for the very first time the Karate team of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa has won the championship in all island school games 2023 - Karate which has held on the 7th, the 8th and the 9th of October 2023 at indoor stadium of Galle, Dadella.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the trainer

And the achievements scored by the players areas follows.

Mishal Fernando(vice-captain) - Gold medal for Under 20 Kata individual event

Rishitha Akish - Gold medal for under 18(-47kg) Kumite individual event

Romesh Anthoniyo - Silver Medal for under 18(-61kg) Kumite individual event

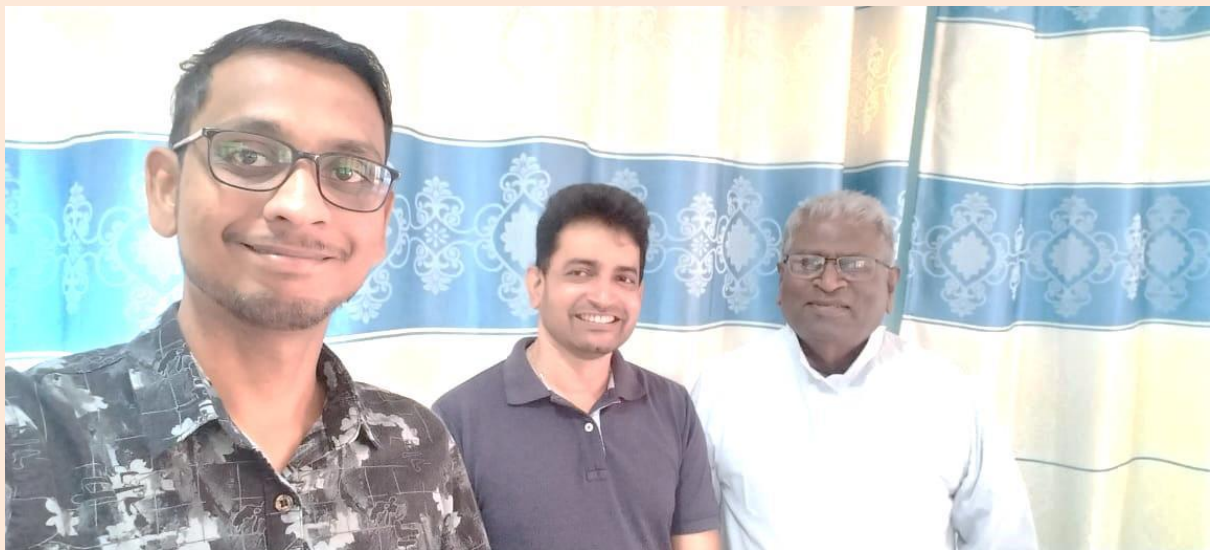
Team Kata bronze medal - Jathya Nethmina(Captain)
- Mishal Fernando(Vice Captain)
- Romesh Anthoniyo



Ruchira Sumal
MIC, Thimbirigaskatuwa

Preparation for the Final Vows

Last September Bro. Dulaj and I went on a 10 days contemplative retreat at Gana VaZhi Niwasa in Jaffna. It was animated by Rev. Fr. M. Selvarathnam (O.M.I)



After the retreat, we were guided by Father Selvam to prepare for our final profession. It was more than three weeks and was a very fruitful period for us.

Bro. Pradeep Kumara

Shakespeare Drama Competition

Participating in the 48th Shakespeare drama competition, hosted by the Rotary Club North and YMCA, was truly a transformative journey. We performed a piece from Macbeth, which required us to put in countless hours and make significant personal sacrifices.



Throughout this challenging yet rewarding experience, we had a remarkable support system. Miss Nirmala Wijedasa, our devoted teacher, went above and beyond in taking care of us. Our director, Harshana Rathnayake, who meticulously crafted our production. Director Delon Weeransinghe, who helped refine our performance further. Mrs. Devni Rajaratne who played a crucial role in enhancing our vocal performances. And Mas. Sheran Costa who contributed significantly to make our drama a success.



Behind the scenes, there were many unsung heroes who played pivotal roles in our production. And I truly appreciate their efforts on behalf of myself and our team.

However, our journey was not without its challenges. Of course, we faced some challenges along the way. Sometimes our performance didn't go as well as we wanted, and people would point out our mistakes. It was tough, but we used those moments to become better.



Though we didn't make it to the finals, the experience was priceless. Our cast turned into a tight-knit family. We rehearsed for long hours, stood by each other through thick and thin, and shared both the joys and challenges. This connection was difficult to express in words, but it was incredibly special. We learned not only our lines but also the value of teamwork. Our collective experiences and shared dreams left an indelible mark on our hearts and souls, making our journey in the Shakespeare drama competition an unforgettable and heartwarming experience.

Don Shamika Dinal Jayamanne

Marist Pre-Postulancy Program.



Warnakulasuriya Kasun Primal is the latest recruit to pre-postulancy at Negombo. This young man 26 years old hails from Dunakkadiniya Velipenna gagamulla. Before joining us he had been working as a shop assistant and then later as the manager of electrical goods retail shop in his area. He has a younger brother and his mother at home. He has lost his father in 2010. He had been an active member of the daham Pasala in his parish. He has started a short course in English and Brother Noel brother Godfrey, Brother Clinton and Brother Remigius.

Kasun has got true his A/L exam in arts subject, once he improves his English language knowledge, hopefully from January 2024, he would be able to start the formal Postulancy program with a couple of young boys expected to join us by next year.

Bro. Noel Fonseka

The Newer 'ME'

At each new dawn
I find a choice, a canvas, a chance
Embracing growth,
A lifelong dance.

With every circumstance, I advance
Find meaning in a brand-new romance.
Seeing life as it is now,
Living each moment becomes a vow.

I embark on a journey,
And I know I need not hurry,
Each step counts, I shed my worry,
My vision's clear, I go slowly.

The power within beckons me to see,
Endless possibilities, wild n free.
The challenge, though seems tough,
I'll stay strong, I've had enough.

I want to celebrate the ever-evolving me.
Accept the change, set my spirit free.
In the newness of self, I find my way.
With hope and courage, I greet the day.

Life's vivid colours and shades of grey,
Guide my heart, come what may.
In the journey of each passing day,
I'll find my path, never to be led astray.

Leaving behind the old me
Shedding off the masks,
That threatened me.
I embrace the newer 'me'
To be forever free.



**Bro. Chamara
Hettiarachchi**



Photo of the Month

The Marist Brother is synonymous with an all-rounder not only in the field of education but in the play field also.

