



Year **XVI** - Number **810** | **6 DECEMBER 2023**

MARISTNEWS

MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT | GENERAL HOUSE | ROME | WWW.CHAMPAGNAT.ORG

MARIST SYMPOSIUM SOURCES AND STREAMS



About 100 participants, lay and consecrated Marists, are taking part in the Marist Symposium, which takes place at the General House, December 4-8. It is 5 days of academic conferences on different themes of the Marist Spiritual and Historical Patrimony: spirituality, education, formation, leadership and, in general, on the Marist mission and life. All the information is available on the Institute's web page. A special issue of Marist News dedicated to this event will be published soon.

general administration

■ The Symposium on Marist Spiritual Patrimony takes place from December 4-9. Brothers Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General; Luis Carlos, Vicar General; Ángel Medina and Lindley Sionosa, from the Secretariat of Brothers Today, João Carlos do Prado, General Councilor and other members of the General Administration participate.

■ On December 4, Brothers Ben Consigli and Josep Maria Soteras, General Councilors, concluded their visit to the Star of the Sea Province. From November 30 to December 4 they visited Kiribati. They will return to Rome on December 7.

■ From December 4 to 5, the FMSI Board Meeting was held at the General House. FMSI Director General Andrea Rossi, General Councilor Br. Ken McDonald, General Councilor, and members of the Board of Directors participated in the meeting.

■ Br. Ángel Diego García Otaola, Director of the Solidarity Secretariat, visited Santiago, Chile, to meet with members of the solidarity area, Marist communities, the Gesta Foundation and Marist schools. From December 8 to 13, he will be in Uruguay. Likewise, on December 4, 5 and 7, he held different virtual work meetings with groups of Ecology, Education in/for Solidarity, Social Works, Children's Rights, and NGOs/Foundations.

■ On December 7, Br. Valdicer Fachi, director of CMI, will visit the Fratelli Project in Maicao, Colombia.

■ On December 9, Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, begins his participation in the Provincial Assembly of Brasil Centro-Sul, in Aparecida, Brazil, which ends on December 13.

MADAGASCAR

MARIST SCHOOLS CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY

The Marist schools of Madagascar, which have over 10,000 students in seven schools, took advantage of the celebration of International Children's Day to reaffirm their commitment to children's rights, and to encourage them to become agents of change in their society. It was also an invitation to all adults – parents, teachers, politicians, religious leaders and the media – to listen to children's voices, respect their rights, and support them in their development. On 20th November, the Marist Schools of Madagascar organized various activities and initiatives to raise awareness of children's rights among their students. These included drawings and texts that reflect the children's vision and aspirations, as well as the challenges and difficulties they encounter in their daily lives. Some expressed their desire to live in a fairer, more peaceful world, more respectful of the environment and diversity. Others denounced the violence, discrimination, poverty, hunger, disease, and war that threaten their rights and their future. It's like an invitation to defend their rights and those of other children. In addition to the drawings and texts, sports and cultural activities to celebrate International Children's Day were also



proposed. Children took part in team games, soccer, basketball and volleyball matches, and more. These activities helped develop team spirit, fair play, cooperation, and joy of living. These activities also fostered the integration of children from different origins, cultures, religions, and languages. Children also had the opportunity to present cultural performances, such as dances, songs, poems, tales and more. They expressed the children's feelings, hopes and dreams. In this way, they helped to strengthen the pupils' sense of identity, belonging and creativity.

RWANDA

TWELVE NOVICES BEGIN NOVITIATE IN SAVE

On November 21, during the Eucharistic celebration of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary, the community of the international novitiate in Save, Rwanda, officially welcomed twelve novices: 3 from the Province of Madagascar and 9 from the Province of East Central Africa (5 from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 3 from the Central African Republic and 1 from Rwanda).

The young men who are embracing Marist consecrated life arrived at the novitiate in September 2023, after two years of formation in the postulancy in Mwanza, Tanzania, and Finaranantsoa, Madagascar. They joined ten other novices (2 from the Province of Madagascar and 8 from the Province of East Central Africa) who are continuing their formation in their second year of novitiate.



The novices are accompanied by four formators: Br. Théogène Kabalisa (Rwanda), Br. Louis de Gonzague Karambizi (Rwanda), Br. Jean Luc Randriatahina (Madagascar) and Br. Fabien Bulaimu Poyo (Master of Novices, Democratic Republic of Congo).

MARIST FOUNDATION FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

FMSI, CCIG AND MARIST BROTHERS SUBMIT A REPORT FOR THE UPR ON SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH

In March 2023, FMSI (Marist Foundation for International Solidarity) and the CCIG (International Catholic Centre of Geneva), with the support of the Marist Brothers Trust Bangladesh, submitted a report for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Bangladesh on “Human Rights in Bangladesh: the situation of children and their families in the tea gardens of Sylhet.”

On November 13th, during the 44th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the review of Bangladesh took place. One hundred ten delegations made statements, addressing issues such as eradicating child labor and forced child marriage, as well as promoting the right to education for children in the country.

The UPR report submitted by FMSI, CCIG, and the Marist Brothers Trust Bangladesh shines a spotlight on the dire situation faced by children and their families in the tea gardens of Sylhet, Bangladesh. It is essential for all stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and the international community, to work towards resolving the pressing issues outlined in the report.

The rights of these children are non-negotiable, and their well-being should be a priority. Through concerted efforts and a shared commitment to ensuring their rights and providing opportunities for growth and development, we can work towards a brighter future for the tea garden children of Sylhet.

Situation of children in Bangladesh

While Bangladesh is making significant strides in several areas, it's crucial to acknowledge the persistent challenges faced by the most vulnerable members of its population. In the tea gardens of Sylhet, the situation for children and their families is particularly dire.

As a State-driven review on human rights taking place within the United Nations, the UPR offers an opportunity to shed light on the harsh realities they face and the critical areas that demand immediate attention.

1. Corporal Punishment

Children in the tea gardens of Sylhet often find themselves caught in a cycle of violence, with corporal punishment being a common and disturbingly normalized practice. These young souls endure physical abuse, affecting their overall well-being and mental health. The UPR report underscores the urgent need for stricter enforcement of laws prohibiting corporal punishment to protect the rights of these children.



2. Child Labor

The economic situation of families in the tea gardens paints a bleak picture. Parents earn meager wages, with many struggling to make even \$2 a day. To make ends meet, many parents resort to taking their children to work in the tea gardens. The statistics reveal a grim reality: a staggering 29.8% of tea-garden children aged 5-17 are involved in child labor in Habiganj, 15.6% in Moulvibazar, and 19.3% in Sylhet, well above the national average of 6.8%. These children become a substitute for or an addition to a family member's income, perpetuating a vicious cycle of child labor.

3. Forced Child Marriages

In the tea gardens, forced child marriages are not uncommon. Girls, in particular, are vulnerable to this grave violation of their rights. Early marriages not only rob them of their childhood but also deny them the opportunity for personal growth and development. It is essential to address this issue to secure a brighter future for tea-garden children.

4. Access to Quality Education

One of the fundamental rights of any child is the right to education. However, the average span of schooling in the tea garden areas is shockingly low at 2.9 years, compared to the national average of 6.2 years. This statistic highlights the pressing need for improved access to quality education in the tea gardens. The high dropout rate further underscores the urgency of addressing this issue, as these children deserve the chance to break free from the cycle of poverty.

MARIST GLOBAL NETWORK OF SCHOOLS

CHAMPAGNAT GLOBAL-MEXICO 2022. THE RICHNESS OF MEETING EACH OTHER



One year after the first in-person meeting of members of the Marist Global Network of Schools CHAMPAGNAT GLOBAL, held from November 28 to December 6, 2022 in Mexico City, some achievements are now observed. See on the network's itinerary document the sequence of activities and the conclusions that emerged from each of the dynamics carried out are presented.

The Mexico 2022 meeting was transcendental for the network because it mainly made it possible:

- The talk on prophetic networks at the service of the mission, given by Father Daniel Villanueva, is a reference when it comes to understanding the value of walking together in a network. The conference provides extremely valuable contributions that are well worth spending some time reflecting on.
- A personal rapprochement of the participants that fostered

knowledge and affection among them and that has been vital to generate later synergies and collaborations. It also made it possible to integrate and adhere to a global project that has been created collaboratively but which is made up of administrative units and regions with very different realities. Thanks to this integration, initiatives as a network are becoming more common.

- Outlining the guidelines that have made it possible to define the roadmap to be followed in Champagnat Global in the next stage: 2023-2025.
- There is no doubt that the meeting in Mexico has been of great benefit to Champagnat Global and as a consequence we are reaping the rewards. Creating a network culture is a process that requires time, perseverance and patience, but these moments of face-to-face meetings are fundamental to motivate, encourage and promote the projects.

marist world

NICARAGUA: MARIST INSTITUTE FR. ANDRÉS WELLER KOLBE



CHILE: DIPLOMA IN CHARISMATIC MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP FROM THE MARIST EDUCATORS' FORMATION SCHOOL



COLOMBIA: YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM PASTO, LAY MARISTS



BRAZIL: BR. ÓSCAR MARTÍN, GENERAL COUNCILOR, VISITS THE BRASIL SUL-AMAZÔNIA PROVINCE



KIRIBATI: BROTHERS BEN CONSIGLI AND JOSEP MARIA SOTERAS VISIT THE STAR OF THE SEA PROVINCE



MEXICO: MARISTIZATION COURSE IN GUADALAJARA

COLOMBIA

MEETING OF THE INSTITUTE'S LEGAL STRUCTURES IN BOGOTÁ

From November 19-22, Bogotá, Colombia, was the venue for the Meeting of the Institute's juridical structures, bringing together the 10 members of the juridical entities Gier and Fraters, who were accompanied by Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General.

The purpose of the juridical structures is to support the administrative units in the different situations of governance, leadership, management and sustainability, in addition to paying special attention to the new processes that are emerging and to the contexts that present greater difficulties for the development of the mission, in such a way that the administrative management can be strengthened in line with the Marist charism.

The participants in the meeting were: Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General; Brother Jorge Gaio, Ecône General; Brother Goyo Linacero, General Administration; Brother Xavi Gine, Hermitage Province; Brother Robert Thunus, West Central Europe; Brother Brian Poulin, United States; Brother Patrick McNamara, General House; Brother Juan Miguel Anaya, Mediterranea Province; Brother Libardo Garzón,



Norandina Province; June Cruz, Brasil Centro-Sul; Jorge Barba, México Central.

In November, the General Council approved the constitutions and statutes of the Corporation "GIER International" and the Association "Fraters Maristen Internationaal" (Marist Brothers International).

CHILE

SECRETARIAT OF LAITY OF THE INSTITUTE MEETS IN SANTIAGO

The members of the Secretariat of Laity of the Institute, together with Brother João Carlos do Prado, General Councilor, met in Santiago de Chile from November 19 to 23.

Among the main objectives of the meeting are the report on the six years of management of the director of the Secretariat, Raúl Amaya, who will end his term on December 31; reflect on the key concepts of lay processes worldwide; evaluate Phase 4 of the Forum on Lay Marist Vocation, and plan actions for the period 2024-2025.

The participants began their arrival on Saturday, November 18. On Sunday the 19th, the activities began with a time of retreat and prayer, followed by sharing the Eucharist. In the afternoon, Raúl Amaya reported on his management and the meeting of the "Forum Team: Phase 4" was prepared.

On Monday, work began on reflection on key concepts of lay processes, and updating the situation of the laity in the regions and administrative units that make up the Marist Institute. After sharing lunch, new methods of organization were proposed, and practical aspects of the Secretariat's operation were reviewed. The day ended with a dinner shared with the lay community "La Mesa" and a dialogue about their experience of the lay vocation. Tuesday's agenda began early in the morning with the meeting of the "Lay Forum" Team and the General Council virtually. Continuing the day, the Calendar for 2024-2025 was presented.



With the objective of sharing fraternity, the members of the Secretariat went to the Grajales Community, in the center of Santiago, to share lunch with the Brothers. In the afternoon, a visit was made to the Marist Animation House of the Chile Sector, of the Santa María de los Andes Province, where they were

able to share with the members of the local Animation Groups. Participating in the meeting Raúl Amaya, director of the Secretariat until December 31 (Santa María de los Andes); Mark O'Farrell, associate director (Star of the Sea); Manu Gómez, deputy director, and director as of January 1 (Mediterranea); Ana Saborío, deputy director as of January 1 (Central America); and Brother João Carlos do Prado, of the General Council. The Secretariat thanks all those who made the meeting possible for their valuable contribution and commitment to promoting the Lay Marist Vocation.

Participating in the meeting Raúl Amaya, director of the Secretariat until December 31 (Santa María de los Andes); Mark O'Farrell, assistant director (Star of the Sea); Manu Gómez, assistant director, and director from January 1 (Mediterranea); Ana Saborío, assistant director from January 1 (Central America); and Br João Carlos do Prado, from the General Council. The Secretariat thanks all those who made the meeting possible for their valuable contribution and commitment to promoting the Lay Marist Vocation.

OTHER MARIST VOICES 21 & 22

LEADERSHIP AND CARE / HORIZONTAL LISTENING

The publication of "Other Marist Voices" continues, messages inspired by the book "Marist Voices" related to the development of servant and prophetic leadership in the Marist mission.

Other Marist Voices 21 was written by Br. Iñigo García Blanco, Community and socio-educational animator, from the Province of Ibérica – Spain, who addresses the theme "Leadership and CARE" (English | Español | Français | Português) – Video. The message refers to chapter 12 of Marist Voices (How Many Loaves do You Have?), written by Br. Hipólito Pérez.

Other Marist Voices 22 was written by Pablo and Laura, Missionary couple, from the Province of América Central – Cuba, who addresses the theme "Listening: the basic verb of leadership / Leadership and horizontal listening" (English | Español | Français



| Português) – Video. The message refers to chapter 8 of Marist Voices (A Listening Leadership), written by Br. Norbert Mwila.

MÉXICO OCCIDENTAL

The collaborators of the different works of the Marist Province held the second stage of the “Maristization” course in Guadalajara from December 1 to 3. In a commitment to mission, spirituality and Marist fraternity, the participants carried out activities in which they deepened their vocational journey.

EUROPE REGION

From November 27 to December 1, the first of two weeks of formation for directors and coordinators of social works in Marist Europe was held in Xaudaró, Madrid. There were participants from 5 countries, from all the provinces of the Region.

CAMBODIA

Last Friday, the LaValla Project community greeted students and staff from St John's College, Woodlawn (Australia), who shared much of the last week with the community. As part of their school immersion, the Marist students assisted the site staff, spent time with each class and played games with the LaValla students.

AMÉRICA SUR REGION

Members of the Coordinating Team of the Network of Marist Memory Centers of the South America Region made a research visit to the General Archives from November 29 to December 1. The representatives of the Patrimony Area of the Provinces of Cruz del Sur, Brasil Centro Norte and Santa María de los Andes were able to review original documentation on Marcellin Champagnat and also on the origins of their Administrative Units.

DECEMBER 5

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING DAY

International Volunteering Day, instituted by the UN in 1985, is commemorated internationally on December 5.

It is a day to recognize volunteers and promote the spirit of volunteering at local, national, and international levels, with the aim of making the spirit of solidarity, peace, and development present throughout the world.

For this year's International Volunteering Day, according to the United Nations, recognizes the power of collective action: if everyone volunteered, the world would be a better place. If everyone did it...

“Volunteering is a tremendous renewable resource for solving social, educational, economic and environmental problems around the world. As the world faces growing challenges, volunteers are often the first to help. Volunteers are at the forefront in crises and emergencies, often in very difficult and urgent situations”.

We wish to thank all the volunteers who donate their time, energies, skills, and abilities to help and be of service to others in different and multiple areas: education for all, a clean environment

and good health, inclusive and peaceful societies, and much more.

Thank you because as Marist Volunteers you offer, with openness and simplicity, your availability at the local or global level, beyond geographical or provincial boundaries; you recognize that the world is continually changing and you face today's challenges; you abandon the culture of “ego” and promote the culture of “echoes”, you try to placate the scandal of indifference and social inequalities; you are agents of change, bridge builders, messengers of peace, you strive to transform life and our environment; you are not afraid to take risks to reach out to the peripheries, in defence of the poorest and most vulnerable.

Thank you Volunteer for your commitment, for your actions and initiatives of educational, social and community interest, which are carried out in a collaborative and selfless way. Thank you for your donated life that comes from the heart and a service of solidarity that respects the rights and collaborates in the empowerment and inclusion of so many children and young people.

GENERAL HOUSE

PROGRAM FOR ACCOMPANYING OLDER BROTHERS ENDS

From November 6 to 29, 2023, the first course in the Institute on the theme of Accompanying Older Brothers was held at the General House, coordinated by the Institute's ongoing formation team, made up of Brothers Ataíde José de Lima (Brasil Centro-Norte), Xavier Barceló (L'Hermitage) and Michael Sexton (Star of the Sea).

The following Brothers took part in the course:

Dickson Auxensio Sion (África Austral), Adolfo Cermeño Giraldo (América Central), Joaci Pinheiro de Sousa (Brasil Centro-Norte), Jarbas Rodrigues de Sousa (Brasil Centro-Norte), Otalivio Sarturi (Brasil Centro-Sul), Solano Bageston de Lima (Brasil Sul-Amazônia), José Luis Marijuán Venero (Compostela), Alberto García Rodríguez (Compostela), Carlos García Zamora (Ibérica), Ambrosio Alonso Díez (Ibérica),

Antonio Torrelles Juvillà (L'Hermitage), Simeó Camprubí (L'Hermitage), Juan Antonio Úsar Echarrí (Mediterránea), Carlos Guillermo Perales López (México Occidental), Eduardo Navarro de la Torre (México Occidental), Ángel Valle González (Norandina), Juan Pablo Gaviria Chindoy (Norandina), Kevin Wanden (Star of the Sea) e Stephen Milan (USA).



Program

In the first week, Pedro Jesús Arenas developed the theme of "integral care of the elderly person", emphasizing that the accompaniment of a Brother, developed by a team, requires technical, relational, emotional, spiritual, ethical and cultural skills.

In the second week, José Cristo Rey, a Claretian priest, developed the theme of "longevity and extra time, with the implications for a healthy religious life". And Brother Landelino Ortego (Norandina), on the last two days, presented the theme of the spirituality of the elderly Brother.

In the third week, Mrs. Vicky Irigaray presented the theme of "personal and community spiritual accompaniment", while Brother Michael Green (Star of the Sea) developed the theme of "accompanying older brothers from Marist origins".

Over the last two days, Brother Joe McKee (West Central Europe) helped the group to reflect on the "care of the caregiver", where he pointed out that contemporary culture tends

to emphasize doing, to the detriment of being. Caring for an elderly brother presupposes that, starting from a personal life project, one is able to take care of oneself.

There were also two Marist workshops. In the first, Brother Óscar Vicario, General Councillor, emphasized that the Marist vocation is a vocation to care for the lives of children and young people. It is up to the Brother in old age, when he no longer has many apostolic activities, to take care of his vocation, his health, nature, those who live with him and those who visit him. Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, based on his letter *Homes of Light*, invited us to take care of life and to cultivate a new life. He recalled that Mary, thanks to her free heart full of God's warmth, was able to welcome divine newness. He believes that the rebirth of the Institute and its future has a lot to do with the concrete commitment of each person to take seriously the cultivation of interior and spiritual life.

Two other workshops were given by Brother Dairon Menezes, a member of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, and Sister Maite Pablo, a Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa.

UISG - USG

BR. ERNESTO SÁNCHEZ PARTICIPATES IN THE JOINT MEETING ON SYNODALITY



In many areas, it is important to move soon to get closer to the current generations and promote evangelical values,” mentioned Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, during the joint meeting of the unions of superiors general (USG and UISG), held in Sacrofano (Rome), from November 22 to 24, with the theme “Synodality: A Renewed Call to the Prophecy of Hope.” The event had the participation of more than 250 Superiors and General Superiors.

Some delegates of the Superiors General who participated in the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October shared their experiences on Synodality. Together with Brother Ernesto Sánchez (Superior General of the Institute of the Marist Brothers), also shared their reflections Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ; Sister Patricia Murray, IBVM; Br. Mark Hilton, SC; Sister Mary Barron, OLA; Fr. Mauro Giuseppe Lepori, O. Cist.; Sister Maria Nirmalini, A.C.

When speaking about the content aspects of the Synod, Brother Ernesto mentioned: After living the experience of this Synod Assembly, I feel that I have better connected with the diversity of leadership service roles in the Church. It has been impressive the simple and fraternal relationship that we have experienced together during that month. I think we need to

delve deeper into the topic of our personal and common testimony, our lifestyle, within a social context in which we live with great challenges. In many areas, it is important to move soon to get closer to the current generations and promote evangelical values. I am excited by the doors that are opening in this synodal process. There is a positive movement, although there is no shortage of critics and opponents, don't let that discourage us. And, at the same time, personally experience the process of inner listening to the Spirit, that will move us to a continuous personal conversion, without which it will be difficult to take steps forward.” ([Download the complete document of Br. Ernesto](#))

Later, Sr. Elizabeth Mary Davis, RSM, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, MCCJ and Sr. Elysée Izerimana, SDN Op. spoke about the challenges of Consecrated Life. On the second day of the meeting, the participants met with Pope Francis. And in the afternoon, before concluding, the participants heard testimonies from two Superiors General: The Sister Miriam Altenhofen, SSsP, Superior General of the Servants of the Holy Spirit, and Fr. Miguel Márquez, OCD, Superior General of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, who valued “the role of Mary and the importance of trusting in her role as Mother ”.

AMÉRICA CENTRAL

BR. JUAN CARLOS BOLAÑOS APPOINTED PROVINCIAL

Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General and Council, after studying the consultation made to the Brothers of the Province have appointed Br. Juan Carlos Bolaños as Provincial of América Central for a first term of three years. He will take office during the next Provincial Chapter, scheduled for June 26, 2024.

Br. Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, thanked Br. Hipolito Perez for his commitment during these six years of leadership in the province: "you have developed your mission with simplicity, joy and closeness, facing the challenges that have arisen in these years due to the pandemic and post-pandemic as well as complex social situations in several countries where the Province is located".

In a letter sent to the Province on November 26, 2023, Br. Ernesto thanked also the Provincial Council and all those who collaborate in the various provincial animation teams, both confreres and lay people.

**Br. Juan Carlos Bolaños Viscarra**

Br. Juan Carlos was born in the city of Santa Ana, El Salvador, on August 8, 1979. His parents are Fernando Bolaños and Concepción Viscarra de Bolaños. He is the fourth son of his family; his older siblings are Fernando Enrique, Anabel and Ileana. He also has four nephews and nieces.

He studied elementary and high school at Liceo San Luis, a Marist school in his hometown. There he actively participated in the REMAR groups and began his Marist vocational process. He entered the Postulancy in January 1998, in Guatemala City. He made his novitiate in San Salvador, where he made his first profession as a Marist Brother on October 27, 2002.

He completed his university studies in Guatemala from 2003 to 2007, graduating as Professor of Literature and Licentiate in Religious Sciences. He has collaborated in the apostolic mission in several countries of his province, as a teacher and coordinator of Youth and Vocation Ministry: in the Marist School of Zone 6 of Guatemala, in the San Francisco School of Estelí, Nicaragua, and in the Marist School of Manatí, Puerto Rico. In 2014 he participated in the course of Formators for a new world, in El Escorial, Spain. Later, in 2015, he joined the team of formators of the Interprovincial Novitiate in Medellín, Colombia, as assistant and novice's master and bursar.

He completed the studies of Formation for Formators at the Summer School in Morelia, Mexico, from 2016 to 2019. In 2019 he moved to Guatemala, to become director of the San José Formation House, where, until today, he accompanies the process of initial formation of postulants and young brothers. In 2017 he was elected Provincial Councilor, and since 2021 he is the Vice-Provincial. From 2019 to the present he participates in the International Commission of Brothers Today. He has also accompanied formation processes of the laity of his province and was delegate for the International Forum on Lay Marist Vocation held in Rome in 2022.

**Institute of the Marist Brothers General House**

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