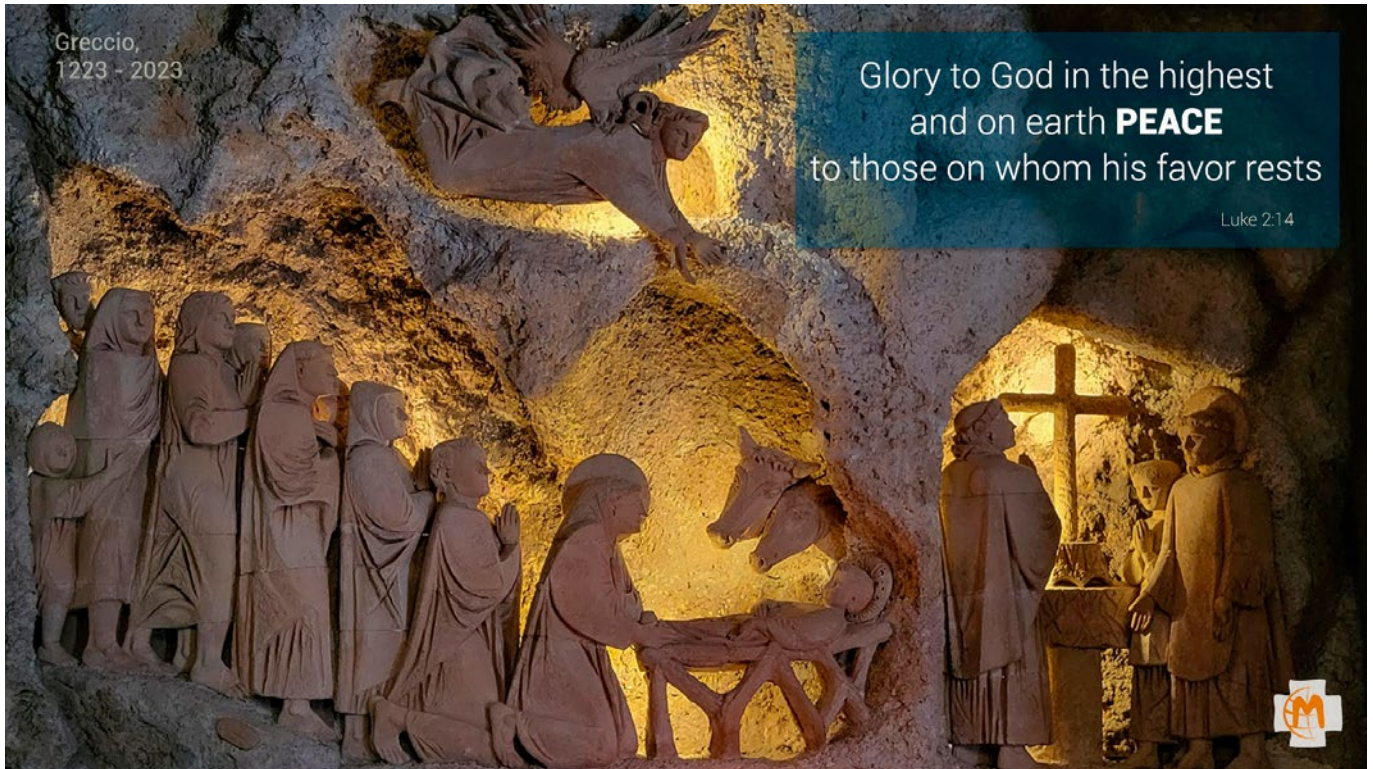




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MARIST NEWS

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



WISHING ALL MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT AND OUR FRIENDS A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS AND A HEALTHY AND HAPPY NEW YEAR IN 2024, MARKING THE 207TH YEAR OF OUR INSTITUTE.

As we celebrate Christmas, we find ourselves in challenging times, aware that approximately 30 countries are entangled in war. Nevertheless, amidst our festivities, we hear the angelic proclamation: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14). The crucial question here is whether we truly comprehend God’s love for us. Our awareness of this love can foster unity and peace; however, without personally experiencing this love, we risk sowing seeds of division and conflict.

Eight hundred years ago, St. Francis crafted the first Nativity scene in Greccio, an event that remains a grace for the Church. Even after centuries, we continue to emulate this gesture of the Saint of Assisi. Standing before the crib, we reflect on the fact that God became human and dwelt among us. However, amidst the modern celebrations of Christmas, replete with gifts, par-

ties, and numerous distractions, the true significance of Jesus’ birth often fades into oblivion.

I extend an invitation for us, in our families and communities, to sense God’s presence. Let us emulate Mary, who “treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). She serves as an inspiration for us to grasp the meaning of events and discern what God calls us to do. The Church, through the Synod, advocates the experience of listening—listening to the voices of the poor and the diverse realities within the Church and the world. Let us heed Mary’s call to listen with our hearts. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas! May this season be a time of beauty and joy for your families. Remember, peace starts right where we are. It is our responsibility to strive towards building and promoting peace in our immediate surroundings.

Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba - Superior General

MEXICO CENTRAL

BR. LUIS FELIPE GONZÁLEZ RUIZ APPOINTED PROVINCIAL FOR A SECOND THREE-YEAR TERM

The Superior General and his Council, after having polled the Province and computed its votes, have decided to appoint Br. Luis Felipe González Ruiz as Provincial of México Central for a second three-year term.

In the letter sent to the Province on December 12, 2023, Brother Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, thanked Brother Luis Felipe for accepting with availability and generosity to continue this service of leadership as Provincial: "Thank you for your closeness to the brothers and laity, and for the work you do as a team with the Council and the animation teams". The new Provincial mandate will begin with the celebration of the next Provincial Chapter to be held from July 25-27, 2024.



CENTRAL AMERICA

CULTIVATING THE CULTURE OF CARE – A ANNUAL RETREAT

Inspired by the "culture of care", the brothers and lay Marists of the Province of Central America held their annual retreat from November 30th to December 5th in Guatemala.

Under the guidance of Brother Juan Carlos Bolaños, appointed Provincial, and the Provincial Commission "Life of the Brothers", the Marists addressed the theme "Cultivating a culture of care: a transforming annual retreat". During the experience, the participants reflected on building a culture of care in the community.

The first day was dedicated to reflecting on Pope Francis' teachings on the "culture of care", especially the message of November 5, 2022, on his trip to Bahrain. On the second day, participants looked at how to take care of themselves, understanding that only in this way can they contribute to the well-being of the community. On the third day, the theme "Caring for others" was discussed, reflecting on the gift of fraternity and communion, and on building bridges to strengthen relationships, highlighting that caring is not just an individual responsibility, but also involves building strong relationships and promoting collective well-being. On the fourth day, the theme "Caring for fragile life" focused on the importance of synodality. Those present discussed the idea of embracing the vocational journey of the laity and how, as a Marist community, they can contribute to this exciting moment in history. And finally, the last day dealt with "caring for Marist life".



The retreat ended with the closing Mass, marked by the temporary profession of three young brothers: Roberto Constanza, Gerardo Rivera and Mesvin Marroquín. At the same time, it was a moment of thanksgiving for the jubilees of religious professions of the brothers of the province:

50 years of Marist life:

Br. José Antonio Baños Casados
Br. Adolfo Cermeño Giraldo
Br. José Luis Vallejo Ortega

35 years of Marist life:

Br. Alex Francisco García Paredes
Br. Ángel Jesús Merino Mazuelas
Br. Carlos Rafael Vélez Cacho

25 years of Marist life:

Br. Carlos Benigno Monroy Peinado

WEST AFRICA

Marist Youth Ministry in Ghana (Kumasi and Accra) successfully hosted Prefects' Encounters for both Marist and non-Marist schools. The initiative aimed to foster idea-sharing, socialization, and leadership skill development among student leaders.

UNITED STATES

The first Marist Youth Mission Conference kicks off last weekend in Miami. Matt Fallon and his Marist Young Adult team will lead students from our Marist Schools around the USA in deepening their understanding of our Marist Mission as well as encourage each participant to become active in fostering our Mission.

NORANDINA

A training course on a new management model was held in the city of Loja, Ecuador, from December 7 to 9 with representatives of the Marist institutions of the country. The course was led by the National Education Team with the support of the psychologist Victor Murillo of the Centro Integral Orion.

FMSI

In November, a meeting was held between the staff for humanitarian interventions and development projects of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives of the Association of Former Students of the Marist Schools in Greece with the aim of presenting FMSI and establishing contacts regarding different projects implemented by the Ministry and FMSI.

ARCO NORTE

From December 10 to 14 in Guadalajara, Mexico, the Meeting of Education Coordinators of the Region was held. The participants were accompanied by the executive secretary of the region, Br. Rodrigo Espinosa.

SOUTH AFRICA

MARIST MERCY CARE'S 17TH ANNUAL PROJECT ENRICHES LIVES IN LANGBOS INFORMAL SETTLEMENT



In its 17th consecutive year, Marist Mercy Care's transformative project in the heart of the Addo area, South Africa, continues to make a significant impact on the lives of over 400 children. The week-long program, situated in the challenging environment of Langbos Informal Settlement, brings together volunteers from South Africa and Germany, uniting efforts to provide a meaningful experience for the participating children.

Director of Marist Mercy Care, Jason Grieve, emphasized the importance of the project, stating, "This initiative not only nurtures the children of Addo but also serves as a catalyst for positive change in the broader community."

Volunteers, drawn from various corners of South Africa and Germany, play a vital role in creating a supportive environment for the children. The program extends beyond mere recreation, involving the newly appointed head students from the 5 Marist Schools in South Africa in a leadership program. This unique opportunity exposes them to the challenges faced by South Africans, fostering skills that will

contribute to their growth as effective leaders within their school settings.

The summer camp, catering to children aged 3-15, offers a diverse range of activities including sports, dance, games, and arts. Despite the challenging conditions with no running water, electricity, or formal structures, the resilience of both the organizers and participants shines through.

Grieve further highlighted, "Our commitment extends beyond the annual project. Throughout the year, Marist Mercy Care actively engages with the community, operating two Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers, employing over 20 local staff, providing meals for 400 people weekly, and maintaining a healthcare facility dedicated to the well-being of the sick and dying."

As Marist Mercy Care's legacy of compassion and community engagement continues, it serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating that even in the face of adversity, positive change is not only possible but achievable through collective effort.

MARIST INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MARIST UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IS THE TOPIC OF A WEBINAR PROMOTED BY THE NETWORK OF IHE

Representatives from more than 10 countries participated in the webinar held on November 21st, promoted by the Marist International Network of Institutions of Higher Education (IHE). The webinar had as its topic our Marist University Management.

Brother Marcelo Bonhemberger, Vice-President of Institutional Identity at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) and President of the Network Board of Directors, was the first speaker at the event. He emphasized that the main goal of the Network is to provide its members with quality training and discussion on topics that have a positive impact on our society. "We are all connected to the legacy of Saint Marcellin Champagnat. Transforming the world through education is our mission," he said.

Afterwards, Br. Marcelo introduced the General Vicar of the Marist Institute, Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez. He thanked the work that each person carries out through different strategies, and he also congratulated the organizers for the initiative and choice of the topic under discussion. "Big challenges, big opportunities. Management asks us to always carry out a review, a very careful observation of the world so that we can build and transform. Let us be courageous to explore new and interesting possibilities", reinforced the General Vicar.

After the welcoming speeches, it was time to introduce the webinar's special guest: the Colombian anthropologist Santiago Uribe Rocha. He is one of the people responsible for the exponential development that Medellín has had in the last 30 years. In the 1990s, the city was considered the most violent in the world. In 2013, it won the title of most innovative on the planet, according to the Urban Land Institute.

"I am here today to share with you how the University of Medellín played a fundamental role in the cultural, urban and social transformation that took place in the city. It is social innovation

as the basis for transformation", said the anthropologist.

Uribe, as he is known, has been the director of the Medellín Resilience Workshop since 2013. They are part of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities network. "For 10 years, a network of 100 cities has been exchanging knowledge – and staying alive that way. All cities are represented by institutions, and many of them are universities", commented Uribe.

The anthropologist also pointed that, in order for changes to be significant, it is necessary to start at the end. "We start from a fundamental principle: if the State only arrived at the periphery with the police, we need to restore dignity to the citizens who live in this place with the best we have." For this reason, states Uribe, most libraries today are located on the outskirts. "Today, we have 26 parks and libraries spread across the city."

A collective intelligence was created in Medellín, and then actions began to become everyday practices. "The social is the beginning and the end, it is the central axis of transformation, because it connects humility, silence to listen to others and culture – which is what remains", comments Uribe.

After 30 years, these practices became public policies, formulated and created by the university. "The university documented this transformation", concluded the anthropologist.



Marist International Network of Institutions of Higher Education

The Marist International Network of Higher Education consists of the current union of 22 institutions that, in harmony with the premises of the General Administration of the Institute of the Marist Brothers in Rome, seek to create connections of synergy and action in their areas of mission.

Founded in 2004, this network aims to create opportunities for partnership, formation and joint projects, strengthening action in higher education in more than 10 countries.

marist world

INDIA: CHRISTMAS AT MARCELLIN TRUST – OPERATION RAINBOW, TRICHY



SPAIN: COMMUNITY CHAMPAGNAT, LEON



USA: MARIST YOUTH MISSION CONFERENCE LAUNCHED IN FLORIDA



BRAZIL: BR. ERNESTO VISITS FTD EDUCAÇÃO, SÃO PAULO



MADAGASCAR: PERPETUAL VOWS (BR. ROGER) AND FIRST PROFESSION (BR. VIENEI)



GUATEMALA: FORMER COURSE MARIST CENTRAL AMERICA

OTHER MARIST VOICES 25 AND 26

AWARENESS AS A SERVANT LEADER / PROPHETIC SERVICE

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 25 was written by Br. Vincent Uchenna Abadom, Educator, Provincial of the Province of Nigeria, who addresses the theme “Awareness as a servant leader: my personal journey” ([English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)) – [Video](#). The message refers to chapter 6 of Marist Voices (Awareness), written by Br. Ken McDonald.

Other Marist Voices 26 was written by Ernesto José Reyes Plaza, Delegate for Life and Mission in Chile, from the Province Santa



María de los Andes, who addresses the theme “Formation for prophetic service: my life story” ([English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)) – [Video](#). The message refers to chapter 21 of Marist Voices (Training and Lifelong Learning for an Emerging World), written by Br. Chano Guzmán Moriana.

COMPOSTELA

TRANSFER OF HONDURAS TO THE PROVINCE OF CENTRAL AMERICA

As of December 12, 2023, the Marist Mission of Honduras is canonically linked to the Province of América Central, after having been part of the Province of Compostela for 30 years. The handover ceremony was attended by Brothers João Carlos do Prado and Ken McDonald, General Councilors links with the Arco Norte Region, Brother Máximo Blanco Morán, Provincial of Compostela, Brother Hipólito Pérez Gómez, Provincial of América Central, Brothers and lay Marists, as well as the educators of the two Marist works in Honduras, the Instituto Marista La Inmaculada and the social center Horizontes al Futuro.

During the institutional act, which took place after the Eucharist, the Provincial of Compostela recalled the 30 years of Marist presence in the country and highlighted its educational and evangelizing mission.

The General Councilors, Brothers João and Ken, thanked the leadership of the Province of Compostela in three decades and recalled the official decision of the General Council, on June 24, 2021, to link the Marist mission of Honduras to the Province of Central America as of December 12, 2023.

Br. Ken McDonald especially thanked the Provinces and put the mission in the hands of Mary and St. Marcellin: "On behalf of Brother Superior General Ernesto Sanchez and the entire General Council, we thank the Marist Province of Compostela



and so many Brothers for their generous commitment to the Marist presence in this country for the past 31 years. We wish the Marist Province of America Central every success in the continuation of this noble and beautiful Marist mission. Rest assured that Mary and Marcellin will be walking with you so that this presence will continue to flourish and bear fruit in this context of the Marist world. Thank you and best wishes to all for this beautiful project".

The document of transfer of the Marist presence in Honduras to the Province of Central America was signed by the Brothers Provincial and the General Councilors. Then the representatives of the educational community of the country handed the document to Brother Hipólito, Provincial of América Central.

Photos

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

MELANESIAN BROTHERS' GATHERING

The Brothers from the region of Melanesia (Papua New Guinea, Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) gathered for three days, till 17 December, at the Emmaus Retreat Centre in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, to explore brotherhood and Marist mission in this part of the Star of the Sea Province.

The Participants were accompanied by the Provincial, Br. Peter Carroll, the Delegate for the Pacific, Br John Hazelman, and presenters and facilitators Br Graham Neist, and Br Tony Leon.



BRASIL CENTRO-SUL PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

The Marist Brothers of Brazil Centro-Sul held the Provincial Assembly in the city of Aparecida do Norte, headquarters of the of the National Shrine, from December 8 to 12. The Assembly was attended by the Superior General of the Marist Institute, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, the Provincial, Br. Benê Oliveira and several brothers.

Brother Benê welcomed those present, and highlighted the privilege of being as pilgrims, as a provincial community, in the sanctuary loved by Brazilians, in the House of Mother Aparecida, to give thanks for the gifts of consecration, fraternity, spirituality, mission, fidelity and perseverance in the Marist vocation. Next, Br. Ernesto addressed the topic of synodality, and highlighted his experience in the synodal assembly in the Vatican. The Superior General also spoke about the reconfiguration of the Institute, considering the vitality, viability and sustainability of Marist life and mission. He also highlighted elements of spirituality, the Marist vocation in the face of emerging needs, and the need to grow as a global Marist family.

The first day was also marked by a celebration that inspired the participants, led by Br. Miguel Fernandes and José Leão da Cunha Filho, executive director of the province, with the guiding question: "Where to go brothers?"

On the second day, the program continued with reflections on "announcements that generate life." The program began with a moment of reflection led by Br. Anacleto Peruzzo, director of Consecrated Life, and João Luis Fedel Gonçalves, specialist in Identity, Mission, and Vocation. Br. Anacleto invited reflection with the inspiring questions: "What do I desire for my Province, Region, and Institute? How can I help my Province to welcome God's announcements?"

That day, brothers Bruno Marcondes, Carlos Henrique Oliveira, José Augusto Wendler and Rafael Fernandes renewed their temporary vows. Then, there was time for individual pilgrimage at the sanctuary and, to conclude the day, a Marian prayer was performed in front of the sanctuary.

The third day was coordinated by Br. Rogério Mateucci, provincial councilor and rector of the PUC in Paraná, and José André de Oliveira, Lay Marist and head of the PUCPR Cabinet. The program began with a mass at the central altar of the National Shrine of Aparecida. That same day, Br. Alan Patrick Zucchero, Redemptorist and director of "TV Aparecida" programming, met with the brothers to share his vision of the experience lived in the Sanctuary of Aparecida, where it is manifested "the



grace of fraternity and the memory that Our Lady is our sister on this synodal path."

Monday morning began with a prayer led by Brother Miguel Fernandes and José Leão entitled "Echoes of the path walked." And there was the participation of Dr. Bruno Orloski, from the Legal Office of the Marist Group, who informed the brothers about the administration of the province in relation to the Patrimony. The day's program concluded with a speech by the Provincial, Br. Benê Oliveira, and the Superior General, Br. Ernesto Sánchez, to conclude the activities in Aparecida. In the afternoon, the brothers went to Boraceia, in Vila Marista, the brothers' summer home, to have more moments of prayer and reflection on the experience.

On the last day of the Assembly, in Boraceia, the brothers began the program with a moment of prayer dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, led by Brother Anacleto Peruzzo. And it was Brother Ernesto Sánchez who gave the motivation speech. Then, João Luis Fedel summarized the moments, and asked those present: "What perception of the future do we imagine for the Province?" Later, the brothers had a personal moment to internalize everything they experienced during the days of the Assembly and how they would like to continue in the Marist mission.

After the reflection, the brothers met in groups of 4 to 5 people to write down at least two perceptions. Then, they shared their ideas with the large group. The evaluation of the Assembly was carried out by Brother Anacleto. The opinions were very positive. The Provincial Assembly concluded with the production of a summary poem titled "Announcements that generate life." The Brothers returned with a feeling of gratitude for the experience.

MARIST INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION

THE MARIST BROTHERS AND FMSI'S WORK TO RAISE AWARENESS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The Institute of the Marist Brothers and the Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI) have long been champions of the rights of children and young people living in the most vulnerable conditions. Their commitment extends beyond traditional educational endeavours, leading them to actively participate in United Nations mechanisms.

In collaboration with the Secretariat of Solidarity of the Marist Brothers, FMSI works tirelessly to raise awareness about the importance of defending human rights, especially for those at the highest risk. This commitment resonates with the Marist Charism, which emphasizes the education of children and young people in 80 countries worldwide.

To fulfil their objectives, both the Secretariat of Solidarity and FMSI actively engage in various United Nations advocacy mechanisms. One of the key tools is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a process that enables them to present comprehensive reports and recommendations to the United Nations. This engagement is essential, as it allows civil society organizations to actively participate in the UPR process, fostering collaborative networks and partnerships with various stakeholders.

Active involvement in the UPR process is crucial for the effectiveness and inclusivity of the advocacy efforts led by the Secretariat of Solidarity and FMSI. Collaborative networking and partnerships with other stakeholders facilitate a broader exchange of insights and resources. This inclusive approach promotes a more thorough examination of human rights situa-



tions, ultimately contributing to a more robust framework for governments to address them.

World Children's Day

On November 20, 2023, on the occasion of World Children's Day, FMSI in collaboration with the Secretariat of Solidarity of the Marist Brothers Institute, organized the event "Right to be Children – Derecho a ser Niños." During this event, FMSI and the Secretariat of Solidarity presented a booklet, which provides detailed information on how they are actively participating in the UPR process and making a significant impact in the realm of human rights.

The Institute of the Marist Brothers and FMSI's involvement in the UPR process is a testament to their unwavering commitment to defending the rights of people in the most vulnerable conditions.

Booklet : [Inglés](#) | [Español](#) | [Italiano](#)



Institute of the Marist Brothers General House

Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2 - Rome, Italy - comunica@fms.it

Website

<http://www.champagnat.org>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/champagnatorg>

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