



Year **XVI** - Number **816** | 17 JANUARY 2024

MARISTNEWS

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

MARISTS AT THE SERVICE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF NIGERIA

The Board of Directors of the Marist Volunteer Network met from November 27 to 30, in Manziana. Present were Br. Benedict Umoh (Africa Region), Belén Salas (Europe Region), Alvaneí Finamor (America Sur Region), Br. Chris Wills (Oceania Region), Br. Diego Zawadzky (Arco Norte Region), Br. Valdicer Fachi and Flaminia Filanci (CMI). Brother Teófilo Minga was present as interpreter.

The Marist Brothers of the Province of Nigeria had 11th provincial chapter from 9th January to 13th January, 2024 with the theme: Marists at the Service of Children and young people – then, the slogan: Looking Beyond. The Logo, inspired by the General Conference of



2022, took its shape from the awareness of Province' need for a sense of "Looking Beyond" and the desire to remain faithful to Marist roots.

During the chapter, the new provincial of Nigeria, Br. Mark Omede Okolo, was installed, with the presence of the Superior General, Br. Ernesto Sánchez, and the two General Councilors, links with the Region of



general administration

■ Last week, Brother João Carlos do Prado, accompanied by the Provincial of Mexico Occidental, Br. Luis Enrique, visited the Marist works and communities in Haiti.

■ From Monday to Friday the Regional Assembly of Europe is being held in Carcavelos, with the Provincials and Councils of the 5 Administrative Units of the continent. Among the participants are four representatives of the General Government: Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General; Brothers João Carlos do Prado and Ben Consigli, General Councilors, links for the Region; and Brother Goyo Linacero, Assistant to the Economic General and Project Manager of the Strategic Plan of the General Administration.

■ On Tuesday, Brother César Rojas (Norandina) arrived at the

General House for the course "New Builders of L'Hermitage", which will be held in Manziana from February 1st to November 25th, 2024, for formators. Brothers César, Juan Castro (MDA) and Michel Maminiaina (Madagascar) form the animation team, together with the Brothers Today Secretariat.

■ On Wednesday, Brothers and collaborators of the General Administration held a formation session on the theme of the III International Marist Mission Assembly.

■ Brother Lindley Sionosa, Assistant Director of the Secretariat Brothers Today, is participating in the formation itinerary for the young post-novice Brothers of the América Sur Region, in preparation for perpetual profession, which is taking place in Porto Alegre until January 28.

Africa, Brothers Óscar Martín and Ken McDonald. Two symbols were employed for the installation, apron and towel, a power sign reminding Provincial that the mantle handed over to him is a call to serve. Br. Mark replaces Br. Vincent Adadom, who has led the Province for the last six years.

After the installation, Br. Mark admonished the participants to be Brothers (the essence of the brotherhood), and always ready to move out of the comfort zones to reach out to others.

To help the Provincial as Servant and Prophetic leaders, were

elected provincial councilors Brothers Henry Uzor, Paul Angulu, Gregory Ekene Osuji, Nnodu Onwutalu, and Okechukwu Anochie. The provincial superior chose Br. Okechukwu Anochie as the deputy provincial.

42 delegates took part in the Chapter. Br. Francis Jumbe, from the province of Southern Africa was the Facilitator. Together with the representation of the General Government, there were also 9 observers: 3 Marist Brothers, 1 Spiritan priest, 2 Sisters (Marist Daughters of Jesus the Good Shepherd and Immaculate Heart of Mary's sisters), and 3 lay Marists.

SECRETARIAT OF EDUCATION AND EVANGELIZATION

CHAMPAGNAT GLOBAL PRESENT AT THE XXVIII INTER-AMERICAN CONGRESS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Under the slogan: "Educating for a Sustainable Future", the 28th Congress of Catholic Education, organised by the CIEC (Inter-American Confederation of Catholic Education), took place in the city of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) from the 11th to the 13th January. The Secretariat of Marist Education and Evangelisation was present at the meeting, with more than 1200 participants from 21 countries, through Brother Niño Pizarro and the Executive Secretary of Champagnat Global, Dr. Javier Llamas. The congress was a great opportunity to reflect on the great task of promoting integral sustainable development, in line with the Magisterium of Pope Francis through the Global Education Pact, and at the same time to see how to contribute as a Catholic school to respond to the challenges of society and to the construction of a more fraternal world.



CHAMPAGNAT
GLOBAL



The reflections of the congress have revolved around the conviction that Catholic education must empower learners to transform themselves and the society in which they live by adopting sustainable lifestyles, making them active and participatory citizens of the world who contribute to creating a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, safe and sustainable world.

MEXICO OCCIDENTAL

ANNUAL RETREAT OF THE BROTHERS



The Marist Brothers of the Province of México Occidental held their retreat 2023, December 25-30, in Guadalajara, with the theme “Living passionately our being Marist today”, a theme inspired by the Constitutions and the Rule of Life.

Fifty-five brothers participated in person and two communities of older brothers participated virtually (Casa Champagnat from Guadalajara and the Chuburna Residence from Merida). Brother Óscar Martín Vicario, General Councilor, was the animator of the retreat, which was also attended by the Provincial, Brother Luis Enrique Rodríguez Santana.

Br. Óscar Martín spoke about the importance of praying to practice spirituality, “to meditate in order to have the heart awake, attentive, conscious and to seek an experience of attention to live connected, and thus, to react to pain and to be compassionate, like Mary, like Champagnat, to be available for the mission”.

Brother Luis Enrique, during the retreat, emphasized that “being a Marist Brother is a manifestation of love, a way of living with an open and undivided heart that accepts everyone, we

commit ourselves to live in simplicity, to live in discernment, to live in joy and to live in community”.

During the first day, the Brothers shared moments of prayer and reflection. On the second day, the participants concentrated on the theme of the identity of being a Brother, considering the dimensions of collectivity, fraternity and commitment to their vocation. On the third day, the brothers held a special celebration on fraternity. In this regard, Br. Óscar recalled the Rule of Life of the brothers, underlining that “Fraternity is not only the gift that you receive in your vocation, it is also the one that you share”.

The final celebration was marked by the renewal of vows of Brother Víctor Hugo, and the first profession of Brothers Jesús Andrés Morales Reyes and Albino Quiroz Alejándres. At the same time, the consecrated life of seven jubilarians was celebrated: Br. José Ernesto Naranjo Terán, Br. Gonzalo Castillo Méndez, Br. José Luis Casillas Velázquez (60 years); Br. Javier López Godina Barajas y Br. Enrique Escobar Zúñiga (50 years) Br. Agustín Acevedo Sánchez, Br. Guillermo José Villarreal Cavazos (25 year).

EUROPE REGION

MEETING OF THE COORDINATION TEAM

From December 18-22, the follow-up and coordination team of the Marist Region of Europe met in Valencia. The first part of the meeting was attended by Brother Teodorino Aller, regional coordinator and coordinator of Marist life, Brother Patxi García, coordinator of formation, and also José Antonio Rosa Lemus, secretary of mission. Eva Flórez, administrator, and Andrea Peñuela, communications, joined the second half of the meeting.

The main task of the meeting was to review and evaluate the first quarter of the year 2023-2024 and to study the plan for the second quarter.

The meeting played an important role in the formation of the team and several significant moments stand out: the sharing and meeting with the Brothers' community of Valencia; the meeting with the local staff of the school and with the girls of the emancipation apartments of Quart del Poblet and their educators; the visit, dinner and preparation for the Christmas party at the Torrente Home.

A formative part was dedicated to the Gospel message "all, One" (Jn 17, 21). Were present Fr. Manuel Fernández Rico, of



the Spanish Episcopal Conference and pastor of the Archdiocese of Mérida-Badajoz; Brother Antonio Luque; and Father Pedro López, former General Councilor of the Redemptorist Fathers. All this helped to better understand the service that the team is called to render to the Marist mission in Europe.

HONDURAS

SCHOOL OF LEADERS BRINGS TOGETHER YOUNG PEOPLE IN COMAYAGUA

From January 8 to 11, the School of Leaders of the "Remar" movement was held at the La Paz Retreat House in Comayagua, Honduras, Province of Central America. Twenty-four young people from the "caravels" and the Remar Community of the Marist Institute La Inmaculada took part, accompanied by some "helmsmen" and Brothers.

In this short space of time, the participants experienced the "stage of life", the techniques of oratory and corporal expression, the life group, etc. The themes of Jesus, the fullness of life and being a leader helped the participants to grow as Christians and as Marists.

On the last day, during the Retreat, the young people were able



to summarize and highlight the fundamental points that they had worked on and reflected on during the time of formation, committing themselves to putting into daily life what they had experienced during the meeting.

marist world

PHILIPPINES: MARIST COMMUNITY IN MAPAC CELEBRATES THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTITUTE



HAITI: BR. JOÃO CARLOS, GENERAL COUNCILLOR, VISITING THE BROTHERS IN THE COUNTRY



GREECE: BR. BEN CONSIGLI, GENERAL COUNCILLOR, WITH THE EDUCATORS OF THE TWO MARIST SCHOOLS IN ATHENS



GUATEMALA: NEW POSTULANTS OF THE PROVINCE OF AMÉRICA CENTRAL



TIMOR LESTE: POSTULANTS OF THE PROVINCE STAR OF THE SEA IN BAUCAU



NIGERIA: NEW PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

OTHER MARIST VOICES 29 AND 30

COMMUNICATION / HONEST ACCOMPANIMENT

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 29 was written by Br. Mario Meuti, educator and missionary in Romania (Lavalla200> community of Moines-ti), from the Province of Méditerranée – Italy, who addresses the theme "Communication and silence in leadership" ([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 30 was written by José Antonio Rosa Lemus, Mission Delegate of Europe Region, from the Province of Méditerranée – Spain, who addresses the theme "Sincere and honest accompaniment" ([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.



MARIST SPIRITUAL PATRIMONY COMMISSION

FMS STUDIA NO 4: THE LEGAL RECOGNITION OF THE MARIST BROTHERS (1825 – 1851)

In November, FMS Studia 4 was published, with the title “Legal recognition of the Marist Brothers (1825 – 1851). Political and religious obstacles and the mystical project from Fr Champagnat to Br François”. The book, which is only available in French, is part of a study by Brother Gabriel Michel, edited by Br. André Lanfrey. We reproduce below the preface by Br André.



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Brother Gabriel Michel (1921-2008) devoted a lengthy period to an historical study of the steps taken to obtain legal recognition of the Institute from the French government: a problem that plagued the life of Fr. Champagnat and contributed in part to his premature death. His work, entitled *Marcellin Champagnat et la reconnaissance légale des Frères Maristes* (Marcellin Champagnat and the legal recognition of the Marist Brothers), was published in 1986 by the Carmelite printing house in St Chamond, as an A4 booklet of 301 pages. There was therefore a considerable delay between the work itself and its fairly confidential publication: perhaps ten years. As this story ended in failure for Fr. Champagnat, it was important to recount what followed until the success of Br. François in 1851. This is why Br. Gabriel Michel wrote a second volume of 112 pages, in 1987-1990, entitled *Frère François et la reconnaissance légale des Frères Maristes (1840-1851)* [“Brother François and the legal recognition of the Marist Brothers (1840-1851)”]. Printed in 1991, it had the same relatively limited distribution as the first volume. This is undoubtedly why the General House in Rome produced a second edition around the year 2000, in the form of 2 A4 notebooks, but this time as a private publication. The text is identical to that of the first edition, but without the thematic, onomastic and topographical indexes, or the chronology of the first edition. There is not even a table of contents.

In his introduction to the first volume, Br Gabriel gives some valuable information about his intentions.

“The Marist Brothers know that their Founder, Father Champagnat, made extraordinary efforts, and on numerous occasions, to have his congregation legally recognised by the French government but that he did not succeed. They sometimes wonder: do we really know why? [...] This problem of “the legal recognition” kept coming up throughout the first twenty years of the history of the Marist Brothers. It was not an

obsession, but it was continually there in the background. We are going to find, therefore, a set of documents simply connected to each other by a few explanations and maintaining their chronological succession. The story stops at 1840. Another volume could later tell the story of the second stage (1840-1851) which, as we know, was very successful that time round.” Since it was Br Gabriel’s intention in 1986 to deal with the question of the legal recognition in its entirety, we are publishing the history of legal recognition from 1822 to 1851 in a single volume.

The background to the work is very substantial, with copies of around 140 documents, many of them previously unpublished. They are the fruit of Br Gabriel’s research, especially in the Archives of the Loire Department, the Archdiocese of Lyon and even the National Archives. It therefore represents a remarkable collection to be treated with all due respect.

Obviously, there are a few limitations to this work, which I will mention briefly. First of all, Br Gabriel was trained as a literary scholar rather than as a historian. He thus uses a writing style that may lend colour to the narrative but weakens its rigour with moral reflections, invented dialogues, edifying remarks, and so on. As a result, sentences are too long, paragraphs very short... As for the substance, Br Gabriel, in his desire to highlight the person of Champagnat, sacrifices something of the religious-political environment. For example, he underestimates the importance of the revolution of 1830, which was not a simple incident but a major event that ruined hopes of re-Christianisation and gave rise to a liberal regime that was very hostile to the Church. He was also overly faithful to the Institute’s historiographical tradition, which demonised Vicar General Bochard and gave too much credit to Bishop de Pins, who in fact was inept in steering the steps towards legal recognition up until 1832. Gabriel was also reluctant to portray Champagnat as a political and religious figure in his own right, whereas the problem of legal recognition had an eminently political and religious character.

It is true that before 1830 the person of Champagnat, confined as he was to the department of the Loire, was not well known even though, from 1822 onwards, he had made a name for himself in the important diocese of Lyon since he had become a sort of vassal of the Vicar General Bochard, more out of necessity than conviction. Indeed, Champagnat was able to separate himself from Bochard tactfully when Bishop de Pins arrived and took an active interest in him and his work. But the administrator and his council had only a limited regard for him, at least in the early years of their relationship. Moreover, as Bishop de Pins considered the Little Brothers of Mary to be HIS diocesan congregation of brothers, he saw it as his responsibility alone to take the necessary steps to obtain legal authorisation. We know that these attempts before 1830 were to fail, due to the unwillingness of the State administration and also because of the bungling of the Administrator.

While Champagnat remained somewhat sidelined by an over-confident Bishop de Pins, his stature was growing in the department of the Loire, where the number of Brothers' schools was increasing, as was the reputation of the Hermitage, which was acting, in fact if not in law, as a teacher training college for the department. In St Chamond itself, the turnaround of Fr Dervieux, the influential parish priest of St Pierre, encouraged the moral and financial support of the leading citizens for a work that was very useful to the canton and even to the department. The Little Brothers of Mary were sufficiently well established that in 1830 the prefect, although deeply hostile, could not seriously threaten them or have them replaced by mutual schools, except in one case: Feurs. The search of L'Hermitage in 1830 was a paradoxical tribute to a work deemed important enough to attract the suspicions of the political and administrative authorities.

With the promulgation of the Guizot law (1833), the State asserted itself as the exclusive authority over public education. After 1833, Champagnat took the initiative and moved heaven and earth to obtain an Edict, which he narrowly failed to obtain in 1838. Even if he failed in his attempt, it meant that he had acquired national stature. He wrote to the king, exchanged letters with ministers, prefects, deputies, bishops and other congregations. He sketched out what he intended to become the area of action of his congregation: from the Mediterranean, thanks to his contacts with St Paul-Trois-Châteaux, to the north

of France with the foundation of St Pol-sur-Ternoise in the Pas-de-Calais department.

His failure to gain legal recognition needs to be put into perspective. Although it did not succeed on a national level, it had the firm support of the Loire administration, and its work was sufficiently extensive and well known for the bishops and the Ministry of Public Instruction to recognise its de facto existence at a time when recruitment of teachers was inadequate. The threat of military service for unqualified brothers was mitigated by an arrangement with the Brothers of Christian Instruction at St Paul-Trois-Châteaux from 1835.

A paradoxical consequence of the congregation's lack of official status was that it could not receive donations or legacies, nor could it own property. All the property was therefore in the name of Champagnat, who paid considerable taxes and was therefore one of the few electors at a time when, since suffrage was based on a census, there were only a few hundred thousand of them. So when Mr Champagnat corresponded with notables or met them, it was important to remember that he was one himself. And he was undoubtedly held in higher esteem by lay circles than by the ecclesiastical world, which had long been astonished that a priest reputed to have no great talents should have succeeded so well. In any case, many clergy and notables from St Chamond attended his funeral in June 1840. They were burying one of their own. Another paradox: the absence of legal authorisation for the Little Brothers of Mary did not hinder their growth, whereas many other associations of Brothers with legal recognition did not manage to flourish, despite significant advantages in terms of diplomas (brevet) and military service. In this respect, the contrast between the

Brothers of St Paul-Trois-Châteaux and those of L'Hermitage was spectacular, to the extent that the arrangement concluded between Fr. Champagnat and Fr. Mazelier a few years later (1842) led to a veritable annexation of the latter's work. The same would happen with the Brothers of Viviers in 1844.

It must therefore be admitted that the advantages offered by an edict were not the determining factor for candidates in their vocation as brothers. In fact, for most founders, the idea of a vocation was of little importance: they were looking for simple lay associations of schoolteachers who were good Christians and nothing more. Champagnat, on the other hand, planned to found a branch of the Society of Mary, possibly under the guise



of a charitable association. In both cases, people spoke of “brothers”, but they did not all understand the meaning of this title in the same way: for him, it was not a question of having pious teachers, but of establishing a providential society under the auspices of Mary.

After 1840, the actions of Fr Colin, Superior of the Society of Mary, and Br François, Director General of the Brothers, followed the two paths that Fr Champagnat had inaugurated, but with their priorities reversed. By merging the Marist Brothers, first with the Brothers of St Paul (1842) and then with those of Viviers (1844), the Institute benefited from the edicts granted to these two

congregations under the Restoration. But this did not seem satisfactory to the Little Brothers of Mary (LBM), not only for legal reasons but, more fundamentally, because this title had a mystical character and the Institute could not renounce it. Also, when the July Monarchy was overthrown in 1848, and the ensuing unrest led to the advent of a conservative republic, Br. François and Br. Louis-Marie were able to take advantage of this new atmosphere to finally obtain an edict authorising the Institute throughout the whole of France. For them, this was certainly a political and religious success, but above all it was a sign that Mary and Father Champagnat were still watching over their Society, which was at last publicly recognised under its original name.

GLOBAL FAMILY

CONSULTATION PROCESS ON THE MARIST BRAND

The Institute's communications department, with a mandate from the General Council, is developing a consultation process on the Marist brand. This is a response to the construction of our identity as a “Global Family”, where we want to express our values, principles and mission through a common institutional image throughout the Institute. This project is being carried out with the collaboration of the communications leaders of the Administrative Units. A communication agency called “Agência Libre” (<https://libre.ag/>), from Brazil, has been hired to support this process. A first report on the perception of the Marist image in the world will be presented to the General Council in February.

To help with this task, a survey has been prepared and we invite you to take 5 minutes of your time to answer the proposed questions.

This survey aims to understand the perception of the Marist identity and brand in different parts of the world. The aim is to strengthen the Marist identity in all the contexts of our presence and mission.



**Answer questions
about the Marist brand**



Messengers of peace

One of the projects of the General Administration's Strategic Plan for Animation, Leadership and Government (2017-2025) focuses on the theme of communication: develop better internal and external communication to cultivate a sense of belonging, to overcome geographical and existential borders, and to publicize Marist mission in the wider society.

For more than a year, Marist communicators, representing all the Administrative Units, have been working on 4 initiatives identified by the General Council to improve communication and vision as a global family. These initiatives, worked on by 4 groups of communicators, are: designing communication services, increasing awareness as a global family, creating a corporate image and projecting the Marist message in society.

This work will soon be disseminated and will serve as a resource for Marist communicators, whose representatives will meet next October in Rome for a first international meeting of Marist communicators.

MARIST REGION OF EUROPE

WORKSHOP ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The first edition of the workshop on Artificial Intelligence (AI) applied to the classroom was held on January 10, organized by the Marist Region of Europe. The seminar was attended by Humanities teachers from secondary and baccalaureate schools.

The speaker was Fernando Fuentes Guzmán, a computer science teacher at the Marist school in Alicante, Province of Mediterránea. Around 120 educators registered.

Given the large number of participants, the Region's coordination and monitoring team organized five editions of the workshop. The evaluation of the proposal by the 20 participants in the first

edition was very positive and the team of the Marist Region of Europe will continue to work to advance knowledge of AI as a pedagogical tool in favor of the Marist mission.



MEXICO

THE MARISTS OF MEXICO CELEBRATE 125 YEARS OF PRESENCE

The brothers and layty Marist of Mexico commemorate in 2024 the 125 years of Marist presence in the country, and they also celebrate the 100 Anniversary of the Birth of Brother Basilio Rueda Guzmán, Servant of God. The arrival of the first three Marist brothers to Mexico, Guadalajara, dates back to July 21, 1899. And Brother Basilio Rueda Guzmán, in the process of canonization, was born October 16, 1924, in Acatlán de Juárez, Jalisco. The Jubilee Year of Mexico has as its motto "Gratitude, audacity and trust", and as part of the celebrations the Marists have scheduled four main events: the Launch of the Jubilee Year, on January 23, the commemoration of the arrival of the

Marist Brothers to Mexico, on May 20, the anniversary of the birth of Brother Basilio, October 16, and the Closing of the Marist Jubilee Year, from December 26 to 31, with an Interprovincial Retreat. Throughout the jubilee year of Mexico, the Marist brothers and laity will promote in all their educational communities, missions and social works different meetings, events, readings and digital materials alluding to the two themes – the 125 years of Marist presence in Mexico, and the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Brother Basilio Rueda Guzmán.



STAR OF THE SEA - SAMOA

PERPETUAL VOWS OF BROTHER ANITELEA FIDOW



Br Anitelea Fidow, from the Star of the Sea province, professed his perpetual vows on January 13 in the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, in Apia, Samoa. The celebration was presided by Bishop Peter Brown, the Diocesan Administrator. Were present at the celebration, the provincial, Br Peter Carroll, many brothers, Fidow's family, friends, Religious Sisters, ex-Marist students and supporters. Br. Peter invited Br. Anitelea to Profess his vows. He also assured him his continuing support and brotherly encouragement. The provincial also took the opportunity to thank the local Church, through Bishop Peter, people, and supporters for the way in which they have enabled them to continue their mission and ministry in Samoa.

Br Anitelea Fidow professed the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for the rest of his life, and he confirmed his commitment to Christ through the Institute of the Marist Brothers. In his speech Br Anitelea expressed his gratitude, to the organizers and helpers, to his mother and family. He also confirmed his faith through a cultural Penitential Rite from his country and was covered with a samoan i'e toga (fine mat), signifying contrition and forgiveness.

Redemptorist Bishop, Peter Brown, ex-student and friend of the brothers, explained the significance of the Profession and brought a sense of family to the occasion. His homily was simple but profound. The Bishop congratulated Anitelea and thanked the Marist Brothers for their continuing commitment to the Samoan Church and people.

Br Sefo Une, Country Coordinator, acted as master of ceremonies and ensured everything went to plan, from entry procession to presentation of the crucifix and signing of the documents.

It was a marvellous ceremony: the choir, with its variety of voices and harmonies, its English and Samoan songs, melodies, and rhythms, brought joy and beauty to the ceremony. After, the celebration moved from the Cathedral to the Marcellin Hall at the nearby Marist Brothers Primary School at Mulivai. The food of the reception was plentiful in Samoan style, and the music was constant and dancing intermittent. Among the brothers were John, Chris, Kees from Fiji, Tainga and Amberoti from Kiribati, Peter Horide from New Zealand joined the Samoan community of Sefo, Siaosi, Afa and Kevin for all the celebrations.



Institute of the Marist Brothers General House

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

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