



EAST ASIA

MARIST LIFE

Newsletter

January 15, 2024, Volume 02, Issue No. 25

KOBE COMMUNITY Japan

Hello everyone! Welcome to the Kobe Community. I will share with you the highlights of our 2023 and a glimpse of each brother's life.

Last April 2023, three of our brothers got sick with COVID-19. Thankfully, Br. Bernard avoided getting sick. · Brother Allen and Brother Yohan who were also sick during those times made sure that everyone ate their meals and took their medicines.

In May 2023, Brother Yohan was blessed to finally proceed with his planned Way of Santiago, a month-long Pilgrimage on foot in Spain. He had been planning this since 2019 as part of his Silver Jubilee celebration as a Marist Brother. Due to the pandemic, he had his plan realized only last year. Currently, Brother Yohan is very active in the Laudato Si initiatives and he facilitates a program in the nearby Kitasuma Parish.

Brother Joseph is turning 94 on April 16. He just retired from the translation work he had been doing for the past few decades. As for Brother Bernard, he was bedridden last July, and it took him months to be able to walk properly. He is still recovering from his sickness and is using the aid of a walker, an electric chair, or a walking stick for him to move around, going up and down the stairs to the dining hall. Bro. Bernard and Brother Joseph attend physical therapy sessions for the elderly. The sessions are beneficial for them to stay physically well.

Brother Allen will be a full-time employee of MBIS starting in August 2023. He is now a homeroom adviser of Grade 7, teaching Religion classes from Grades 1 to 10, and a coach of both boys' and girls' middle school basketball teams. On Sundays, he volunteers as a catechist, choir member, and Mass commentator in both Kobe Central Church and Akashi Church.

Last September, Br. Joseph Yoshida celebrated his 60th year as a Marist Brother. The Eucharistic Celebration was presided by Father Thirdie Caballero, a Filipino Vincentian priest currently assigned in Koshien Parish. The Provincial, Br. Allan de Castro and his council were present in the said event.

Back in November, our community went to the Kobe Foreigner's Cemetery in Mt. Futatabi for our annual visit to the grave of the Marist Brothers. Afterward, we had our outing at the nearby Kobe Municipal Arboretum to see the autumn foliage. But on our way home, our car got accidentally bumped from behind by another car! Thankfully, no one got hurt, and both cars only got scratches.

Throughout the year, our community had the privilege of hosting a number of visitors. It is one of our busiest years in terms of the number of guests we received. It was a joy for us to receive Br. Patrick McNamara, former Provincial of USA, in his first-ever visit to the Kobe community last April.

Br. Arnel Alfanta visited the community last June, and we traveled here in Kansai. Br. Jo-An Legaste also visited us here last July. Relatives of Br. Yohan visited us last July to enjoy the summer in Suma Beach. Br. Allan de Castro, Br. Rommel Ocasiones, and Br. Anthony Tan had their Provincial Council meeting here last September. Our Sector Leader, Br. Jacobo Song visited us here during the second week of December. Brother Allen's family visited Kobe at the end of December and spent their New Year here. I hope our visitors enjoyed their stay here in Kobe.

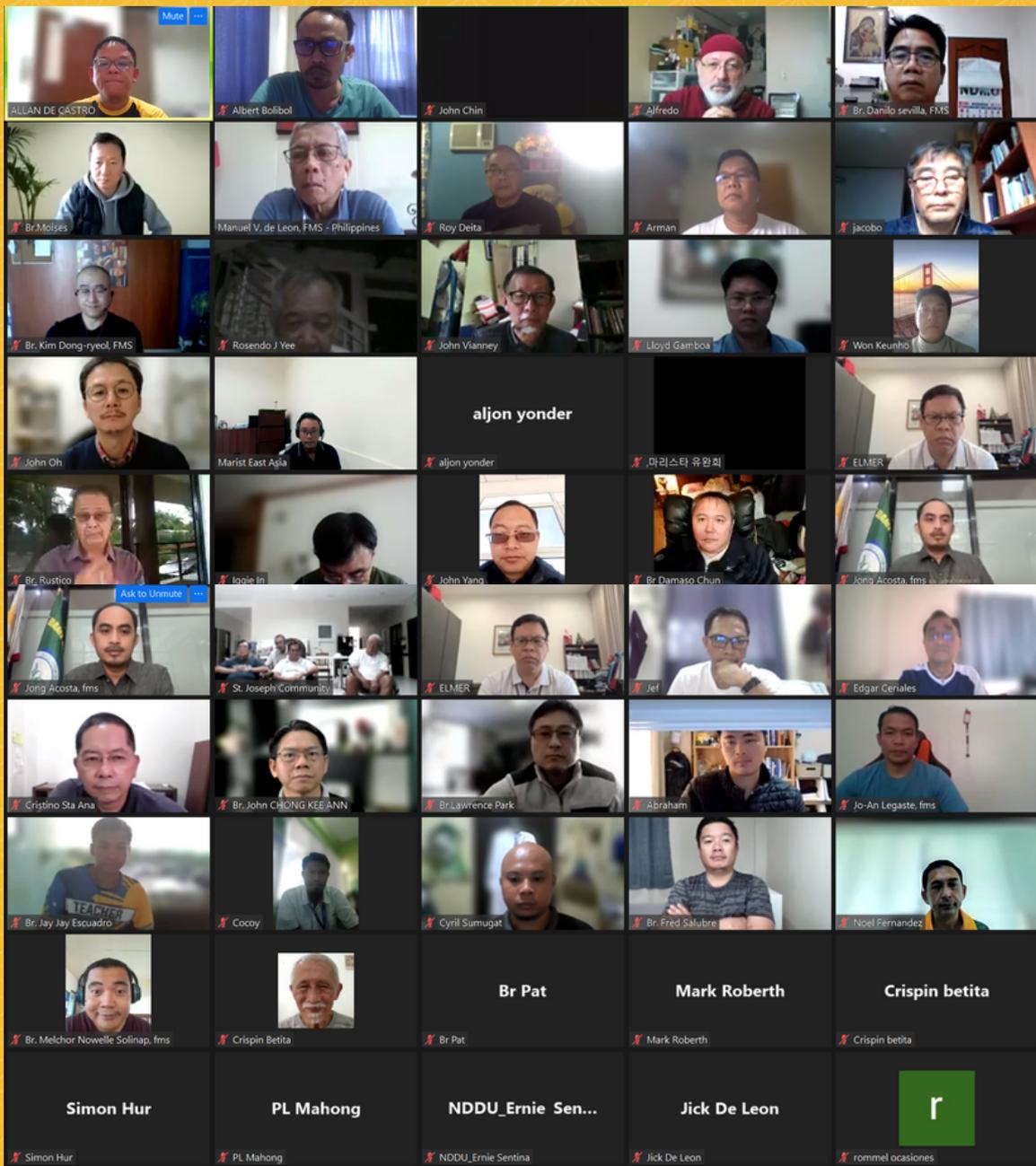


EAST ASIA PROVINCE HOLDS BROTHERS' ASSEMBLY ONLINE

The Province of East Asia had their online assembly on January 10, 2024. It was participated by 49 brothers from the Philippines, China, and Korea-Japan sectors. The said event enjoined the brothers to come together for prayer, reflection, and sharing of ideas on relevant themes important to the life of the Brothers.

Br. Allan J. de Castro, the Provincial Superior, and his council led the assembly by sharing the achievements and challenges of the Province in the areas of Spirituality, Community Life, Mission, Formation, Finance, and Laity. The active participation of the brothers during the open forum generated a meaningful reflection on the life and the relevance of Marist mission amidst the present realities such as, among others, the aging brothers, the lack of vocation, the scarcity of resources, and the challenge of succession plans in the ministries.

The assembly ended with renewed enthusiasm among the participants to live the calls of the 6th Provincial Chapter namely: to be contemplatives of the Sacred; compassionate healers; bridge builders; and carers of the Common Home.



Brother Provincial's Visit in Korea-Japan Sector

January 2 to 7, 2024

The Korea-Japan Sector is composed of Sector Community, Jecheon-Chungju Community, Ansan Formation House and Kobe Community.



Photo News



January 3-4: St. Joseph International School - Orientation for new Teachers (Kuching, Malaysia)



January 5: Installation of Br. Jeff Rhey R. Antiquisa, FMS, as Interim Director of Notre Dame of Cotabato until the end of SY 2023-2024.

January 13: Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family, Notre Dame of Marbel University Community, visited the brothers and shared lunch and singing re-creation time with them.



January 12-14: Provincial Council Meeting in Hong Kong Community.



January 8-9: Br. Allan participated in the meeting of the Association of Mindanao-Sulu Religious Brothers (AMSRB) in Cagayan de Oro City.

Birthday Celebration



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
BRO. MANUEL V. DE LEON, FMS
 UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

www.nddu.edu.ph | BOI Accredited | PAASCU Accredited | ISO 9001:2015 Certified | TESDA Accredited



Notre Dame of Dadiangas University, Inc.

January 4 at 6:00 PM · 🌐

On this special day, we extend our heartfelt wishes to **BRO. MANUEL V. DE LEON, FMS**. Your dedication to academic excellence and your commitment to the ideals of St. Marcellin inspire us all.

Thank you for your tireless efforts, wisdom, vision, and compassionate leadership. May the coming year be filled with blessings, exciting endeavors, and accomplishments.



In a Narrative Woven with Warm Hospitality, Unwavering Faith, and a Commitment to Service, Liz Igoy's Extraordinary Travel Unfolds as a Testimony to Marist Values



In a narrative rich with warm hospitality, unwavering faith, and a steadfast commitment to service, Liz Igoy's remarkable journey from the Philippines to Rome and then to the Hermitage emerges as a compelling testament to the enduring values and principles that define the Marist

Institute. Yet, as she embarks on a new chapter in Malawi, Liz confronts challenges that will undoubtedly probe the depths of her resilience and fortitude, as she endeavors to leave a positive imprint in a community grappling with poverty and the promise of fresh beginnings.

• An Interwoven Fabric of Warm Welcome and Unshakeable Belief

Liz's tour through Rome and the Hermitage was an immersion in the warm embrace of Marist communities, reinforcing the foundational value of hospitality.



From the well-organized trip to the friendly atmosphere of the General House and the Hermitage, every moment echoed the principles that define the Marist Institute. The experience deepened Liz's faith, preparing her for the challenges she would encounter in her new mission.

• Missionary Spirit in the Face of Challenges

As a missionary, Liz's invaluable time spent in Rome and the Hermitage expanded her understanding of the local and global dimensions of the Marist mission. Despite the challenges awaiting her in Malawi, the experience left her inspired and ready to contribute wholeheartedly to her new mission, embodying the very essence of the Marist spirit.

• Resonance with Champagnat's Legacy



From the enchanting chime of bells at Our Lady of Fourvière to the reflective walks from Lavalla to the Hermitage, Liz's journey resonated deeply with the spirit of Champagnat and the Marist mission. Each moment, from exploring historical sites to

discovering plaques that honor Marist heritage, left an indelible mark on her, reinforcing the timeless principles that guide the Institute.

• Engaging with Marist Communities

Liz's engagement with local initiatives and Marist communities in Rome showcased the practical application of Marist values. Participating in service initiatives, sharing meals, prayers, and engaging in meaningful dialogue demonstrated a commitment to the welcoming spirit that defines the Marist way of life.

• Exploring Marist Heritage and Global Connection

The Hermitage's exhibits and collections, showcasing the evolution of the place and



Marist presence in the world, provided Liz with a deep understanding of the historical connections to Marist principles. Navigating the cultural richness of the Hermitage involved visiting the chapel, joining youth ministry, and exploring Lyon—a city foundational to the Marist movement. These experiences created a profound sense of connection.

• Challenges and Triumphs in Malawi

In a moving odyssey from Rome to the heart of Malawi, Liz Igoy's story unfolds as a testament to resilience and determination. Departing on the night of December 23rd, Liz navigated through airports, including Addis Ababa and Lubumbashi International in Congo, finally reaching Kamuzu International Airport in Malawi on December 24th.



Fighting exhaustion and the challenges of a restless journey, Liz's yearning to connect with her family for Christmas fueled her determination. Unexpectedly, a missing yellow card at the health counter posed a hurdle, threatening to overshadow the holiday in the confines of the airport.



Undaunted, Liz used airport WIFI to call a waiting Brother outside, overcoming language barriers through collaboration. The Brother's negotiation with an intermediary paved the way for her passage.

Approaching the exit, another obstacle arose as airport personnel questioned her origin and Christmas gifts for her Brother. Responding with a mix of disappointment and fatigue, Liz pressed on.

Amidst meeting her community members, Liz steadfastly maintained a warm smile, resolute in embracing the unfolding experience. As they progressed towards the community house, the harsh realities of poverty came into sharp focus, designating it as the most economically challenged place Liz had ever encountered. Upon reaching the house, a modest dinner followed, and Liz seized the moment to rest and engage in thoughtful reflection.



Liz Igoy's journey embodies the human spirit's resilience, turning adversities into stepping stones. Her tale is a testament to the enduring power of hope and determination, proving that even in the darkest moments, the light within can guide the way home.

• Integration into Local Community

In the heart of Malawi, a Marist volunteer's journey reveals itself as a lively mix of cultural experiences, community warmth, and personal transformation. Brimming with moments of inspiration

"In the heart of Malawi, Liz Igo's integration becomes a celebration of unity amidst diversity. Her determination to connect echoes the Marist call to foster bonds that transcend geographical boundaries."



and challenge, the odyssey paints a picture of resilience, understanding, and the forging of connections across borders.

On a serene Christmas day, together with her

LaValla >200 Malawi community was graciously invited to partake in the rich tapestry of Malawian life by sharing a meal in one of the local Marist communities. The tantalizing flavors of the region's cuisine offered a sensory celebration, introducing the volunteer to the essence of Malawi's culinary heritage.



As the new year dawned on the 2nd of January, another chapter of cultural exchange unfolded within the walls of the Provincial House. Here, the volunteer was treated not only to a feast of flavors but also to the rhythmic beats and expressive dance that echoed the soul of Malawi. The experience resonated as a harmonious blend of festive joy and communal spirit.

Venturing beyond the confines of organized events, the volunteer embarked on a humble exploration of the local neighborhood. Attempting to bridge the gap between cultures, greetings in the local language were met with smiles, reciprocated greetings, and an unmistakable curiosity in the eyes of the locals. It became apparent that the sight of outsiders or foreigners was a rarity in their daily lives.



These encounters, though challenging in the face of unfamiliarity, became stepping stones towards fostering mutual understanding. The

volunteer's efforts to connect on a personal level not only bridged cultural gaps but also unveiled a shared humanity that transcends geographical boundaries.

In the heartwarming symphony of shared meals, festive dances, and street greetings, the Marist volunteer's journey in Malawi emerges as a testament to the transformative power of cultural exchange. The challenges encountered along the way serve as catalysts for personal growth, while

the shared moments of joy become threads that weave a tighter bond between the volunteer and the welcoming community of Malawi.

Undeterred, Liz initiated her integration into the local community, tasting local cuisine, participating in community events, and attempting to connect with people on the streets. Her efforts reveal a determination to bridge the gap and create meaningful connections.

• **Positive Impact in the Face of Challenges**

Despite challenges like incomplete house setup, transportation issues, and electricity shortages, Liz envisions a positive impact in the community. Volunteering at the local school and parish, understanding community needs, and collaborating with community members showcase her commitment to overcoming obstacles and making a lasting difference.



Liz Igo's journey, marked by inspiring highs and challenging lows, is a testament to the indomitable spirit of a Marist volunteer. As she faces the unknown in Malawi, her story resonates as an inspirational call to embody Marist values, even in the face of adversity, showcasing the enduring power of faith, resilience, and service.



Resilience is not the absence of challenges but the ability to transform them into opportunities. Liz Igo's journey is a reminder that every obstacle in our path is a chance to embody the enduring spirit of Marist values.

Marist Youth Ministry

Inclusive and Integral Pedagogy: Skills in Ministering to the Young People

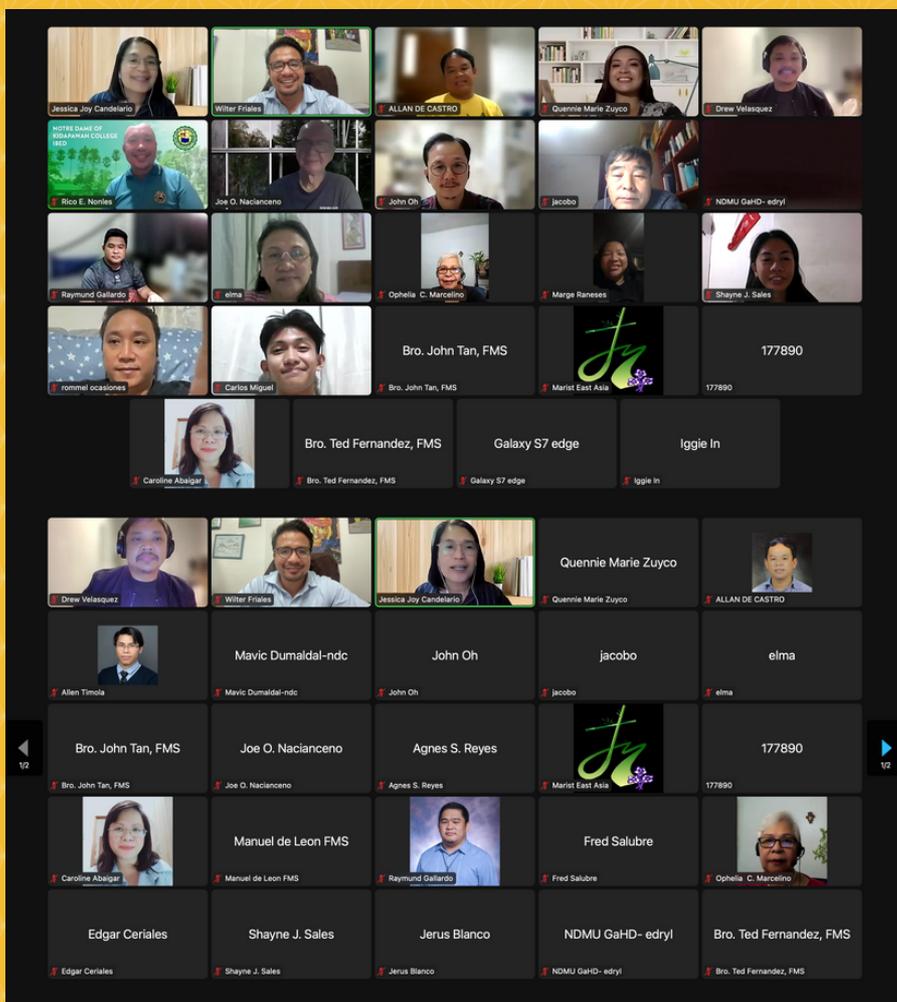
On December 22, 2023, at 7 PM, a session on **Skills in Ministering to the Young People** was conducted. This webinar was attended by around 30 people mostly coming from the Marist community, administrators, teachers, and students alike. The activity initiated by the Province Center, was a concrete response to Pope Francis' call to synodality, that is, to reflect together the essence of being-one-with and the importance of youth participation in our journeying together as the people of God. The said activity is also a part of the continuing reflection on the Statements of the 6th Provincial Chapter of the East Asia Province, particularly on being "bridge builders" on the concerns of the youth.

Ms. Jessica Joy Candelario and Mr. Andrew Napoleon Velasquez, the esteemed resource speakers for the event, are both members of the Bukal ng Tipan Pastoral Center, a center that journeys towards the vision of a synodal and participatory church.

The one-hour interactive webinar revolved around the mission Christians ought to share with one another—that is, journeying with each other, especially Marist educators' journey with their students. Mr. Velasquez, after sharing his own personal journey with the youth, challenged the participants to think of a Marist youth they have been journeying with and to share it with the group; this transcended to a heartfelt discussion of concerns and struggles. Ms. Candelario, on the other hand, placed emphasis on the following goals of Marist Educators' ministering to the young people: (1) The Hard Work of Listening, (2) Wishing for an Authentic Church, (3) A More Relational Church, and (4) A Community Committed to Justice. Moreover, the discussion underscored that the Catholic school education's goal, is "not to proselytize, but to bring young people and children forward in human values in all realities, and one such reality is transcendence." A brief but meaningful feedback portion of the event smoothly concluded the event.

Indeed, inclusive and integral pedagogy—this is what Catholic school education is all about; the Catholic community continues to hope and pray that the Marist schools and institution remain steadfast in realizing such with the grace of God, while embarking on a journey of synodality with the children and the youth.

By: Ms. Jireh Clarisse Salomsom



LAITY DESK UPDATE:

Last January 15, Ms. Elma Rafil, Chair of the Laity Commission, and Ms. Agnes Reyes, Laity Desk Coordinator, met to discuss the upcoming initiatives for the Marist Laity. Reviewing the Key Result Area for Lay Partnership, they proposed priorities to address from 2024 onwards. The following were highlighted:

- Marist Lay Vocation Encounter is scheduled for March 23-24, 2024.
- Formulation of the Guidelines for the Renewal of CMMF. Formation of three phases prior to the August 15 renewal of commitment.
- Intensify the formation of the Friends of Marcellin.
- Request for a brother-point person to accompany the growth of Marist Lay life in each community.
- Intensify involvement of MAREX and New Marists in Mission groups.
- Further, animate the laity in other sectors. Plan out regular formation sessions online with the laity from other sectors.

The strengthening of collaborative initiatives between the Laity Desk and the Laity Commission is aimed to further animate the laity, particularly in the conduct of formation that embodies the development of vocational itineraries.



CYPD Coordinates with NDEA for Anti-OSAEC 2nd Year Advocacy



The advocacy against online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) is now in its 2nd year of implementation under the funding grant of Misaan Cara. During its first year of implementation, trainings were conducted to all 63 schools of NDEA. The first program cycle was intended to provide and equip the school administrators with the awareness of the abuse and the mechanisms of combatting the risks through the setting up of protection protocols and guidelines for reporting. The student leaders were also given the opportunity for this training.

Last January 15, Ms. Agnes Reyes coordinated with Dr. Evelyn Dollete, the NDEA Executive Director for the implementation of the 2nd Phase targeting parents and students in the schools of all NDEA member schools. Br. Crispin P. Betita, FMS, the Chair of the Child and Youth Protection Desk hopes that a greater consciousness on the protection of children against all forms of online risks will eventually help and benefit children, a cause so close to the heart of St. Marcellin.

An Invitation to the

Marist Family Gathering February 10, 2024



Fellow Marists of Champagnat,

On behalf of the Marist Sisters, the host for this year's 2024 Marist Family Gathering, I am with great joy and anticipation to invite you to attend our Post Pandemic Marist Family Gathering 2024 that will take place in Davao City on Saturday, February 10, 2024, with the theme, "Marists, Pilgrims of the Heart: A seamless Garment given to us by Christ, woven by Mary, worn by generations of Marists". Sr. Sylvette Mane, Superior General of the Marist Sisters, will be our main resource person. This Marist Family gathering happens every two years and aims to meet, reflect, and share to deepen our love for our Marist Spirituality and our Marist family life and mission.

As a Marist family member, I am looking forward to seeing you, your fellow Marist Brothers, and Lay Marist Mission Partners. Below is the flow of the activities:

- 8 am Registration
- 9 am Holy Mass
- 10 am Snacks
- 10-12 noon Preliminaries, Talk
- 12-1 pm Lunch
- 1-2 pm Group Sharing
- 2-3 pm Updates from each Marist branch
- 3 pm Snacks /home sweet home

The contribution is Php 500 per participant, which will cover the two snacks, lunch, and other materials. The additional cost is a T-shirt Souvenir that is optional with the amount of Php 180 for dry fit with design (S, M, L) or an additional Php 20 if it is 2XL and 3XL.

Please RSVP by January 20, 2024, @ gelyns@yahoo.com or 09209014018.

With Prayers and Gratitude,

Br. Allan J. de Castro, FMS
Provincial

THE MARIST BROTHERS' PALAWAN MISSION

WHAT WE DO?

We are Marist Brothers, missionaries to the Indigenous People (I.P.s) in Palawan particularly in Malutok, Ransang, Rizal.

We aim to share the mission of our Founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat, in the field of education, especially to the peripheries of society - to those who are least favored.

We are focused on education and the promotion of cultural preservation.

OUR WORK

We strongly believe that education is not only for those who can afford it. It is an equally given opportunity to everyone. There are just others who do not have the resources to avail of it. Since we arrived in 2000, we have been able to send I.P. students to primary, secondary, and now tertiary schools in Palawan. We believe that when given positive attention through holistic education, the Palaw'ans can deliver themselves from poverty and eventually contribute to National development.



THE BENEFITS OUTWEIGH THE RISKS

Moving up the next ladder of education is the best feeling ever. It was the best feeling because, despite the challenges, you were able to reach your goal at last. Last June 29, 2023, twenty-one (21) kids had their moving-up ceremony in our level one education system in our Binikyat extension. These kids come from nearby areas in our mission school; some are a 20-minute walk away, and others are two mountains away from our school. And worst, some kids (with their parents) risk their safety by crossing flooded rivers, through a log footbridge, walking under heavy rains, and some wake up at 5:00 in the morning to reach the school to study basic writing, reading, and arithmetic. They risk themselves daily with the aim of learning. I felt that for these kids, it is more than the best feeling ever but more of an achievement because, despite the risks, they made it through.

Source: <https://maristpalawanmission.my.canva.site>

Provincial's Schedule



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



January 8 - February 5, 2024

January 8-9:
Cagayan de Oro for meeting of Association of Mindanao-Sulu Religious Brothers

January 10:
Online Province Assembly at 9:00 AM

January 12-14:
Provincial/Vow Council Meeting in HongKong Community

January 15-16:
Medical Check-Up at Alexian Clinic, Davao City

January 27-February 5, 2024:
Meeting with Vicar General and Assistant Econome General at China Sector

January 23:
Br. Albert S. Bolibol

January 29:
Br. Paul Ching (Sun Nam)
Br. Anthony Tan Kim Hock

January 30:
Br. Arnel S. Alfanta

Prayer Intentions:

- For all the church leaders that they remain steadfast in their role of leading the people of God.
- For our government officials that they may serve with truthfulness and justice.
- For all our Marist institutions that they continue to become agents of transforming lives imbued with Gospel values.
- For the increase of vocations to Marist life: brothers and lay.
- For our elderly and sick brothers that they may feel the comforting healing touch of Jesus, the Healer.
- For the poor, the abandoned, and those who have no homes to return to, may they find generous people to offer them comfort in their needs.
- For the safety and protection of those doing their job to protect peace in our community.
- For families that they continue to grow deeper in love like the first family in Nazareth.