



Marist Province of South Asia Newsletter January 2024



A new beginning awaits anyone who is willing and wanting to make Jesus Christ the Lord of their life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"





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From the Editor's Desk!

Life is not only good. Life is a journey to find the good in the bad. A journey to find light in the darkness. A journey to find heaven from hell. That is why it is not possible to think about happiness without sadness. If there is no hell, there is no heaven. Without darkness, there is no light. Without unconsciousness, there is no consciousness.

Therefore, be careful when expecting things like pure happiness, pure love, and pure politics. It should be a transformation instead of an escape. But the easy thing is to leave the bad find the good and run away. As we grow older, we have to wake up from that dream. Understand that if the branches of a tree touch heaven, the roots of that tree must reach hell.

In India, there is a group of Shiva devotees called Agora. They live in the graves. They sit on dead bodies and eat food cooked in a skull. The corpses are covered with cloths. Living beyond the boundaries of good and bad in life is an achievement.

Shiva is the unity of the opposites of creation and destruction. Agora believes that to celebrate the happiness of life, it should be on the ground of death. It is not possible to forget death and enjoy life. Because life is found in death. Human beings live with demons and angels. When the divine is present the demonic is lurking in the shadows. So, the greatest is to learn to live with both. None of them is perfect. Even the saints who were sinners yet were aware of the limitations.

Our cells die. Our relationship is dying. Our heroes die. Our beliefs die. Meanwhile, new cells are born. New relationships are formed. Heroes are created. Beliefs are built. But you cannot enjoy the beauty of birth without the pain of death.

That's why it is good to wish you a happy new year. But it is spiritual to start the year with an open mind that can accept good things as well as bad things.

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi FMS

Dear brothers and sisters,

Beginning this month, I am planning a series of reflections - my thoughts and convictions - on Prayer. I would like to call this "live in prayerfulness constantly."

I sense that Prayer for some of us is,

- an activity that is sporadic.
- something that happens in regular moments or situations and
- an encounter that takes place with a higher power in outer space.

I view prayer not only as an activity but also as something beyond that. For me it is a way of living. It is something that has the possibility to happen at all moments of our lives when we are conscious of the HERE AND NOW moments. It is growing into the awareness of God that includes oneself, others, nature, and the experiences we go through in our day-to-day life.

In this month's reflection I would like to focus on **the immutable or indestructible reality** in each one of us. The meaning is that each one of us is created "in the image and likeness of God."

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness (Genesis 1:26). Let me try to elaborate on this.

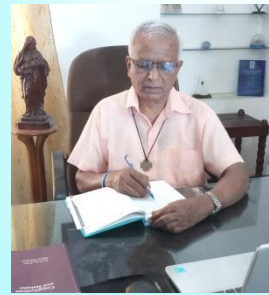
This Bible quotation can be interpreted as **GROWING INTO THE AWARENESS OF BEING A GOD-BEARER.**

As people we could be attractive, beautiful/handsome, intelligent, strong etc. All these characteristics can change in a person at any given moment. **Only the immutable or indestructible reality of a person bearing the image and likeness of God that would never change because that reality is permanent.** Unfortunately, some of us pay attention only to the impermanent realities in ourselves forgetting the permanent reality, most of the time.

How can one practice to experience the permanent reality? Here are three steps that might help us experience this reality all through the day.

1. Looking at the mirror, my tendency is to pay attention to the impermanent gifts in me: my complexion, my hair etc. I suggest that you dedicate some time to look at God within you. This is going beyond those impermanent gifts and trying to appreciate and value the never changing precious gift of yourself.
2. **When recognizing God in oneself, try to become aware of the mission that each one of us is entrusted to. This is to proclaim God in oneself more during the interactions with others.**
3. In your interaction with others, try to become aware of making your **EGO** disappear. Allow **GOD** to be proclaimed through your words, gestures, and emotions like smile etc. Then you will be able to echo the words of St. Paul to the Galatians in chapter 2. Verse 20 in the New Testament: ***"It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.***

Bro. Nicholas Fernando, Provincial



A Call within a Call



Br. Zubair Yaqub, FMS, who had been discerning about his call as Marist Brother for the past couple of years, he called it, “a call within a call”. He has finally taken wings and have flown to the Davao, Philippines to continue the process of his discernment as a Marist Priest.

Zubair, had been quite busy since the beginning getting ready with various formalities of visa and organizing his departure. When he received his visa on the 22nd, he informed while he was returning from Islamabad, that his ticket was also confirmed for the 26th of January.

The community manage to grab an evening from his hectic schedule to pray, eat and share a fraternal evening. On 24th January, in the evening, we came together as a community for prayers especially organized to pray with and for Zubair. The prayers were for his journey that he is taking to discern his call.



After the prayers, we had time to share his journey with us, he was given enough food for his journey in the form of sharing with, his strength and areas to improve. There were exchange

of gratitude for various things done by Zubair for the Community, Sector, and the young people. The evening concluded with a meal in a close by restaurant. It was worth dedicated for Zubair.



On the 25th of January, Zubair had his family gather at his home. So, he was also to meet most of his family members, siblings, and friends at a lunch.

He left by a night bus to Islamabad to stay with his uncle the overnight and took QR flight on the 26th morning for Davao. He arrived safe and well in time for the orientation with his companions in the Marist Fathers novitiate house.



We wish many blessings as he goes through this process of discernment. He is already missed; however, we will get over this in due time. Our hope and wish are, that has he discover his priestly vocation, will find much joy, happiness, and fulfilment as a Marist Father.

Bro. Paul Bhatti

Food for Thought

REMEMBER YOUR AGE GROUP TODAY IN THIS YEAR 2024

OVERTIME AGE

1924 - 100 years
1925 - 99 years
1926 - 98 years
1927 - 97 years
1928 - 96 years
1929 - 95 years
1930 - 94 years
1931 - 93 years
1932 - 92 years
1933 - 91 years

SUNSET AGE

1934 - 90 years
1935 - 89 years
1936 - 88 years
1937 - 87 years
1938 - 86 years
1939 - 85 years
1940 - 84 years
1941 - 83 years
1942 - 82 years
1943 - 81 years

THE AGED

1944 - 80 years
1945 - 79 years
1946 - 78 years
1947 - 77 years
1948 - 76 years
1949 - 75 years
1950 - 74 years
1951 - 73 years
1952 - 72 years old
1953 - 71 years old

OLD AGE

1954 - 70 years old
1955 - 69 years old
1956 - 68 years old
1957 - 67 years
1958 - 66 years

1959 - 65 years old
1960 - 64 years
1961 - 63 years old
1962 - 62 years
1963 - 61 years

AMENDMENTS AND RECONCILIATION AGE

1964 - 60 years
1965 - 59 years
1966 - 58 years old
1967 - 57 years
1968 - 56 years
1969 - 55 years
1970 - 54 years
1971 - 53 years old
1972 - 52 years
1973 - 51 years

ACHIEVEMENTS AND FULFILMENT AGE

1974 - 50 years old
1975 - 49 years old
1976 - 48 years
1977 - 47 years
1978 - 46 years
1979 - 45 years old
1980 - 44 years
1981 - 43 years
1982 - 42 years old
1983 - 41 years

DECISION MAKING AGE

1984 - 40 years old
1985 - 39 years
1986 - 38 years old
1987 - 37 years old
1988 - 36 years
1989 - 35 years old
1990 - 34 years old
1991 - 33 years old

1992 - 32 years old
1993 - 31 years

COMMITMENT & DETERMINATION AGE

1994 - 30 years old
1995 - 29 years
1996 - 28 years
1997 - 27 years
1998 - 26 years
1999 - 25 years old
2000 - 24 years
2001 - 23 years
2002 - 22 years old
2003 - 21 years


ADOLESCENCE AND STUDIES

2004 - 20 years
2005 - 19 years
2006 - 18 years old
2007 - 17 years
2008 - 16 years
2009 - 15 years
2010 - 14 years
2011 - 13 years
2012 - 12 years
2013 - 11 years

BABY'S & TODDLERS SUPERVISION AGE

2014 - 10 years
2015 - 09 years
2016 - 08 years
2017 - 07 years
2018 - 06 years
2019 - 05 years
2020 - 04 years
2021 - 03 years
2022 - 02 years
2023 - 01 year
2024 - month

Avoid pretending that you are still young. Always remember that time does not wait for anybody. Think twice about your age. As the days go by, we approach our resting place. Ask yourself these questions:



What have I really done for my family, relatives, friends and God since I came to this earth?

Is there anything I can still do?

So do something now because time is passing swiftly and it may be too late. Every day you get older, make yourself a treasure because this world is temporary. Be grateful to God and start to push forward with determination and hard work with prayer and diligence and you will gain eternal life which is HEAVEN
: BEWARE OF "ONE DAY"

ONE DAY, you will retire from active civil service and start leaving a private life.

ONE DAY another person will be sitting on your seat and be in your position.

ONE DAY, you will lock your door, but you will not be the one to open it.

ONE DAY, you will wash that best clothes of yours and you will not be able to wear it.

ONE DAY, your favorite food will be prepared and you will not be there to eat it anymore.

ONE DAY, you will eat and drink what you will never excrete.

ONE DAY, your curriculum vitae and all your years of experience will not matter to anyone anymore.

ONE DAY, the person that seems to love you most will never dare to move closer to you.

ONE DAY, you will think of what you can never accomplish.

ONE DAY, you will be regarded as "a corpse"

ONE DAY, you will be isolated in a place called "grave"

ONE DAY, those things and people you love most will come your way but you will not be able to give any attention to it/them.

ONE DAY, you will hold your breath and never be able to release it.


ONE DAY, you will become a defendant before The Chief Judge (GOD).

ONE DAY, housefly/ termites will come your way and you will be unable to chase them.

ONE DAY, you will receive a call that you can never decline.

ONE DAY, your name will be called, but no one will answer.

ONE DAY, the assets you cherished most will be taken by another person.



ONE DAY, your deed on Earth will be presented to you like a CD.

ONE DAY a title will be added to your name "Late"

ONE DAY, The Great Allocator will allocate you to an appropriate place.

ONE DAY, that your beautiful skin will turn to its original nature-sand/dust.

ONE DAY, your entire body will cease operation. The verb will change from he is a good man to he was a good man.

ONE DAY, you will be given an eternal apartment, either Paradise or hell.

ONE DAY, you will not be able to hold or type anything on this phone anymore.

In Summary, take LIFE easy, DO GOOD, and run from EVIL. Be at peace with everyone, love your neighbour as yourself and remember that "that ONE DAY will surely come when this write up shall be fulfilled in your Life."

Please inform your Loved ones and people you wish to save from hell, to remind THEM about that ONE DAY'

May God continue to bless and guide us so as to be conscious of tomorrow..

Be careful how you live today

Don't Cherish worldly things more than the creator of the world

Remember someone owns your life

Don't cause people to cry because of your maltreatment to them

Only one thing will not perish after you have gone , that's your good work,

Choose your set

"Only Remembered By What You Have Done" God will help us all.



Pongal in the Marist Primary School at PU

We celebrated Pongal in the Marist Primary School at Pu on the 12th of January. All the teachers and students contributed something to the Pongal. They brought rice, jaggery, and dhall from home. All the students came to school in colorful dress. All the teachers and students worked together to prepare Pongal. When the Pongal was ready, we had a prayer of thanksgiving. After the prayer, the teachers served the Pongal to the students. It was a happy moment. The kids were very happy and enjoyed it very much.



Bro. Arokiasamy FMS



Youth Night 2023

St. Mary's Youth Association celebrated its 6th anniversary at 'Marist Sewana' on 13th January 2023. The purpose of establishing our youth group was to encourage youth to develop a personal relationship with Jesus through daily sharing of the Word of God, time in prayer, and through active witnessing and sharing God's love. Show them by your example what true faith, authentic Christianity, and discipleship look like as empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Br. Chamara our guide from the beginning of our journey addressed saying the youth is the are the future leaders, who will drive development and the and zeal. The role of the and moral development several ways in which society and its growth



backbone of any nation. They entrepreneurs, and employees economic growth and discipline of society with faith youth in economic development is therefore crucial. There are the youth can contribute to with a passion.



The night was organized starting with a thanksgiving prayer by Thinuka Hasalanka, and a welcome speech by Br. Chamara and we cut a cake symbolizing our unity and continued the celebration with games and songs. The most important event was starting the fire and all danced around the fire in the middle. Thanks, Hashan for being a wonderful master of the ceremony.

The mission of the Youth Ministry therefore is to provide for the formation

and organization of the youth – with events, retreats, and mission trips – to realize their potential, empower them to live as disciples of Jesus, elicit their participation in Church activities, and to prepare them as future parish leaders and country leader as well.

Our youth group is so thankful to the Brothers at 'Marist Sewana' for always guiding us and giving us generously their place for our activities. We are inspired and revitalized to continue our journey under the guidance of the Marist Brothers, Haldanduwana.

Shehan Kavishka



Poverty

Poverty is a marketing strategy in the world of politics, media, and NGOs. It is a spring of wealth to them. They market poverty to make them rich and to keep the poor in their desperate state throughout but ignorant civilians do not understand the tragedy of their children's future. The poor cannot stop the politicians from misleading them but they can stop being misled. Ironically, they do not understand this harsh truth because ignorance of the truth is worse than poverty.

Poverty is synonymous with ignorance. In other words, ignorance and poverty are two sides of the same coin. Ignorance of the truth, and overlooking the truth are incurable symptoms of foolishness. Knowing the truth but listening and believing in something untrue is poverty. Being blind to the truth and following age-old traditions, beliefs, rituals, and practices blindly is also utter foolishness and ignorance. Such people willingly nurture the twin babies of ignorance and poverty very affectionately in their bosoms.

Financial poverty is not as dangerous as social poverty, spiritual poverty, political poverty, etc. Financial poverty can be remedied but not the other forms of poverty. It is threatening to redeem political slaves who rock the political criminals in their heart cradles. Spiritual handicaps and social hypocrites suffer from incurable diseases that cannot be cured. Let us question ourselves as to what sort of poverty we have if we have.

Anyone can be born poor but should not die poor. To die rich and earn riches in heaven one should be rich in values, attitudes, behavior, etc. Be careful if you are desirously giving chase to wealth, power, position, or fame instead of riches in heaven because the day you meet a person who does not care for any of these, you realize how poor you are. Dalai Lama says how poor some people are, they have only money! People who are liberated from attachments and cravings are rich in attitudes and standards of life. This is not a difficult task but unfortunately, ignorance is the enemy that misleads people from doing so.

Poverty is a blessing that guarantees the treasures in heaven. The poverty of life is not only an obligation of the Religious Congregations alone but anyone irrespective of their denominations can enjoy poverty and simplicity of life. Giving up a luxurious way of life, consuming the minimum, and sharing the surplus or the remainder is a fruitful way of nourishing our spirituality and enhancing social values. Let us strive to detach from all the worldly treasures for heavenly treasures.



Ajith Perera

University Lecturer - *Ph.D. in Linguistics at European Continental University USA*

The Nation Builders Par Excellence!

(This column 'The Nation Builders Par Excellence!' is a tribute to the veteran teachers who have immensely contributed to the growth, progress, and success of Maris Stella College Negombo. Their incomparable contribution to the nation's development, the propagation of the Catholic Church, and the advancement of the World at large should be admired.)



Strength in voice and endurance in personality is a blessing to a public figure. Controlling well-grown lads full of energy at Advanced Level grades and maintaining discipline is not an easy task for a novice in the teaching profession. She, who was a fresh graduate, was recruited to teach Logic to Advanced Level students who were more for sports but not for education. She had the gift of gab to control them, motivate them, and produce good results. Recruiting her to Maris Stella College was a commendable decision of the Brothers. She, who started her career as an average teacher, ended up being the first lady Deputy Principal at the College. She is Ms. Nalini Fernando.

Although she started teaching AL students in the evenings in 1979, she joined the academic staff in 1980. Her first batch of students sat the AL examination in 1980 and produced good results. In 1981 she gained the luxury of being a permanent staff member. Her invaluable service to the College and innumerable students is praiseworthy. Her contribution will never be forgotten.

Boys are boys. They are swift in action. Their impulsive actions and reactions can lead to disaster. Her motherly yet prudent approaches have dowsed fire on many occasions. Her interference in such scenarios has proved her strength of character and solid personality. She was loved and respected by the students. Students obeyed her. She was a source of strength to the Brothers and the academic staff when there were such situations. A sense of duty and responsibility was in her blood.

While walking down memory lane She finally said “I am grateful to all the Brothers, particularly Brothers. Clifford Perera and Clinton Perera who recruited me. I fondly remember all the Principals and teachers during my stay at the College.”

She enjoys life with her children and grandchildren. As Robert Frost says in his poem ‘Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening’, she too says she has a few miles to go before she sleeps. That’s how mothers and grandmothers are. Let us thank the Lord for the gift of Ms. Nalini and for all the blessings the College and students received in abundance and implore Him to grant her good health and strength to enjoy life.

Ajith Perera
University Lecturer

Pongal celebration at St. Marcellin Higher Secondary School, Mangamanuthu.

On 12th January we celebrated the Pongal festival in our school. Our students brought Pongal rice, jaggery, gee, and other needful things to prepare sweet Pongal. Our teachers and students prepared a tasty Pongal. After enjoying the food, students were busy with Kolam completions. Then we had "pot breaking ". The staff had a 'lucky corner' competition. Br. Lazar was the lucky man to get the first prize. Our students performed the 'Silambam' show. Our students entertained us culturally. Finally, Br. Alex gave prizes to the winners. Thus, we had a sweet day.



Bro. Lazar Sebastian FMS



DID YOU KNOW?

Interesting Facts about Charley Chaplin

1. Chaplin had a complicated childhood.

Chaplin was born in 1889 to Hannah Chaplin and Charles Chaplin Sr. Although his parents never divorced, the couple became estranged by 1891, when Chaplin was just 2 years old. His mother suffered from psychosis and was committed to a mental institution. Chaplin and his brother were sent to a public boarding school where they would be educated but suffer from continuous chastisement. Chaplin's father would die at the age of 37 due to alcoholism, having done very little in his children's upbringing.

2. Chaplin became rich very quickly.

In 1914 Chaplin made his first film. One year later he would sign with Essanay company for \$1,250 a week and \$10,000 as a bonus. A year later he would sign for \$10,000 a week and a bonus of \$150,000. By 1918, Chaplin would have already been considered rich, but his fortune would grow bigger with his signing with First National for a million dollars. Chaplin would eventually become a co-founder of United Artists and reach stardom all while becoming a very rich man.

3. Chaplin opposed using sound in films.

An icon of the silent era of cinema, Chaplin would live the transition from silence to the controversial "talkies". He would be noted for refusing to transition into the new technology, doubting that his characters would perform the same as in silent films. Nevertheless, after dabbling with sound in some of his films by adding music, Chaplin would eventually fully give in to sound in his 1940 movie, *The Great Dictator*.

4. Chaplin's body was stolen after his death.

In 1977, at the age of 88, Charlie Chaplin passed away in Manoir de Ban, Switzerland. Almost a year later after being put to rest in a Swiss cemetery, a pair of robbers stole Chaplin's coffin with his remains inside and attempted to extort his widow with 600,000 dollars in ransom. The thieves were eventually caught and Chaplin's remains were returned to the cemetery, only this time his coffin was buried surrounded by concrete to avoid any other such robbery.

5. Chaplin's home was converted into a museum.

Many years after his death, the grounds of Manoir de Ban, Chaplin's estate, would give a home to his legacy. Chaplin's World Museum opened in 2016, with a tour of Chaplin's life and work from his childhood to his later years. The estate was restored to its authentic form, preserving the look Chaplin and his family created.



Janith Jayamaha

My Reminiscences of the Indian Mission that is Completing 50 years.

The Brothers in India are eagerly awaiting the grand celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the founding of the mission In India. Currently, the brothers are proud owners of three schools and the Rainbow Project that serves children, youth and parents affected with aids. The presence and the witnessing value of the Marists are very much felt in Tamil Nadu. Their ministry carried out in West Bengal too is quite praiseworthy.



Let me go back to the origins of this mission. As far as I know there had been a Sri Lankan Brother, namely late Brother Francis Silva Studying at St. Joseph's College Trichy in Tamil Nadu. His life has made an impact on some Indian students in the college. One Mr. Lewis Joseph a close friend of Brother Francis has earlier expressed his desire to join the Marist Brothers. Later he has joined the school as a teacher managed by the Salasian Fathers in Waradarajampattai in Trichy district.



In 1974 at the request of late Brother Paul Ambrose, the Assistant General in charge of Asia, made an appeal to Brother Gregory Appuhamy the then Provincial and the council to select three brothers to send to the Indian Mission as pioneers.



Accordingly, Brothers Sunanda Perera, Godfrey Perera and Joseph Florentius were chosen to venture out to this new mission. Two students from Maris Stella College, Negombo, namely Manick Fenandopulle and Ravi Fernando too joined these brothers. All of them were to enroll them as Pre -University students of St.Joeph's college, Trichy.

Brother Gregory Appuhamy, the then provincial Superior accompanied the brothers and the two students to Trichy, South India. It was month of April 21st of 1974.



(Later Brother Dela De Soyza came to Trichy, spent some time with brothers and left for Bangalore to follow a course of Theology in the C.R.I Brothers' Institute.)

A house was rented out in Thillainagar, on the 10th Cross Street, in Trichy for the first group of brothers to occupy. (This house still exists in Thillainagar) Soon the basic facilities were provided with, so that the brothers could get themselves acclimatized to the tough weather and entirely different surroundings. Five push cycles were bought for travelling. An old man, an ex-soldier was their cook who prepared breakfast and lunch. The dinner was taken from nearby hotels.

Gradually the first community of Marist Brothers settled down with lot of expectations.
(to be continued).

Brother Joseph Peiris

Primary Concert 2023 MSC Thimbirigaskatuwa.

The Primary School Concert 2023 was held on the 30th of December at the College premises. The event was successfully held, and many students gave amazing performances. Veteran actress Malkanthi Jayasinghe was the Chief Guest.



The school concert is a bi-annual event involving all Primary students from grades 1 - 5 and integrates all the items into their lessons. Each year a theme is chosen and students showcase their skills in dance, music, singing, or drama through performance pieces that have been developed collaboratively with the Arts staff and their class teachers. Students also design and create their costume items, props, and sets for these performances. School Concert is a huge event on our school calendar and one that is highly valued by students and parents, staff, and the wider school community.



Jayangika Mirando
Teacher, MSC Thimbirigaskatuwa

Walk Down Memory Lane

Give a little introduction about yourself

I am Ledrich Fernando 59 years. I am from Negombo. I work as an electronic service manager. I am married to Ruklantji Perera and my son is Leshan Fernando.

How and when was the Association with Marists established?

I am an old boy from Maris Stella College, Negombo, and my son as well. I had an opportunity to associate with all the Marist Brothers who were at school during my 13 years as a student. 1970 to the day I associate closely with the Brothers and the school.

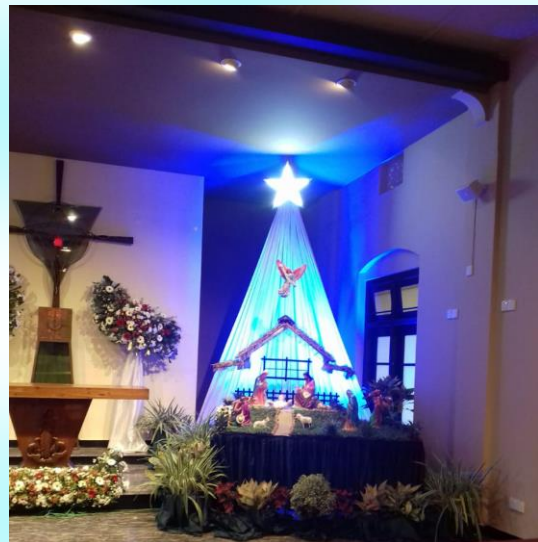
How was that relationship with the Marist Brothers affected you?

Well, More than academics I was engaging most of the time with extracurricular activities of the school. I spent most of my time in the motor mechanic room of the school. Therefore, I had enough blame from the Brothers yet Br. Clinton helped me a lot. I was lucky to have an Indian tour too to learn more about motor mechanics. I am grateful to Br. Clinton and still I remember him gratefully. Br. Francis Sales was a model to my life and affected a lot how he looked after backyard flower garden. I was an altar server at the College Chapel at that time.

We were the first batch of students to study motor mechanic. We started this with the guidance of Bros. Gregory Appuhamy, the principal, and Clinton Perera, Deputy Principal. Mr. Alahakon was our teacher. He dressed himself with all white clothes like Brothers but never dirtied himself even though did practicals with vehicle parts. We all learned a lot of discipline from him. Brothers' presence and teaching made our lives bright and still, when we see them feeling of respect becomes very vibrant. They build our character not only teach theory from the books.

Who were the brothers who worked with you optimistically?

Brothers Gregory Appuhamy, Clinton Perera, Francis Sales, Joseph Fonseka, Joseph Peiris, Godfry Perera, Shanthi Liyanage, and Clifford Perera were role models and the builders of our faith and Character.



How did you get the attitude to make the crib at Christmas?

When I was an altar boy, I noticed Br. Francis Sales made a crib using all-natural materials at the chapel. I helped him and I too had a desire to make. That was the beginning and it is because of Br. Francis Sales. Since 1978 as a college kid I began to make the crib and this is the 45th year. I am making it with deep faith and passion. Not only that but on holy Thursday too, I have been making the repository for the adoration of the Lord. In addition to that, I am the one who makes the crib and the repository on Holy Thursday at Grand Street Church Negombo with the help of the Youth of the Parish.



What is the difference you see between the cribs of the past and cribs of today?

Those days I planned a lot before making the Crib took a long time to collect materials. I make creatively using natural materials. I am not fond of using artificial materials. I am not happy to make same way every year. I change the concept and I make to give a message. I am happy some people and photographers come to see my crib even from a far. Nowadays we see Christmas lot of artificial decorations being used but through my crib, I want to give a message to use all-natural materials. I purposely want children to see and learn to be creative and use environment friendly materials.



What is your goal in making a crib?

It is mainly my faith to God and love for God to present Lord's birth. Second my love for the College where I grew and learned. Third I wish school kids would see this and learn to be creative and change their attitude to use natural materials and make simple cribs rather than complex, not matching or out of context. I want to develop that simplicity truly which we find in the crib. Sometimes we notice the cribs with all sorts of decorations which does not match the context. I see that insulting the true crib.



Do you have any memories to share?

Yes. When the Brothers were running the farm at Waradala I joined the Bros. Gregory and Clinton made and established the first Biogas system.

As an advanced-level student, I was sent to India for training. Br. Clinton was the one who guided me.

I was the one who designed Julian's house for several years in my school years. From 1998 to 2008 I made cribs at Grand Street Church too but now I help the youth to make.

Are you training someone to take this forward?

Yes. My son Lesan Perera is helping me and gradually he will take the baton. He is already an architect and giving me opinions too.

Bro. Sandalal Alwis

The Role of the Sunday School Teacher

The daily school teacher and the Sunday school teacher have a huge role to play in guiding the younger generation towards values such as respect for parents, elders, and respect for teachers. The factors affecting the deterioration of values have become so strong that it is not an easy task. But the work has to be done regardless of the challenges. If not, we will regret it in the future.



Electronic mass media is partly responsible for the degradation of values. Some television dramas and commercials set an example for children that cannot be appreciated. Some advertisements have been a blow to our culture. Before presenting certain advertisements, it is wiser to consider the negative impact they have on our values and culture. On one side, such destruction is happening, and on the other side, fundamentalists against the Roman Catholic Church. The force of corporate dollar-dependent fundamentalists has also emerged strongly.



Fundamentalists are trying hard to change their religion by giving small relief to poor families. Apart from that, strategies to alienate Catholics from the Catholic religion and the Church can also be implemented. It is one of the highest responsibilities of our era to be aware of non-governmental organizations that are trying to attack our religion and culture under the guise of providing relief to poor people.



In the face of such challenges, the teacher is entrusted with a great responsibility to preserve the values that are deteriorating and pass them on to the next generation and to create a good society that respects and perfects the knowledge of religion.

The Sunday school teacher has more responsibility than the daily school teacher. There are times when the subject of religious education, which has 3 periods per week, cannot be taught due to sports events and other events. Despite such a situation, the opportunity given to the teacher in the school every day is not enough.

No matter what additional projects there were, the teacher in the past carried that strong responsibility head-on. Today there is a shortage of such teachers. However, despite the obstacles, many qualities should be present in the Sunday school teacher who plays the role of creating a good society.



The Sunday school teacher should be an exemplary person. Children should be role models in their dress, speech, and behavior. The teacher who warns the children should stay in that warning. The teacher should be a person who has faith and respect towards the trinitarian God and the traditions of the Catholic Church.

He should be a person of calm demeanor who acts without being a slave to emotions. Scripture knowledge should be developed through constant reading of Spiritual books. He or she must be a person who is committed to guiding children. Must be a person who is committed to guiding children. Holy Trinity, Sacraments, Holy Church such as Bible, Saints, Priest and lay vocations, faith, prayer life should be taught to the children in the same way.

To fulfill the role assigned to him, the teacher who works as a Sunday school teacher with such qualities should prepare an annual program of the Sunday school at the beginning of the year with the cooperation of the Priest of the parish and other teachers. For that, it is more appropriate to use practical programs such as meditation programs, sermons, parenting virtue programs, Bible discussions, Bible knowledge competitions, street parades, sadaham tours, and Shramadana rather than by heart of lessons and lectures and other competitions.

While preparing the annual program, attention should also be paid to implementing a program that suits the identity of the area. During the implementation of these programs, the parents should be gathered and presented to them. They should also be involved. By that, the confidence of the parents should be confirmed. Then the program can be implemented successfully. We discussed in groups the events that we can collaborate with parents and it was an eye-opener.

It is also easy for the activities of the Sunday school to make the parents believe that through attending school they will get a lot of support for their children's character development.

Various problems may arise in the organization of tasks. In some Sunday schools, the attendance of students studying in higher grades has become very low. The reason for this is that some private classes are held on Sunday mornings.

After discussing with the teachers who run private classes in the area, they will agree to it by making a collective request to release the children on Sunday mornings. The parish, which belongs to the Sunday school, should discuss with all the teachers conducting private classes and request that the welfare of the children be given priority over personal profit.

It is our only wish that through the meaningful work of the Sunday school teacher who does voluntary work without receiving any allowance, the Sunday school teacher will be able to make a good generation of children in society and make the next generation a group of religious friendly to the country.

It was a half-day programme on 15th January 2023 led by Br. Chamara Hettiarachchi FMS. The Sunday school teachers were satisfied and grateful for this rich hour of motivation on how to be an active teacher. 110 teachers actively participated. We Thanks Rev. Fathers Linton and Vimukthi for guiding and giving us all the opportunities for our development as teachers.



Media Unit, Nagoda parish

PONGAL - FESTIVAL OF HARVEST

PONGAL FESTIVAL

The Pongal harvest festival in Tamil Nadu was jointly celebrated by the Marcellin Trust – Rainbow Project and Marist Nursery and Primary School. The celebration took place at the Marist Brothers House, St. Marcellin Community Hall in Rettaivaikkal, UKT Malai, Trichy.

CREATING NEW HOPE

Special guests at the event included Br. Chinnappan, FMS, Mr. Johnson Sahayanathan, and Prof. Dr. Christhuraj from St. Joseph's College, Trichy. Beneficiaries of the Rainbow Project cooked Pongal as families, expressing gratitude to nature and farmers for their sustenance.



BUILDING RESILIENCE

Students from the Social Work Department of Holy Cross College and Bishop Heber College, Trichy, organized various games for parents and children. Winners were awarded, and all participants received consolation prizes.

CARING LIVES

Marcellin club members led the event and served as Masters of the Ceremony. A bag office bearing the symbol of Australian Marist Solidarity, which supports the Rainbow project, along with nutrition supplements and medicine, were distributed.

SOLIDARITY

A lunch prepared by Rainbow staff and beneficiaries was served to approximately 200 people. Special Thanks to our benefactors and well wishers especially AMS, Mrs. Shanthi Robert, Mrs. Shabeen, Mrs. Amalia, and Mr. Isaac.



MARCELLIN CLUB

The Marcellin Club is made up of young individuals who are recipients of the Rainbow Project's benefits. These young men and women volunteer their time to inspire hope, self-confidence, and dignity in the hearts of the project's children. They serve as role models, demonstrating how to overcome challenges, dream of a new life, and build resilience for a brighter future.



Bro. Raj Kumar FMS

Christmas Get-together at Marcellin Nivasa

The importance of food during the Christmas season goes beyond mere sustenance; it serves as a cultural cornerstone, a symbol of generosity, and a medium for expressing love and gratitude. At the heart of the holiday season, a sumptuous Christmas feast becomes a vehicle for preserving cultural and familial ties.

The customary coming together of the brothers on Christmas day took place at Marcellin Nivasa. The novices and novitiate staff also took part.



After the prayer and carols brothers and Novices took part in indoor games. The meaningful Christmas prayer was led by Br. Chamara and the Provincial and a novice placed the baby Jesus at the crib during the prayer. We had a sumptuous meal. It was a donation from Mr. Ajith Weerasinghe, a Loyal old boy of Maris Stella College. All the Brothers enjoyed and wished one another. It was indeed a happy Christmas lunch.

Br. Godfry Perera

Christmas at Marist international Novitiate

Christmas is a very special time in the Catholic Liturgical Year, as it commemorates the birth of Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of the humanity, emphasizing love, peace and salvation.

For us novices, this was a time for our spiritual growth and to live out the Marist Presence which is a very significant aspect of our spirituality.



Preparation for Christmas for the novices began with the Advent retreat at the Serene Pastures Retreat House of the Good Shepherd Sisters at Bolawalana. The theme of the retreat was “Advent, a sign of hope and awareness.” Bro. Kikko our Novice Master and Bro. Real the Assistant Novice Master, conducted the four-day retreat which had many significant inputs for our spiritual nourishment. We concluded the retreat with the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In terms of sharing our valued “Marist presence” with our Brothers and Sisters around our community, the first was the “Parish family Christmas gathering” at the Tudella

Parish. Along with the members of different pious associations and members of the parish we sang Christmas Carols in different languages and entertained all those who were present.

On the Christmas Eve, we went to St. Matthews' Parish in Ekala and actively participated in the Christmas Vigil Mass by joining the parish choir and assisting in the animation which added more meaning and gave a festival atmosphere.

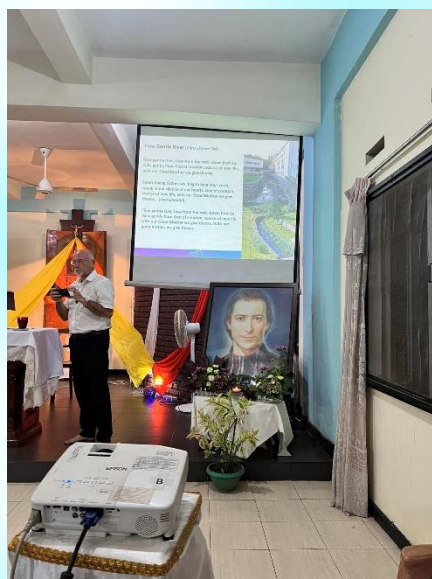
Accepting the invitation of Brother Nicholas Fernando, the Provincial of the South Asia Province we went to "Marcellin Nivasa", the Provincial house on 25th December to share the Christmas joy. A prayer service with a short reflection, singing of Christmas carols in different languages, entertainment, games and a grand lunch made us feel that all of us are the Brothers of the Marist Global family.

We also attended the annual Christmas concert of "Franciscan Poornodaya" an apostolate run by the TOR fathers, to assist the marginalized children and those with learning difficulties. Our presence in this event was noteworthy because some of our novices trained children in singing Christmas carols and this is an institution in which some of our novices are also engaged in apostolic work.

Christmas Carols of Marist Stella College, Negombo, Prize giving of the English Medium Sunday school of the Ekala parish and the Christmas concert of "Nisansala" which is run by the Brothers of Charity for Children with special needs were the other events we participated in the aftermath of Christmas. The Novitiate Community attended these in order to show our solidarity and develop a lasting relationship with our brothers and sisters.

In conclusion, this Christmas was a grace-filled time for us Novices to live our Marist values and to nourish our souls in welcoming the baby Jesus to our hearts through various activities in the community life plan of the Novitiate.

The foundation day of the institute



The 2nd of January is a very important day for all of Marists of Champagnat across the globe. 207 years ago, Fr. Marcellin Champagnat, the assistant Parish priest of La Valla in France founded the Congregation of the "Little Brothers of Mary" known today as the "Marist Brothers of the Schools".

The Novitiate community here in Tudella also shared the joy of the Foundation Day of the Marist Institute with a thanksgiving Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Rev. Fr. Joseph Chaminda TOR, Director of the Franciscan "Poornodaya". Before the Eucharistic Celebration Bro. Francisco Gracia, the Director of the Novitiate, gave a presentation about the important Marist locations of the Marist Brothers and their

significance to the founder as well as for the development of Marist Spirituality. Bro.

Shanthi Liyanage highlighted the personality of our founder St. Marcellin Champagnat and the characteristics of the Marist spirituality with a meaningful homily.

Many invitees came together to share the festive joy of the Foundation day with us. Among them were Brother Nicholas Fernando, Provincial of the South Asia Province, Lay Marists, choristers of St. Matthews' Parish at E-kala, a Vietnamese and a Cambodian family and the co-workers of the Novitiate. After the Holy Eucharist everyone present was served with delicious snacks, drinks and a grand dinner prepared by the Novices.

The event was a distinguished and significant celebration, marked by grandeur and meaning.

Prathap Ranasinghe
1st Year Novice

Christmas Celebration

2023 Timbirigaskatuwa Maris Stella College's short Christmas celebration for the non-academic staff was held under the leadership of the principal of the school, Rev. Bro. Marvin Perera. Gifts were distributed to them by the school. Br. Mervyn didn't forget to share the message of Christmas with the non-clinical staff. In his message he said

Celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ is more than a Christian holiday or a Christian festival. It is more than an occasion to decorate our houses.

It is an opportunity to pause and give thanks for the love, hope, and joy found in Jesus – our Saviour and friend. As we exchange gifts with loved ones, it is out of remembrance of the gift God gave us in Jesus. The gift is that we are loved, are never alone, and can have hope for the future.



Mike Kurakulasuriya
MSC Thimbirigaskatuwa

Eye Camp by Holy Cross College and Marcellin Trust

On February 1, 2024, a commendable eye camp was meticulously organized by Mr. Narmatha, a second-year trainee from the Department of Social Work at Holy Cross College, Trichy. This collaborative effort involved the Marcellin Trust - Rainbow Project. The camp took place in the morning at Mela Street, Uyyakondan Thirumalai.

Approximately 30 individuals availed themselves of the opportunity for a free eye check-up. For those requiring further treatment, instructions were provided to visit the hospital, where they would receive care at a discounted cost. This initiative was an integral part of the Community Organization activity undertaken by the students during their field training.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Miss. Narmatha for her dedicated service and valuable contributions to the Rainbow Project over the past three months.



Bro. Raj Kumar FMS

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Bro. Dulaj Fernando and Bro Pradeep Hettiarachchi from South Asia Province professed their final vows as a Marist Brothers on December 8 2023 at Maris Stella College Chapel Negombo , Sri Lanka .

The Liturgy was Presided over by Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandarasiri Perera OSB with two other priests concelebrating.

This was an important day for Bros. Dulaj & pradeep. Marist Brothers, Lay Marist, Parents, friends, teachers and family members gathered for this memorable Celebration.





Bro. Sujith Alwis

Exploring deserts dry

*Into the unknown deserts dry
I tend to reach the endless sky
Steps, although slow,
Wide horizons, yet to glow.*

*Sand and sky, a constant guide,
Desert winds, side by side,
With my aspirations high
I chase dreams, reaching for the night.*

*In its expanse, stories unfold
Many deeper mysterious to behold,
Facing sandstorms, a hopeful call
Through challenges, I stand tall*

*In the vastness, footprints vanish,
Whispers linger, a silent wish.
I hear echoes, a gentle song
A melody of memories, lasting long*

*In the desert's timeless dance,
Feeble and meek, slowly I advance.
Cacti rise in the sun's embrace,
Nature's arms, a tranquil grace.*

*Exploring deserts, with brilliance bright,
Golden sands, a dazzling light.
Sunsets paint the sky ablaze,
Stars ignite at night gaze.*

*Oasis serves as a welcome refuge,
Sheltering souls, a respite huge
Shaded palms, a refreshing treat
Heated dry lands and waters meet.*

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi



"Sacred Reunion: A Tapestry of Smiles in Shared Ministry"



As the image unfolds before me, the profound warmth radiating from the scene elicits a thought of enduring camaraderie and shared joy. Witnessing two Catholic priest and Brother, their faces adorned with big, broad smiles, holding hands and exchanging pleasantries after a reunion in a common meeting place, sparks a recognition of the unspoken bond that transcends the confines of religious duties. In this moment frozen in time, the image transcends religious boundaries, offering a universal testament to the power of friendship and shared experiences. The shared laughter, the exchanged pleasantries, and the evident sense of familiarity echo a profound truth – that bonds formed in common purpose and shared beliefs create a foundation for enduring connections. It serves as a reminder that, beneath the vestments and religious affiliations, these priests are individuals who find solace and joy in the company of a trusted friend. This touching scene captures the essence of unity, understanding, and the timeless beauty of human connection in the tapestry of faith and friendship.

Ashela De Silva

Birthdays Month of February

01 Ranjith Perera (94) 718582475
02 Clinton Perera (94) 776199525
10 Sooriya (94) 772195071
16 Arockiasamy (91) 9003585575
24 Devasiri Fernando (devasiri@yahoo.com)
26 Alex Arochiasami (880) 1767780389

Happy Birthday