

# NEWSBULLETIN



CAMEROON - GHANA - CÔTE D'IVOIRE - LIBERIA - TCHAD

Marist Province of West Africa

N° 74 | 2024



**BOUAKE:**

**AN EXCITING EDUCATIONAL ADVENTURE**

*In this issue, we find...*

## **CULTURAL IDENTITY AND MENTAL WELL-BEING**

Understanding the profound interplay between cultural identity and mental well-being is crucial in navigating the complex journey of self-discovery. This article explores how a strong cultural identity can act as a source of resilience and nourishment for the mind. "If you can listen, you will grow"





Br Francis Lukong, fms

## Education in Solidarity: A Possible Syllabus for Marist Primary Schools

### Goal:

to instill values of cooperation, empathy, accepting and respecting differences among people, social responsibility, peaceful resolution of conflicts, a sense of global issues, and acts of kindness in children, and prepare them to be active and compassionate members of society.

### Topics to cover:

1. Understanding Solidarity:
  - ↳ Building Empathy:

On Saturday, February 17, 2024, Br Francis Lukong from the Province of West Africa and Nacho Casamayor from the Mediterranean Province led an online workshop on the theme, "Education in Solidarity." The participants were Brothers from the Marist Province of West Africa. Br Francis delved into crafting a potential primary school syllabus, while Casamayor explored the concept of Transformative Education for Global Citizenship

At the end of their presentations and a moment for interaction (Q&R) the Provincial Superior, Br Cyprian in a concluding statement thanked everyone for making out time to be part of the discussions and emphasized the aim of Solidarity in Education is to instill values, cooperation, conflict resolution, empathy, and a commitment to community service. Solidarity, he affirmed, is a way of life. The mission extends beyond academics, focusing on educating children to live harmoniously, fostering peace, love, and the development of good Christians and virtuous citizens

Written by Br Valentine, fms

# Transformative Education for Global Citizenship



Nacho Casamayor





## Pastoral collaboration between Religious in Tatum

By Br Ndilon Nobert

Collaboration is at the heart of our mission in Tatum. The Marist Brothers actively engage with the parish and the larger church community. This includes hands-on involvement in pastoral life, such as assisting with the distribution of holy communion and the teaching of catechesis. The close bond between the Brothers, the diocesan Priests, and Sisters in the parish is referred to as the "Trinitarian family."

Beyond the religious family, the Brothers extend their collaboration to the broader community, socializing with both the school and the larger Tatum community. The recent Christmas celebrations brought together about nine hundred young people, including events for the school and the Marist community.

Gratitude is expressed to the donors for their generosity that helped the community celebrate well with the children the festive season of Christmas. The Brothers also played an active role in organizing and celebrating the week of prayer for Christian unity, bringing together Christians from various denominations. Collaboration and community engagement remain integral to our mission in Tatum.

# An Exciting Educational Adventure



In a magical journey of discovery, the little ones from Centre Scolaire Marcellin Champagnat de Bouake were delighted with a visit to the airport on February 26, 2024. This special outing allowed the youngest members of our school family to explore the fascinating world of air travel and experience the bustling life of an airport.

The highlight of the day was the chance not just to see but also to touch and even step inside a real airplane. The gleaming aircraft captured the imaginations of these young minds, sparking joy and wide-eyed wonder. With the guidance of teachers and airport staff, the children actively engaged in hands-on learning and the magic of aviation.

As the day unfolded, it became clear that this airport adventure left a lasting impression on the little explorers. Their giggles and animated conversations echoed the excitement of newfound knowledge, laying the foundation for a lifelong curiosity. This enchanting experience will surely inspire the youngest pupils of the school as they continue to dream, explore, and grow.

*By Br Jean Alex Kouakou*

# Marist Pedagogy: From a psychological Lens [12(ii)]

*A Continuation from Previous Edition: N° 73 / 2023,*

*By Br Kramo Eric*

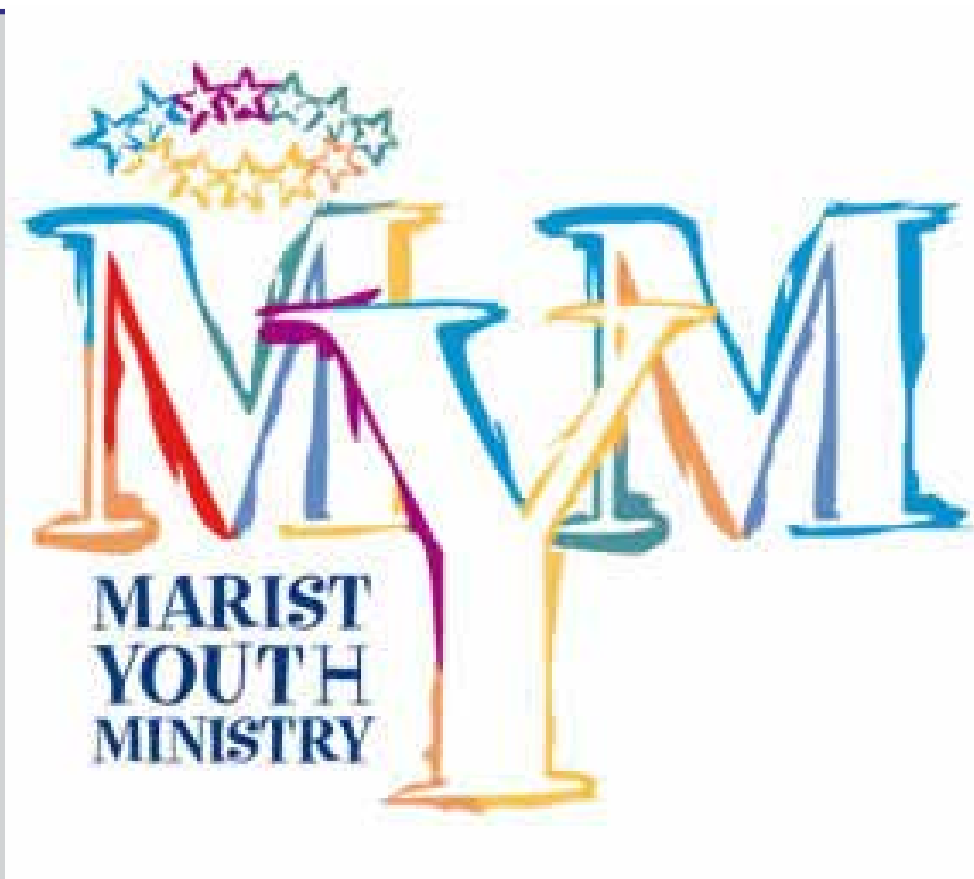
The Pieta, Michael Angelo's masterpiece, represents the pain, trauma, agony, and sorrow that the Blessed Virgin Mary experienced throughout her life. The artwork portrays a mother embracing her deceased child, tightly holding him close to her chest. This piece of art offers a moment for deep reflection on the prophetic words of Simeon. It serves as a reminder that the Blessed Virgin Mary faced an abundance of human suffering. Did she surrender or succumb to the frailties of her body? The scriptures provide insight into this question.

Despite the difficult circumstances of these events, Mary remained calm, unemotional, and hardy, as noted in Luke 2:19, "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." The devotion to the seven sorrows of Mary has since become a significant aspect of Catholic spirituality and represents the Holy Mother's resilience in the face of adversity.

Mary's Magnificat, a song of praise, expresses her self-satisfaction and comfortability unequivocally. The Magnificat contains a few expressions that bring these ideas out clearly. For instance, Mary says, "My spirit rejoices in God, my savior; ...

behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed... the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name...." These words reflect the self-esteem and contentment of a person who is at peace with themselves. Mary's words flow seamlessly in harmony with her soul and her deep trust in her Lord, who has favored her. This extraordinary joy undoubtedly made Mary's facial expression impeccably radiant and flawless. I can imagine the humility and sweet melodic tone that accompanied the first Magnificat. In other words, it was exceptional.

An analysis of Mary's life reveals several events that indicate a low score in the trait of neuroticism. Moreover, she demonstrates a remarkable ability to endure negative emotions and cope with them effectively. For instance, despite facing difficulties, Mary refused to succumb to self-pity and depression. Instead, she displayed extraordinary calmness, self-satisfaction, and self-comfort. Despite the adversity, Mary found solace and joy in her faith in God. On the strength of the above assessment, we rate the Blessed Virgin Mary low on McCrae and Costa's factor of neuroticism.



## MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE MARIST YOUTH MINISTRY (MYM)



CARLOS B. NYANTI

PRESIDENT OF MYM Sr. Shirley Kolmer Mem. Cath. School

I am proud to be a member of the Marist Youth Ministry (MYM), which stands out among youth organizations. On January 19, 2023, a workshop was held at Sr. Shirley Kolmer Memorial Catholic School in Barnersville, Monrovia-Liberia, bringing together MYM members to explore the unique qualities that define the group.

Br. Birkem Pascal led the workshop, which stressed Marist Principles such as Presence, Simplicity, Humility, Modesty, Family Spirit, the Way of Mary, and Love of Work. In my perspective, MYM's mission is to "Empower, Impact, and Transform Young People."

I feel blessed to be part of this ministry and grateful to Br. Birkem Pascal for his insightful presentation during this workshop. Special thanks to Br. Benjamin Florentin Kra for his support, mentorship, and dedication to the ministry.

To those who missed the event, your absence was noted, and we hope to see you at the next gathering. Thank you all!

## Cameroon



## Final Professions

By Br Cho Nchang, fms

In solemn ceremonies held on the 23rd, 28th and 30th of December 2023 in Bouaké, Bafu and Koumra respectively, six Brothers in the Marist Province of West Africa recently made their final profession of vows. This ceremony marks a significant milestone in their lifelong commitment to the Brotherhood. They are Brothers Kouakou Jean Alex Bertrand from Ivory Coast, Gueradi Tour-Hali Destin from Chad and Ndim Gilbert, Wiysenyuy Habib and Njuakom Augustine all from Cameroon. The final profession was witnessed by the Brothers working in these countries, their family members and students. The

Provincial Superior, Br Cyprian Gandebo received the vows of Brothers Alex and Destin while Br Oliver Tata received that of Brothers Gilbert, Habib, and Augustine on behalf of the Superior General.

The Final Profession of these Brothers in the Province does not symbolize the end of a period of initial discernment period but also the beginning of a lifelong commitment to the Marist values of Presence, humility, and Simplicity. We thank God for the gift of their vocations, and we pray that through their lives, the Lord may call other young men to join in the service of children and young people in the Marist Province of West Africa.



Ivory Coast



Chad



On December 16, 2023, the tertianship course at the Institute for Continuing Formation (ICF) at Elmina in Ghana concluded with a graduation ceremony for the participants. The Institute proudly conferred awards upon a diverse Religious Institutes that took part in the program. The participants included four Marist Brothers, two FST (Blessed Most Holy Trinity) Sisters, two Medical Sisters, one SVD (Divine Word Missionary), and one sister from DMJ (Daughters of Mary and Joseph).

# Tertianship 2023

written by Br Jean Alex Kouakou







## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND VOCATIONS

By Br Elvis Tomla

This year, the Brothers have been actively engaging the youth after Sunday masses, during which they emphasized the idea of "new year, new fashion." Brother Teddy has been teaching catechesis every Saturday in the Parish.

The feast of the consecrated was celebrated on February 4th at Saint Louis Parish (Téguéré). All religious Institutes participated, showcasing their brochures and pictures of founders. The youth showed interest, inquiring about the various groups. Notably, the Archbishop briefly visited the Religious despite his busy schedule.

Following the exposure and interaction with the youth, a Mass was held with well-animated participation from the children. In the homily, the vicar General encouraged the children not to fear answering God's call. They were further challenged to visit the Religious in their respective communities. The day concluded with a shared meal with the youth and children of the Parish.

Brothers Lawrence and Kra attended the 2023 Archdiocesan Youth Festival at St. Paul Major Seminary, Gbarnga, Bong County from 26 to 31 December 2023.





## Giving back to her Alma Mater

On Friday, January 19, 2024, the class of 2006 alumni paid a visit to Sister Shirley Kolmer Catholic school, generously donating toiletries, mineral water, soft drinks, and 2024 calendars featuring each member's photo and profession. Before the donation, the alumni emphasized the significance of career choices and urged the students to cultivate discipline. They engaged in a 15-minute discussion with the School Head - Rev Br Anthony Doe Siryeh, the Bursar - Rev. Br. Birkem Pascal Funsu, and the Public Relations Officer, Youtoo David Kohn, exploring potential projects to support within the school.

By Voice Of Shirley news Agency (VOSA)



## Lenten Season 2024

Each year, as the Lenten season unfolds, students actively engage in a meaningful tradition of contributing essential items to support those less fortunate in celebrating Easter with joy. Commencing on Friday, March 1, 2024, during the second week of Lent, Brother François took charge in orchestrating this benevolent activity.

BR JEAN ALEX KOUAKOU



## CHEMIN DE CROIX



*The Centre Scolaire Saint Marcellin Champagnat de Bouaké during the Lenten period, organized the way of the cross led by Brother Germain Beda and animated by the students and the teachers.*



Way of the Cross

**College Catholique Bilingue Notre dame des Nation, Yassa - Doula**

23rd February 2024



# INAUGURATION OF NEW INFIRMARY

The Project is financed by FMSI



On January 31st, at 8:30 am, the ceremony for the consecration and inauguration of the school infirmary Centre Scolaire Saint Marcellin Champagnat in Bouaké took place. Father Innocent, the assistant priest at Saint Mary's Parish Zone, officiated the blessing ceremony.



# A SENSE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

*In our Previous Edition: N° 73 / 2023, we featured an article titled "A SENSE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY AND MENTAL WELL-BEING" by Br Therenca Banseka. Due to its extensive content, we present the continuation of this article in the current bulletin.*

Feeling a sense of belonging to a particular group or country gives comfort or calmness to the mind because one does not feel left out. Every other stressful activity was buried and forgotten because of the excitement of the cultural celebration. The mind was directed toward one thing because of the social bond attached to it. In explaining mental health and the importance of social interaction, Didier (2023), in one of the seminars that I attended, said there is a bonding hormone in our body called Oxytocin, which improves our mental health. This implies that doing things together and living together is significant for our mental health. Loneliness is one of the highest killers because it comes with worries about our daily sad experiences, which can result in stress and depression.

Mental health has become a global concern in recent years. This is because many people are gradually losing their lives due to experiences they go through day in and day out in silence, even without knowing the causes. It has been proven that social interaction is one of the ways to help enhance mental well-being in people. This is explained by the fact that one of the ways to improve mental well-being depends on the quality of our relationship with others. To think of it, a person who feels he is not being loved by others may isolate himself from the rest of the community members. This person can begin to undergo a lot of psychological distress,

worries, and feelings of rejection because the experience is gradually leading to stress, anxiety, and depression. This is where people tend to seek comfort with noncommunity members because that is where they find solace. If care is not taken, every piece of information about the community members is disseminated to whoever they meet because there is a blame game in place and we need sympathy from anyone coming our way. We can see that the mental health of this person is at stake, and at the same time, his vocation is also at stake. What about the integrity of the other community members when your information is circulating everywhere because the person undergoing this challenge wants others on his side and, therefore, will destroy the reputation of others? Lack of sense of cultural belongingness is a dangerous virus in communities.

Also, it should be noted that in many cases, nobody can make us not feel accepted; we have the responsibility to make ourselves belong. It could be because we are overwhelmed by the functions we perform or our opinions and refuse to listen to everyone except ourselves. Egunjobi (2022) opined, "If you can listen, you can understand. If you can listen, you can obey. If you can listen, you can learn. If you can listen, you can be aware. If you can listen, you can connect. If you can listen, you can support. If you can listen, you will grow".

## The best performing students are appreciated



A student in form one emerges as best performing student in the entire school



On Tuesday, February 24th, in Bouaké the Community, hosted a sendoff party for Pius Glay, the prospective postulant who spent six (6) months immersing himself in community living and learning French. As his stay came to an end, the community deemed it fitting to celebrate him, extending well wishes for a successful journey as he embarks on the postulancy program at Ahwiren, Ghana.



Galaxy S21 Ultra 5G

We welcome your valuable input. Your feedback and ideas are essential in helping us improve. For Comments, Suggestions and sending of articles, Contact:

Whatsapp: +237677085480; +1(845)3188314  
Email: [mnewsbullet@gmail.com](mailto:mnewsbullet@gmail.com)

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