

# Marist International Novitiate

March 2024

## Newsletter

The Joy of being a Brother  
Bik pela hamamas tru olsem brata

La joie d'être frère

La alegría de ser hermano

Niềm vui của người tu sĩ

සහෝදරයෙක් වීමේ සතුට

ভাই হওয়ার আনন্দ



# Champagnat wanted us to be Brothers

Bro. Kikko Garcia *fms*

Dear friends,

*"Champagnat wanted us to be brothers.*

*To follow Jesus, like Mary, by being a Marist Brother, is one way among many of responding to the call that He makes to each one of us. We listen to his call, we allow ourselves to be seduced by his loving gaze, we are with him in order to be sent (Mk 3:14). This way of living from our origins gives us an identity that fills us with joy and brings forth in us the joy that floods our whole being, like Mary. With her, we learn to live in a simple, humble and fraternal way with all those with whom we share life and faith, and we make every encounter with others a space to celebrate fraternity and to give thanks for this beautiful gift received."*

The above paragraphs are taken from the draft of the New Formation Guide ... and express the life we try to live in our Novitiate.

It has been a few months since the last edition of our novitiate newsletter. It has been a few days since 7 novices made their first profession (March 16). Still we have fresh feelings of the celebration and the commitments of the 7 of them in following Jesus as Mary and many Marist Brothers have made.

And now, we would like to share with you a little bit of the life of our novitiate during the last few months.

What we write, of course, does not reflect the full richness of the life of each of the members of the community, but it shows the spirit of our formation program. All the activities and actions, reflections, studies and prayers are aimed at the discernment of the vocation of our young men.

The diversity of our community, in thoughts, cultures, styles, dreams, are not an impediment to continue to know ourselves, to accept ourselves, to integrate ourselves and to continue to convert ourselves to Jesus and his gospel. Together we are clarifying our deep motivations, our strengths, our energies. We are daring to dream of an evangelical and Marist community life in the style that Marcellin formed in La Valla and a mission lived with passion for the children and young people that God will put in our path. Congratulations to our 7 young Brothers and to our 5 Novices who continue the journey!

Enjoy the reading



The idea recently arose of organizing a dinner to thank all those who contribute to the life and mission of the novitiate. The date of February 22 was reserved, the invitations made, and the menu prepared by the novices, with a lot of care and love and with dishes typical of their country.

It all took place in a family atmosphere. Someone said: "Here, more important than the work we can do, we have the impression, when we come to work, that we are participating and collaborating in the family life of the novitiate.

Another, asked what he thought of Marists, replied: "They are open-minded, welcoming people with a strong family spirit." One of them intervened spontaneously at the end to express his gratitude in the name of all and also expressed his surprise for such an initiative. It was in fact the first time we had done this, and we had to ask ourselves: « Why we haven't thought of it before? »



## 2024 STAFF DINNER

Bro. Réal Sauvageau *fms*

# BMSI Workshop

by Prathap Ranasinghe

As consecrated men and women it's important to live a healthy emotional life to fulfill the mission entrusted to us by Jesus.

BMSI (Mind, Body, Soul Integration) was a unique opportunity for the Novices to discover their vocation in a very deep manner through their own life story and grow in understanding of their own behaviors.

The aim of the 10-day program was to understand the underlying reasons for such behaviors in us, and to heal from negative and hurtful past experiences in our lives.



This Workshop was organized by Bro. Francisco Garcia and was attended by many formands belonging to various congregations in Sri Lanka and the Facilitator was Sr. Mary Grace Iglupas DSA from the Philippines. Fr. Ahil SJ, Director of the Fatima Retreat House Kandy, facilitated the venue and all the other logistics for the workshop.



**BMSI Oct. 2023**





**BMSI Oct. 2023**



Christmas is an extraordinary time for each Christian. It is time that we celebrate the nativity of Jesus Christ, who brought salvation to humankind. As a Marist novice at Tudella Novitiate Community, Advent and Christmas were a time for our spiritual growth and to live out the “Marist Presence,” which is a significant aspect of our spirituality.

Christmas began with the four-day Advent retreat at the serene pasture retreat house of the Good Shepherd Sisters. The theme of the advent retreat was “AWAKE” or “AWARENESS”. It was run by Bro. Kikko and Bro. Real. They brought to us many important inputs for our spiritual awareness of Christmas and to receive the sacrament of reconciliation at the end of the retreat. Right away after the retreat, we started to decorate our community for Christmas. It was a chance for our novices to work together as an international community. The novices have learned to dialogue with each other in deciding on decoration themes and how to show the culture of each country. Besides the celebration of the community, we practiced the “Marist Presence” by accepting and attending many invitations from other congregations and parishes, e.g. The carol singing in many languages in Tudella parish, Marist’s meal on Christmas day with Marcellin Nivasa community (the provincial house of the South Asia Province), Christmas Carols of Marist Stella College, the Christmas concert of “Franciscan Poornodaya,” and the prizegiving of the English Medium Sunday school of Ekala parish.

This Christmas was a grace time for novices to experience Christmas in another culture and also practice being present as a Marist among people. It was a time to nourish our souls and welcome baby Jesus into our hearts.



**Christmas at  
Marist  
International  
Novitiate**  
*by Quang Vinh*

# Community Outing to Trincomalee

by Bomes Tukana



At the beginning of January this year the whole community went on a trip to Trincomalee, on the East side of Sri Lanka. It was a good experience for all the Novices, and it was all amazing.

This was our first visit to Trincomalee. We were picked up early in the morning by a hire bus, and it took about 5 hours to reach the main town. On the way we visited a few places, like Dambulla and Sigiriya.

The first place we visited was the Dambulla Rock cave temple, an amazing place. It was a hard climb for a few novices, but eventually we made it to the top. The monkeys said hello to us, and then we entered the caves. Amazing!

Then further on the way we stopped briefly at Sigiriya, seeing the rock from a distance (unfortunately we couldn't enter with local prices, as the ticket office wanted to charge us tourist rates, about \$US30 each).

Because of the good roads it was very comfortable to travel. When we reached Trincomalee, seeing the sea beach was all fantastic. With bright lights of the fishermen, it was very picturesque.

The next day we visited many places, including Kanniya hot water springs, but only some of the places we were unable to visit because of the high prices. We were all pleased with all the smiles of the local people.

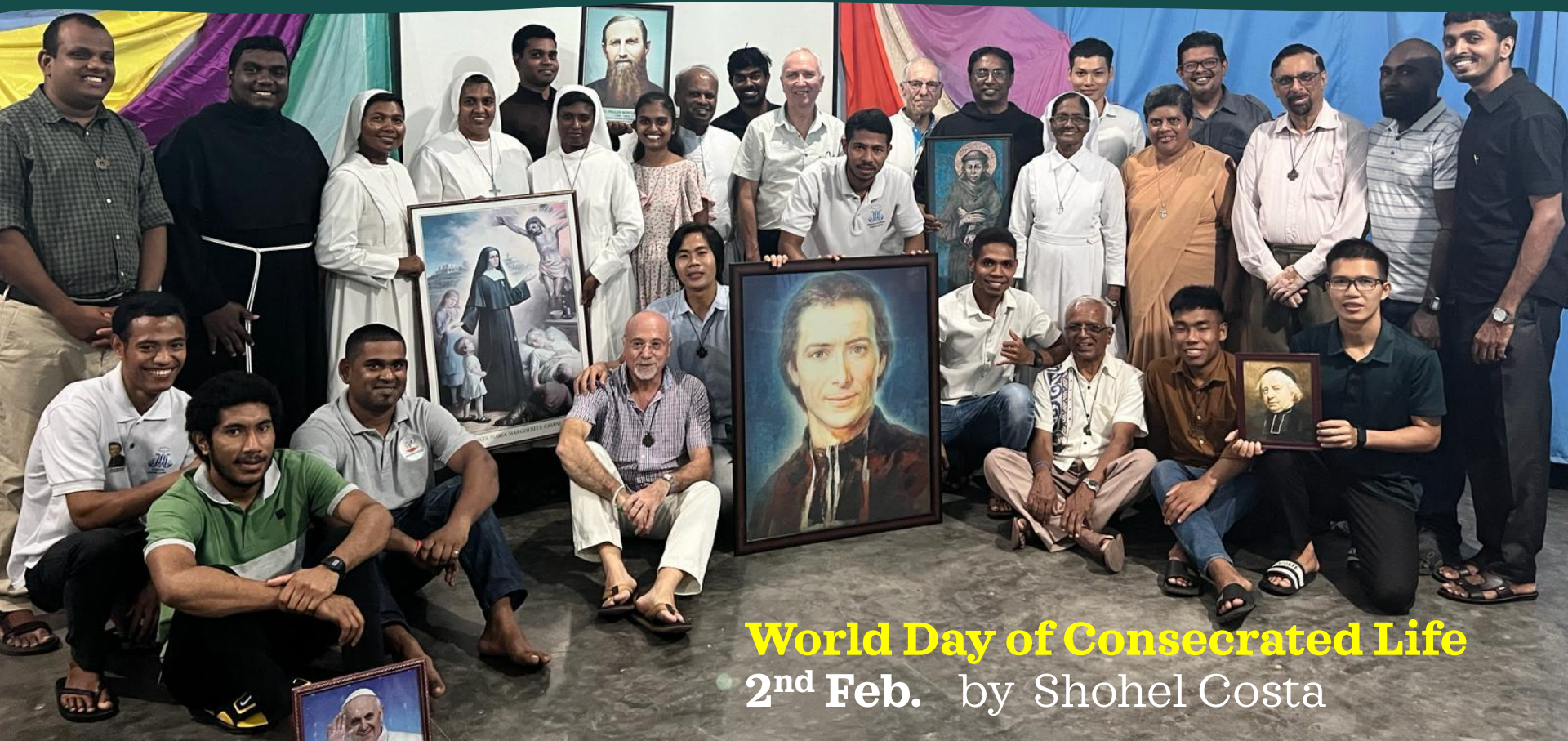
The climate was very hot most days, but for the remaining two days it rained.

Even though we didn't visit other places, the important thing was that we enjoyed the trip together.



The Novitiate, on the Feast Day of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple, celebrated the World Day of Consecrated Life on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, along with other religious communities living nearby. Among the Religious families attending were the OMI Fathers, TOR Franciscans, Franciscan Minim Sisters, Holy Family Sisters, Charity Brothers, and Franciscan Missionary Brothers, plus our own Brothers from the Hermitage, as well as Bro. Nicholas.

During the prayer service we gave thanks to God for the gift of Consecrated life and prayed for more vocations. At the end of the service each congregation gave a presentation introducing their charism, spirituality, founder, mission and their global presence. Hence all of us gained a deeper understanding of other religious families with whom we share our lives and participate in different ministries. At the end of the celebration there was a shared dinner, with various kinds of delicious dishes contributed by each religious community. It was a great moment of sharing joy and fraternity with others and created lasting friendships in the vineyard of the Lord.



**World Day of Consecrated Life**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. by Shohel Costa

# Iconography Workshop

Bro. Quoc Coung *fms*



There are many ways in which we can express our feelings with God. On 19 February 2024 a Workshop was run by **Sally Longley** through Zoom from Sydney, Australia.

As we know there are many ways in which we can pray to God, for example through Contemplation, Meditation, or through using words ... Sally taught us a new way of praying, with an Icon.

Through the strokes and colours we choose to paint, we can express all our feelings.



As part of our Lenten program, Br Rod organised a Lenten reflection day. This was open to other congregations, and attended by the Novices from the De La Salle Brothers, TOR Franciscans and Marians of the Immaculate Conception, along with our Marist Novices and Postulants.

The theme of the reflection was "When I am weak, then I am strong" and was partly based on the characters from the Novel "Les Miserables." As an orientation to the retreat, the movie was screened, with commentaries by Bro. Rod regarding the historical background. The next day there were different inputs by Brothers Rod and Kikko, and ample time for personal reflection and sharing. In the afternoon there was a fire camp and a reconciliation ritual with Taizé hymns, with the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation.

Apart from the spiritual benefits, this was a great opportunity for the participants to grow in the bonds of brotherhood and fraternity and to enjoy the delicious meals prepared by our novitiate staff. This Lenten programme helped me to understand that God has placed weakness in me to serve a higher purpose in God's plan for me, and to experience God's love and presence in my life through my weaknesses.

Lenten Reflection  
at Novitiate  
by Prathap  
Ranasinghe



Another milestone for our Novitiate was our latest First Profession on Saturday 16th March, with seven new Brothers:

Br Nguyen Quoc **Cuong** (Vietnam), Br **Dedimo** Soares (Timor Leste), Br **Edgar** Da Costa Salgueiro (Timor Leste), Br Nguyen Van **Ky** (Vietnam), Br **Manecas** Dos Santos (Timor Leste), Br **Pech** Reun (Cambodia), Br **Simon** Mendonca Maia (Timor Leste)

Their Profession was celebrated with Br Darren Burge (SOTS Vice-Provincial) and Br Canisio Willrich (MDA Leader) receiving their vows, in a ceremony led by Fr Joseph Chaminda TOR and two concelebrants, and enjoyed by 130 friends, Brothers, and local Religious in attendance. For this important moment in their life, they chose the theme: **"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."** (Jer. 1:5). Following our Community Sharing that evening, and a Missioning party the next night, our Brothers headed to their respective countries, to spend time with their families, before a few month's community experience, then their continued formation in MAPAC. [by Br Rod Thomson fms]

## First Profession!





## Bandarawela Trip

*(after Profession, after Easter)*

We all enjoyed a well-deserved rest after a busy month of celebrations, and so we relaxed with the company of Novices from the Benedictines and Oblates. Many great meals, excursions and good times!

