



Marist Province of South Asia
Newsletter
March 2024



“We are told to let our light shine, and if it does, we won’t need to tell anybody it does. Lighthouses don’t fire cannons to call attention to their shining—they just shine.”
Dwight L. Moody





Marist Brothers, Provincial Office,
No. 10, Marcellin Nivasa,
Mirigama Road, Negombo, 11500,
Sri Lanka.

Tel: / Fax: (94) 31 2238130
(94) 31 2237011

Email: nickf_fms@yahoo.com
lankafms@gmail.com

Province Communication Commission

Bro. Rajakumar, FMS
(Link Councilor, Commission for
Communication)
maristindiafms@gmail.com

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi, FMS
(Editor)
chamafms@yahoo.com

Bro. Saul Placious, FMS
placiousfms@gmail.com

Mr. Sudarshana Mohotti
lankafms@gmail.com



From the Editor's Desk!

A few days before we celebrated the victory of Jesus' Resurrection. This is our opportunity to see with eyes of faith God's love for us revealed in Christ Jesus risen from the grave. Saint Augustine and others remind us, "We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song."

The great mystery of our Easter faith is that Christ has died, He has Risen, and Christ will come again. As we participate in this joyful celebration, we acknowledge that Jesus' resurrection gives us hope. His victory over sin and death offers us a new commitment.

We must witness the hope that Jesus' resurrection brings to our world that seeks a reason to hope again. Amid our difficulties, weaknesses, and fears, God sends Jesus to be our hope. We must renew each day this divine life offered to us in Jesus' resurrection. This is our feast of Victory!

How do we witness the power of Jesus' resurrection in our daily lives? Has the unconditional gift of God's outstretched arms made a difference in our lives?

In Jesus' resurrection, all humanity gets a second chance. We are all called to be transformed by this Easter joy. In Jesus' resurrection, we see how good triumphs over evil, and all creation is made new in the light that shines through our lives.

We must be open to the power of the risen Christ each day. Jesus' life must become a model for us of self-giving and self-sacrifice. May this Easter season bring us joy and hope as we rise with Christ in the newness of life.

Easter is not just one Sunday. Easter is a way of life. It is a life where Christ is always at the center lifting us from the things that keep us in the grave and do not allow us to experience the life that God intends for us. As an "Easter people", we know what it means to rise from the grave and experience life as God has prepared for us. When life's problems come your way, lift your head high and say, Alleluia anyhow!

May we continue to experience what a relationship with GOD is all about as we celebrate the new life that comes from the Risen Lord Jesus.

Dear Lord Jesus,

We thank you for your amazing love and humility that led to your cruel death on the cross where you willingly laid down your life for our salvation. We also thank You that You are the resurrection and the life and that whoever believes in You, though he or she die, yet shall live, and everyone who lives and believes in You shall never die!

Help us to live in the joy and hope of your resurrection life in this Easter season and throughout our lives. In your name we pray, Amen!

Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi FMS

Growing in awareness of the presence of God in all God's creatures and man-manufactured things.

Dear Marists of Champagnat,

In the reflection that I wrote to you in the newsletter of January 2024, the invitation was to grow into the consciousness of God's presence in myself based on the fundamental truth that I am created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26). Bearing God's image is the only reality, which is immutable and indestructible in me.

Then in the newsletter of February 2024, the invitation was to recognize the presence of God in all my sisters and brothers, the only immutable and indestructible reality in them and to relate to them in a manner appropriate to the sacred presence of God.

In this newsletter, I would like to focus on "living in prayerfulness constantly". The invitation is to recognize the presence of God in all creation. It may be easier to recognize God in nature that surrounds us but may find it more difficult to find the presence of God in things manufactured by human beings.



Presence of God in the creation such as sun, moon, wind, thunder, plants, etc. are all living creatures. They can evoke in us a multitude of sentiments like awe, gratitude, bliss, fear etc. Let us take the advantage of the creation to be more aware of them and grow into encounter God everywhere.

As mentioned already, we could have the difficulty encountering God with things manufactured by human beings. None of us denies the truth of the presence of God everywhere and in everything. Therefore, one can come to an easy conclusion that God is present in these things manufactured by human beings as well. We know man has not created them. Instead, using the elements created by God, man has manufactured them. Therefore, we cannot take them for granted as God's, created substance is in them. This too will help us to sharpen our minds to see God's presence in all man-manufactured things.

It is true they are manufactured for our use, but not for misuse or improper use. When we use them properly with a mind-set of gratitude, they can become another form of prayer in recognition of God's presence in them.

A practical application of this thought could be to sit on a chair for study, relaxation, or any other purpose, and do it with sentiments of gratitude like love, and respect. This awareness will give rise to some healthy relationship with the chair that I use. On the contrary, if I misuse it or put it to improper use of it then it is possible that I could cultivate "sentiments of sorry" coming out of me.



The conclusion of what I have been trying to share in the three reflections so far are,

- growing into the awareness of God's presence in me.
- relating with all sisters and brothers to recognize the presence of the same God in them and
- finding God's presence in all God created and man-manufactured things to grow into proper relationship with them.

This simple awareness will help us to experience God's presence everywhere.

Bro. Nicholas Fernando, Provincial

Reflection from Alex's dairy from Manziana....

Am I a Religious Person or a Spiritual person?

First week of this "New Builders of the Hermitage" we had a short reflection on Spirituality. There we were asked by the Facilitator this question... Are you a Religious Person or Spiritual person? Based on this I would like to share my reflection. Last week I read a short story written by *Henri Nouwen* which will help me to understand more of my questions.



One day a young fugitive, trying to hide himself from the enemy, entered a small village. The people were kind to him and offered him a place to stay. But when the soldiers who wanted the fugitive asked where he was hiding, everyone became very fearful. The soldiers threatened to burn the village and kill every person in it unless the young man was handed over to them before dawn.

The people went to the Rabbi and asked him what to do. Torn between handing over the boy to the enemy and having his people killed, the Rabbi withdrew to his room and read his Bible, hoping to find an answer before dawn.

In the early morning, his eyes fell on these words, "It is better that one man dies than that the whole people be lost." Then the Rabbi closed the Bible, called the soldiers, and told them where the boy was hidden. And after the soldiers led the fugitive away to be killed, there was a feast in the village because the Rabbi had saved the lives of the people.

*But the Rabbi did not celebrate. Overcome with deep sadness, he remained in his room. That night an angel came to him and asked, "What have you done?" He said, "I handed over the fugitive to the enemy." Then the angel said, "**But don't you know that you have handed over the Messiah?**" "How could I know?" the Rabbi replied anxiously.*

*Then the angel said, "**If, instead of reading your Bible, you had visited this young man just once and looked into his eyes, you would have known.**"*

*The question Henri Nouwen asks every one of us is this, "**Are we not challenged in daily life to look deeper into the eyes of the people we encounter and to see in them the face of God?**"*



From my childhood I was a regular attender of the Mass, reading bible, praying rosary, Sunday catechism also, and learned all traditional prayers. I thought that's enough for me to be a good religious person. When I join the religious life as a Marist, I learn more on prayer, personal prayers, meditation, retreat, recollections... but the question is how deep I am involved in these practices I don't know. When I did my 30 days retreat in Goa Jesuit's centre, I learned deeper meditation and personal prayers. With all these I thought I am a good religious and spiritual person. But my commitment in the community and mission challenged me on my religious practices. As the story tells me

"Am I able to see the Messiah?

Instead of looking and finding answers from the Bible or our Constitutions, am I able to look into the eyes of my brother and see the face of God?

Am I challenged in my daily life to look deeper into the eyes of the people I encounter and to see in them the face of God?"

If I am able to find the answer for these questions... I may have a good community and mission life wherever I am assigned. Whatever happens in the community, if I try to see the goodness of my brother and look for the way to help him to come out from the problems, surely the Messiah will be in the community and there will be peace and understanding of each other also developing my brotherhood in a good way. Try to appreciate every single act of good deed of the brother, encourage the brother by using the positive way of looking at him and always try to say 'you are a good brother' 'you are a nice person', 'you are doing well...' Some good words and appreciation will help the brother to change his ways of speaking, avoid seeing the issues in negative ways, and help him to come close to the brothers in an honest and humble way. If all the brothers in the community do this way... no need of looking for advice or solutions in the Bible or our Constitutions, because, we are living the Bible and the Constitutions by our loving, humble and simple life.

You may think it's not easy to live like this, too much of unreality... not possible to put in practice... but it will be good if we try to put in our life as a professed brother. Being a spiritual person, is simplicity, sincerity, purity and humility. A simple life helps the person grow. A sincere life helps the person live our brotherhood.

Also, I find these short comparisons of Religion and spirituality...

Religion Vs Spirituality

Religion : Worships God
Spirituality: Encourages oneness with God

Religion : God is outside of you
Spirituality: God is within you

Religion : Separates people who have different beliefs
Spirituality: Unites people regardless of their beliefs

Religion : Teaches people to be afraid of hell
Spirituality: Teaches people to create heaven on Earth

Religion : Based on fear and restriction
Spirituality: Based on love and freedom

Religion : Feels like being a single drop in the ocean.
Spirituality: Feels like being the entire ocean in a single drop.

Religion : Based on others' experience
Spirituality: Based on your personal experience.

Brothers, this is my short reflection and part of my journal. If it is worth enough to read and reflect and try to discern ourselves maybe it will be helpful for our committed life. I wish and pray for all of us to 'look into the eyes of the brothers to see the goodness of the brother rather than mistakes and it will help us to see the Messiah

Bro. A.H. Alex, fms

Food for thought

To whom is the difference between these two images
Can you say
Seriously a big trial of these two images
I'm getting pregnant...

Feeling happy even after watching the cactus in the first image...

But the balloon is hiked there..

With plasters on...

Because I love the cactus tree

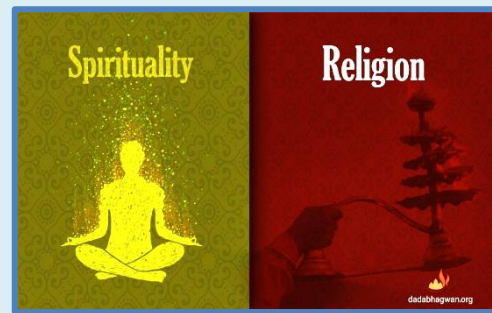
Holding on the pain.....

I am happy even if I look at the second form, even if I plant a cactus...

But I'm making a little change.

No hills in the balloon.. No plasters....

Because she has changed because of the love of watching the cactus tree...



Covering the bones he was born
Protecting the balloon as the balloons shake from the stone....

Exactly from these two images
In the first picture, someone tolerates the pain because of love..
Because someone in the second image is in love
Could be the other of him
Keeping him safe from harm....

So someone's mistakes because of love
To bear the flaws is also a love..
Fixing your mistakes because of love is also a love...

But my opinion is though
More than to bear because of love
If you fix your own imperfections
The value of that love is so high...
Because not even one of the two feels pain....
When someone is tolerating the mistakes of others because of love.
Someone is in pain....

So if you love it, it is for each other.
Let's fix our own mistakes....



The Lantern and the Truthful People

A certain philosopher, out of curiosity, went in search of truthful men or honest people in the world. He had an age-old lantern that was of immense support for his exploration. This lamp had the miraculous power of exposing the true self of a person. When this lamp is held closer to a person's face, the true self or the inner self of the person can easily be seen. The inner true self of a person that is hidden even in broad daylight could be seen from the light of the lantern.

The philosopher first went to America in search of truthful men. On seeing him walking to and fro in broad daylight holding the lantern closer to the faces of the people in a busy city in America, a person questioned him out of curiosity. "What are you doing?" "This is an experiment. I am looking for truthful people." "But what is this lantern for? Why are you carrying it in the broad daylight?" "This is not an ordinary lantern. I can see the inner true self of people with this lantern." "You may do it with good intentions but my dear your purpose would be lost in America. There are no such honest people now in America. We had exemplary leaders like Abraham Lincoln. That era is gone. But if you are still interested you may give it a try in Britain. There could be people of such calibre even today." So the philosopher then came to Britain.

He began to run up and down holding the lantern closer to people on a busy street in Britain. A person who saw his peculiar behaviour interrogated him. "What are you looking for?" "I am looking for truthful and honest people." "So what has it got to do with a lantern?" "Oh, I can read the inner self of others with the light of the lantern." "I so am sorry. We had eminent leaders like Winston Churchill long ago. They were very truthful and honest. Thereafter we have not had any leader of such calibre. If you are still

interested you may go to India. There are people of different denominations and different ethnicities. So the philosopher reached India.

Having seen the strange behaviour of the philosopher in broad daylight in the street of India a certain person questioned him as to why he was holding the lantern. "So sorry to hear that but your attempt would be a failure here in India. We had prominent leaders like Mahathma Gandhi but now they are extinct. We have no true leaders. Why don't you try this in our neighbouring country, Sri Lanka? They say that true leaders are still living there. He then hurriedly came to Sri Lanka. The confused philosopher began to run all over Fort Colombo in broad daylight. "Why are you so confused and running all over?" A person who saw the clueless philosopher asked him out of curiosity. "I am looking for my lantern." Someone has stolen his lantern. Now it is quite clear that not only the truth but also the yardstick of truth is lost in a country like ours.



Ajith Perera

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.)

English teachers usually maintain a prominent place in any school because of their exceptional approaches and behaviour. It is no exception with her at Mars Stella College, Negombo. Her students loved to see her in colourful neat dress code embroidered with lipsticks and a bit of makeup that added some pleasantness to her beauty. Attire, appearance and behaviour are very significant for a teacher to be pleasant before students. Maintaining one's personality is important to be a role model for students.

She is Ms. Laticia Fernando, my grade 5 English language teacher, who joined the College in 1979 during the tenure of Bro. Joseph Fonseka the Primary Principal and Rev Bro Clinton Perera, Upper School Principal. One of the admiring features of my teacher was that she created an English-speaking environment in the classroom and she did not use a single word in Sinhala. That reinforced her students to acquire the English language and converse in English with her. That was a boost for us to enrich our vocabulary and other language skills.

In addition to teaching English and elocution for grades 4, 5 and 6, she was very supportive of any floral arrangements at any school event. She volunteered to undertake the responsibility of all the decorations to add colour to the event. Her expertise in this regard is commendable. Until her retirement in 1995, she rendered a great service to the College.

Let us wish her God's choicest blessings, God's grace, and good health. Let us also remember her in our prayers.

Ajith Perera - University Lecturer

DID YOU KNOW?

Commonly Unknown Facts about the Passion of the Christ.

One of the best movies that we have watched about the life of Jesus was 'The Passion of the Christ,' Mel Gibson's profound attempt to revisit the crucifixion.

"The Passion of the Christ" was released in 2004, and made a great impact on the Christian community, and the world, for those who went to see it. Even though this depiction was graphic (parental discretion advised), it still failed to capture the full reality of what Jesus endured during his final hours on earth, but it came as remarkably close as we would expect a movie too.

Some of the facts and secrets behind filming this historical, and epic movie are still challenging. We have always been fascinated by what happens behind the scenes of a movie, and this one was no exception.

Jim Caviezel was seemingly the perfect candidate to play Jesus Christ. He experienced a shoulder separation when the 130-pound cross was dropped onto his shoulder. That scene is still in the movie.

That was a heavy cross. It was probably more than half the weight of a typical Jewish man. It took great inner strength for Jesus to carry such a weight after being severely scourged with a cat-o-nine whip, hit in the head with a reed, had a crown of thorn pressed into his head, and abandoned by all his friends.

Jim did it with a separated shoulder, though we are sure he did not traverse the full length of the journey but the pain in his face during that scene would have been real.

This film had more pre-ticket sales than any other movie in history. It grossed \$611,899,420 in worldwide ticket sales since its release.

Did you notice that the highest-grossing independent film in the world is a 'Jesus' movie?' This movie did not just appeal to the Christians, as we are sure a lot of Christians still did not go to see the movie, but the quality of this attempt had worldwide appeal.



Janith Jayamaha

The First Professions

Last Saturday 16th March we joyfully celebrated the First Professions of seven new Brothers, four of whom are from our Star of the Sea Province:

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





Their Profession was celebrated in our Novitiate chapel, 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 (one of our chaplains) 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).

It was a joyful day, full of God’s blessings for our future presence and ministry with young people in the Region, our call to be a “beacon of hope in this turbulent world”, as “the face and hands of God’s tender mercy”.

Please pray for our Brothers as they spend a month now with their families, then a few month’s community experience with their families, before their continued formation in MAPAC.



Bro. Rod Thomson

Lenten Reflection at Novitiate

As part of our Lenten program in our Marist International Novitiate community, Br Rod organised a Lenten day of reflection.



This reflection day 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.” Thus as an orientation to the retreat, the movie “Les Miserables” was screened on the previous night, with commentaries by Bro. Rod regarding the historical background of the book.

The next day there were different inputs by Brothers Rod and Kikko. And there was ample time for personal reflection and for sharing. In the afternoon there was a fire camp and a reconciliation ritual along with Taizé hymns. And the participants had 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.

Prathap Ranasinghe, Novice

My Reminiscences of the Indian Mission that is completing 50 years (cont. from last newsletter)

With me In the Juniorate there were about 6 aspirants chosen from different parts of Trichy District. It was quite a challenging task for me to plan out things as none of the boys was able to talk in English and my Tamil was not that strong to converse with them. So I hired a teacher to teach them English and from Amalashram in Sri Rangam I was able to get a young priest to teach them religion. I shared with them basics of Founder's Life and about the congregation.

We had about an acre of paddy land in Trichy close to Holy Cross sister's property. (Nothing exists now). It was walking distance from our Puthur house. Early morning after breakfast we all went to the paddy land and worked for about two hours.

Before lunch there were lessons and twice a week in the afternoon, the young Capuchin Priest took classes and prayed with the students.

Every morning we attended Holy Mass at Fatima Church in Puthur. The parish priest Rev. Father Rayappan, an old priest, trained at Papal Seminary in Kandy Sri Lanka liked us very much.

Our first group of young Novice brothers were all in Sri Lanka following the Novitiate Formation at Ragama in Sri Lanka. They were to come back to Trichy after completion of their First Profession. Therefore Br. Raphael was asked to take charge of the formation house in Trichy. I had to go to Aruwankadu house.

An aspirant from Palkkarai, Trichy, namely Jeyaraj, joined me. Later Brother Chinnappan Dewadas too joined our community at Aruwankadu. We helped Jeyaraj to follow the Marist way of life. We were there about little less than a year. However the Brother Provincial and his council decided to close down the Aruwankadu community. We all came to Trichy making one formation Community. Brothers Chinappan, Lazar, and

Kulendaisamy began their University studies at St. Joseph's College, Trichy. Brother Anthony Francis too was sent from Sri Lanka to keep company to the young scholastics.

Having done a yeomen service to the Indian Mission Brother Raphael went on a transfer to Sri Lanka. I was asked to be in charge of the young brothers until someone to be appointed. Brother Ephrem Obris joined us and he soon became the animator.

Brother Ephrem was quite active, energetic and he planned to by a plot of land at Kulithali, about an hour's journey from Trichy. It was a plantation of Bananas and sugarcane. Eventually a house was put up there. Brother Nicholas Fernando too was sent to support the Kulithali community. (to be continued)



Bro. Joseph Peiris

Vocation Promotion at National Basilica Sri Lanka

It is good to light a candle rather than curse the darkness. As we are gracefully reflecting that we are diminishing not dying but there is a call to work our best and God and Mary would do the rest. Vocation in a religious context is how God calls you to serve Him in the world. God calls you through Baptism and Confirmation to serve Him in a specific way of life.



There are four different callings to our vocation: marriage, religious life, priesthood, and the single life. All of these callings are ordered to get us closer to God. We Marist Brothers are unique in letting children know all the ways of life that we can as good Christians and humans as well.

In the simplest terms, "vocation" means a "call." So, in general terms, our vocation is what God calls us to do with our lives. Everybody is called by God to know, love, and serve him. The difference here we experience is vocation promotion is not a duty of the team only but of all the Brothers to invite the young to embrace our way of life.

Bro. Sasmika Fernando FMS

Way of the Cross

The Way of the Cross is a **traditional devotion in honor of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus**. Known also as Stations of the Cross.

The way of the cross (the way of self-denial), is the way of life, for **"If anyone desires to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."** Luke 9:23. Every step I take in following Jesus, every step on the way of life, is a step of denying (saying "no" to) myself, my own will.



Our Brothers with the help of the parish priests, Sisters conducted way of the cross in different dioceses. We Marists are trained to conduct the way of the Cross with Mary meaningfully. Once again we are reminded of our call to make Jesus Christ known and loved in the way of Mary.

Bro. Sandalal Alwis FMS

Renewal Programme at Palakudawa

In essence, the season of Lent is a time for self-examination, repentance, and the renewal of our relationship with one another and with God through prayer, fasting, and acts of charity also Lent is a time in which we seek spiritual renewal. It is for the Christian the basic purpose of spiritual healing is to renew and strengthen one's relationship with the living Christ. I had the privilege to conduct a healing and repentance programme at Palakudawa parish. I extend my gratitude to Rev. Fr. Neville the Parish priest for inviting me to share God's Love.



Bro. Sujith Alwis FMS

MASTER I.P. BINEV METHNULA APPUHAMY

(Band Leader of Senior Western Band 2022-2023)

I entered Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa in 2010 as a grade one student. After two years when I was in grade two, I joined the Junior Western Band under the guidance of Mr. Mahinda Withanage who is a retired Air Force Officer. I played Side Drums for

three years and in 2015 I was selected to the Senior Western Band of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa under the direction of Mrs. Hansika Mendis, Mrs. Geethika Amarathunge, Mr. Kaushal Rashmika, Mr. Mahinda Withanage, and Mr. Saman Kularathna.

I gave my fullest support to the “Maris Grazia” band presentation from 2015 – 2023. In 2015 I started in the Senior Western Band playing the “Triangle”, Eventually I obtained knowledge about all the instruments that play in the whole band.

In 2018 I won the “Most Enthusiastic Member” Prize in the ‘Talent Appreciation’ award ceremony.



The year 2022 was memorable in my career as I was selected as the Leader of the Senior Western Band at Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa. I got the privilege to renovate the Band Room of Western Band. We did our best for all the events of the school as a group playing the band to fulfill their needs.

We won 3rd place in Province in All Island Band Competition and, 4th place in All Island.

We won 3rd place in Province in All Island

In September 2022 I became the leader of the Western Band. Since then till I signed off from my school I respected the principal and did my duties obediently. I thank Rev. Bro. Mervyn Perera for being with me from the beginning to the end.

I sincerely remember Mr. Mike Kurukulasuriya and Mr. Gamini who have helped me immensely during my course of work. I am grateful to Marist Brothers who were my teachers Rev. Bros Chamara Hettiarachchi and Dulaj Fernando and especially Rev. Br. Shanthi Liuanage who helped me in many ways for my success.



I have beautiful memories during my time as a member of the Western Band as well as the leader. I have not only amazing knowledge of music but also experience and good leadership qualities. I thank God for giving me such opportunities to enlighten my career.

I.P. Binev Methnula Appuhamy

Debate Union Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskattuwa

"වෛ ඡීසර" Western Province Debate Competition was conducted by KIU University Battaramulla. There were Sinhala, English, and Tamil media competitions on the 21st and the 22nd of March 2024 at KIU University. Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskattuwa won second place in Sinhala medium and Imod Senura of grade 11, Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskattuwa was adjudged the best researcher.



Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskattuwa



Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa proudly announces the launch of its innovative digital library website, showcasing our dedication to academic excellence. The inauguration on March 20th, 2024, featured esteemed guests such as Miss Wajira Ranjika Silva, the assistant director of the Education Department of Education of Western Province, and Mr. Manuja Karunaratne, the head of the National Science Library and resource center of the national science foundation recognizing the significance of this milestone.

Our commitment to providing unparalleled access to knowledge is at the core of this event. We extend gratitude to Mrs. Niroshani Fernando our dedicated librarian, and library staff, and Rev. Bro Mervyn Perera, the principal of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa for their unwavering support.

The digital library website marks a revolutionary step in our digital transformation journey. With digitization, every resource is easily accessible via the user-friendly Koha database platform, revolutionizing information engagement.

Key features include a comprehensive online catalog, virtual reading rooms for anytime access, interactive learning tools, and robust research support services. Real-time updates keep users informed about library events and workshops.

We invite all the students and teachers, to explore this platform, embracing the transformative power of knowledge in the digital age. Together, let's embark on a journey of discovery and excellence, redefining how we access and engage with information.



Thathsara Fernando

Transforming Coastlines: Maris Eco Friends Spearhead Beach Cleaning Programme.

Principal of Maris Stella College Negombo -Rev.Bro.Sunanda Alwis, members of Maris Eco Friends Society, officials of Goldi Sands Hotel and Arigatou International -SDGs Model classroom Sarvodaya and End Child Poverty Knowledge Center at the inauguration of the beach-cleaning programme.



In an endeavor to combat coastal pollution and preserve marine ecosystems, Maris Eco Friends recently undertook a commendable initiative in collaboration with Goldi Sands Hotel and Arigatou International Sarvodaya. The concerted effort is aimed at rejuvenating the pristine beauty of our beaches through a dedicated beach cleaning programme.

Marine life and ecosystems



Coastal pollution poses a major threat to marine life and ecosystems, with plastic debris and other waste accumulating on beaches worldwide. Recognizing the urgent need for action, Maris Eco Friends, a renowned environmental organization, joined forces with Goldi Sands Hotel and Arigatou International-SDGs Model classroom Sarvodaya, leading figures in hospitality and sustainability to address the pressing issue.

The programme held on March 12 was conducted by Maris Eco Friends Society, Ms. Heshu Perera the Manager of End Child Poverty Knowledge Center by Arigatou International of Sarvodaya Head quarters, Ms Dinakshi Liyanage of Goldi Sands Hotel and staff and environmental enthusiasts. Armed with gloves, bags, and an unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship, participants combed the shores meticulously collecting and disposing of litter.

Community engagement

The initiative garnered widespread support and participation from the local community, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the preservation of their coastal heritage. Through interactive workshops and



educational sessions, participants gained insights into the detrimental effects of coastal pollution while learning practical strategies for waste reduction and sustainable living.

Corporate Sponsorship

Goldi Sands Hotel and Arigatou International -SDGs Model classroom Sarvodaya demonstrated exemplary corporate responsibility by sponsoring the beach cleaning programme. Their generous support not only facilitated the logistics of the initiative but also underscored the commitment to environmental sustainability and community engagement.



Principal of Maris Stella College Negombo -Rev. Bro. Sunanda Alwis said: “Everything aspect in the environment is vital as parts of the human body. Therefore, we should protect them.”

Master in charge of Maris Eco Friends Jude Preman said: “The theme of the beach-cleaning initiative is “Maris Journey from Ego to Eco.” As students of the Environment Movement we believe that it is the responsibility of

everyone to protect the environment for future generations.

President of Maris Eco Friends-Algard Einston Fernando: “Our aim is to instill a sense of the environment in people for their well being.”



Manager of End Child Poverty Knowledge Center by Arigatou International Sarvodaya Head quarters- Hesha Perera said that there are four basic sustainable development goals on environment. They are goal No 3: Good Health and Well being, No 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, goal No15: Life on Land and goal No14: Life below Water. The initiative to protect the ocean for future generations is commendable.

The beach cleaning programme orchestrated by Maris Eco Friends, in collaboration with Goldi Sands Hotel and Arigatou International-SDGs Model classroom Sarvodaya, stands as a testament to the power of collective action in addressing environmental challenges.

By fostering partnerships, engaging communities, and promoting sustainable practices, the initiative exemplifies a proactive approach to safeguarding our coastal treasures for generations to come.

Daily mirror Newspaper



Maris Eco Friends

To keep the Marist Brothers Provincial house premises a clear and greener place the Eco Friends of Maris Stella College, Negombo launched a project to provide sustainable and eco-conscious cleaning solutions for provincial house premises.



This initiative was not only to promote cleanliness but also environmental responsibility and community involvement and awareness. We believe through eco-friendly practices and volunteer activities, the initiative fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for maintaining a clean and sustainable environment.

Members of the Eco-Friendly Society along with interested residents, learned cleaning activities would prioritize the use of environmentally friendly cleaning products such as ash, vinegar, baking soda, and biodegradable detergents to minimize chemical exposure and pollution and also recycling and waste management segregation bins would be provided for proper disposal and recycling of waste materials with regular collection and disposal arrangements.

It was a great day and our gratitude to Br. Sales Fernando the superior of the community for active participation and supporting us in many ways. We believe we are called to serve not to be served.

Jude Preman

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15)

Maris Stella College Old Boys' Association recently organized a spiritually enriching Lenten program at the MSC OBA auditorium on 28th March, led by the esteemed Rev. Fr. Gihan Goonatilleke, National Director of Family Apostolate. The event witnessed a remarkable turnout of attendees, showcasing the community's enthusiasm for spiritual growth and reflection during the Lenten season.



Under the guidance of Project Chairman Olington Fernando and Core Chairman Samudra Appuhamy, the Lenten program offered participants a profound opportunity to delve into the teachings of Jesus Christ. Reverend Fr. Gihan Goonatileke, renowned for his insightful and inspiring sermons, captivated the audience with his profound messages of repentance and belief in the good news of the Kingdom of God drawing near.

During the program, attendees were encouraged to reflect on the significance of repentance and embracing the good news proclaimed by Jesus Christ, echoing the timeless words spoken in Mark 1:15, "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

The success of the Lenten program organized by Maris Stella College OBA reflects the unwavering dedication of its members to nurturing spiritual growth and fostering a vibrant community of believers. Such initiatives serve as reminders of the profound impact of faith-based gatherings in enriching lives and strengthening the bonds of brotherhood among all who participate.

Samudra Appuhamy

Gampaha District Under 20 Basketball Tournament - 2024 (Finals) | Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa

The semifinals and finals of the Gampaha District Under-20 Basketball Tournament were held on the 26th and 27th of March at the Thimbirigaskattuwa Maris Stella School basketball court. Thimbirigaskattuwa Maris Stella College qualified for the final by recording a sharp victory of 75 - 51 points in the semi-final between Thimbirigaskatuwa Maris Stella College and Daluwakotuwa Loyola College.

In the other semi-final between Seeduwa St. Thomas College and Kadana De Mazonad College, De Mazonad College won the semi-final and qualified for the final. In the first half of the final match, although the scoreboard was tied, the Thimbirigaskatuwa Maris Stella College basketball team managed to win the tournament by recording the final score of 63 - 52. Kadana De Mazonad College won second place while Seeduwa St. Thomas College won third place in the tournament.



Master Sulakshana Herath

Lent is a Time of Renewal

Lent is a time of the year when Christians may fast or try to make a change in their life that they believe is a positive one. It starts on Ash Wednesday and is 40 days which reflects the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness and resisting temptation.



On Ash Wednesday, Christians have a cross marked on their foreheads made from the ashes of palm leaves mixed with oil. As the period of Lent is a time for reflection and fasting, it can make a great period to learn about Lent, and for children to reflect and think about their own Lenten promises, with different Lent activities.

The Church invites us to give alms, whether they be our "time, talent, or treasure." Help our children brainstorm how they can give up their resources. Maybe they can volunteer to give a hand to a neighbor, or write letters to an elderly relative, or spend their own money to have a Mass said for a special intention. Very small children can choose a toy or book to donate to those in need.



Children with differently able at Ladani Muditha went to neighbouring schools to share some food and soft drinks along with fruits to share with them. Ladani Dharma differently able school children shared their food with others and had 40-day little charitable activities. For children, almsgiving can be a very tangible way for them to grow spiritually. It teaches children to put their faith into action and directs their concerns to others.

Ladani Children's Home Haldanduwana visited and cleaned the Home for the Elders and had a shramadhana at Marist Sewana. They didn't forget to keep water ponds for birds to drink and take baths in this hottest period. Ladani Home at Mattakotuwa had a shramadhana to clean the cemetery. Ladani Children's Home Katuneriya cleaned the parish church premises and collected polythene and plastics beside the main road and church. As they did this project they learned the 3R method for their lives. Ladani Home at Bibiladeniya had passan and reconciliation servise.



This Lent 40 Acts of Kindness Activity is a great way to encourage our students to perform kind acts this Lent. This resource comes with everything you need to create a beautiful Lenten kindness tree. Each day, our students completed one act of kindness and coloured a leaf on the tree until they had a beautiful, completed kindness tree, representing 40 kind acts.



Under the guidance of Ladani Founder Rev. Fr. Neville Coogne Br. Chamara Hettiarachchi was invited to lead all the lentan activities in their respective home. This time of lent was different from other years as the children attended very practical life education sessions rather than performing rituals. In all these events we wanted the children to be nature lovers and very responsible characters in society.

Ladani News

Grand Opening of Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa's Milk Bar

We are delighted to announce that the opening of the Milk Bar at Maris Stella College Thimbirigaskatuwa took place on March 11th, 2024. This altruistic initiative, dedicated to promoting nutritional food options for children, has now become a reality, thanks to the collective efforts of the college community.





The auspicious occasion began with a meaningful blessing by the revered Rev. Fr. Milroy OP, who graced the event with his presence, instilling a sense of sacredness into the endeavor.

In a ceremonious gesture, the Principal, Deputy Principals, Sectional Heads, Head Prefect, Deputy Head Prefects, and enthusiastic students came together to officially inaugurate the Milk Bar, signifying their unwavering commitment to fostering healthier life styles among the student body.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all who contributed to the realization of this project and invite everyone to reflect on the significance of this milestone in our ongoing mission to prioritize the well-being and nourishment of our students.



Romain Perera

Scout Investiture Ceremony of 173rd Negombo Marcelling Scout Group | Maris Stella College Thibirigaskatuwa.

One of the most famous extracurricular activities of Maris Stella College Thibirigaskatuwa is scouting. Our little cubs and scouts received their uniform, badges and stars on 22nd of March at the College premises.

The Aims and Methods of Scouting

Rev. Bro. Mervyn Perera the Principal of the College addressed the parents and students about how important to be a scout.



The Scouting program has specific objectives, commonly referred to as the “Aims of Scouting.” They are character development, leadership development, citizenship training, and personal fitness.



It helps in building confidence and self-esteem among the students. They learn important life skills, team building, outdoor adventure, education, and fun. It helps them to explore, to discover the world beyond the classroom, and also helps in all-round development .

Scouts activate the adventurous side of children and encourage them to push boundaries and overcome fears. Group Leaders will connect with youth members to build a mutually trusting relationship, supporting youth to give things a go, where previously they may have felt scared.

Scouting makes a direct and positive impact on the community by teaching positive values and leadership skills to youth. Every year, Scouts and their leaders contribute thousands of volunteer hours to their local communities. Sharing time with the aged in the local community, planting trees, etc. We wish them a bright future.



Jayangika Miranda

Eastertide's Joy

The quietude of the day,
Finds the stone rolled away.
In the empty tomb, where His body lay,
Hope springs forth it's new way.

With hearts filled with delight,
Let's greet the dawn's first light.
Foreshadowing the darkest night,
Beholding the brightest sight.

In Christ's resurrection, let us rejoice,
Raise our hearts and lift our voice.
For in Him we have the ultimate choice,
To follow His path with poise.



Christ did rise from death's chain
His resurrection an eternal gain.
Victory triumphs, freedom from pain
Through His love, find our aim.

Eastertide's joy, an abounding grace,
Find solace in His loving embrace.
In Him alone, our trust place.
Adversities of life boldly face.

The sacrifice to rise again
His sufferings were not in vain
Spirit of the Lord is here
We rejoice without fear



Bro. Chamara Hettiarachchi FMS



Religious Brothers assembly in Tamil Nadu, India

I trust this letter finds you well. I am writing to provide a brief summary of the proceedings of the recent TARB (The Association of Religious Brothers) meet held on 9th March 2024 at Monfort Provincialate.



The event commenced promptly at 9:30 am with a soulful prayer song performed by the talented students of Monfort School, Yercaud, setting a serene and reverent atmosphere for the gathering.

Brother Britto SHJ, the secretary of TARB, extended a warm welcome to all the participants, setting the tone for a day filled with insightful discussions and meaningful interactions. Among the notable guests present were Reverend Brothers Amalan, Provincial of De La Salle Brothers; Money Karate, the president of ARBI; Br. Irudhayam, Provincial of Monfort, Trichy; Br. Johnson, Provincial of Monfort, Yercaud; Br. Stephen Arockiasamy, Provincial of Sacred Heart Brothers, Palyamkottai; and Br. Joseph, the Superior General of St. Michael's Brothers, Coimbatore. Their presence added immense value to the event, enriching our discussions with their wisdom and experience.



The proceedings commenced with an address by Reverend Brother Irudhayam, Provincial of Monfort, who eloquently spoke on the significance of our minority status, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities it presents. Following this, we had the honor of welcoming Professor Johnpeter from Loyola College, Chennai, as our chief guest. His insightful discourse on "Our Responsibilities in Today's Social and Political Context" resonated deeply with all attendees, encouraging us to reflect on our roles as religious brothers in contemporary society.



I am delighted to report that the brothers exhibited remarkable enthusiasm and engagement throughout the day, with a total of 67 brothers actively participating in the various sessions and discussions. The highlight of the event was undoubtedly the election conducted during the closing ceremony, under the guidance of Reverend Brother Money Karate. I am pleased to announce that Brother Shahayarahj, a dedicated member of the Monfort community, was elected as the President of TARB, while Brother Johnson assumed the role of Secretary. Their leadership will undoubtedly steer our association towards greater heights in the coming years.

As we concluded the proceedings, it was a fitting occasion for Br. Money Karate to express the gratitude to Brother Amalan and Brother Britto for their exemplary service as President and Secretary of TARB over the past nine years. Their dedication and commitment have been instrumental in shaping the success of our association, and they were duly felicitated for their invaluable contributions.

In closing, Br. Inigo Amalan FSC extend my heartfelt thanks to all the participants, guests, and organizers who made this event a resounding success. May the insights gained and connections

forged during this meet continue to inspire and guide us in our shared journey as religious brothers.



Bro. Britto SHJ



Photo of the Month



2024.03.24

The Power of Preaching Beyond the Pulpit: A Brother's Dedication

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." - Mark 16:15

In the bustling streets, amidst the solemnity of Lent, a profound scene unfolds—a brother, deeply immersed in his preaching, stands among a sea of believers partaking in the Way of the Cross procession. His words resonate with passion, echoing the timeless message of redemption and love.

In this moment captured, we witness the transcendence of preaching beyond the confines of the church walls. It's a testament to the belief that the message of God's love knows no boundaries, reaching souls wherever they may be found. As the brother fervently speaks, his dedication illuminates the path to spiritual awakening for those who listen.

Just as Jesus walked among the people, spreading the message of hope and salvation, so too does this brother and others like him who tirelessly work to bring God's love to the masses. Their commitment serves as a beacon of light in a world often shrouded in darkness, reminding us of the transformative power of faith and the importance of sharing it with others.

In the midst of the Lenten journey, let us be inspired by the dedication of those who preach not only within the sanctuary but also in the streets, carrying forth the timeless message of God's love and redemption to all who will listen.

Ashela De Silva

