



EAST ASIA MARIST LIFE Newsletter

June 22, 2024, Volume 03, Issue No. 01

HONG KONG COMMUNITY

Kowloon, Hong Kong

It has been a wonderful school year of 2023-24 with a lot of activities going on. I just to share with you all some of the events that took place not long ago.

June 6th Champagnat's Day Celebration: In Kowloon SFX, a Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated at our school Hall.



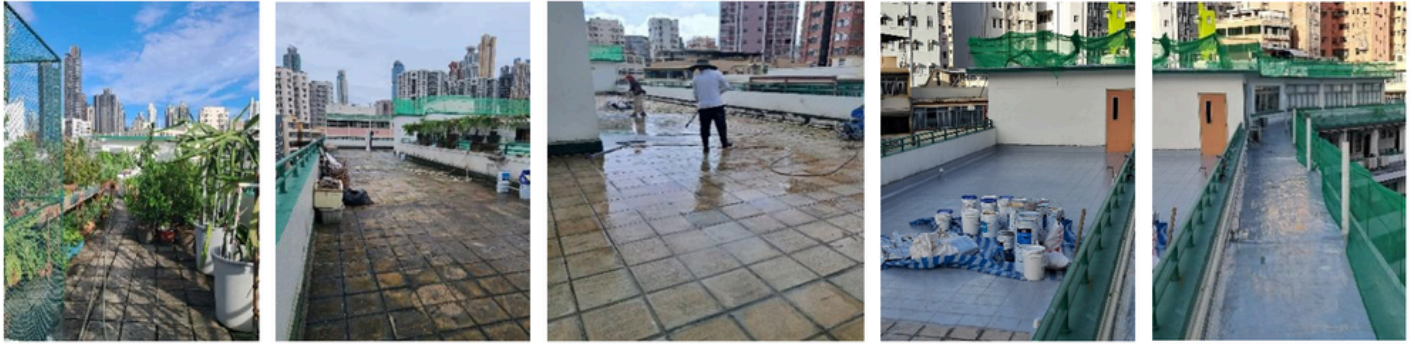
We had a joint school Champagnat's quiz competition for junior form.



In Tsuen Wan SFX: Champagnat's Day Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated at the local church.



June 9th Clearing up rooftop. Due to water leaking at the rooftop, we need to clear up our garden for the repair work. Thanks to alumni for laboring with the Brothers to clear up the plants. It was heavy rain in the beginning, but thanks be to God, everything went as planned. It took almost 4 hours to clear up all the plants.



May 30th , Student Mass on Thursday: Last student Mass before the school Final Exam.



May 28th, Busking at the school entrance



In May, We had visitor coming by.



Solidarity work with the St. Edigio Community:
Distributing meal boxes to the poor and the elderly nearby.



Joint school retreat: Both our SFX Kowloon and Tsuen Wan catholic boys participated. Theme: In the way of Mary



The Evangelization week:
Spreading God's word to all the students in small group activities.



By: Br. John Clement Chong, FMS

**My flesh and my heart may fail, but
God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.**

(Psalm 73:26)

Formators' Program

The Formators' Program had been the initiative of the General Administrations from the past and was continued on at present. Many of us will remember in recent history that several Brothers from East Asia Province had participated in this program. In 1996, Brs. Rustico Lumbo and Robert Teoh participated the program in Valpre, France that lasted for 22 months. In 2005, Brs. Lindley Sionosa and John Tan Wee Eng were in Nairobi, Kenya and the program lasted for 11 months. In 2013, Br. Jacobo Song was in Rome, Italy and the program lasted for 6 months. At present, Br. Rommel Ocasiones is attending the program that will last for 10 months in Italy.

The General Administration has always recognized the importance of Formation Ministry in the life of the Institution and of the Church. As the title of the project states, it is geared towards preparation of Brothers who will take charge of works in different stages of formation of young men who showed interest in the vocation of the Marist as Religious Brothers. The program hopes to prepare the participants through skills training, updating on recent trends and advocacies, and honest assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses.

As the term of the present General Administration is coming to an end, this program was made possible, through the supervision of the Brothers Today Secretariat. The year 2024 is significant in our Marist Heritage since it commemorates the bicentenary of the building of the Norte Dame of the Hermitage, the Mother House of the Institute. It was in May 1824 that the foundation stone was laid by Fr. Champagnat, and hence the commencement of its building. One year after, Marcellin and the handful of Brothers took residence to this new home. It is through this historical importance that the Formators' Program has the theme: Builders of the New Hermitage.

There are 19 participants from fifteen Administrative Units and a Marist priest from Tonga, accompanied by 3 Brothers in the team. The whole program is set from February to November of 2024. The calendar of activities is a combination of formal sessions (classes and workshops), exposure to significant Marist places, visit to historical church locations, and participation on liturgical services at the Vatican, when possible. That is on top of creating a community atmosphere at Manziana, Italy where we are housed most of time.

For most of the time, the modules take place in a weekly basis, with different presenters or experts on topics that will help the participants in deeper understanding of themselves, of the Marist Brothers Identity and the challenges that the Church and world must face. We hope and pray that all these activities will translate to a vibrant and meaningful program in our formation houses.

The group is at Notre Dame of Hermitage in St. Chamond, Loire, France, this month of June to experience more deeply the heritage of the institute. Apart from the sessions we are also fortunate to meet and know more people who are part of the Marist Family/World. Personally, I find this international experience both as challenging and enriching. I am truly grateful to the opportunity to be part of this program. Probably I will end here and share more later towards the end of the program.





MARIST BROTHERS OF THE SCHOOLS SUMMER VOCATION WORKSHOP 2024

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Br. Jeffrey, FMS
Chairperson



Br. Cyril, FMS
Staff



Br. Lloyd, FMS
Staff



Br. Raymund, FMS
Staff



Br. Dave, FMS
Staff



Br. Jay Jay, FMS
Staff



John Angelo
Aspirant



Joshua Carl
Aspirant

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R
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Rainier Apareja
Upi, Maguindanao



Kurt Bautista
Upi, Maguindanao



Alanu Dabuco
Upi, Maguindanao



Eerl Phryme Depalubos
Kidapawan



John Jeral Pacio
Upi, Maguindanao



Jorich Pacio
Upi, Maguindanao

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champagnat.org

The Marist Brothers' ongoing summer workshop for the candidates to become aspirants is held from June 16 to 30 at the Marist Province Center, Lagao, General Santos City, Philippines. There are six (6) workshopers, five (5) from Upi, Maguindanao, and one (1) from Kidapawan City. Br. Jeffrey Guino-o chaired the summer workshop.



The Culmination of the *75 Years* of Marist Presence in the Philippines



The Notre Dame of Marbel University hosted the Culminating Program of the 75 Years of Marist Presence in the Philippines on June 21 at Notre Dame of Marbel University Gymnasium, with the theme **“Never let the fire in your heart go out.”**

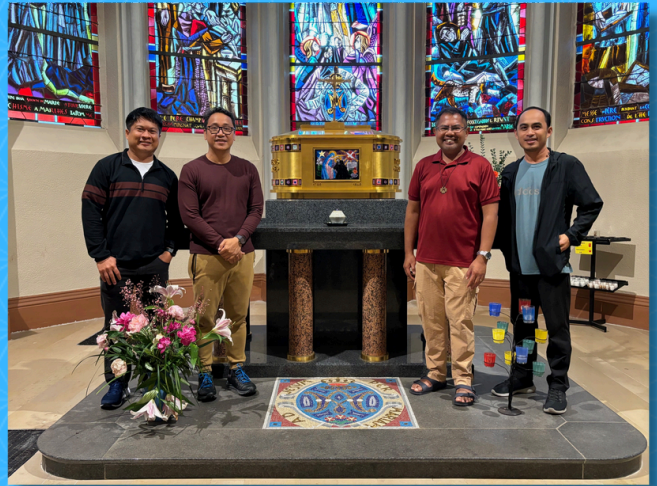
The Most Rev. Archbishop Angelito R. Lampon, OMI, D.D. from the Archdiocese of Cotabato, graced the event as the Mass celebrant, co-celebrated by Fr. Emerald John Paladin, Fr. Count Roosevelt Rozario, CSC, and Fr. Salvador Leyso. The event was attended by a good number of brothers and religious people, represented by participants from Marist Schools in the Philippines, alumni benefactors, guests, and friends.

The Marist Brothers of the East Asia Province were very grateful to the Oblate of Mary Immaculate Congregation for making the presence of the Marist Brothers in the Philippines possible.



Photo News

While in Rome, the Brothers from East Asia Province had their assignments.



June 15. In transit to Kota Kinabalu on the way to Kutching for a Formation of Laity, Ms. Elma Rafil and Ms. Agnes Reyes took the chance to visit the Kota Kinabalu community. It was a delightful time to be with Br. Andrew and Br. John.



June 17-18, June 21. Marist Formation with Laity and youth in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, and with the Catholic Teachers of Stella Maris, Singapore.



Embracing Spirituality in Lay Marist Vocation

-Marjorie Buslig Rañeses

As an animator of the lay Marist community in the Philippines, I find spirituality not just in moments of solitude but also in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. My journey of living spirituality as a lay person in the Marist vocation is deeply rooted in my interactions with school personnel, students, parents, retirees, and fellow members of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (CMMF).



Every day, I am tasked with the responsibility of bringing people closer to Jesus, not only through words but through my actions as well. Whether it's guiding students through their spiritual journey or supporting colleagues in their professional endeavors, I strive to embody the teachings of the Gospel in all aspects of my life. As an administrator,

I approach my duties with a sense of compassion and fairness, understanding that every decision I make has an impact on the lives of those around me. As a parent, sister, and friend, I aim to be a source of love and support, nurturing meaningful relationships that reflect the love of God. Even in the face of challenges and uncertainties, I find strength in my spirituality, knowing that I am part of a global community connected by our shared faith. Through my involvement with the outer community and partnerships with organizations, I am reminded of the importance of solidarity and service in living out the Marist values.

Spirituality, for me, is not confined to moments of prayer or meditation; it is a way of life that permeates every aspect of my being. It is found in the kindness I show to others, the empathy I extend to those in need, and the hope I hold for a better tomorrow. In essence, living spirituality as a lay Marist is about embodying the spirit of Saint Marcellin Champagnat in our daily lives, striving to make a difference in the world one small act of love at a time. It is through these actions that we truly live out the Gospel message and fulfill our calling as followers of Christ. (Reprinted from The Sharing Number 24 -JUNE 17, 2024)

MARIST LAITY ASSISTS IN DIOCESAN FORMATION

Last June 12, Fr. Ramil Nerio, Director of the Christian Life Commission of the Diocese of Marbel, invited lay Marists Elma Rafil and Agnes Reyes to collaborate in the Diocesan formation program, particularly in the Safeguarding initiatives being currently implemented. During the said meeting, a sharing of ideas and drafting of the session programs for the gathering of all religious organizations in the Diocese was discussed. The meeting aims at strengthening synodality expressed in collaborative actions in the preparation for the establishment of a functional Safeguarding System, Ministry of Care and Protection in the Diocese of Marbel. Said collaborative meeting with the Religious groups is set for the 18th of July, 2024.



Nurturing Marist Life, Marikina Community Experience

Marist School community continues its initiative in nurturing Marist lay life. This June, Mrs. Veronica Rañeses facilitated the convening of personnel for a prayer and reflection with the Brothers at the Marikina Community. She said: "There is joy and hope today with 13 Marists of Champagnat who responded to join "Marist Life Celebration" and experienced shared life, spirituality and mission."



Collaboration meeting of the Asia-Youth Ministry Animators

Core members:

- Dr. Wilter Friales- East Asia
- Br. Juan Gustavo Gil Rivero- Cambodia
- Br. Jos Long Tran- Vietnam
- Mr. Jude Fernando- Sri Lanka



Marists of Champagnat **AYMI**
Asia-Youth Ministry Animators' Session Series 1
Sharer: Br. Juan Gustavo Gil Rivero
JUNE 27, 2024 | 7:00 PM

Glimpses of the Past

The following article was taken from the Marist Newsletter of Philippine Vice-Province, July 26, 1980, pages 13-15; 21.

THE LIFE STORY OF BR. ROGER BAGARES (1943-1980)

Roger was the fifth child among his five brothers and three sisters. He began his high school in Lagao in 1955. His studies were interrupted two years after completing freshman year because of the severe rat infestation and locust plague of the mid-fifties practically wiping all the crops in South Cotabato. His academic record shows average performance in the first year. He scored two hundred in Religion as a freshman. By sophomore year, he was already maintaining second honors. And Religion was his highest grade. Although the grades were higher in junior year, he was second honors with applied Arithmetic as the only grade below 90. In his junior year, he scored a hundred in English. By senior year, Roger was a first honor with all grades above 90 or better. His academic strength was in Religion, English and Science. He had to be a fine student if he received an average of 95% in Physics. As a student, Roger is described by Mr. Fortunato Jaud as outstanding in conduct. He was a very friendly student, most respectful, obedient, and religious. Mr. Jaud mentioned that there was nothing extraordinary about him. He was lost in the crowd doing good quietly. His emotional equilibrium was remarkable.

Brother entered the Novitiate in June 1961. Br. Norman Roy who had him as a novice and later was his provincial has this to say about him:

As Master of Novices, I was privileged to see the workings of the Spirit in his soul. I've never met a man with such courage and determination to improve himself in body and soul. He had a slight speech impediment and found the English language quite difficult to pronounce. I once suggested that he practice making English sounds by looking at his face in a mirror. Unfortunately, the only mirror was in the dormitory, and silence in that area was strictly enforced. He came to ask that I secure him a mirror so he could practice. Practice he did and slowly overcome his impediment.

Upon my return from the Chapter in 1969, Br. Roger knew that he had a serious illness and that his days were numbered. I wanted to see him and inquired how he felt. He said to me: "Brother Provincial, I know I'm dying, but I'm not afraid. I'm ready. I've tried to live the life of a good Marist." When I questioned him further about his sufferings, he replied: Yes, I do suffer greatly at times, but I bear it patiently and in union with Christ's sufferings. And I offer these sufferings and also my death for the perseverance of the Brothers in the Philippines." For me, those were the most inspiring and consoling words from such a young Brother.

I never had the chance to speak to Br. Roger again. I was in his room at the UST hospital the evening of his death, but he was in a coma. As he lay there fighting for his life, I could not help but say: "Salamat sa Dios for such a Marist! May his tribe increase!"

He was back in Lagao in 1963 to begin his scholasticate. Br. Bernard Curtin, his scholastic master, shares with us what he remembers and treasures about Rober.

On July 11, we all celebrated the 10th anniversary of the happy welcome to Heaven of the first Filipino Marist Brother to reach that glorious goal. In twenty-seven short years, he accomplished great things and fulfilled the dream of his childhood.

Roger Bagares was Vedasto and Adela's pride and joy on February 27, 1943, the beautiful day he was born in Banga, South Cotabato. A few years later, the family moved to General Santos City, and Roger grew up in the barrio of Lagao.

In the public elementary school, Roger was the typical youngster, playful and mischievous, and not very interested in his school work. But he was a bright little fellow, and when he began to study with the Brothers in Notre Dame of Lagao High School, he put to good use the talents God had blessed him with. He lost his parents while he was still young and that could well be one because of his ever-growing attachment to the Brothers. After his graduation from high school, he asked to be admitted to the Brothers' novitiate in Tamontaka, near Cotabato City, and he was accepted.

On May 1, 1962, Roger's dream came true, and he became Br. Roger as he formally began his novitiate year. The boy was fast becoming a man. Unknown to him, he had a long race to run and very little time to finish it. As a novice, he could still be playful and mischievous like the little boy in Lagao, but he was maturing fast. His supreme ambition was to be a first-class Marist, a son who would make Mary smile and Champagnat proud. In the novitiate, he continued to build a solid foundation for the life everyone, including himself, believed would be a long and fruitful one. "All to Jesus through Mary" and "All to Mary for Jesus" was the motto that inspired him.

He was never considered a model novice, but he was humble enough to accept correction with a smile, and whatever he did, he tried to do well. Among other things, he became a chess fanatic, and he enjoyed playing to win and teaching others how to win. Whether it was praying or studying, planting vegetables, mending clothes, teaching catechism to the little children of the barrio, or learning the life of Blessed Champagnat, his strength of will enabled him to put all he had into whatever work he was assigned.

During his three years in the Scholasticate, Roger was a serious student and the Marist life he had determined to build for himself made steady progress. He took whatever came in stride, and his sense of humor helped him overcome the rough spots. He was popular among his classmates, and his teachers appreciated him as a budding scholar and hard-working young man. Even in those distracted years, he was a man of prayer, and the number one devotion in his young life was to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He continued to concentrate on the virtues stressed by Champagnat as essential for a Marist Brother: humility, love for Our Lady, obedience, and willingness to work hard in the apostolate and for the community. He had good judgment in abundance, and it was obvious to all that the young man was growing fast.

Br. Roger graduated from Marist College, Marikina, with his A.B. and finished his B.S.E. at Notre Dame of Marbel College. On April 6, 1969, he made his perpetual profession as a Marist Brother in the Lagao parish church. In the meantime, he had begun his work in the apostolate of teaching, and his natural seriousness combined with his personal interest enabled him to have a real influence over the students. From Marbel, he was assigned to ND Lagao for one year, ND Kidapawan for one year, and in 1969-70 to ND Dadiangas.

The disease that would soon take him to his Father in heaven was already at work and Roger soon sensed that no doctor or medicine would stop its deathly progress. He resigned himself to God's will and did all he could to continue the apostolate he had begun so enthusiastically. He prayed he offered his sufferings without a complaint, he helped in the library, he made rosaries and he kept in touch with the boys in school. When he had to be confined in the hospital many of his visitors never realized leukemia and that he knew it. When visitors would drop in to see him, his "owl eyes" would light up, and he would welcome them with a big smile. He was most appreciative of the loving tender care he received from his Brothers as well as from the doctors, nurses, relatives, and friends. When God called him home on July 11, 1970, he answered the call just as enthusiastically as he had answered the first call in May 1961. Like St. Paul, he had fought a good fight, he had run a good race, and Jesus was there at his bedside in U.S.T. Hospital awaiting to welcome him home to Heaven and the company of Mary and all Her children.

Blessed Champagnat is definitely proud of him, the first Filipino Marist in heaven. We, too, are proud of him, and those of us who knew him still miss him so much. The funeral was in Tamontaka on a beautiful morning, July 15, 1970, and tears were flowing freely down the faces of many in the large crowd that came to say a last goodbye to Br. Roger Bagares, while they whispered prayers for him and for him.

Br. Ted was in training with Roger for three years. Here is how Ted describes Roger:

He is well-remembered from my scholastic days as "the encyclopedia of the community" – he could expound on any topic, especially current events. He read everything in the newspapers (from headlines to ads) and shared the information, especially at the table. His fondness for intellectual discussion was such that he would challenge you to THINK and refute his arguments.

He could sleep through a class (and that he did with finesse) and still could answer questions when asked. Knowledgeable and reflective, Roger would never admit that he is a scholar. He practiced his intelligence at a practical level. That's where his asset was... his ABILITY TO SHARE IN THE COMMUNITY.

He was never pretentious or a persistent leader. His humility always surfaced in his willingness to serve and remain in the background during big events.

The last precious words he offered to me in June 1970 were: "Anything you experience in life, be it good or bad, is always a PART OF YOUR LIFE. So, enjoy it, Man!

During his college days, Br. Roger did exceptionally well in his studies. His record shows six grades below 85 as an A.B. student. And the eleven courses taken to obtain his B.S.E. were all in the line of 90 or better. His grades in theology were the highest.

His last director was Br. Henry Joseph. Br. Henry would like to share his impressions of Roger with us.

"He was in the Dadiangas community only a year and a half before the dreadful disease – leukemia- took him away from us ten years ago.

He, the youngest member of the community, always felt at ease with everyone because of his calm and friendly attitude.

His dry wit and frank humor revealed a rather mature personality. This trait was very much in evidence in his dealings with the boys over whom he had a genuine and healthy influence, both in and outside the classroom.

His maturity also manifested itself in his approach to serious and intellectual development, such as reading professional, religious, and educational periodicals.

A great example for all of us." ###

Provincial's Schedule



June 15 - July 12, 2024

June 15:

Koronadal City – Corporation Meeting of Marist Development Foundation Incorporated (MDFI)

June 16-20:

Marist Province Center, Lagao, General Santos City, Philippines

June 21:

The Culmination of the 75th Year of Marist Presence in the Philippines

June 22-July 12:

Community Visits to Korea-Japan Sector

June 18:

Br. Rosendo J. Yee

June 24:

Br. Jonnel M. Sisneros

June 25:

Br. Alexander Skin (Hee-young)

June 27:

Mr. Ladislao Aballe

Prayer Intentions:

- We pray for our families, friends, and loved ones. May God strengthen our relationships and help us be a source of encouragement and support to one another.
- We pray for those who are suffering, whether it be from illness, loneliness, or any form of hardship. Lord, bring them comfort and healing.
- We pray for our communities, and we ask for unity and compassion. Help us reach out to those in need and be instruments of Your love and mercy.
- We pray for those in positions of authority. Grant them wisdom and discernment as they make decisions that affect many lives.
- We pray for our natural world. As we enjoy the beauty of creation, help us be good stewards of the earth and cherish the environment You have entrusted to us.

