

M Marist ECHO

Institute of the Marist Brothers

Number 31 -Year 13 - March 2000

A NEW THRUST

FMS ECHO first appeared in January 1988. Its aim was to provide the Brothers with news about the Marist world. Three major developments are now inviting us to redirect it and give it a new thrust. The creation of newer channels of communications like "FMS UPDATES" and our Marist Web site, and the adaptation of FMS MESSAGE to serve as a successor to the BULLETIN OF THE

INSTITUTE have required us to rethink our publication plans and policies. A deeper understanding of the role of lay people in the heart of the Church, and of religious life today, is opening up horizons for us to work together in the charism we share, and to show esteem for everyone's vocation. On these very pages, Brother Benito, our Superior General, invites us to travel our Marist Road "together."

No longer is Saint Marcellin a man who belongs almost exclusively to the Brothers. His canonization has raised him to universal acclaim in our Church and society. More and more lay people want a stake in his spirituality and mission. FMS ECHO, now with the added word MARIST to better capture its essence, aims to be totally open and available to as many readers as possible.

On the road together

Br. Benito Arbués, Superior General

I send these greetings from America, remembering vividly the meetings that I'm having with Brothers, lay people, and students in my visits to Provinces here. In all of these meetings, I sense a desire that is turning into a reality: Brothers and lay people, side by side, traveling in the footsteps of St. Marcellin.

For years now, our Marist Institute has been trying to come to grips with this reality. At the outset, we approached it warily. Later on, we responded to it in a paternalistic way, feeling that we needed to train lay people for their work in our schools and with our graduates. Now we Brothers are learning that there are men and women possessing Marist hearts, and we are hearing the call to work "with" them in befriending young people.

We are dealing with all this in hope and joy. Together, all of us are involved in bringing forth a visible new reality and trying to express it in many ways, speaking of shared mission, fraternal life with the Champagnat Movement, Marist Volunteer Projects, and the belief that "You and I are the Champagnats of today." But we realize that



Visit of Br. Benito to Nyangezi Democratic Republic of the Congo.

we have to "walk our talk." I note a very positive change taking place in the way that we are relating to each other as Brothers and lay people. From an employer-employee relationship in a school setting, we are moving on to one of walking side by side with each other, wanting to live the Gospel of Jesus in the way that Mary did, following in the footsteps of St. Marcellin.

From our distinct but complementary vocations, we are discovering a new form of Church and a new way of practicing our Marist spirituality and mission. Working together, we can all develop and share the gifts that God has given to each one of us. ♦

ON THE SHORE OF LAKE VICTORIA

A husband and wife among brothers

Pepe Sanz Martínez
and Ana Krutter Abillá.

Masonga, Tanzania

Hi! We are Ana and Pepe, a married couple living in the small village of Masonga, on the shore of Lake Victoria in Tanzania. We share our life with the people of this village and the Marist Brothers. How did we get here? After years of feeling uneasy about "What are we doing for our brothers and sisters?" and "What are we being called to do?" we learned about this particular mission at a summer program. Before our arrival in Tanzania, we followed a process of discernment and preparation, we were welcomed into a community among the poor in our city of Lérida, Spain, and we immersed ourselves in that mission.

Now, for the past nine months, we've been part of this community in Masonga, with Brothers from Mexico and Italy. Together we look after a school, adult education programs, and various agro-forestry projects. We rely on a team of local teachers, and also on many helpful people back home. Now that several months have gone by, we can evaluate this experience, which involves a three-year commitment.

First of all, we really like living with the Brothers. We are family, sharing in a common project and mission. We feel a sense of belonging and participate fully in making decisions and carrying them out – we are an integral part of this place. Being able to count on the experience of the Brothers and to be part of a mission that has been in operation for a few years is giving us a better understanding of the world around us, and strengthening our capacity to get involved. For us, living in community – sharing activities, prayer, differences, good times... and ultimately, our life, with due respect for our privacy as a married couple – has been very enriching!

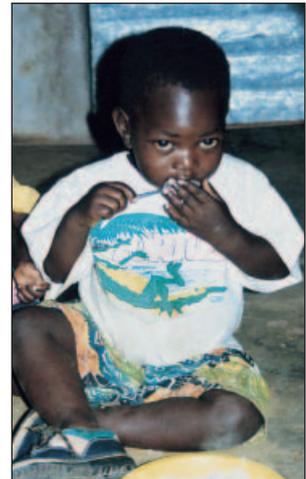


Looking back over the last nine months, we've enjoyed this experience, we're happy with the choice we made and with what we are doing here. Day after day, we try our best to



be at the side of the people and help in any way possible. Teaching, working on projects with students, farming, bee-keeping, visiting families, spending afternoons with children in the village... by the end of the day we're all tired out, but very contented. We feel that our life and what we're trying to do here is very meaningful.

We're learning from the world all around us, from the concrete witness of others, and from constantly taking stock of the things that we are seeing and doing. Someone once said that it's not just a matter of doing good, but of "doing good well." We are also feeling in communion with our families, the people who support us, and those in other places who are working for the same cause that we are. And



so it only remains for us to say ASANTE SANA – THANKS VERY MUCH – to God and to everyone who has made it possible for us to be here today. ♦

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INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS

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Project for the laity

An interview with Brother Pedro Marcos

Br. Pedro Marcos has been a General Councilor since 1993, after serving as Provincial in Chile and Peru. The governing and animation of the Institute are his main tasks. At the request of Br. Benito, he also animates the Marist Fraternities.

WHY DID BR. BENITO ASK YOU TO TAKE CHARGE OF ANIMATING THE FRATERNITIES?

I was a member of the Spirituality Commission, which also has to do with the laity.

WHAT IS A MARIST FRATERNITY?

Lay people who gather to share in our spirituality and mission with St. Marcellin. They organize informal groups, called Marist Fraternities. They choose a life plan that will affect the Christian, family, and professional dimensions of their lives.



Third Encounter of Fraternities, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

ARE WE TALKING ABOUT A WATERED-DOWN VERSION OF THE BROTHERHOOD?

Absolutely not. People attracted by St. Marcellin's spirituality seek to live the Christian life in a Marist way, according to the family and work situations in which they find themselves.

HOW MANY FRATERNITIES ARE THERE IN THE WORLD?

About 175, with some 3000 members in 33 countries. Most are in Latin America –



Brazil, Mexico, Central America, Argentina, Colombia... In Europe, France, followed by Spain. Also in Africa, in spite of unrest in some places.

HOW DOES ONE JOIN A FRATERNITY?

Get in touch with someone who already belongs to one, or visit the nearest community of Marist Brothers.

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO JOIN A FRATERNITY?

St. Marcellin draws them in – his life and brotherly love, his attitude toward children and

young people, his sensitivity to the poor. Then, the example of many Brothers – their joy and simple lifestyle. Marist Fraternities are a launching pad for many people wanting to spread their apostolic wings.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE EFFECT OF MARCELLIN'S CANONIZATION?

At least fifteen new Fraternities have sprung to life since that time. Several have taken him

as their patron. Many groups have been inspired to undertake projects in solidarity.

IS THIS ONLY A SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT, OR DOES IT ALSO INVOLVE CONCRETE ACTION?

Social commitment is a basic aspect of the life plan. It is not enough to merely attend meetings and offer mutual encouragement for living a better life. Everyone takes on an apostolic project in solidarity with people in need.

WHAT IS MEANT BY A LIFE PLAN?

A plan for leading a Christian life, with a minimum of organizational structure, built on basic principles that shape each Fraternity. It provides for living the faith where one is, as Mary did, and sharing it in one's group; becoming more familiar with Marcellin and his spirituality; taking on concrete apostolic commitments in tune with our Marist charism...

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE LEADING AND ANIMATING FRATERNITIES?

Lay people. Brothers are present for accompaniment, providing input concerning Marist Spirituality. ♦



• MARIST SPIRITUALITY TWO SIDES OF

Some people are drawn to Marcellin's spirituality. Others to his mission. Everyone has his or her own personal approach. Sooner or later, anyone committed to a life of Marist spirituality must put it into practice. Whoever gives himself or herself wholeheartedly to this venture needs to go to the source of Marcellin's spirituality. Our greatest challenge is to blend his spirituality and our mission, in our own personal lives, in our communities and movements, and among the teachers and young people with whom we work.

ACTIVE SPIRITUALITY IN MARCELLIN'S TRADITION.

One day Brother John came to school wearing his Marist habit. He usually dressed much the same as the rest of the staff, but with the addition of a Marist badge. Some staff asked, "Why is Johnno dressed up to-day?" At least one of us knew that the day was March 25th. That's loyalty.

I found myself as having an overload of lessons and extra-curricular activities, and our family was expecting our seventh child. Another lay teacher came along and offered to take over some of my work. That's compassion – and an answer to my prayer.

A Marist principal set aside one particular lesson every week to coach us in the Religious Education lessons for the week; we had a new curriculum for helping our students catch some religion. That's respect and dedication, coming from his own personal, spiritual centredness.

Basil O'Callaghan. AUSTRALIA

PRAYER AND APOSTOLIC MISSION

St. Marcellin has handed on to us a spirituality that remains ever up-to-date. What follows is intended to remind us of an element very basic to our Marist spirituality as we go about the process of refounding our Institute. It will inspire us with daring and hope in our apostolic mission.

Father Champagnat often said, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." (Psalm 127, 1) Prayer and confidence in God are paramount.

Champagnat used to impress upon his Brothers that they should never make important decisions or undertake any large-scale projects without first having spent a long time in prayer with the Lord. For Marcellin, as for Jesus, "Prayer is the most important point." (Constitutions, Article 68) To me, the adjective "important" in this context means that prayer is something fundamental and essential. If we want to "make Jesus Christ known and loved by orphans and abandoned children, by youngsters vulnerable to all sorts of dangers, let us begin by nurturing our relationship with God. One cannot give what one does not have, and yet nothing is impossible with God.

Thus, we will be able to become like Champagnat, that adventurous "man with the heart that knows no bounds." Once again, let us recall his words, "Our vision extends to all the dioceses in the world." Even though he died before seeing his hopes fully realized, today our Brothers are on mission throughout the world.

To sum up, then, prayer is the essential ingredient that gives us the strength and energy to accomplish our apostolic mission. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, in union with our Good Mother, St. Marcellin is summoning us insistently. A new generation, filled with anxiety, is pleading for guidance. Do we have any reason to hesitate?

Br. Dominique Kagabo. RWANDA

LITY AND MISSION • THE SAME COIN

THE SPIRITUALITY AND MISSION OF MARCELLIN: WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

All of us, Brothers and Lay People, are determined to carry on the Great Work of Love started by Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

To live the Marist charism, we need to be more than mere admirers of our Founder. We need to feel called to take part in his work, and allow ourselves to fall under the spell of his visionary plan for educating children and young people, preparing them to be good Christians and virtuous citizens.

The Marist educator ought to transcend the realm of the professional world, embracing the project of evangelization, thus being open to the greatest calling in the life of a Christian. We are to be members of the great Marist Family, fully involved in this mission of working together to incarnate the Kingdom of God in our midst.

Our greatest source of inspiration is the very example that Saint Marcellin has handed down to us, his lifelong dedication to a plan for teaching that has spread far and wide, serving as a grace-filled instrument for developing the human person. Marcellin's example is the driving force behind our actions today. It is present in every Brother and Lay Person who is carrying on the project that he began. Marcellin is alive and well in the work of our hearts and our hands today!

Another encouraging reality in our journey is our increasing closeness to the life of the Brothers, to Marist communities that are becoming ever more open to the Laity. We are becoming nearer to each other and being strengthened by our complementary vocations. In sharing our lives as Brothers and Lay People, we are discovering a dynamic source of energy in our lives for bringing the charism, mission, and spirituality of Marcellin Champagnat to others.

Simone Engler Hahn. BRASIL

PLANTING THE GOSPEL'S SEED

I would like to share what Marcellin Champagnat and his lifelong mission mean to me. Faces, memories, and stories flock to mind, each one wanting to be put into words. They pass in review, one after another...

Faces of young Brothers, captivated by Jesus and his life's work, filled with hope, ready for action...

Faces of middle-aged Brothers, daring, generous, fully committed...

Faces of elderly Brothers, time-tested, wise, holy...

Faces of lay teachers, dynamic, dutiful, self-sacrificing...

Faces of parents, eager to support their own children and those of others...

Faces of catechists and campus ministers, apostles, well-informed, joyful...

Faces of volunteers, working in solidarity, adventurous, persevering...

Faces of staff members, secretaries, coordinators – sincere, efficient, thorough...

Faces of children and young people, some known on a first-name basis, and many still to be known...

I listen to their every word. The more I leave behind their outward appearances and look into hearts, the more I uncover a beautiful reality. In their glances, smiles, hands and gestures, energy and tiredness... I see Marcellin's face, hands, strong build, and big heart being sketched, and his present-day mission outlined. Dreaming? I don't think so. I prefer to think that the Spirit of Jesus desires to convert us into new Champagnats, planting the Gospel's seed as Mary did. Even more. That the Spirit is already well-advanced in doing this!

Br. Carlos Vélez. PUERTO RICO

The Vibrant Heartbeat of our Marist Fraternities

NONSTOP GROWTH

The grace of the canonization has given even greater impetus to the creation of new Fraternities. France has seen the birth of the “Val de Saône” Fraternity. The city of Los Andes, the cradle of our Marist presence in Chile, has also welcomed a new Fraternity into its midst. It has taken the name “Brother Fernando de la Fuente” in honor of the Brother who was martyred in the refugee camp in Bugobe, Democratic Republic of Congo.

A second Fraternity has started up in Argentina, at Colegio San José de Morón, taking the name “St. Marcellin.” In Brazil, two more have begun in Porto Alegre – “St. James” and “St. Marcellin,” both at Colegio Pío XII in Novo Hamburgo.

Also in Brazil, in the Marist Province of Río, after several months of preparations, the Fraternities of “Nuestra Señora de Pilar,” “Nuestra Señora de la Peña,” “Brother Gonçalves Xavier,” and “Nuestra Señora da Abadía” have been established. Another four Fraternities have been started in the cities of Palmas, Aruaná, Sylvania, and Araçuaí.

THE PREPARATION OF ANIMATORS

The animators of Fraternities in France recently held a two-day meeting at the Hermitage. They exchanged views and reflected on their roles in the midst of their respective groups. This initiative offers a framework for ensuring that Fraternities will be blessed with animators well prepared to exercise their responsibilities.

COMING TOGETHER TO SHARE

Fraternities located in the same country are adopting the custom of coming together once a year to share their experiences, prayers, concerns,

and plans. A visit by the Superior General or General Councilors adds a reason to celebrate at these get-togethers. Such gatherings have taken place in Mexico, Central America, Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia. Participants invariably express their enthusiasm and their determination to continue living their Christian faith in the way that Mary and St. Marcellin did, and to undertake activities extending this spirituality throughout their cities and regions. Mention should be made of the meeting in Rio de Janeiro, where participants reaped the benefits of a “Desert Day,” i.e., a lengthy period

“Teófilo” in Murcia, Spain; and “Nuestra Señora de la Paz” in San Miguel, El Salvador.

ECHOES FROM THE CANONIZATION

“The canonization is a grace-filled time for rediscovering Marcellin. A time to see ourselves reflected in the mirror of his virtues, to fall in step with him in his travels with Jesus. A precious time to be together and grasp his basic aims; to claim once more, together, the refreshing spirit and zeal of that first community alongside the River Gier; to listen attentively to the beating of Marcellin’s compassionate heart meeting new



The new “San Marcellino” Fraternity at Colegio San José de Morón in Argentina.

of silence, prayer, and listening to the Word of God.

PLAN OF LIFE

Several Fraternities are placing much emphasis on the “Plan of Life,” dedicating themselves to reflecting on it and finding ways to implement it in their daily lives. Some Fraternities have sent the results of their reflections to Rome, including “Andra Mari” in Bilbao, Spain;

Montagnes.”

Luis, Fraternity in Zaragoza, Spain

I think that the greatest miracle to come from Marcellin’s canonization will prove to be that he is now closer to us than ever, here in Zaragoza and everywhere else; that he sees how we are genuinely present among the children and young people in each of our

MARCELLIN – A WAY OF LIVING

Soon it will be a year since Marcellin was proclaimed a Saint. In a special way, the canonization calls us to go out to young people as Marcellin did, filled with love, joy, dynamism, and daring. To let Marcellin’s words resonate in our hearts – “I cannot see a child without telling him how much Jesus loves him.” To become fired up with our Saint’s dynamic spirit, boldly seeking out the weakest and most vulnerable young people, to assure them that they are God’s favorites, that God needs them exactly as they are. Marcellin shows us how to welcome them warmly, encourage them with kindness, and look after their needs. How to do good quietly. The way Mary did.

Marie Yvonne Donnart, The Fraternity of Lagny, FRANCE

schools and apostolates. That “boundary lines” no longer exist because he is drawing us closer to the Father; and that in Mary, our Good Mother’s care, we are sharing this spirituality with others.”

Monica, Fraternity in Zaragoza, Spain

THE LAITY IN TODAY’S WORLD

From testimony published in “Vida Cristiana,” a Catholic Sunday publication in Cuba (No. 1763):

I feel indebted and compelled to remember these men who give their lives to teaching and the academic and human development of each one of their students. Today there are no Marist Brothers in Cuba. They have been gone since June of 1961, when they were forced “to leave.” But I know that many of us are cherishing happy memories of our days in their care. We have kept in touch with them as much as we possibly can. I know that they are working closely with their former students, and with others whom they have come to know at a later time.

With these people and their families, they have founded what is known as the Champagnat Movement. The source propelling this Movement is the inspiration “to live as lay men and women in the world of today, not as religious in a secular world.” The Movement is not about clericalizing the laity. On the contrary, it encourages lay people to live their Baptism in all its fullness, in their own community as well as in society at large. Members of this Movement enter into a deep union with God by means of their personal story – through their marriage, their family, friends, and acquaintances, their leisure time,

and the daily concerns and social responsibilities in which they find themselves immersed. In addition, politics, the economy, and the sciences are not foisted upon them; rather it is their commitment to be men and women committed to the Gospel that sets the tone for their involvement in these fields. They work for a more just and fraternal world, striving to be more and more faithful to the spirit of St. Marcellin, acting with integrity, a spirit of service, and the courage that comes with their faith. These groups of lay people exemplify true Gospel values in the social and cultural contexts of the countries in which they live.

Before concluding let me say that from here in Cuba, I am speaking on behalf of many former Marist students in asking for prayers for the Marist Brothers and the Champagnat Movement, that God keep blessing their work, in itself but a grain of sand, but with His help, contributing greatly to “the construction of the civilization of love” to which we are all being called by John Paul II. ♦



Members of various fraternities from France in Taupes.



Reliquary given by the Marist Brothers to Pope Pius XII at the Beatification, 1955.

WAYS TO HOLINESS

In canonizing Saint Marcellin on April 18, 1999, the Church officially recognized his holiness. It was the culmination of a long process. At present, the Marist Brothers have several causes for sainthood underway, for Brothers in two categories – confessors, Brothers François and Alfano – and martyrs.

Brother François (1808-1881), from France, was Saint Marcellin’s successor as Superior General of the Brothers. Brother Alfano, from Italy, lived from 1873 to 1943. We await the Church’s acceptance of a miracle for each Brother, leading up to their beatification.

The causes for our martyrs pertain to Spain (173 Brothers and two Laymen) and China (four Brothers).

The eight processes going forward in Spanish dioceses are grouped together in four positio. The process that is farthest along is that of Brother Bernardo. His beatification will take place in the near future.

In China, ten Brothers are considered martyrs: four who died in the Boxer Rebellion in Beijing in 1900; five in Nantchang in 1906; and Brother Joche-Albert in 1951. Only the process for the first group is underway, being presented by the Vincentian Fathers; however it is not being actively followed up at this time. The lives of saints are like the lamp in the Gospel. They are to be brilliant beacons for all to see, not hidden away and unknown.

Br. Gabriele Andreucci
Postulator General. ROME

The Little Virtues

Br. Fabien Landry from Iberville. CANADA

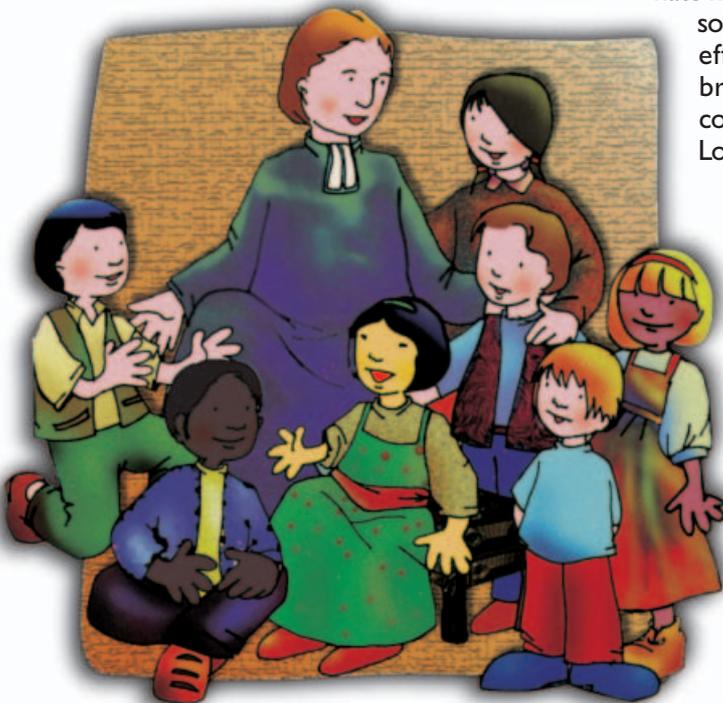
One day Brother Laurence came by to talk with Father Champagnat. Laurence was one of our Saint's first disciples.

"Father," Laurence began, "you're always telling us that we should develop very strong bonds of brotherly love in our communities. There are six of us in my community, and each one is filled with a world of good will. So how come we are having such a challenging time in reaching that spirit of unity which you insist is so important in our lives? How can we improve?"

"Laurence," Marcellin replied, "you're right in emphasizing that each brother in your community is filled with good will. Yes, each one of you truly does love the Lord and is working hard to see that He is loved by all of your students. As you know, a person can love God and his neighbor without being perfect in this regard. To approach a perfect union of hearts and minds, it is necessary to practice what I call the little virtues.

Let me explain. For family spirit to be strong in your community, be forgiving, excusing the petty meanness

that you encounter in those around you, thus lessening the sting of such behavior. Do so even if an offending individual does not return your kindness and consideration. Lovingly pass over personal defects in others – their unreasonableness and the hurtful words that they sometimes blurt out without thinking. Practice patience, sensing the suffering in others and helping them to ease their pain. Express holy joy in sharing your happy times together, building up and maintaining your wholesome spirit of brotherhood. Show adaptability, looking after the welfare of others rather than imposing your own ideas on them. Display loving concern by anticipating their needs and saving them from having to express them. Be good-natured and affable, serene in the face of snubs and put-downs, always ready to serve the needs of others. Never tire of helping people out, over and over again. Be friendly and polite, respecting, esteeming, and showing genuine care for everyone you meet. Look after the common good, putting the interests of others ahead of your own. And finally, maintain your poise and composure, which will help you to eliminate mood-swings, which so often weaken our efforts to grow in brotherly love and communion with the Lord and others". ♦



NEWS BRIEFS

- *The Marist Publications Service in Rome has just produced a 27-minute video highlighting the most significant moments of the triduum of the canonization, April 17-19, 1999.*
- *God keeps calling. Spread over five continents, thirty-six Brothers made their Perpetual Profession and another sixty-nine made First Vows during 1999. A reason for joy and hope. Still, "the harvest is bountiful and the field hands few!"*
- *The 20th General Chapter will take place in Rome beginning on September 4, 2001. An assembly of representatives from all of the Brothers' Administrative Units, a Chapter takes place every eight years to map out guidelines and elect a new government. Already a Commission has begun preparing for this meeting.*
- *The Jubilee is an important moment in the life of the faithful. The Holy Father's pilgrimage to the Holy Land this March aptly symbolizes our own inner journeys to the roots of our Christian faith.*
- *Releasing the world's poorest countries from their external debt is an objective that seeks to clear their path for economic development. In many countries campaigns are underway to achieve this end.*
- *The official Web site of the Marist Brothers is just getting started. It's intended to be an interactive Marist space for providing news, views and information... The address is: www.fms.it*