



FROM THE PROVINCIAL'S DESK ...

1 December 2013

Dear Brothers and friends,

Today, we start the season of Advent. I just love Advent. There is the freshness of a new beginning. It is a season of expectation of Jesus coming into our world, Jesus coming into our lives again. How can we as Marists be open to things that are new, particularly in Advent?



This is the last newsletter for 2013. What an eventful year it has been for me: visiting Papua New Guinea, the three-week workshop and retreat for the Brothers preparing for final profession, the Provincial Chapter and the General Conference in September. The event that still lingers with me most is the General Conference in September. It was for me a most challenging event. It forced me to look at things differently. It spoke about *"Awakening the Dawn"*, about being *"Prophets and Mystics"*; it spoke about *"Newness in our lives"*; it spoke about *"New way of being brother"*. The calls of the last General Chapter rang even louder and with an urgency that we cannot and must not ignore. I felt that Mary was with us throughout



the Conference – pushing, goading, prodding and urging us to find this new way of being brother. During the Conference I kept on hearing: *"We cannot go on in the way we are"*. We must discover this newness in our brotherly and religious life. Mary will be with us as she was with Elizabeth at the Visitation. Mary went with haste to visit her cousin; she did not mooch along the way. The General Chapter Document invites us: *"With Mary, to go in haste to the New Land"*. This gives me such confidence that Mary is with us. In his introduction to the Document of the XXI General Chapter Brother Emili Turú made two strong assertions: *"The same Lord who invites us to a radical following of Him will give us the means and the strength necessary to do so"* and *"Mary, Our Good Mother, accompanies us with tenderness and sensitivity: may she bless each one of us."* These two statements that should make us bold and audacious enough to try new things. I am enthused by these words!



I am also inspired by the Bible story of the Visitation as in St Luke. It is full of encouragement for us to be bold as Mary and to reach out to others and to bring Jesus to

them in a new way. The story has a sense of urgency for Mary and Elizabeth. We need to experience this urgency in our Marist lives. Let us examine the story more closely and try tease out the message that it carries for us Marists in Southern Africa today. At times I sense that we do not realise the urgency of the calls of the General Chapter.



At the Annunciation the Archangel Gabriel told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth, was about to become a mother. Mary was a young girl; her cousin was “advanced in years”, quite beyond the normal age of conceiving. “See, moreover, how it fares with your cousin Elizabeth; she is old, yet she too has conceived a son;to prove that nothing is impossible with God. And Mary said ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done unto me according to thy word.’ And with that the angel left her” (Luke 1: 36 – 38). There is no record of the angel reappearing to Mary. Mary relied on her love and faith in God, and I should imagine her common sense. We do not need angels to appear to us. We have Mary and the strong calls of the Chapter to focus our lives on Jesus in new ways. The angel in this story should remind us that there is a spiritual realm in our lives where God desires to be known and heard.

The birth of Christ was without Mary’s knowledge of man; the birth of John the Baptist

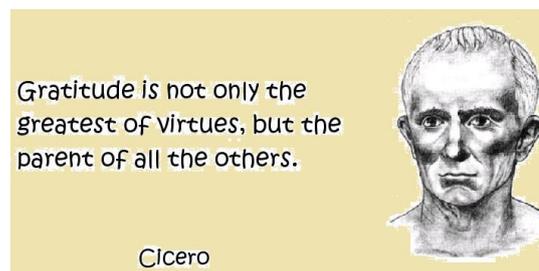
was without regard to age! “Nothing is impossible for God” The scripture continues the story: “In the days that followed, Mary rose up and went with haste to the city of Judah, in the hill country where Zachary dwelt; and entering in she gave Elizabeth greetings. No sooner had the Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, than the child leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth herself was filled with the Holy Spirit; so that she cried out with a loud voice, ‘Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. How have I deserved to be visited by the mother of my Lord? Why as soon as ever the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you for you believed; the message that was brought to you from the Lord shall have fulfilment” (Luke 1: 39 – 45).

Mary “went in haste”; she is always in a hurry to do good. With deliberate speed she came to visit and serve her elderly cousin. Mary hastened to meet Elizabeth. Mary was carrying Jesus to Elizabeth. We as Marists serve our neighbour best when we bear Jesus within our hearts and soul. This is the way of Mary. This is how we can be the Marian face of the church.

Brothers and friends make this Advent a special one were you take Jesus to those you live with and meet. Advent is a good time to become more aware of the spiritual dimension in our lives and to be open to hearing the voice of God to receive comfort and guidance. Let us be aware and open to the many ways that Jesus and Mary desire to enter into our lives.

Be true little brothers of Jesus.

Joe



OUR ZAMBIAN MISSIONARY IN THE MARIST DISTRICT OF ASIA (MDA)



District Chapter 2013: Br Vigilio Bwalya is on the extreme left. Three other Brothers from Africa all come from Ghana



Marist Brothers working in **BANGLADESH:**
From left: Brothers. Javier Bometon (*Spain*), Eugenion Sanz (*Spain*), Mark Poro (*Solomon Islands*), Cesar Henrique (*El Salvador*), Marti Henrique (*Spain*), **Vigilio Bwalya (*Zambia*)** George Vale (*Philippines*).



Vigilio & Br Michael (NZ) during the Chapter

Every diocese in the world figures in our plans



Three "former Zambians" - Vigilio, Luis Sobrado (ex-Superior of MDA), José Luis Grande (Econome for MDA)



Br. Vigilio with children of the slums of Dhaka, the capital city.
 "...the place I visited once & never went back ... hard to believe the inhuman conditions I saw"

ACCEPT MY APOLOGY

If a Marist Brother speaking to Jesus, had said: "HAPPY THE MAN WHO WILL BE AT THE FEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (Lk 14:15-24) Jesus could well have replied:

"Em verdade vos digo que não haverá ninguém na comunidade." *I won't be available for prayer*

*I have a very important meeting
So accept my apology.*

*I was sporting with the boys
I couldn't leave them alone
So accept my apology.*

*Wow, I can't miss this game
Am a big fan of Man-City
I will eat after the game
So accept my apology.*

*I was too tired
I had a busy schedule
Couldn't wake up in time
so accept my apology.*

*It was a very important call
I couldn't miss it
It came from abroad
So accept my apology.*

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SO ACCEPT MY APOLOGY.

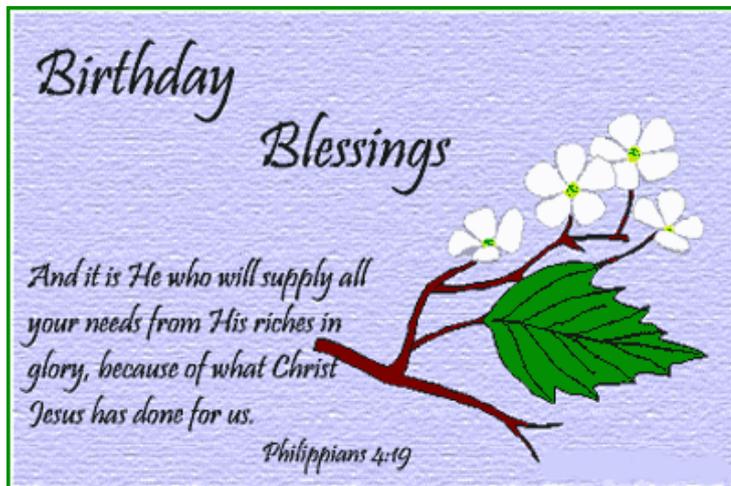
"Truly I tell you there will be nobody in the community."

A contribution by **Br. David Kachoka.**
Mtendere Secondary School.



MANY HAPPY RETURNS TO ...

4/12/38	BELMIRO SCHMIDT
15/12/36	BRENDAN O'SHEA
23/12/41	JOÃO REIS
23/12/49	DENIS NTACYICA
25/12/86	VASCO NOVELE
25/12/82	STEVEN PHIRI
30/12/34	EMMANUEL LAPOINTE
30/12/70	AARON MAZHAMBE



Fostering a truly Marist school culture

(An extract from *NEW LANDS* 1 November 2013 - From Marist Australia)

“Marist College Penshurst has a Marist Dinner Gathering once a term. All staff are invited to attend these events. Some nights we meet in the 'upper room' of a local restaurant, other times we meet in the school boardroom. We begin with 45 minutes of prayer, scripture, reflection and discussion led by Br Tony Butler, followed by dinner. These events are a highlight of our calendar.”

(Declan Donohue – RE Coordinator)

It's up to us!

PLANNING AHEAD ...

Br JOE WALTON - CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2013

1 - 3	Johannesburg Community
4	Travel to Maputo
5 - 6	Novitiate Matola
7	First profession
9	Travel to Johannesburg
10 - 11	Johannesburg
12	Travel to LUANDA
13 - 31	Visitation ANGOLA

JANUARY 2014

1 - 4	ANGOLA
5	Travel to JOHANNESBURG
9	Travel to LILONGWE

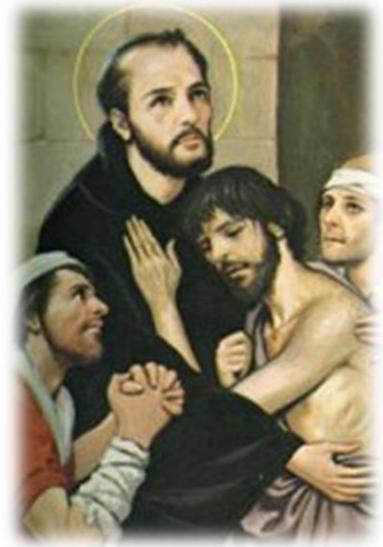
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

21-23 January	Lilongwe, Malawi
22-23 March	Luanda, Angola
28 - 29 May	Kutama, Zimbabwe (centenary)
12 - 13 July	Chassa, Zambia (golden jubilee)
21 - 25 July	Nairobi Kenya, Meeting for New Models for Animation
25 - 26 September	Johannesburg, South Africa
14 - 15 November	Lilongwe, Malawi

Special Patrons of the Brotherhood

ST. JOHN OF GOD

1495-1550 (Feast: March 8). Born in Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal. At the age of eight, for unknown reasons, John left home. John spent most of his youth as a rootless wanderer, working as a shepherd, soldier, bookseller and labourer and travelled through the countries of Europe and North Africa. While in Granada (Spain) at age forty, he experienced a conversion. John's motivation was his great love of God and Our Blessed Lady. His love encompassed everyone, the sick, orphans, widows, prisoners and the poor. John created an equal partnership between benefactors and those in need, each helping one another. He created a family of co-workers that comprised the nobility, the middle-class, the poor, volunteers and his paid staff, all with the one purpose of serving God by serving those in need. People began calling him "John of God." An Order of Brothers was formed after his death calling themselves the "Hospitallers of St. John of God."



Something to think about

THE MISSING FIVE POUND NOTE



Chippenham George worked for the Post Office and his job was to process all the mail that had illegible addresses. One day just before Christmas, a letter landed on his desk simply addressed in shaky handwriting: 'To God'. With no other clue on the envelope, George opened the letter and read:

Dear God,

I am a 93 year old widow living on the State pension. Yesterday someone stole my purse. It had £100 in it, which was all the money I had in the world and no pension due until after Christmas. Next week is Christmas and I had invited two of my friends over for Christmas lunch. Without that money, I have nothing to buy food with. I have no family to turn to, and you are my only hope. God; can you please help me?

Chippenham George was really touched, and being kind hearted, he put a copy of the letter up on the staff notice board at the main Fareham sorting office where he worked. The letter touched the other postmen and they all dug into their pockets and had a whip round. Between them they raised £95 (about \$130). Using an officially franked Post Office envelope, they sent the cash on to the old lady, and for the rest of the day, all the workers felt a warm glow thinking of the nice thing they had done.

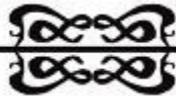
Christmas came and went. A few days later, another letter simply addressed to 'God' landed in the Sorting Office. Many of the postmen gathered around while George opened the letter. It read,

Dear God,

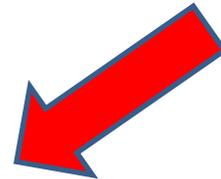
How can I ever thank you enough for what you did for me? Because of your generosity, I was able to provide a lovely luncheon for my friends. We had a very nice day, and I told my friends of your wonderful gift - in fact we haven't gotten over it and even Father John, our parish priest, is beside himself with joy. By the way, there was £5 missing. I think it must have been those thieving fellows at the Post Office.



George could not help musing on Oscar Wilde's quote: 'A good deed never goes unpunished'



TYPHOON HAIYAN



12. A typhoon victim checks on her husband as she keeps him alive by manually pumping air into his lungs following his leg amputation that led to an infection, at the Divine Word hospital which still operates without electrical power on the 7th day of the Typhoon Haiyan disaster in Tacloban. (AFP)



Seven Days after Typhoon Haiyan struck Tacloban

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MIUC?

8 November 2013

Dear Brothers,

As I informed you, the Provincials of Africa were called for an emergency meeting at MIC: only three of us were able to attend. West Africa and Madagascar were represented by staff members, Francis Veye and Camille respectively. We dealt with the difficult issue: whether Marist International University College (MIUC) should become a Chartered University or follow a different course.

The Universities Act of 2012 required to be supplemented by detailed Directives. These came from the Commission of University Education (CUE) in the form of legislation that will be gazetted shortly: University Regulations 2013 and University Standards and Guidelines 2013 to put the Act into operation.

On the 28 and 29 October 2013, CUE conducted a workshop for all the stakeholders to interrogate the two documents. On 30 October 2013 CUE held a meeting with The Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA) and its constituent colleges in consideration of the fact that CUEA is the only private university in Kenya that has constituent colleges. In summary the outcome of the meeting is as follows:

By the 13 December 2013, the three constituent colleges of CUEA, namely Hekima which has been a constituent for 20 years, Tangaza 17 years and Marist 11 years will cease to be constituent colleges because they have exceeded the three years provided by law to remain a constituent college. This provision was not in the agreement when these colleges became constituent colleges.

The three constituent colleges are given two options:

- Become a campus of CUEA
- Provide a roadmap for becoming a chartered university

The choice must be communicated to the CEO of CUE through the Vice Chancellor of CUEA before the end of the second week of November 2013 to enable the former to advise the Cabinet Secretary before he publishes the two documents in the Gazette.

As you can see it was an important decision to make in such a short period. It does not matter which way

we went it would have serious implications for MIC, MIUC and Marist Africa. The provincials considered other options besides the two given to us by the Kenyan CUE. We thought of closing MIC as a university and going back to the original founding idea. There are implications with that decision with Kenya and with our educating our brothers in formation. We also looked at and are still looking at the possibility of merging with Tangaza College and or Hekima. Both groups are keen to dialogue with us. Brother Valentin and I met with leaders of both groups. They both were in favour of dialogue. To become a campus with CUEA would mean we have to give up too much and our formation could be compromised. It would take a lot of negotiation to become a Campus College and the outcome for us would be uncertain.

If we do not become a university and close MIC there are also many difficulties that the Provinces would have to face. We would need to start a scholasticate in our own provinces near a university. In some countries the universities are unreliable and degrees take longer to get. In a province like Southern Africa do we build separate scholasticates for each country? That would not be good for our unity. We would lose the great unity MIC adds to the Marist Africa. We are trying to develop internationality in the whole of the Marist Institute so closing MIC would be a step backwards.

Our final decision was to become a chartered University but being open to merging with the other colleges who are in the same predicament as we are. We have to see what is best for the formation of our brothers in formation.

I am extremely worried about our decision as it has enormous financial implications for us as a province and as Marist Africa. We do not have the finances to do all we need to do in our own province and with this extra burden of funding MIC and MIUC, all I can do is hope. It does not matter what way we decided there would have been major financial implications.

I hope you understand were the decision comes from and the difficulty in making a decision that one feels so uncomfortable about and *Joe* that we discerned and did what was best for Africa.

Yours sincerely

NEWS FROM MATOLA

For their last gathering of 2013, about 80 novices and “juniors” (i.e. religious with temporary vows) from the Archdiocese of Maputo assembled at our novitiate in Matola. There was time for reflection,



prayer, liturgy and thanks – especially from those who were about to make final profession. It appears that Br Simeon Banda is a one-man team who accompanies them regularly. Thanks for looking after and feeding the flock of the Lord, Simeon!

And thanks to FMM of Marist Canada, the novitiate now has two new solar panels to alleviate the shortage of hot water.

SOME INTENTIONS FOR YOUR PRAYERS

- **Br Peter Zulu** (1st year MIC) lost a very close maternal aunt on 6 November.
- **Br Joseph Antonin Lussier** well-known as “Joe Electric” for his ability as a handyman. Born in 1928, he died in Canada on 16 November. He spent many years in Zimbabwe, and worked for much shorter periods in Zambia, Nigeria and Rwanda.
- **Br Dostie** who is recovering well from his operation. He is due to see the surgeon on 20 December, but we do not expect to see him back in Malawi till February.
- **Br Andrew Fournier** who leaves on 1 December to take over the role of administrator for our house in Manziana until a permanent replacement is found.
- Our **Brothers in Syria and Centre Afrique**, countries where violence is pandemic.
- Victims of the disaster in the **Philippines**.

To all our readers ...

