



**Marist Brothers - Irmãos Maristas**  
**Province of Southern Africa - Província da África Austral**  
**Province Office, Area 9/290B, Box 1077, Lilongwe, Malawi**

1 December 2012

Dear Brothers

As we are in the season of Advent, let us spend the time in waiting for the child Jesus to be with us again at Christmas. I would like to share a poem by James Langford with you. I came across it in my scrap book of odds and ends.

The message of the poem will cause us to reflect on our commitment to poor children at this stage in the history of our Province. It will help us see the world through the eyes of the child.



**A Prayer**

Lord I need to talk to you about the children.  
Sometimes I wonder why you keep sending them to us.  
You surely know how we treat them, what we do to them.  
You have taken so many of them back before they even owned a doll.  
Or dreamed of hitting a home run  
Or thought about living long enough to graduate from High School.  
We have let them die of random gunshots, starvation, drugs and disease.  
Of loneliness, abuse and despair.  
A friend who is a counsellor at a local elementary school told me  
That in the past two weeks he has dealt with  
Two suicide notes three fifth graders who have joined a notorious gang.  
And more than a few fourth and fifth graders who are sexually active.  
What have we done...or not done...to your children?  
Who can they trust?  
What must you be suffering?  
You, who still a child, amazed the elders in the temple  
You who though exhausted at the end of a day of preaching and teaching  
Ordered the apostles not to prevent the children from you  
And it was you. Lord who told us that unless we become like little children  
We cannot enter the kingdom.

I think what you meant was unless we speak the truth  
Unless we trust and dream and hope and love  
Unless we play and laugh and reach out to others  
With both hands like children are meant to do, we cannot be ready to see you  
Surely, You didn't mean that you want us to be like so many children today  
Afraid, alone, neglected, molested, threatened, streetwise, suspicious, hopeless  
How can we be childlike if children cannot be children anymore?  
Show us the way Lord  
Start at the beginning  
Teach us to see ourselves, our actions and omissions, through a child's eyes  
Remind us  
All children are our children  
And we are your children  
Help us.



Let us see the world through the eyes of a child.

Joe

## Birthday greetings for December

### Happy birthday to the following brothers

<b>4/12/38</b>	<b>Belmiro Schmidt</b>
<b>15/12/36</b>	<b>Brendan O'Shea</b>
<b>23/12/41</b>	<b>João Reis</b>
<b>23/12/49</b>	<b>Denis Ntacyica</b>
<b>25/12/86</b>	<b>Vasco Novele</b>
<b>25/12/82</b>	<b>Steven Phiri (novice)</b>
<b>30/12/34</b>	<b>Emmanuel Lapointe</b>
<b>30/12/70</b>	<b>Aaron Mazhambe</b>

## Marist and Marianist Third Age Renewal Program at Manziana

17 October – 14 December 2012

Seventeen participants were welcomed to the campus of “Istituto Fratelli Maristi” by the animation team comprising Brothers Barry Burns (New Zealand), Antoine Kazindu (Africa Central East) and Anthony Hunt (Sydney). The group includes five Marianists, all from the USA, and 12 Marist Brothers coming from the following Provinces: South Asia (1), West Central Europe (3), New Zealand (2), Nigeria (1), USA (1), Sydney (2), Southern Africa (1) and East Asia (1). The chaplain for our session is Marianist Alvin McMenemy, also from the USA.

During the first week, we took time to share our personal life stories for 20 minutes before the entire group – an exercise that proved to be appropriate, enabling each one to reflect on his life and fostering the sense of community. A day-long outing rounded off of this part of the program: a visit to the Etruscan necropolis of Cerveteri, a meal at a medieval hilltop town (Ceri) and a visit to the shores of Lake Bracciano at Anguilara Sabbazia.

Comboni Father David Glenday animated three days of sessions on *Religious Life and Prayer in the Third Age*. A man with considerable missionary experience in both Africa and Asia, he has been Superior General of his congregation, and currently serves as Secretary General of the Union of Superiors General that includes some 230 congregations of men of pontifical right. His contact with our Institute includes retreats for the Brothers preparing for *Ad Gentes* in Davao as well as a number of sessions at Manziana. Among the memorable phrases from his input: “Listening with the ears of God” (Bonhoeffer); “The facts are friendly” (Eric Fromm); “At the bottom of every event there is a gospel”; “Prayer is the place where experience becomes wisdom”.

Brother Mike McAward SM, Secretary General of the Marianist spent a morning on the spirit of Blessed William Chaminade’s congregation. Of particular interest was the method used by the Marianists to ordain some of their members (currently about one third of their members, though there is no policy) to provide liturgical and other services in their communities and apostolic works. Mixed composition is part of their founding charism and care is taken to avoid extremes such as clericalisation among their Brothers or laicization of priests. Brother Mike spoke about the Marian dimension of the Church as an element of Marianist mission.

On the following day, Brother Emili Turu’ presented our charism largely making use of the three icons used in his circular, *He gave us the name of Mary*, and relating them to the themes of Inclusion (Visitation Icon), Interaction (Pentecost icon) and Interiority (Annunciation icon). Naturally, he made some insightful comments on the Synod of Bishops at which he was an official observer. At the end of October, the community braved the threatening weather to participate at the General Papal Audience in the Piazza at St Peter’s.

Michael Drennan SJ from Ireland spent four days with us on the spirituality of ageing, how to “grow in wisdom, age and grace.” A citation from Meister Eckhart sums up much of what was shared during the session: *You must bring him everything! Your dreams, your successes, your rejoicing. And if you have little to rejoice over, bring him the little. And if your life seems to be only a heap of fragments, bring him the fragments. And if you have only empty hands, bring him your empty hands. Shattered hopes are his material. In his hands all is made good.*

At the time of writing, our Marianist members are visiting their places of origin near Bordeaux, while the Marist Brothers are at the Hermitage where we were warmly received by the community. Br Neville Solomon has been an excellent guide and animator both through the renovated Hermitage complex and on our visits to the historically significant Marist places, as well as to Taizé, Cluny, Ars and La Neylière (the last home of Fr Claude Colin and his burial place). The new Hermitage now provides comfortable accommodation and a number of very tastefully designed chapels and oratories for those who come to reflect and pray here. The weather has been very kind to us. A week before we arrived it had snowed in Lavalla. Since then it has been quite chilly at times but even pleasantly sunny on two or three days.

The driver of our bus to Taizé, faithfully following the instructions of his SATNAV GPS device, took us through some beautiful countryside in the Beaujolais region of France to THEIZÉ, a little town with the same pronunciation as Taizé but no resemblance to the monastery founded by Br Roger Schutz! However, no great harm was done as we still arrived at the correct place in time for 10.00 a.m. Holy Mass.

The entire group of Marists and Marianists has developed a fine spirit of community, and our shared reflections have been insightful and enriching. The final four weeks at Manziana will include sessions entitled *Choices of the Heart; Health and Wellbeing; The Kingdom;* and *Walking with Mary* and concludes with a three-day retreat. Slotted in between these aspects will be an overnight visit to Assisi. (Br Mario Colussi)



**Back: Brian Callaghan fms, Barry Burns fms, Jim Jaeckle sm, Carl Tapp fms**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Row: Robert Fachett sm, Joe Genovese sm, Mario Colussi fms, Charles Gay fms, John O'Brien fms**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Row: John McDonnell fms, Antoine Kazindu fms, Delmar Jorn sm, Paul Ching fms, Augustin Hendlmeier fms, Dominic O'Brien fms**  
**Front: Anthony Francis fms, Joseph De Meyer fms, Emili Turú SG, Denis Itumah fms, Alvin McMenemy sm (chaplain)    Absent: Anthony Hunt fms**

## 10 days in Madagascar



I was most fortunate to have the opportunity to spend some time in Madagascar last month. I was invited to their Centenary Celebration. Right from the start I felt at home yet I was in a different world from the usual African scenes I am used to. The landscape and architecture are so different. I arrived in Antananarivo and skirted the city to set off for the Antsirabe a two and a half hour journey. We went through small villages and admired many rice paddies, all so different for me.

In Antsirabe there are two schools run by the Brothers, St Joseph's and Immaculate Conception School. They were founded in 1920. St Joseph's is a large school of 1700 students: it has a beautiful 90 year old brick building. You can see it in the photograph



A student representative from the other Marist schools in Madagascar came to St Joseph's for the celebration. For a few days, sports competitions, cultural events, and other competitions took place. The cultural events highlighted the many cultures found in Madagascar.

We were subjected to many styles of dancing from different parts of the country. They were really most entertaining.



The highlight of the celebration for me was the mass. Even though I never understood a word I felt totally part of this most meaningful celebration. The processions and meaningful body language spoke clearly to me. I was fortunate to have a brother sit next to me at mass to translate the speeches and the sermon.

After the celebrations I was taken south to see the different works of the brothers. We, as Marists, can be proud of what is done in Madagascar today by the Brothers and lay teachers. The schools have the top exam results in the country and even more importantly the students are really cared for and loved by the brothers and teachers in our schools.

I wish I could say more about the experience I had but it would make our newsletter too long. I wish the Brothers of Madagascar all God's blessings and success for the next hundred years,

Here are some scenes of the country side taken as I travelled to the different Brothers communities



## Malawi Schools Science Trophy 2011

The floating Schools Science Trophy, based on the Malawi Certificate of Education results for a given year, was started over 20 ago.

Over the years, the Marist Schools have taken places of honour again and again. The 2011 awards were no different and Marist Schools were represented in all categories except for one young man from Ngabu and another one from Chichiri who received individual mentions. All other awards in the male division were from Marist schools with Likuni in first position and holder of the trophy, in second position came Zomba Catholic, and in third place Marist Secondary School. In the female section, all awards went to Catholic schools with Ludzi Girls, St. Mary's and Marymount in first, second and third position respectively.

Congratulations to staff and pupils in Marist and Catholic schools at large.

### Something to think about:

#### Why some trees are evergreen

The Cherokee people of North America have a short creation story that encourages a Christmas insight, and it goes like this. When the plants and trees were first made, the Great Mystery gave a gift to each species. But first he set up a contest to determine which gift would be most useful to whom.

"I want you to stay awake and keep watch over the earth for seven nights," he told them. The young trees and plants were so excited to be entrusted with such an important job that the first night they did not find it difficult to stay awake. However, the second night was not so easy, and just before dawn a few fell asleep. On the third night the trees and plants whispered among themselves in the wind trying to keep from dropping off, but it was too much work for some of them. Even more fell asleep on the fourth night.



By the time the seventh night came, the only trees and plants still awake were the cedar, the pine, the spruce, the fir the holly and the laurel. "What wonderful endurance you have," exclaimed the Great Mystery. "You will be guardians of the forest. Even in the seemingly dead of winter, your brother and sister creatures will find protection in your branches." Ever since then all the other trees and plants lose their leaves and sleep all winter while the evergreens stay awake.

This tale does not use the usual Advent symbols of light and darkness. It talks about greenness in midst of barrenness and associates this greenness with the ability to stay awake. "Staying awake" is standard code in spiritual literature. It means remaining aware of our life-giving connection to divine reality, even when inner and outer forces militate against it. Just as the light in the darkness reminds us of this truth, so does the green-leafed tree in the leafless forest.

**Calendar**

<b>December</b>	
3-7 December	Visit Manhiça, Mozambique
8 December	Attending the First profession of Novices in Matola
9 December	Johannesburg
11-14 December	Kalulushi
15 December	Johannesburg
16 December	Lilongwe