


 MDA  
marist district of asia

# news



**"A NEW BEGINNING"**

**APRIL - JUNE 2017**

## Let Us Dream Together with Marcellin

Words shared with the students of the Marcellin School in Bangladesh on the day the School was blessed and dedicated.

200 years ago in southern France there was a young man named Marcellin. As young people do, he had a dream. As time went by, he started sharing his fondest dream: to start a community of Brothers to educate children living in faraway places around the world.

The more Marcellin shared this dream, the more things began to happen. Young men joined his project and many schools started to appear in the countryside of France. His dream became a reality and grew in surprising ways. Schools were founded all over the world, in the United States, Syria, India, Spain, Italy, the Philippines, China, Canada, Malaysia, Argentina, Brazil, and many other countries. Today there are Marist Brothers schools in 83 Countries.

Now, here in Bangladesh, in Gyasnogor you are living with followers of Marcellin, Brother Eugenio and Brother Marti. They too firmly

believe in his dream and are sharing it with others – Bishop Bejoy, Mr. Topon, the Marist Sisters, the Holy Cross Fathers and many other people who have generously contributed to the opening of this school.

Education is the basis for progress here and throughout the world. Let us continue to dream together with Marcellin.

You, dear students, are at the center of this ceremony today. A few years ago, this school was just a dream. But when we began sharing Marcellin's dream with others, miracles happened and the dream came true, giving you this opportunity to realize your fondest dreams for yourselves, Bangladesh, Asia and the world.

As a leader of the Marist District of Asia, from the bottom of my heart I congratulate everyone for all the planning and work you have done to help make the miracle of this Marcellin School a reality. May God continue to bless and thank you very much. Onk dhonnobad.



## Activities

- Trip to Bangladesh, visit to the two communities, Mymmensing and Gyosnagore. Blessing of the New School Saint Marcellin School.
- Go to Sri Lanka visit the Novices, then Advice group works and Council of the Novitiate meets and then Formation commission of MDA have two days of meetings.
- Twenty-one of March, travel to Singapore, Inter- regional meeting (Provinces of Oceania and Asia) twenty-five fly to Saigon,
- Country meeting with the brothers in Vietnam (a new face, Asian face start to appear)
- April second Face to face meeting at the Christian guest House.
- Seven of April fly to Sri Lanka profession of our Novices (Guanzhao, Sinh, Tri, Hung) Holy week,
- Twenty-four arrive to Saigon, meeting of Young men in formation ...

## Inter-Regional Meeting

Our Inter Regional meeting: On March 22 and 23 the leader of the two Regions met together at the Community in Singapore. Some of the points shared in that meeting were:



- Exchange of Personnel, lay volunteers (Bro. in China, living in MDA Community for a while)
- Oceania Ministries in Asia: Cambodia and East Timor. Explore cooperation for the two regions.
- Increase communication
- Formation: at the moment, there is collaboration in these areas: Davao Postulancy (East Timor Postulants), Inter National Novitiate (South Asia, MDA, Melanesia and East Timor), MAPAC (both regions) Perpetual Profession preparation experiences.
- Networks of School: Through the Champagnat Marist Schools Oceania.
- New Models Projects: we feel we need more collaboration.
- Other points: Formation of Formators, Holistic Regional Formation for Leadership, explore way to collaborate across the Marist Regions.

We were very grateful for the hospitality and fraternity they shared with us during those days...



La Valla 200 team (Angel and Jeff)  
visiting our communities.

Fraternally

*Bro. Hoan, fms*

## First Professions at the Novitiate of Tudella, Sri Lanka.

*"I have called you by your name, you are mine" (Is 43:1)*

It is the theme that the novices have chosen for the celebration of their profession, on the **8<sup>th</sup> of April at the international novitiate of Tudella, Sri Lanka.** They have seen together that this Word of God was giving the strongest meaning to the act of donation they were going to do. This word was also lighting (or throwing light on) all the experience lived in these two years of the novitiate where it became always clearer for each one of them that they were "personally called by God to his mission, in this Marist Charism, in this particular Kairos of the bicentenary, experiencing the immense love of God, feeling themselves "beloved sons" in the Son.

The song one of them was singing after the first Reading had a particular resonance:

*I will come to you in the silence.  
I will lift you from all your fear. You will hear my voice,  
I claim you as my choice, be still and know I am here...*

So it has been a great moment for Brothers **Guangzhao (Ch.), Hung, Sinh, Tri** (from Vietnam), **Epalle** (Solomon Islands), and **Fereole** (Vanuatu), in a wonderful and inspiring liturgy presided by Archbishop Pierre Nguyen Vat Tot, the apostolic nuncio of Sri Lanka. More than 80 participants, Brothers, Sisters and friends were there to accompany them with their prayer and their warming presence. At the same time, **Br. Dulaj Fernando** and **Br. Jiji Dhasan** from the South Asia Province renewed their vows received by **Br Mervyn Perera**, the Provincial.



## A great experience of courage and trust - Br.Sinh

*Dear brothers I am one of the newly professed brothers in Tudella International Novitiate. First of all I would like to express my gratitude to our Lord and Mary for calling and guiding me, and for the brothers who have been helping me on this journey, especially my formators here in the Novitiate. My vocation in Marist life is a mixture of ups and downs but with constant prayer and discernment helped me a lot in making a decision. An experience of fear, uncertainty, confusion, and discouragement just before profession mass demanded me to call on the help of Brother master, we had a moment of prayer and silence, at this moment I realized that trusting in God is the only way to move forward, learning to make a step that is leading me somewhere which I don't know, finally I gave myself a chance to live for God. Everything in my life, every decision was being done by tradition or by my parents, but entering the religious life and making profession is my personal choice I made for God, because I experience him personally and I chose to live for him. After profession I feel so happy, so peaceful, so grateful, so energetic, there is no more room for fear or uncertainty. I'm asking for your prayers to be faithful to my vocation and to be a little Brother of Mary. Thank you.*



## "Lord, it is good for us to be here" – Br. Guangzhao

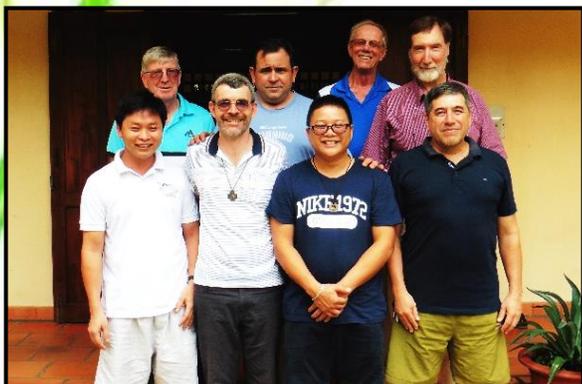
*"Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will..." (Mt 17:4). 'Here' is not a particular place. It is wherever we have an encounter with God. When we have encounter God, we will be satisfied and say, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." I always thought that making my religious profession was about announcing the vows in public and then living them throughout my life. But I discovered that there is something more. On that special day, 8<sup>th</sup> April, after I*

announced my views, I was deeply touched by the presence of God. I felt full of light, peace, joy, and happiness without darkness, worries or fears. As well, I can say that, because of God's love and calling, I opened myself and said 'yes' to the Lord, and in doing so. I found what I am looking for in my life, I have discovered that God alone is my life. In this sense, I can say bravely and with my companions, " Lord, it is very good for us to be here.." (cf Mt 17:4)

## Country Meeting in Vietnam

26 – 28 of March

On the last week of March there was an important meeting in Vietnam, the 8 brothers living in Vietnam got together to share points of view and try to reach some consensus, especially in the area of ministries. The meeting concluded with affirm desire to start soon new presences in the country. We know all these implies changes and new challenges but we trust that the unity and passion of the brothers can make these new presences a reality in their midst.



## Easter Celebration at Tudella Novitiate

After our newly professed Brothers left us, we entered Holy Week. We started preparing for a celebration of the Passover Meal on Wednesday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, our Good Friday ceremonies, where we commemorated Jesus' way of the cross and our 3pm Veneration, culminating with evening adoration. Then with great joy we celebrated our 7pm Easter Vigil ceremony.



East of these ceremonies were held here, and so each needed a lot of preparation, including cleaning the house, singing practices, and rehearsals. We were joining by our neighbours and friends, resulting in a congregation most days of about 50 people.



Looking back to these Easter ceremonies I was struck by many new experiences. For example, I experienced a new appreciation of the Last Supper with the way we celebrated the Passover Meal, led by Br Rod. As well we held our Holy Thursday Mass with 2 of our dining room tables placed in the center of our chapel as our altar. These two celebrations were a mixture of joy and ritual, and helped me realize something of what it would have been like for Jesus and his disciples. Also, with the celebration of the Vigil Mass, I experienced togetherness with our neighbours, sharing the joy of the resurrection of Christ and sharing a meal afterwards like we are one big family. Actually, I made it a point to visit some of those I'd met, over the next few days, including a lady who was very sick, and another family who befriended me. And so, I really experienced a "Happy Easter" this year, and wish all readers the same!

### Face to Face Council Meeting in April 2-6 in Bangkok

This was the last meeting with Bro. Joe Mckee. We were thankful for his sharing life experiences with us.



### Vietnam

From Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday the candidacy community expended the time in a new parish in Bao Loc city, 200 km from Saigon. We prayed with the community and enjoyed the beauty of that city. There we also met some new young men and had the opportunity to visit them and their families and introduce the Marist Brother's life and charism.

### MAPAC Community gathering at Easter Sunday



On Easter Sunday, the MAPAC community invited our Marist lay partners and their families for a simple liturgy and a shared meal prepared by the Brothers in the community. The celebration was a meaningful gathering which enabled us to share a family spirit with our lay-



These are first contacts, we will keep in touch with them and hopefully some of them will join us. We pray for them and for those helping us to make known our Congregation in this new land.



partners at MAPAC community. We all look forward for more gatherings in the future.

### The Triduum for our Davao postulants

On Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday the postulants attended a recollection offered at Ataneo University. The event featured a Jesuit speaker daily who did a wonderful job explaining the entire Easter Event. The choir from Ataneo University provided prayerful songs at the beginning and end of each segment. The talks and choir performances occurred each morning. On Thursday afternoon, there was the Liturgy of the Last Supper which was beautifully presented. On Friday, the afternoon was given to Reconciliation and the Stations of the Cross. Holy Saturday evening was the Easter Vigil. The postulants enjoyed each of the three days and benefitted greatly from the experience.



### Time for my Spiritual Renewal...

Every time of my life, I am aware of the love of God is flowing in me and I am allowing myself to be clothed fully with the God's wonderful Love. At present I am Manziana with other brothers from different part of the world for our special renewal course at this stage. I was longing for this time to renew myself and recharge my energy by being with the Lord in the 'new and fresh air' without any other worriedness... which will help me to deepen my faith in the Lord and experience His love as a Marist brother with my limitations. It is a time for me to be silence in my heart and mind and try to listen my inner questions which remains in me. I cannot find all the answers for all my questions but I can come to an

understanding of my limitations and mediate on them, and allowing myself to God to reform me these days.



Here I am experiencing great happiness with the place and surrounding atmospheres, helps to connect with the Risen Lord through whole universe. It is a precious gift for me from the Lord and with companionship of my brothers. We are 18 brothers coming from different part of the world, mostly from Africa.

Last week we have a wonderful time with the SMSM Sisters whom we shared our life's journey, our experiences and inputs of the Spiritual Renewal program itself. We had a very meaningful Easter Celebration too.

This week we will have our evaluation week, then from May 1<sup>st</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> we will make pilgrim to the Hermitage. It will increase my faith with the journey of Fr. Champagnat and his early brothers. I am fully involved in the program and it's a real time of receive God's grace more.

I am looking forward to go back to India with the new energy and strength after getting my Volunteer visa. May the blessing of the Rison Lord be with us always.

*Br. Dora*

### The Holy Week - An Uplifting Experience.

The Holy Week celebrations and the Easter celebrations were the most wonderful and surprising experience, I have ever had. We went to several parishes nearby to see the variety of ways in which Filipino people express their faith during this season. There were two things that I saw in the celebrations that struck me: one was the closeness of families, and the other was the devotion of Filipinos.

To start with, Palm Sunday was a day when I felt the joyful presence of people who came for Mass. Everyone came with palms on their hand. The Mass ended with everyone raising their palms for a blessing, hoping that their palms would catch some drops of holy water. That was something I had never seen before.

My experience continued with the Sacred Paschal Triduum which is the most solemn celebration of the Catholic Church as it recalls the mystery of the redemption: the paschal mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. The devotion of Filipinos to God and their faith is obviously seen during these three days. Beginning with Holy Thursday, we went to the Chrism Mass at Antipolo Cathedral at early dawn, expecting to have a seat in the church so that we could participate comfortably in the Mass. However, when we got there, the place was already crowded. Of course, there were no more seat available. Along the road, there were people walking from all directions as pilgrims to the Cathedral; I simply admired these people. It was also my first time to attend a Chrism Mass at which I experienced the blessing of the oil which is going to be used for the sacraments throughout the year.

Next, we participated in the washing of the feet celebration with the people of St Gabriel's Parish. The twelve selected men were dressed like the twelve apostles. The washing of the feet was meaningful as the priest, with a gesture of humility and service to the people in the parish, acted in the same way as Christ did to his apostles. I expected to see some women among these twelve but sadly, there were none. One unique thing that I found out was the visiting of churches by people which Filipinos refer to "visita Iglesia". When visiting different churches, they prayed and showed their devotion and piety to God, which is something new for me, and not yet practiced in my country.

Then we participated in the Good Friday celebration and the Easter Vigil at the same parish. Both of these celebrations took up to three and a half hours- which made them the two longest Triduum Masses I have ever attended. Unlike Palm Sunday which was joyfully celebrated as people commemorated the event when Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Messiah by waving their palms, the Good Friday celebration started in silence as we commemorated the death of our Lord Jesus. One of the unique things that happened on Good Friday at St Gabriel's parish was the procession after the liturgy; people went around some parish streets with a statue of Jesus carrying his cross and a statue of Mary.

The Easter Vigil marked the most beautiful experience. The celebration began in total darkness. The Parish really made sure that all the lights were turned off, so that the new Light from the Easter candle shone through, symbolizing Christ bringing light to a world in darkness. This was an uplifting experience. One of the outstanding aspects of this solemn celebration was the presence of many



families. I believe this is a special occasion when members in a family can gather together to attend Mass. In a way, these celebrations help to unite members in the family which is very meaningful. I could say Filipinos are very devout people. They have a strong faith: when the priest blessed the water, and went around and sprinkled water, people just wanted a drop of the

holy water to fall on them. They were asking for one more round in order to be sprinkled by the holy water. That was a moving scene for me. Another significant aspect of the celebration of the Easter vigil was the beautiful responsorial psalms sung between the readings, which made me feel the joy and happiness of the Easter celebration. Even though I do not know the language I could follow the flow of the melody. Lastly came the Salubong, a tradition practiced by the Filipinos. This is the reenactment of the meeting of the Virgin Mary and the Resurrected Jesus which, I think, is a unique practice enacted at dawn on Easter Sunday. Hundreds of devoted Filipinos from the parish joined in that procession where the men with the statue of the Resurrected Jesus went in one direction while the women with the statue of Mama Mary went in another direction and both met up in the same place, then a little girl dressed up like an angel lifted the veil from the head of Mama Mary. I have never experienced this before.

Overall, the Holy Week event was a moving experience for me. The most uplifting thing in all that was read and said during the Holy Week was the statement that Jesus did not die for himself, but for us, and such an historical event was remembered and celebrated solemnly with the devotion of many Filipinos and their families.

*By Bao Nguyen MAPAC*

## MDA Community Leaders' work shop – Cambodia



## MDA Formation commission meeting at the Novitiate in Sri Lanka



Change of email Address:

Bro. Jose Maria Sierra – Talit Community has a new  
Email Address: [jmsierradelpozo@gmail.com](mailto:jmsierradelpozo@gmail.com)

### District Leader/ Publication Director:

*Bro. Juan Castro, fms*

### Production:

Bro. A.H.Alex, fms

### Administration Address:

58/54 Soi Pichai 2, St. Louis 3  
Southern Sathorn Road  
Yanawa, Sathorn,  
Bangkok 10120, THAILAND.  
Tel.: (Mobile) +66 (0) 624632826  
E-mail: [juancale@hotmail.com](mailto:juancale@hotmail.com)

## BIRTHDAYS

### April 2017:

5<sup>th</sup> Br. Dakora Gilbert

10<sup>th</sup> Rubel Raphael Nokrek (Novice)

20<sup>th</sup> Nguyen Thanh Hung (Novice)

### May 2017:

5<sup>th</sup> Br. Cong Anton Tien

9<sup>th</sup> Br. Baoxuan Joseph Xia

15 Br. Gomes Riocardo

20 Br. Mark Poro

### June 2017:

2<sup>nd</sup> Br. Guanzhao Zhang

6<sup>th</sup> Br. Joseph Xia Van Tri

7<sup>th</sup> Br. John Nyuydine

8<sup>th</sup> Br. Real Sauvageau

16<sup>th</sup> Br. Andrew Chan

16<sup>th</sup> Br. Walter Eras Lopez

19<sup>th</sup> Br. Bao Nguyen

**GOOD WISHES AND PRAYERS TO  
YOU ALL BROTHERS**

### Hearty Congratulations from the District to the Newly Professed Brothers

Br. Guanzhao Zhang (C),

Br. Hung Nguyen Thanh (V),

Br. Sinh Quoc Vo (V), Br. Tri Ngyen Van (V)