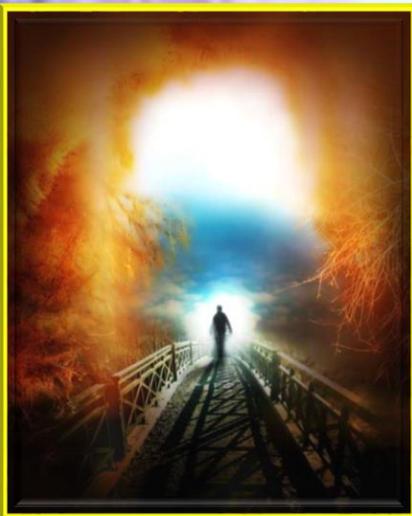




The days after...

Br. Max Meier

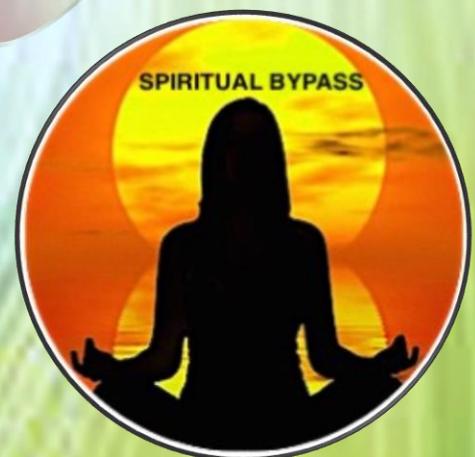
After finishing the General Chapter, all the experiences, reflections, the new Constitutions and Statutes and Rule of Life, are coming out little by little and trying to become life in our place of mission.



For an external observer it must be overwhelming to see all the challenges, documents and the proclaiming of the **NEW BEGINNING**. Only the paper, where there are presented more than 30 challenges must appear to him as something too big and complicated.

During the General Chapter the presence of several facilitators was very helpful to walk and decide as a community, but now back in our provinces and confronting the reality of our daily life with the experience of the chapter, could have been for more than one participant like a culture shock. The natural reaction is to think that reality is quite different and that many good proposals and suggestion cannot be realized because of our limits and obstacles.

We need to hire facilitators, but this is not possible in all of our places and communities, but we could return to concentrate our attention on someone we



are sometimes talking about, but seldom allow him to act freely in us. Jesus has promised us his facilitator: the Holy Spirit.

If someone is thinking that I try to offer a “**Spiritual BYPASS**” for our real-life problems, I can assure him that this is not my purpose.

If we want to provide a place for the action of the Spirit of God, a very hard personal work has to be done. I am writing this on the commemoration day of Saint John of the Cross and this man has experienced in preparing our inner being for the Spirit of God. Our way to pray is one of the key experiences when we want to open ourselves to the action of this *divine facilitator*. Our personal and our community prayer has to be distinguished by this mystic and contemplative aspect. Once the presence of God in us is translucent to others, and our actions are motivated, executed and moved by the Spirit, many difficult things will more easily find an adequate way out.

The most important point in all that effort to start a **NEW BEGINNING**, for the majority of us Brothers is an invitation to renew our **FIRST LOVE**. Despite all our infidelities, and mediocrity, like an old couple, we are willing to start again.

For our younger Brothers there is a challenge to maintain the fire burning in their hearts. With a **New HEART**, a **NEW BEGINNING** is possible and it is an urgent necessity: The World, the Church and our Marist World is clamouring for it.



News from Vietnam



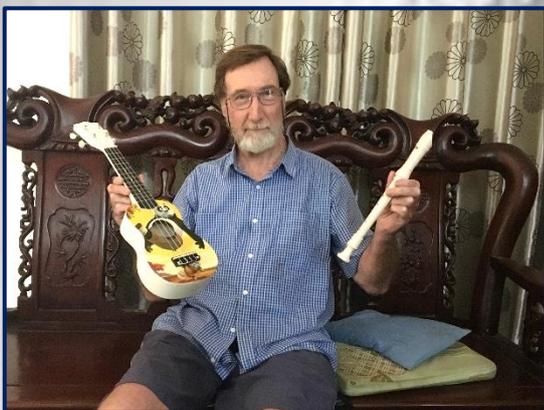
CHRISTMAS A NEW HORIZONS IN QUOC OAI, HANOI

Our Christmas celebrations for the children of Quoc Oai was a well attended and happy event. **Brs. Antonio and Cong** were leading the occasion with help of many of the older students involved in the helping out with the organisation. Song, dance, games and food created a real sense of celebration and joy.



MUSIC COURSE AT THE BLIND CENTRE IN HANOI

Teaching the blind students practical music for the past three months was a successful and rewarding experience both for teachers and students. We taught them the skills of playing the ukelele and the recorder. **Brs. Geoff and Cong** were very involved together with a very able Ms Thien. It was quite a challenge and presented many difficulties; we learnt a lot and so did the students.



Bro. Geoff Kelly

Christmas in Tan Chau. Br. Michael Potter

The invitation:

Our Community Celebration in Tan Chau was held on Christmas Eve, because in Vietnam there is no holiday on Christmas Day.



Our Community of Quy, Michael, Xa and Dan with a few of our teaching colleagues from the Language Centres at which we work.



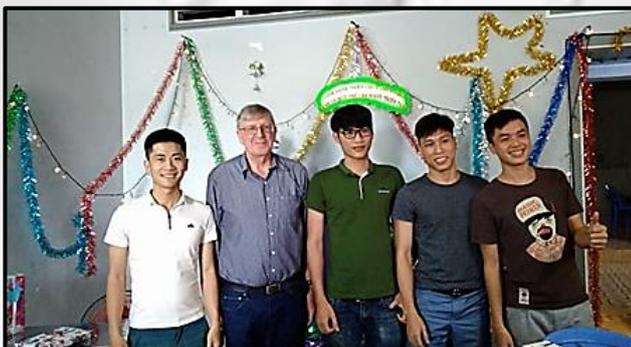
The meal involving 15 students and colleagues; cooked by our students and young Marists (and the two brothers)



A huge crowd of all beliefs joined a spectacular Concert and midnight Mass.



Students from Saigon, who are regular visitors to our community – all originating from Ha Tinh! Marists of the future?



Third Age Spirituality Program...

October 9 – December 9, 2017 – Br. Pietro

Dear Brothers and friends. My warmest greetings to you all.



On the 10th of December **Br. Gilbert Dakora** and **I** were ended the two months Spirituality Course for the Third Age Renewal, in English: Participants included 16 Marist Brothers and 2 Marianist Brothers. We were rich in cultural diversity and life experience; eighteen Brothers from five Continents and representing twelve countries: Australia, Cambodia, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Kiribati, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sarawak, United States, and Viet Nam.

We were welcomed at the General House in Rome. we lived two intense months of listening, sharing, reflection, prayer, pilgrimages and various visits in Rome and surrounding... Highlights were:

1. A 10-day pilgrimage to France, with visits and contemplation of the places where Marcellin Champagnat lived with his first Brothers; sharing with the various branches of the Society of Mary: Fathers, Marist Sisters, Marist Missionary Sisters...
2. A three days pilgrimage in Assisi, visiting the places of St. Francis.
3. Visit to the Vatican excavations, and the tomb of St. Peter; audience with Pope Francis, who also had a nomination of our group ...



For more detailed description and pictures, you can enter these links:

- https://padlet.com/john_mcmahon/MaristThirdAge2017Part1
- https://padlet.com/john_mcmahon/MaristThirdAge2017Part2
- <http://www.johnmcmahon.id.au/maristthirdageprogram2017/>

The course has been an intensive time in my Christian, religious and Marist growth. I lived with a group of Brothers rich in wisdom and good spirit, open and generous, eager to be more and more "Marist" in the years that advance, and to look at the future in the style of the 22nd General Chapter, **JOURNEYING TOGETHER AS A GLOBAL FAMILY.**



On behalf of the MDA I also participated at the three-days meeting organized by the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life, in preparation for the Synod for Youth to be held in Rome next October 2018. From all the nations of the world, we went to a great meeting, with over 500 participants. Only a conviction: religious life, as a charism, cannot have a term, because it is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. Many congregations dedicated to education for the faith of the young are an inestimable gift for the Church. A part the report about this meeting.

I am returning to carry out our mission in Vietnam with renewed enthusiasm, with the tranquility of a Brother who feels called to be particularly a presence among young people, beyond what I can still operate with my strengths.

Many thanks to the dear Brothers who have been my marvelous companions, a special gratitude to the organizational team, and especially to the Good Mother, who continues to watch over our steps and reinvigorates our life and mission; in the years of the third age we feel even more their "sons" and "Little Brothers"

Young people, the Faith and Vocational Discernment



This is the theme of the upcoming Synod of Bishops of October 2018 in Rome. **Bro. Pietro Codato** that attended this meeting in Rome on December from 1 to 3 about Vocation discernment... The Congregation of Religious has organized a preparatory meeting from 1 to 3 December 2017. I took part in the name of the MDA. Very intense days of listening, sharing, prayer, with the participation of over 500 religious of many Congregations from all over the world. *(Br. Juan)*



News from Samut Sakhon – Thailand

Rosa Maria Schiaffino – Volunteer

Two months have elapsed since I arrived at Samut Sakhon. The small Marist community welcomed me even before landing in Thailand. The picture of Champagnat was hanging on my wall and made me feel at home. The rhythm of work at the Marist Centre is quite demanding. In a calm day we spend around 9 hours but often we also have staff meetings or family visits and this increases our workload but a deep love of mission makes our tasks simple and even affords us to handle our duties smilingly.



Our Burmese students are joyful by nature. In the Centre they can recover some of the rights which were taken away from them without being consulted. The aim of the Centre is to give them back the right to education and we try to make it in a Marist way: with simplicity, love of work, family spirit and being present among them. But I don't want to create the illusion that all is perfect. There are obstacles, fears and doubts in the day-to-day life of the

Centre and of the community. Will the Thai government change in the future its immigration policies and send our students back to Myanmar? Then our project would be meaningless and we would have to create a new program and start once again.

In a community which has kicked off several times the uncertainty of the future makes its members feel insecure. The Marist community members are quite diverse. Their personalities and individual history occasionally lead to misunderstandings. Today, December 31st, we are celebrating **"the Holy Family"**. It's an invitation to reflect on our communities, our Marist families. None of them is perfect and the addition of imperfections cannot create something perfect.





Then, *what to do?* In my opinion it's time to remember and put into practice one of our main Marist characteristics: **"the family spirit"** and all that it entails: attention, listening, respect, acceptance, love... Only in this way diversity will enrich our communities. In the entrance hall of our centre, there is a poster that's reads: **"WE ARE MARIST FAMILY"**. Let us allow this spirit

fill our communities in the same way it's present in the Centre and may our Good Mother be our Example and guide in each one of our projects.

Some more pictures from Tiger Community - CN



NEWS FROM TALIT – INDIA

Christmas celebration in the hostel.

On 15th of December, after the final exams of our hostel boys in their schools, Brothers and boys planned to celebrate Christmas with a meaningful way. Boys in a small group participated in the competition of crib making. We decorated the hostel with colorful papers and lights. It was so nice to see how the boys were working eagerly as a team and with the spirit of Christmas. The group who made a better crib received their gift on the day of the celebration. We had a eucharistic celebration of Christmas with a good number of priests who live close by and **Fr. Linus**, our parish priest was the Main celebrant. After the Mass, we had cultural program, gift changing, cake sharing along with the good dinner. It was a great day for all of us particularly for the boys. The next day boys went home for holidays to celebrate Christmas and New year with their parents.



With the local Parish

On 24th evening we the community went to join with our Local Parish for the Christmas mid-night mass. After the mass, we joined with the local people to celebrate the Christmas by singing and Dancing. It was a great joy to be with other people; Hindi speakers and Santali tribal in the parish yard together.



With the Diocese

On 27th morning, we joined with priests and religious who are working in the Diocese of Asansol to celebrate Christmas with our Bishop in the Bishop's house, Asansol. This is the custom of the Bishop, inviting all the religious men and women in the diocese along with the diocesan clergies who are ministering in the diocese. We had mass, cultural program followed by fraternal dinner. During the program time, Bishop and Vicar General took the opportunity to thank all of us for our mission and commitments in the diocese and some of us specially recognized for their special work in the diocese. Also, the Bishop welcomed the new religious



members to the diocese who came this year and thanked who left the diocese to other places due to their transfers. We brothers were able to join with the group and shared our joy with them. It was a great experience to be with the Bishop, priests, sisters and brothers of the Diocese.

Br. Doroteo

If Christ were in Tudella Novitiate Community...

He would learn to make a Vietnamese crib, decorate the chapel, dining room, and veranda beautifully with us, prepare different gifts for other Brothers.

He would sing different carols' song from Viet Nam, China, Bangladesh, PNG, Sri-Lanka, Australia, and Québec, visit some other religious communities and apostolic places, bring joy and happiness to the sick and the handicapped.

He would participate in the vigil Christmas mass and New Year mass with different beautiful hymns in the local parish, praise to His Father and give witness to His Kingdom.

He would celebrate Christmas with us, receive some surprised gifts from other brothers, taste various food from different countries, dance with us in the New Year party and play different games.



However, I believe that Christ is here with us.
He is born in a small crib in Tudella.
He is born in each members of Novitiate community.
He speaks to us the language of love.
He brings joy and happiness to all.
I wish you a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Novice Le Danh Thuong – Sri Lanka

Christmas Celebration at MAPAC - Br. Thuan Pham

Christmas, for many of us, is a break time, a time away from our works, our studies. This was not the case of the MAPAC community this Christmas time. We were busy doing one activities to the next.

First, we organized 2- day activities and Christmas Party for the poor Children from **Navotah** (thanks to Marist Solidarity Australia for sponsoring the project) and then on the 22nd Celebrated the Christmas party with our worker at MAPAC, following with the visiting and giving gifts to the streets family in Manila City. We concluded our year with a day of recollection and thanksgiving.

On the 2nd of January together with all Marists of Champagnat all over the world celebrated the 201st foundation day of the Little Brothers of Mary. It was also a joyful day for our community and all Marists because **Br. Hudson**, a Marist seed from Solomon Island, took this occasion to renew his commitment to the Institute for another year. We also warmly welcomed brother **Quang Zhao** to MAPAC community.

Wishing everyone a blessed New Year ahead from MAPAC.



Death of the young volunteer in Cambodia, PATRICK RODGERS



Patrick 23, was working with the Marist Brothers in Pailin (Cambodia), where he has been involved in service work since he first travelled to the region as part of a Year 11 immersion. Since leaving school, Patrick has undertaken service work in Pailin on eight occasions: it is where his heart and his passion was. While the Rodgers family and their legion of friends mourn the loss of this fine young man, so do the Marist Brothers, who referred to Patrick as Little Brother. He died on 25th December 2017, in Pailin Community.

Patrick's funeral held on last Thursday 4th January 2018, at St Michael's Church, Lane Cove, Australia.

Behalf of the MDA we express our heartfelt condolences to Patrick's parents, other members in the family, friends and relatives.

Let us pray for the repose of the soul of Mr. Patrick and for his family members who lost their beloved one.

Br. Juan

BIRTHDAYS

January 2018

2nd Salvador Salinas

5th Wang Peng - 2nd yrs Novice

26th Francis Attha

February 2018

1st Antonio Sanchez

6th Doroteo Roman

17th Canisio Willrich

22nd George Valle

26th Alexander Arokiasamy

**Good wishes and Prayers
Brothers**

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

Yannawa, Sathorn,

Bangkok 10120, THAILAND.

Tel.: (Mobile) +66 (0) 624632826

E-mail: juancale@hotmail.com