



NEWS AND CURRENT EVENTS

Tudella International Novitiate April 2018

Novitiate Council meeting (by Cyril Benora)

On the 8th of March, we had the Novitiate Council gathering with the brothers and the novices, here in Sri Lanka.



The Novitiate Councilors who attended the meeting were the Provincial Peter Carol, District Leaders Jean Marie and Juan Castro, and formators from different provinces and districts, Brothers Lecio and Paco. We, the novitiate community, were given the great opportunity to have interviews with them on different days that they set for us, when they finished their meeting.

Through the sharing we received a lot of feedback. One of the things was that many of the first year novices were told where they will be doing their Apostolic and Community experience, in their respective provinces and districts, and it would begin on the 15th of May until the first week of August. The entire community was made aware, by the Councilors, of different changes that will occur in the future. One will be Br Peter's leaving, a sad moment for us to hear this. We will miss Br Peter when he goes back to Australia. He has been working in the international novitiate for four years.

Visit from Réal's Brothers: John and Maurice (by Br Réal)

I think that many of my family are falling in love with Sri Lanka. After my sister, Violette, her daughters (Danille, Sylvie) and her granddaughter (Geneviève) visited last June, I welcomed my two brothers, John and Maurice. They enjoyed their travels and meeting many kind people around the country, and the wonderful landscape of Sri Lanka. My brother John said that it was the most beautiful trip of his life.

But the best for them has been their last two days at the novitiate. They had the chance to share meals with us and to have many moments of conversation with the first year novices. They expressed that they have been touched by the great diversity in the community and at the same time, a kind acceptance of one another. John and Maurice spoke to all of us on their last day here. This was a significant moment for us, particularly when Maurice shared a

special ministry that he has recently begun, that is to accompany people in the last moments of life. And as a final message, John gave the group two important attitudes that we need to be a good leader today: humility (to be able to see the qualities in each one) and courage (to be the first to face the difficulties of the mission).



Into the Desert (by Robert Howee)

Each month we usually have a Desert Day or reflection day. These have been presented in many different ways over the last ten months, but on the 2nd of March we had quite a different one. Instead of holding the day in one place, for this Desert Day we went to different places. We chose our own place to go, sometimes with two or three of us going together and splitting up once we arrived. Some went to “Marist Sevana, Haldanduwana” (a new contemplative community set up in the Province), some went to a Buddhist Temple area, some went to the beach, and some went to a special church. Some decided to stay at home. Br. Nick gave us some reflection

methods on the night before, including how to count on all our blessings in life, to practice kindness in life and to let go of what we can and can't control in life. These thoughts were well received, along with helpful questions for us to reflect on these things.



Mark has travelled widely in the Church and conveyed to us, not only through Pope Francis' words and actions, but also through his own personal witness, a message of hope. Some of the topics and some pearls of wisdom that Mark shared, included:

“Consolation, desolation and our discernment as Marists.”

“The church is like a field hospital.”

“Sin is what makes us interesting to God.”

“Jesus asked more questions than he gave answers.”

“Our vocation is to warm hearts.”

“My first reaction can be wrong! Wait, discern!”

“Jesus is the answer! Well, maybe. Perhaps Jesus is the question!”

“It's not easy to commit sin. We're more people who have been wounded.”

Holy Week Retreat 2018 (by Br Rod Thomson)

We had a wonderful two day Retreat, led by Br Mark O'Connor, on Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week (March 26 and 27).

Mark, from the Province of Australia, reflected on the impact of Pope Francis' message for us. Mark's style was refreshing, and use of humour kept us all awake and eager to reflect on the Pope's message of God's mercy and love.



Seder Meal (by Hoang Anh)



At twenty-nine years of age, I am happy to be a novice of the Marist Brothers. Over the last year there are so many things that I have learnt and tasted, and I have found God and all of his gifts there in my journey. Particularly in this community I have received so much love and care. On the other hand I have received lot of information from Brothers about Marist life and the church. One of the im-



portant things is the meaning and the experience of the Seder meal, that we celebrated last Tuesday, 27th of March, during Holy Week. We first year novices studied the Mass for the last two months in our classes, and so the Seder meal helped us to truly appreciate where the Eucharist comes from. I appreciate the Brothers who prepared this Passover Meal for us, as it warmed in us the fire of the liturgy of the church, to feel and be at the same time with Christ, united with Him and sharing with Him the cup of suffering that He is always taking in our lives ... that leads to everlasting joy and happiness.



Hello! My name is **Br. Le Danh Thuong** from Viet Nam, and I have just professed my first vows. I have been with my international novitiate community for two years now and almost six years in various formation houses, in Viet Nam and the Philippines.

I am the sixth in a family with seven children. I have wanted to become a religious Brother since I was in grade six. It moved me to join the Marist Brothers in 2012, and my journey of six years in formation has been a blessing for me.

In May, 2016, I started my Novitiate, a real privilege for me. Aside from thinking about religious life ever since elementary school, I had always viewed Brothers as super-

stars. And now with my profession, how can it be, I am not a superstar! I am a normal human being, just, as I have discovered, as they are. This is an amazing part of my journey in self-understanding, and the understanding of the Brothers' vocation.

Having lived in an international community with 17 novices and 4 formators, there were many challenges, difficulties, and times of great happiness. Life in the novitiate can be an intense experience bringing together people from very different walks of life and different cultures. It is a time to enter the "desert", to discern the will of God. It is a time to deepen the relationship with God and my Brothers. It has not been easy, but I knew that God was always with me. I am walking on the way that my spirit leads me to go. So far the journey has taken me through many challenges and what I get to do now with my Profession and the journey beyond is also exciting and will be full of blessings.

Religious life in Novitiate is nothing like what I thought it would be.

It's actually better, where we always have tons of fun, playing, and working together every day. That does happen, but what also happens is a whole lot of growth. I feel like I've grown tremendously since the time I entered. I believe 100 percent that I would not have become the man I am today without religious life.

With the temporary commitment I have just made, I acknowledge the many brothers who came before me and the ones who are with me on the journey now. Their response to God's call has fortified and encouraged mine, and I will be forever grateful. I have also experienced us growing as a community. We have turned our faces toward the future in the hope of understanding the evolving needs of our world, and I couldn't be more proud of the work my community has committed to in order to help all of us Novices to fully enter the discernment process we have been through.

So there it is, the adventure thus far -- but stay tuned because I'm sure the best is yet to come!

First and Perpetual Profession (by Br Rubel Nokrek)

Last Saturday, 7th of April, at Maris Stella College Chapel, five Brothers made their First Profession, and one made his Perpetual Profession.

First vows for Br. Le Danh Thuong FMS (Vietnam), Br. Rubel Raphael Nokrek FMS (Bangladesh), Br. Hettiarachchige Pradeep FMS (Sri Lanka), Br. Xia Baoxuan FMS (China), and Br. Wang Peng FMS (China) were received by Br. Mervyn Perera, Provincial of the South Asia Province, and assisted by Br Juan Castro, District Leader of the Marist District of Asia. Brothers Thuong, Rubel and Wang Peng are going ahead to MAPAC for their further formation and studies, while Brothers Baoxuan and Pradeep will join in their respective countries' communities and ministries.

Br. Jiji Dhasan's Perpetual Vows were received by Br. Oscar Martin, a member of the General Council. Jiji is currently on mission in Talit, West Bengal, India. A large group of Brothers and friends attended the celebration, among whom were Jiji's parents, friends, and community members from Kalpitiya.

The Main celebrant was His Excellency Archbishop Pierre Nguyen Van Tot, Apostolic Nuncio, Sri Lanka. Among those present were many family and friends of the Brothers, a number of Sisters from local congregations, Br. Tony Leon, the Coordinator of



the Brothers Today Secretariat, and Brother Malang Mei, the community leader of Talit community in India. A feature of the celebration with the quality of the music and singing, led by the First Year Novices. The day was full of joy, with all those present strengthening with love and prayer, all the newly professed Brothers. The celebrations continued after the Mass with photos and a sumptuous meal.



EASTER CELEBRATIONS

(by Benjamin Corbafo)

During our semester break, we Novices prepared different liturgies to celebrate together with the Brothers and our neighbors. It was a significant moment for us to be gathered as Christians to commemorate the passion and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The rituals of the Easter celebrations began on Palm Sunday and finished with our Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. And also on Tuesday of Holy Week the Novices and brothers formators celebrated a Seder Meal, and Easter Sunday we had an Easter Party, plus celebrated Sheron's birthday also.



Editor:
Design and print:
Approved by:
Language help:
For suggestions or comments:

Br Rod
Cyril Benora
Br Nicholas Novice Master
Br Peter and Br Rod
cbenora@gmail.com