



CHAMPAGNAT GLOBAL

MARIST GLOBAL NETWORK OF SCHOOLS

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DEATH OF H. LUIS CARLOS GUTIERREZ, VICAR GENERAL OF THE MARIST BROTHERS

Statement on the Passing of Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez,
Vicar General of the Marist Brothers
4 January 2025

It is with deep sorrow that we share the news of the sudden death of our dear Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General of the Marist Brothers. Brother Luis Carlos passed away today 4th January, while visiting his mother and his sister's family in Spain.

At this time, funeral arrangements are still pending. I am traveling tomorrow to Spain to visit his mother and to be there on the day of the funeral.

We hold Brother Luis Carlos, his beloved mother, sister, and family in our prayers during this time of profound loss. We unite in prayer with his Central American Province and with the entire Institute.

In Brother Luis Carlos, we have lost a good and faithful Marist Brother, whose life was marked by love, dedication, and a deep commitment as Vicar general and to the mission of the Institute. May Mary, our Good Mother, who accompanied him throughout his life, now lead him to the God he so faithfully served.

Let us come together as a Marist family in prayer and solidarity, entrusting our brother to God's eternal care.

Fraternally,
Bro. Ernesto Sánchez B., SG, and Brothers of the Community of the General Council.



YOU WILL ALWAYS BE BROTHER

Words of the Superior General,
Brother Ernesto Sánchez, at the
funeral Eucharist of
Brother Luis Carlos

I am grateful for your presence at this Eucharist, in which we commend to God and to Mary, our Good Mother, our brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco.

We are accompanied on this journey by his mother, Loren, his sister Martha and his family.

Thanks to the priests for the celebration in this beautiful church of Our Lady of the Pillar: the vicar of Alicante-Orihuela, Fernando Moreno S., the parish priest of this church, Francisco Román R., and Pedro García.

Thanks to the Provincial Brothers present: Aureliano García - to whom I am very grateful for all the support he has given these days - Máximo Blanco, Abel Muñoz and Gabriel Villa-Réal, from the Marist Provinces with a presence in Spain, and to Brother Juan Carlos Bolaños, Provincial of Central America, to which Brother Luis Carlos belongs.

And thanks to all the Brothers and Lay Marists present here, Marists of Champagnat, and to the friends of the family who have come to participate.

We all share in the pain we feel at the death of Brother Luis Carlos. For me, personally, it is very sad and painful to have lost my Brother and Vicar General, who in recent years has rendered great and excellent service to the Institute. The number of messages we have received from so many Brothers and Lay Marists in relation to Luis Carlos is impressive. It is good to look back and remember all the good he has done in the Institute, both in his Province of Central America, where he started when he was very young, and throughout the Institute during his eight years as Vicar General.

We are invited to walk as 'witnesses of hope', as Pope Francis has suggested to us in this Jubilee Year. In the midst of our sadness at the loss of our Brother, let us live in hope, remembering that our life comes from God and is always in Him, our Father and Creator.

Mary, our Good Mother, holds him in her hands. We thank her and continue to trust in her, who loves us so closely and affectionately. And we entrust him to Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

Thanks to Brothers Óscar and Chuchi, who prepared this Eucharistic Celebration.

Next, we will listen to the song 'Hermano, adiós' (Brother, goodbye) by Kairoi, which reminds us that Brother Luis Carlos is a Brother forever.

STUDENTS FROM MARISTAS ZARAGOZA (SPAIN) PARTICIPATE IN AN INNOVATIVE STEM PROJECT

Luis Carlos Portolés Rodríguez – Coordinator of the Maristas Zaragoza Communications Team || 10 January 2025



On 10 December, 4th year ESO students from the Colegio El Pilar Maristas (Zaragoza, Spain) took part in the initiative entitled STEM Factory Project: Think, Create and Innovate! at the CESTE university centre in Zaragoza.

The project, in collaboration with the Government of Aragon and the TIC Tecnara cluster, offers students the opportunity to experiment with tools from their educational environment and awaken their interest in technological careers. In the first part of the project, the students worked in teams to develop an idea that aimed to advance the use of emerging technologies and their application (GPT Challenge), combining them to achieve a creative and collaborative project, from the consensual search for the idea to the presentation of the results with a focus on real work environments, promoting the practical learning of artificial intelligence (AI, GPT, basic concepts of prompting, exploration of Gamma, etc.).

In the second part, there was a public presentation of the ideas in front of a jury made up of members of the organising bodies in the CESTE Assembly Hall, in which the aim was for the students to develop communication skills in a real context. The winning team from our centre, as decided by the jury, and which will go on to share their ideas in competition with other centres in the region in the next phase, was the team made up of Cristina Dolz, Celia García, Alba Mérida, Adriana Soto, Irene Hijazo and Shengle Ye with a project entitled 'Your support guide for families with loved ones with special needs'. Participation in this programme has been an excellent opportunity for students to connect with cutting-edge technology and be inspired by current trends.



MEETING OF THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF CHILE'S SCHOOLS

Joaquín Meli – head of communications Santa María de los Andes || 13 January 2025

From 6 to 9 January, the members of the Boards of Directors of the twelve Marist schools in the Chile Sector and the Areas of Animation met in Limache, in the Valparaíso region. On this occasion, the directors were able to learn about new planning and management methodologies presented by Marcelo Cordeiro, strategic advisor to Maristas Brasil, the Provincial Plan and the Sectoral Annual Plan for 2025, among others.

The first day began with a prayer in memory of Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez (RIP). This was followed by a welcome to the new directors and to Marcelo Cordeiro, strategic advisor to Maristas Brasil, who will be accompanying the work during this year. A message from our Provincial of Santa María de los Andes, Brother Pablo González, was then shared, followed by a few words from the Executive Secretary Manuel Llanos and the Mission Delegate Marcela Hormazábal. After lunch, the directors took part in a dynamic of Connection, in which they celebrated the fruits of their work in recent years, and the afternoon ended with a time of retreat to reflect on the past, the present and the future, led by the Life Sector, with the motto 'As Marists we walk in the footsteps of Champagnat', which was repeated at the end of each day.

On Tuesday, after a period of prayer, Brother Álvaro Sepúlveda, Vice-Provincial of Santa María de los Andes, gave a presentation on the new Provincial Strategic Plan, followed by Marcelo Cordeiro, who, together with the Mission Delegate, gave a presentation on the lessons learned from the journey so far and the SOAR Matrix, a planning model that identifies strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results. In the afternoon, Marcelo, together with the Executive Secretary for Life and Mission, Manuel Llanos, presented the BLUE evaluation model, which helps to identify those that need to be eliminated, reduced, increased and created.



On Wednesday the 8th, after prayer, Marcelo gave another presentation on OKR methodology, which consists of a working method that orients the actions and efforts of a team towards common short- and medium-term objectives. After a break, Executive Secretary Manuel Llanos led two modules on the development and presentation of the sectoral Annual Plan and the school Governing Boards for 2025.

On Thursday, the last day of the conference, began early with a presentation by Pedro Díaz, from the Mission sectoral area on People Management, in line with what is postulated by provincial planning. This was followed by a plenary session and a Sending Eucharist, which brought the conference to a close.

Esteban Mena, pedagogical coordinator of the Marist School of Villa Alemana, said that the meeting was encouraging, 'because everything that has been raised with us regarding strategic planning and people management is very fertile ground for orienting what Marist education implies, based on what the Province is asking of us'.

The head teacher of the Marist School in Curicó, Jessica Torres, for her part, assessed the changes that lie ahead: 'I am left with a lot of strength, a lot of hope that the changes are always positive, well planned and, above all, with the experience of people who are very enthusiastic about these changes. Faced with a new reality and new contexts, we have to make all the necessary changes and adjustments, with boldness and hope that everything will turn out well'.

Finally, the Mission Delegate, Marcela Hormazábal, emphasised that these CODIS meetings mark a time of transition: 'We are finalising a strategic plan that runs from 2020 to 2025 and we are now embracing the strategic approach of the Santa María de los Andes Province, so the work has focused on that, on getting to know the tool we are going to use, but also on celebrating what has been achieved in the previous period. Now comes a new era, a new way, the directors welcomed it, it was a very fraternal CODI, of dialogue and family spirit'.

We would like to thank the members of the Boards of Directors of the twelve Marist schools in Chile for their enthusiastic participation and the members of the Sectoral Animation Areas and Provincial authorities for the organisation.





ERASMUS + PORTUGAL-SPAIN: LEARNING ACROSS BORDERS

Bárbara Gardete e Guida Dias – Mathematics teacher and secondary school coordinator || 16 January 2025

To think about Erasmus+ is to think about exchange, coexistence, learning, openness to new cultures, among many other characteristics. It is a programme that offers the opportunity to broaden horizons, to develop new skills, promoting mobility among students from European educational institutions, thus fostering cultural and academic exchange. In addition to all this, it helps to develop essential social skills such as autonomy and responsibility.

On 13 December, fourteen 10th grade students from the Externato Marista in Lisbon (Portugal) and their families accepted the challenge and joined fourteen 9th grade students from the Colegio Marista Nuestra Señora Del Carmen, in Badajoz (Spain), to start what is our school's first Erasmus+ project. These young people, accompanied by a teacher, enjoyed a true immersion experience in the Portuguese language and culture. They took a guided tour of Lisbon, visiting several historical sites, they visited Wonderland, they went to the cinema, to football matches, to museums and they took part in many other activities.

According to the teacher who accompanied them, 'my Erasmus+ experience at the Externato Marista in Lisbon can be summarised in the words of Marcellin Champagnat "one heart, one spirit". Since I arrived at the school, it has been nothing but words of welcome. Corridors, classrooms and staircases have been filled with smiles and efforts to make me feel at home. Mission accomplished. If I focus specifically on the 4th year Primary classes I have been in, I would like to highlight the generosity of Rita and Alexandra in explaining everything they are doing in class and giving me the opportunity to approach the children to help them with what they are working on in class, as well as the curiosity they feel about having a foreign teacher. If we talk about the children, what can we say about them! For Marcellin Champagnat, they were the centre of his work and that has been the case for me during my time here. Being able to talk to them and, above all, being able to listen to them, was a gift that makes me want to come back. The Badajoz-Lisbon Erasmus+ connection has just begun, but I'm sure we'll meet again!



For the young people who visited us, the experience was also very enriching. For Fernando Mejías, 'this trip with Erasmus+ has been a great experience. The first thing I want to say is that I felt very comfortable at the Marist school, because from the beginning you realise that we are all one big family. It's incredible to be able to get to know each other and feel that being a Marist is not just about being at a school, but about being part of a community that is all over the world. Then I have to emphasise that, from the very beginning, both the parents and the Portuguese teachers treated us in a very kind way, which made us feel really welcome. This kindness and closeness made us feel at home, creating an environment in which we always felt supported and valued. And last but not least, we must highlight the treatment we received from the Portuguese children, both at home and in class. At all times they made us feel included, without leaving us aside to be with their friends or classmates. They always looked for ways to make the most of our free time, showing us new places and new activities while they were studying. What's more, those classmates who hadn't had the opportunity to host anyone made an effort to approach us, talk to us and make us feel at home in their country.'



From the Spanish testimonies we can also highlight 'participating has been one of the best things I have ever done in my life' or 'a week where you enjoy experiences and moments that will remain in our memory for a lifetime'. At the farewell, with tears, smiles and hugs, they were certain that experiences like this one are to be repeated and that the memories that were built will last a lifetime. Miguel, a day student, said, 'I loved the experience and would do it again and again, because of the group that came and the activities we did, which made this trip unique for Spaniards and Portuguese.' For everyone, there is the feeling that these moments are lived from a common denominator: Marcellin Champagnat and his Marist work.

If you want to know more about the Erasmus+ programmes, go to the [AGORÁ GROUP](#)



DISCOVERING THE WORLD THROUGH THE SENSES: AN EXPERIENCE OF EMPATHY AND INCLUSION AT THE MEXICO MATERNAL, PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Fabian de Jesús Bárcenas Ramírez – SHALOM Group and teacher at the Mexico Primary School || 21 January 2025

At the Instituto México Maternal, Preescolar y Primaria, we had an unforgettable day dedicated to strengthening empathy, inclusion and respect for people with disabilities. This activity took place in the SHALOM classroom, a space where our children voluntarily participated in a sensory experience that led them to discover the world from a different perspective.

AN ACTIVITY WITH A BLINDFOLD

The children were blindfolded and, guided by teachers and fellow pupils from the SHALOM Group, explored their surroundings using only their senses of touch, hearing, taste and smell. This exercise was designed to put them in the shoes of those who face the daily challenges of living without sight, helping them to better understand their reality and develop a greater sensitivity towards their needs.

THE POWER OF COLOURS BEYOND SIGHT

The activity was inspired by *El libro negro de los colores* (The black book of colours) by Menena Cottin and Rosana Faría (Ediciones Tecolote, 2006), a work that invites us to reflect on how blind people can 'see' colours through their other senses. Through this book, the children learned that Tomás, the main character, does not need to see colours to experience them: he perceives them through their smells, textures, sounds and flavours.

For example, the children experienced the freshness and aroma of mint to imagine green, or the sweet taste of chocolate to evoke brown. This activity not only immersed them in Tomás' sensory world, but also allowed them to reflect on how we perceive the world beyond sight.



LESSONS IN INCLUSION AND MUTUAL SUPPORT

Through this activity, our students were able to understand how a blind person perceives and experiences everyday life, creating a space for dialogue and shared learning. Beyond the sensory experience, the exercise strengthened fundamental values such as inclusion, respect and solidarity.

We are very proud to know that this activity had a profound impact on our students, helping them to understand the importance of supporting and living together with empathy towards those who face different realities to their own. These kinds of experiences reflect our commitment as an educational community to educate well-rounded, sensitive people who are committed to others.

WELCOME WORKSHOP FOR NEW MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF HONOUR ELEMENTARY CHAPTER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL (MANATÍ SCHOOL, PUERTO RICO)



Manatí School - Puerto Rico || 23 January 2025

The students had the opportunity to receive the relevant guidance to become part of the Elementary Chapter and Middle School Honour Society. The importance of practising the pillars that this organisation upholds was explained: Leadership, Citizenship, Academic Excellence, Character and Service. In addition, activities were carried out so that they could understand the importance of carrying out each of these.

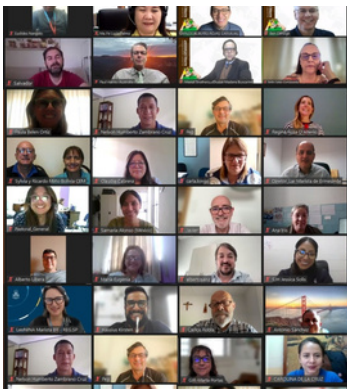
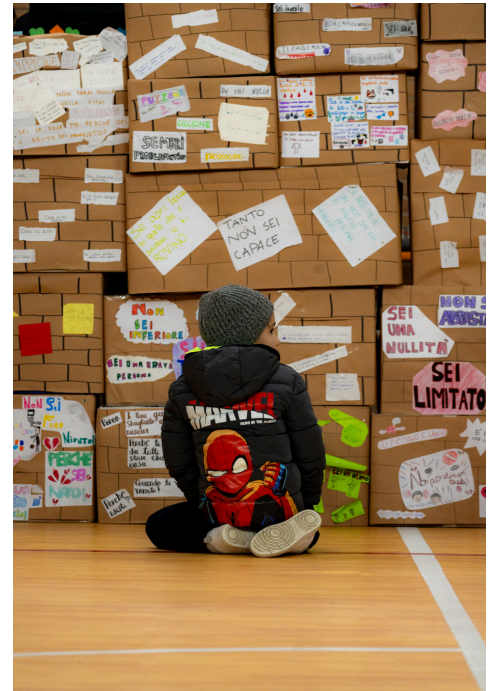
There was also an integration activity which helped the students get to know each other. They had the opportunity to work in teams, mention their future plans and describe situations in which they applied ethical and moral values.



THIS IS HOW THEY CELEBRATED RESPECT DAY AT THE ISTITUTO FRATELLI MARISTI GIUGLIANO (ITALY)

Giuliana Russo – leader of the anti-bullying team Fratelli Maristi Giugliano ||
28 January 2025

On the morning of 20 January 2025, at the Istituto Fratelli Maristi in Giugliano in Campania, in the province of Naples (Italy), on the occasion of Respect Day (established on 20 January by Law No. 70 of 2024), a celebration was organised for all the students, who gathered in the gymnasium for a moment of conviviality and reflection.



Before the celebration, preparatory activities were carried out in all the classes by tutors who, using educational dynamics, involved the students, making them reflect on the issues of bullying and cyberbullying. During these activities, each class used a recycled box to build part of a symbolic wall. On one side of each box were phrases representing insults and offences directed at the victims of bullying, while on the other side were written words of encouragement and support.

The boxes made by the different classes were then joined together to form a large wall in the centre of the gymnasium.

At first, the wall represented a collection of horrors and ugliness. During the celebration, the secondary school pupils, holding hands and supporting each other, read the negative phrases out loud.

Then the older children invited the primary school children to join in. All together, holding hands, they destroyed the wall and then rebuilt it, transforming it into a symbolic work of beauty, with words of affection and solidarity. This gesture demonstrated how, by helping and supporting each other, it is possible to transform selfishness and cruelty into support, empathy and, above all, respect.

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