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CHAMPAGNAT GLOBAL

MARIST GLOBAL NETWORK OF SCHOOLS



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EDITORIAL

Dear Marist of Champagnat!

In this new edition of our quarterly magazine, we embark on a profound and meaningful journey across the continents of Africa and Asia, two regions where vitality, cultural diversity and hope set the pace for our Marist mission.

From the first steps of the Marist Brothers in these territories, **the spirit of Saint Marcellin Champagnat has taken root** in contexts rich in unique traditions, languages and challenges. Today, Africa and Asia are not only mission settings, but living sources of inspiration for our entire global community. Their realities speak to us of resilience, pedagogical creativity, social commitment, and above all, a faith embodied in the daily lives of thousands of educators, students, and families.

From schools flourishing in rural areas to solidarity projects in large metropolises, **every story shared here is a testimony of hope and transformation.** Champagnat Global is not just a network; it is a family. And like every family, we grow as we share our stories, recognise our differences and celebrate our riches.





“Champagnat Global offers me the opportunity to learn from diverse perspectives and collaborate with experts from around the world, allowing me to gain invaluable knowledge and insight that I can then apply to improve the quality of education in my own educational environment”.

BR. MARK ROBERT R. LAUREA

Marist School, Marikina, Philippines

T E S T I M O N Y

'Lighting the Way: The Marist Mission in Asia: A Journey of Hope, Compassion and Transformation'

Building bridges between cultures with compassion: the Marist mission in Asia

Asia, home to nearly **60% of the world's population**, is a land of contrasts: majestic mountains, tropical forests, ancient traditions and rapidly growing cities. It is also a **region facing significant social challenges**: poverty, inequality, displacement and inter-religious tensions.

In this complex and diverse landscape, the Marist Brothers live a bold mission deeply rooted in humility: to make Jesus known and loved through the education and formation of young people, especially those most in need.



its services in **14 countries**, including India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand, among others.

Organised into **three administrative units** (the South Asia Province, the East Asia Province and the Marist District of Asia), the Marists work with lay partners and local communities to build a mission based on inclusion, intercultural dialogue and compassion.

Where hope becomes reality

In India, Marists help Dalit children and tribal communities by providing them with education and dignity. They also care for children affected by HIV/AIDS, offering them not only medical support but also a sense of belonging.

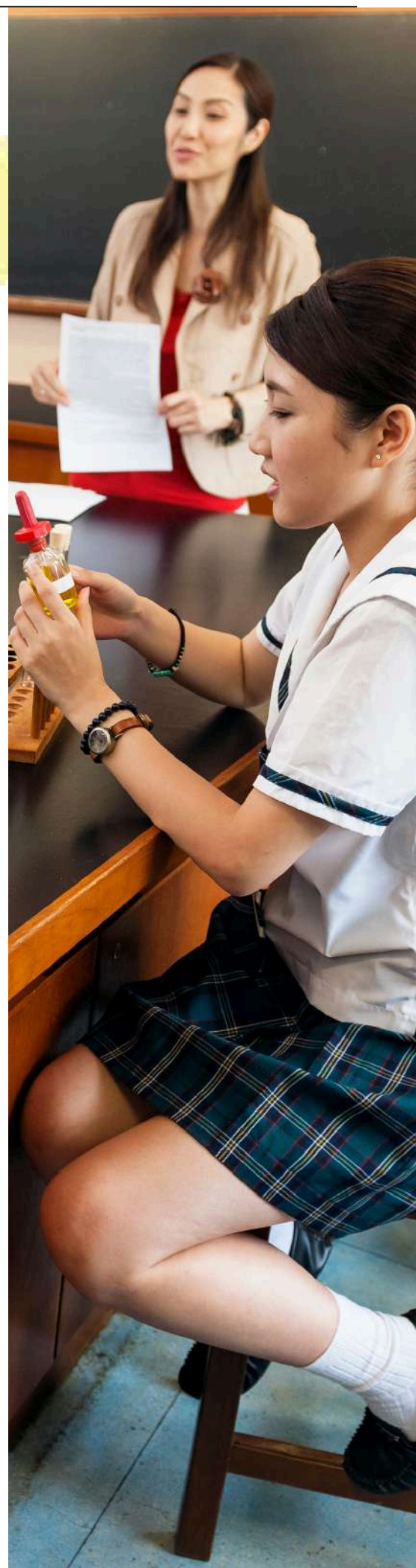
In Bangladesh and Pakistan, where Christianity is a minority faith, Marists educate children from Muslim and Christian backgrounds, breaking down barriers of religion and social class. In the tea plantation areas of Bangladesh, they run a boarding school for the children of day labourers, providing access to an education that would otherwise be impossible.

In the Philippines, the Marists are dedicated to youth ministry, education and the rehabilitation of minors. Their schools and universities serve as safe spaces for young people to grow in knowledge and faith.

Sri Lanka, recovering from decades of civil war, remains a challenging mission field. The Marists focus on reconciliation and peacebuilding, working to

A legacy of service

The Marist Brothers, founded by Saint Marcellin Champagnat in 1817 in France, are a religious congregation dedicated to education, community life and service to the poor. Saint Marcellin believed that, in order to truly teach, **one must first love**. This simple yet profound philosophy continues to guide Marists today, especially in Asia, where they provide



across ethnic lines to bring healing through education and presence.

In South Korea, they run spirituality centres and foster homes for children with disabilities, embodying their charism of being the 'face and hands of God's mercy'.

Along the border between Thailand and Myanmar, the Marists respond to the plight of migrant families and refugees, particularly children fleeing violence in Burma (Myanmar). The Marist Foundation of Asia ensures that these children have access to basic rights: education, healthcare and hope.

Faith in action, even in silence

In China, where Christianity faces government restrictions, the Marist presence has been drastically reduced. What was once a thriving province now consists of a single community. Despite this, two devoted brothers continue to support young people through non-formal education, keeping the Marist flame alive in silence.

The missions in **Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore** were born out of the trials in China. Small but resilient, these communities continue the Marist legacy through schools, parish work and spiritual formation.

A mission rooted in love

Throughout Asia, Marist Brothers and lay collaborators walk side by side with those who are often forgotten: the poor, the displaced, the disabled and the spiritually lost. They listen to the stories of young people, defend their rights and help them discover their full human potential.

The Marist mission is not only to teach academic subjects, but also to shape consciences, foster compassion and build a more just and peaceful world. Students are taught to care for the Earth, serve others and dream of a future where love and justice prevail.

Signs of hope in a wounded world

Today's world faces many crises: child trafficking, environmental destruction, mental health issues, inequality, etc. In this context, Marists are, as Pope Francis says, **'pilgrims of hope,'** offering presence, guidance and light in the darkest corners.

They also focus on family counselling, youth leadership, environmental awareness and interfaith harmony. By partnering with NGOs, local governments and civil society, they create networks of support and transformation.



A global family with an Asian heart

Despite cultural, religious and political differences in Asia, one thing remains constant: the Marist commitment to love, serve and uplift. Their mission, though sometimes small in scale, has a profound impact. As Rabindranath Tagore wrote, 'You cannot cross the sea simply by standing and looking at the water.' Marists have stepped in, crossed the sea and planted seeds of hope where no one dared to go.

The Marist **family store is spacious and welcoming**, and welcomes everyone regardless of their background. It is a family where children find a home, young people find a purpose, and communities find healing.

In the spirit of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, Marists in Asia continue to **build bridges of compassion**, cross borders of indifference, and shine as beacons of hope in our world.

Br. Jiji Dhasan – Regional Coordinator for Asia



"IT'S HAPPENING"

Don't miss out on all the latest news from Champagnat Global, the global network of Marist schools, this term.

Maristas Puerto Rico: 60 years sowing the seeds of the future

The beginnings: A dream come true

It was 1963 when a group of Puerto Rican families expressed a desire: they wanted a **quality Catholic education for their children**. That is how the Marist Brothers responded to the call, driven by Saint Marcellin Champagnat's vision of forming good Christians and virtuous citizens.

The road was not easy. The first Brothers arrived in an unfamiliar environment, with a different culture and expectations. However, their passion and dedication bore fruit. In 1964, in a rented house in Villa Caparra, the Marist College of Guaynabo was born with 188 students.

Shortly thereafter, in 1967, the Marist community expanded to Manatí, with the support of the Ávalo family, who donated the land for the construction of the school.

Barranquitas also witnessed the Marist charism for several years, sowing seeds of faith and education that continue to bear fruit in those who passed through its classrooms.

More than a school, a family.

From those early days to today, the history of the Marists in Puerto Rico is the story of a family that has grown together in faith and education. Every student, every brother, every teacher, and every collaborator has been **part of a community that transcends the walls of a school**.



Marist education has been a journey of accompaniment. We seek not only academic excellence, but also to form people with a deep sense of **brotherhood, solidarity and commitment to society**.

The essence of the Marist charism has been lived through the generations, building bonds that endure beyond the school years.

60 years of history, a mission that lives on

The **60th anniversary** is not only an occasion to remember, but also to renew our commitment. In August and September 2024, we will begin the celebration with Masses in Guaynabo and Manatí, recognising that all our efforts are guided by God.



Some of the **most significant moments** of this commemorative year include:

- **30 January:** Eucharist at the Marist College of Guaynabo, presided over by Monsignor Roberto Octavio González.
- **31 January:** Eucharist in Manatí, followed by a commemorative dinner with Marist brothers who have directed both institutions.
- **14 February:** Sports Olympics between Guaynabo and Manatí, strengthening fraternity and the Marist spirit through sport.

Under the protection of Our Lady of Divine Providence

From the very first day until today, the Marist family has walked under the protection of **Our Lady of Divine Providence**, patroness of Puerto Rico. Every achievement, every challenge overcome and every life transformed has been guided by her love.

Today, as we celebrate 60 years of history, we reaffirm our commitment to continue sowing hope, faith and love in new generations. May this history live on in every student, in every family and in every corner where the Marist charism resonates.

Br. Carlos Velez – President of the Marist College of Guaynabo



Meeting of Marist directors in Madagascar

From 15 to 17 April, the **directors of Marist centres in Madagascar** gathered for a face-to-face meeting of great human and professional richness. This meeting was organised on the initiative of the Provincial Brother, in collaboration with the Education Commission. The meeting brought together the main leaders of Marist schools in the province.



Several essential topics were addressed during this meeting, in a spirit of communion and collaboration. One of the highlights was the presentation of the Province's Education Commission, which clarified the strategy and projects for the coming years. The **strategic plan** has the following objectives:

- Develop a **more significant Marist presence** for the evangelisation of children and young people, in response to the emerging needs of the province.
- **Strengthen the animation and overall management** of the educational and evangelising mission in the centres.
- Improve the **administrative, educational and pastoral effectiveness** of Marist schools in Madagascar.

In this dynamic, **several initiatives were shared to ensure the concrete implementation** of the strategic plan. The meeting provided a **valuable space for dialogue** and sharing on the realities experienced, the challenges encountered and the successes achieved in each centre, including the new primary school in Ampahidrano.

Discussions also focused on **practical and cross-cutting issues**, such as:

- Respect for children's rights, discipline in schools and the development of listening centres.
- The organisation of inter-Marist school activities.
- The recruitment, training and motivation of teachers.

- **Change management**, service transfers, centralisation, teacher salaries and income management.
- The creation of a fund for the **Education Commission**.
- The **development of a strategic plan** for each school and the implementation of specific development projects.

These exchanges helped to **strengthen the Marist family spirit and unite efforts** towards a more promising future for the Marist educational mission in Madagascar.

The Brother Provincial, in his various speeches, repeatedly emphasised the importance of the culture of encounter, which he described as 'very important and significant in our commitment and in the services we provide in the Province'. This culture is an essential lever for building together an educational community faithful to the spirit of Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

Br. HERINIRINA Roland Léonard, FMS

Collaboration between the Publishing Network and the School Network at the 13th INTEGRA-FTD Meeting



As a result of the synergy established between the **Global Marist School Network and the Marist Publishing Network** (FTD-Edelvives-GRAM), Champagnat Global has collaborated with the **13th INTEGRA Meeting** organised each year by FTD.

INTEGRA is a Marist initiative which, through events and training meetings organised by FTD, **supports and strengthens Catholic education in Brazil**, promoting a transformative education based on universal values and spirituality.

From 13 to 16 May, the 13th Meeting took place in Rio de Janeiro, bringing together **more than 150 executives from a large number of congregations**. The theme was: Re-enchantment: hopes and challenges for the management of Catholic education.



One of the hopes for facing the challenges presented by the current educational reality and in the near future is to become increasingly aware of the need, as Pope Francis stated in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, to **recognise our interdependence and save ourselves together, working collaboratively**. In this regard, Javier Llamas, from his experience as executive secretary of the Marist Global Network of Schools, shared with participants some of the **experiences of networking that are being developed in the Catholic world**, while offering guidelines to be taken into account when considering participation in or launching any type of educational network.

Thanks to the promotion of interaction between the Institute's various mission networks, the Secretariat for Education and Evangelisation is seeking to generate synergies between the various networks so that, as in this case, we can enrich ourselves through joint institutional action.

Webinar: Champagnat and the significance of the construction of our Mother House

Once again, around the feast of Champagnat and as part of the activities of the Champagnat Global Open Network, the meeting of the international Marist school community took place online, this time under the title: **"Champagnat and the meaning of building our Mother House"**.



Champagnat Global, who recalled the purpose of this annual gathering and presented the agenda for the event. Brother José Sánchez, director of the Secretariat for Education and Evangelisation (SEE), officially opened the event by highlighting the symbolic and emotional value of L'Hermitage for all Marists around the world: 'It is a **spiritual home** of which we are all a part.'

'Champagnat could not have imagined that 200 years later we would be celebrating his audacity and daring throughout the world,' he said. His words gave way to the greeting from **Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General**, who offered a moving message recalling the 2nd Champagnat Global Meeting held last March at L'Hermitage.

'Marcellin had the ability to **look beyond, responding to the call of the spirit** he felt within him,' explained Brother Ernesto. He also suggested that "each of our communities, fraternities and every Marist centre should build a **new Hermitage**. As the motto of the next General Chapter reminds us: may it be **"Home for all and river of life"**."

One of the most significant moments was the live connection with the **community of L'Hermitage**. Brothers Antonio, Miquel, José Antonio Molina, Eladio, Rafa, Paul and Demóstenes led the prayer together with music dedicated to the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the construction of our Mother House.

The conference 'Champagnat and the significance of the construction of our Mother House' **was given by Brother Ben Consigli, General Councillor**.

Focusing on the **challenges Marcellin faced when building L'Hermitage**, Brother Ben explained that Champagnat's vision was based on 'love of God, faith, education and the way Mary loved Jesus'.

'For Marcellin, the house had tremendous significance. It was a place of formation, growth and questioning, but above all a place where people helped one another. For Champagnat, the construction of the Hermitage was a sign of trust in God and in Mary,' he explained. "For him, it was the answer to rural poverty and ignorance. Marcellin hoped that the Hermitage would be a place to educate the brothers in the Marist spirit and to help those young men who wanted to become brothers to know and love God.'


Brother Ben also listed some of Champagnat's motivations for building our Mother House: 'His love for Mary, his humility and hard work, his vision of the Marist Family and his dedication to the most marginalised people.'

Reflecting on our work today, Brother Ben affirmed that L'Hermitage 'was the **core of our Marist mission**, and today Champagnat Global is a fraternal and global network, it is the same dream carried to all continents.'

To conclude the meeting, Brother Niño Pizarro, deputy director of the SEE, offered some **parting words**, encouraging all participants to continue preparing for the **XXIII General Chapter of the Marist Institute**, to be held in the Philippines under the theme: 'Home for All. River of Life.' A theme that directly evokes the spirit of L'Hermitage. 'At Champagnat.org, we have information that helps us feel part of a process that invites us to continue embodying the spirit bequeathed by Champagnat in our time and in new realities.'

The entire Champagnat Global team would like to thank the nearly **1,200 people who registered** for the event and the **more than 500 who had the opportunity to participate**.

INTERVIEW



Boy Eng Seng, Principal of Maris Stella High School (Singapore): “Teachers are the backbone of the education system”

Singapore continues to stand out as one of the global leaders in education, thanks to its innovative and highly effective approach. With an education system that combines academic rigour and comprehensive development, the Asian country has established itself as a model to follow, quickly adapting to the demands of an increasingly digital and globalised world. As education authorities implement new reforms, Singapore remains an example of how investment in education can transform the future of a nation.

The country has scored highly in international studies such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study).

It currently has two Marist schools, one of which is Maris Stella High School, founded in 1958 by Brother Chanel Soon. It is a comprehensive school for boys with around 250 employees and 3,000 students from Year 1 to Year 10. The Champagnat Global team had the opportunity to chat with Boy Eng Seng, the school's principal.



What are the fundamentals of Singapore's education system?

Singapore is a very small country with no natural resources. To survive, we must rely on our human resources. Therefore, the government and parents place a lot of emphasis on the education of our children.

What sets it apart from other types of education?

A unique feature of Singapore's education system is our bilingual policy. All students study English and their ethnic mother tongue. The mother tongue can be Chinese, Malay, Tamil, Hindi, etc., depending on the student's ethnicity.

According to the Pisa Report, education in Singapore is a success. What is the key?

Teachers are the backbone of the education system. We do everything we can to attract the best graduates to become teachers and invest in their development. To accelerate growth, schools are also encouraged to collaborate and learn from each other.

Schools are grouped into clusters of about 12 schools, and school principals meet monthly to learn and share best practices with each other.

Are there any notable projects currently underway at your school?

Maris Stella Secondary School is one of the few Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools in Singapore. As an SAP school, we nurture bilingual and bicultural talents who are strong in both English and Chinese. Over the years, the school has produced many notable bilingual and bicultural talents, including our Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, who was also our former Minister for Education.

How dedicated are the teachers to the families? Do they also work with them?

Teachers actively collaborate with parents to educate our students, especially those in Years 1 to 6. The school has two parent support groups (PSGs), one for Years 1 to 6 and another for Years 7 to 10. PSG parents work closely with the school to organise programmes that enrich the students' school experience. Teachers also use technology (e.g. mobile apps, email, Zoom, etc.) to communicate with parents frequently and keep them informed about school matters.

What is the biggest challenge you are facing right now?

The school will undergo reconstruction from 2027 to 2029. During these three years, we will move to two temporary locations while the new school building is constructed on the current site. We are now busy preparing for the move and designing the new school campus.

MARIST TEACHERS' LIVES



Br. Jean Baptiste

Brother Jean Baptist was a pillar of dedication and commitment in the lives of his students. His unwavering passion for education and his role as boarding school director made him a beloved figure in the school community. Here are some key aspects of his character and ministry:

Ensuring academic discipline

- He made sure that students were calm and focused on their studies, creating an environment conducive to learning.
- His presence and guidance helped students stay on track and achieve their academic goals.
- Unwavering commitment
- He was the first to rise to wake the students for their daily routine and the last to retire, ensuring that everyone was tucked in and comfortable in their beds.
- This selfless dedication demonstrated his commitment to caring for and supporting his students.
- Filling the role of father
- Brother Jean Baptist took on the role of father to many students, providing them with guidance, support, and love.
- He was a constant presence in their lives, offering them a sense of stability and security.
- Impact on students
- His dedication and care had a profound impact on the students, shaping their academic and personal lives.
- The students loved and respected him, and his legacy continues to inspire them.



The students called him 'Brother Frère, Tamtam, Tamessiune.'

Brother Jean Baptist: A Servant Leader

Brother Jean Baptist's leadership and service extended beyond his role as an educator. As a community leader, he demonstrated remarkable qualities that fostered a sense of unity and belonging among the Brothers. Some highlights of his leadership in the community include:

- Spiritual guidance
- Support for younger Brothers

The life and ministry of Brother Jean Baptist are a testament to the power of dedication, compassion, and commitment. His selfless service will always be remembered and cherished by those who knew him. Brother Jean Baptist's leadership and service continue to inspire the Brothers, fostering a sense of community and common purpose. His legacy reminds us of the importance of caring for one another and prioritising spiritual growth and well-being.

Br. Celestine Tayu, FMS

THE CORRESPONDENCE

BREAKING BARRIERS: THE MARIST BROTHERS' COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN TALIT, INDIA

FMSI

In 2024, Misesan Cara, one of FMSI's major donors, funded the project 'Education and Training for Santal Children and Marginalised People' in India, which was successfully completed in January 2025. Initially launched as a pilot initiative, the project achieved remarkable results and is now being considered for expansion to reach more communities in need.

The project addressed the severe socioeconomic constraints near Talit, West Bengal, that keep Santal children out of school, despite education being a fundamental right. Santal villages generally suffer from extreme poverty, poor living conditions, and lack of access to healthcare and basic services. Most families depend on low-wage agricultural work for local landowners and live in temporary huts without stable income. As a result, children are deprived of education, healthcare, and government support, which they should theoretically receive as their rights. However, systemic neglect and discrimination, in which government assistance prioritises the Bengali population over tribal communities, further marginalises them. Illiteracy is passed down from generation to generation, and many parents are unaware of the value of education, reinforcing the cycle of poverty and exclusion.

To combat these barriers, the Marist Brothers brought education directly to six remote villages, targeting children at high risk of social exclusion. The project created accessible, community-based learning environments, ensuring that education reached even the most isolated and neglected children.

Key achievements of the project:

- 180 children acquired literacy and numeracy skills, breaking the cycle of educational deprivation.
- 100 children attended non-formal education for the first time, overcoming socio-economic and geographical barriers.
- 80 young people gained proficiency in Bengali, spoken English and computer skills, providing them with tools for greater participation in society.
- 100 women completed vocational training in tailoring, promoting their economic independence and self-sufficiency.

THE CORRESPONDENCE

A crucial aspect of the project's success was its culturally and linguistically inclusive approach. With literacy rates among the Santal at only 40.5%, and even lower for women, education in their mother tongue was essential. Public schools, where Bengali is predominantly spoken, exclude many Santal children, contributing to high dropout rates. By employing teachers who are fluent in the Santal language and culture, the project ensured an effective and trust-based learning experience, providing children with an education they could identify with and build on.

Beyond academics, the initiative emphasised human development, personal growth and motivation, encouraging children to dream beyond poverty and aspire to a better future. Given that most Santal families live in extreme poverty and lack a suitable learning environment, the project created safe spaces for education, fostering self-confidence, dignity and hope.

The Child Protection Policy Workshop (16 March 2024) reinforced the safety and well-being of children in study centres, while the Marist Brothers introduced Effective Teaching Methods to improve learning outcomes in resource-constrained areas.

Given that education is a privilege and a key tool for breaking the cycle of poverty, this project offered Santal children the opportunity to go to school, meet their basic needs and develop a positive outlook on life. Having demonstrated its transformative impact, the initiative is being evaluated for expansion, with the aim of reaching more villages and offering greater opportunities to the marginalised Santal community.

Through this initiative, the Marist Brothers reaffirm their mission to serve the most vulnerable, ensuring that education is not just a privilege for a few, but a right for all. Although the project has officially concluded, its impact continues to empower children, families and entire communities, fostering resilience, human dignity and long-term social change.



IN THE SCHOOL

English Fan Fest: An unforgettable week of language immersion at Colegio San José del Parque (Spain)



Learning a language is not limited to classrooms or textbooks. It is a dynamic and living process that takes on real meaning when **students have the opportunity to use it in real and motivating contexts**. With this in mind, our school has launched an exciting new project: **English Fan Fest**, a week full of activities that have taken English learning to another level.

From day one, the excitement and energy have been palpable in every corner of the school. Thanks to the involvement of all the primary school teachers and English assistants, our students have enjoyed an enriching experience in which they have practised the four essential language skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening.

A week of active learning

The English Fan Fest has not just been a series of isolated activities, but a

authentic language immersion in which students have developed their confidence and English skills in a fun and meaningful way.

The key to success has been the collaboration of all teachers and language assistants, who have guided students in each activity, adapting them to their levels and fostering an environment of trust where mistakes are seen as a natural part of learning.

The impact on our students

The progress made by our students has been evident. During this week, we have seen how many of them have lost their fear of speaking English, how they have improved their fluency and, above all, how they have enjoyed learning. Motivation has been present in every activity, demonstrating that English is not just a subject, but a **tool that opens doors and opportunities**.

In addition, the English Fan Fest has reinforced essential values such as teamwork, creativity and curiosity to learn. The children have discovered that English is much more than grammar and vocabulary: it is communication, it is culture, it is a window to the world.



A project with a future

After the success of this first edition, we are convinced that the English Fan Fest should become a tradition at our school. This week of immersion has shown that when learning is experienced with excitement and participation, the results are extraordinary.

We would like to congratulate all the students for their effort and enthusiasm, and thank the English teachers and assistants for making this project possible. Our students' English level continues to grow, and we are proud of that!

Aranca Marty – Head of Primary

Marist Internationalisation Project Chile and South Africa

With the objectives of **strengthening and promoting the use of the English language**, enriching our students' intercultural perspective by learning about other places in the world, and adhering to the Institute's guidelines by fostering the experience of Marcellin's charism far beyond our country as a Global Marist Family, a new cycle of the **Marist Student Internationalisation Project 2025 has begun in South Africa**.



In this way, two groups of Marist students from Chile, accompanied by teachers, travelled to Johannesburg and a third group to Durban, 16 students in total, to live this experience, which lasted four weeks, returning to Chile on 19 June. During their stay, the students were **hosted by families from the host schools and were required to**



It is important to note that students participating in this wonderful project must develop and **submit a report upon their return**, in accordance with the curriculum, which includes activities before, during, and after the experience. This report will cover several subjects and will be graded in all of them, replacing the academic responsibilities scheduled for the same dates in Chile.

It should be noted that this initiative includes welcoming Marist students from South Africa to our country at a later date, forming a lasting bond between our educational communities, which allows us to continue walking together as a Global Marist Family.

*Joaquín Meli – Communications Officer,
Province of Santa Maria de los Andes*

participate in classes and in all activities organised by the institution.

The first group of eleven students arrived in Johannesburg at the end of May, where they were welcomed by representatives from St. David's Marist Inanda School (6) and Marist Brothers Linmeyer School (5).

The group of five students from the Marist Colleges of Los Andes, Quillota IRA and Curicó who travelled to Durban were warmly welcomed at the airport by representatives of St. Henry's Marist College who were holding a sign that read "Welcome, fellow Marists to Durban. We are very pleased to welcome you!"

On Monday 19 May, the Chilean Marists took part in their first day of classes in South Africa, where they were **very well received and integrated by their new classmates**.



Istituto Fratelli Maristi Giugliano (Italy) and Leonteios School (Greece) establish ties through Champagnat Global

Effective communication between schools belonging to the Marist community seems essential, as it contributes to **creating innovative learning experiences and building strong community ties**.

These meetings are truly valuable, as they help us to **become aware of the universality of the Marist mission** and strengthen the spirit of brotherhood that unites us.

The collaboration between the Fratelli Maristi Giugliano Institute and the Leonteios Marist School in Nea Smyrni (Chrysostomos Smyrnis Primary School), which is now coming to fruition, is an example of this communication. It brought together three teachers and their 109 pupils from both institutions, who participated in joint projects, corresponded and visited each other's schools.

Through these activities, we have all had the opportunity to learn from each other's perspectives, develop new skills and create lasting bonds that go beyond the classroom.

The project aimed to promote knowledge, communication, collaboration, exchange, creativity and fun **under the umbrella of the Marist Global Network of Schools**.



It was a fruitful and successful **collaboration between two Marist schools**, the Leonteios School in Nea Smyrni (Chrysostomos Smyrnis Primary School) and the Fratelli Maristi Giugliano Institute, which everyone enjoyed.

We hope that **building bridges between different civilisations** and creating a sense of belonging to a large community that spans the globe will inspire us all.

Open History Classes at Carcavelos School (Portugal): a meeting between generations

As part of the 9th grade History course, the classes held a very special open class: **they invited their grandparents to participate in a session dedicated to the study of the Estado Novo and the Revolution of 25 April 1974**. This initiative, carried out at Carcavelos School (Lisbon, Portugal), aimed not only to deepen the students' knowledge of this important period in Portuguese history, but also to value the living memory of those who experienced it first-hand.

Learning from living history

The study of the Estado Novo — an authoritarian regime led by António de Oliveira Salazar between 1933 and 1974 — and the revolution that brought it to an end on 25 April is a fundamental part of the 9th grade curriculum. However, listening to the testimonies of those who lived under censorship, political repression, colonial war, or even the hope brought by the freedom they won, transforms books and documents into real experiences.



During the open class, the grandparents in attendance **were able to share their memories:** what life was like in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, what they listened to on the radio, how they experienced 25 April and how they felt when democracy arrived.

This class was not only an exercise in historical learning, but also a **moment of civic education.** Students were able to reflect on the value of freedom, democracy, civic participation, and human rights. Actively listening to family testimonies sparked empathy, critical thinking, and a deeper connection to history.

The presence of the grandparents added an emotional and enriching touch to the class. Many students discovered stories they had never heard before, and the older people felt valued and listened to. This intergenerational exchange highlighted the power of history as a tool for connecting the past, present and future.

Maria João Silva

East Asia celebrates the Marist Youth Festival

In order to nurture the faith lived by young Marists, foster commitment to the poor and inspire a spirit of generous service, the Marist Youth Ministry of the Marist Province of East Asia is holding its **biennial Marist Youth Festival**, promoted by the St Marcellin Champagnat Club (SMC Club) of the Philippines Sector and organised by Notre Dame of Dadiangas University- Espina Campus, Espina Campus, in the city of General Santos, Philippines.

The Marist Youth Festival aims to **celebrate the gift and richness of Marist identity**; create opportunities for encounter with Jesus and young Marists of Champagnat, together with brothers and lay people; and commit ourselves to loving service to our Marist brothers and sisters and to the people of our communities.



The meeting was attended by **a total of 485 participants**, including 435 young people and 50 youth leaders and chaperones, both lay people and Marist brothers, from schools and non-school ministries in the Province of East Asia. The festival was attended by **delegates from different Marist schools.**

The theme of the gathering, **“Awake and arise, let Christ enlighten you,”** invites young people to awaken to their faith and reach their spiritual potential, with the promise that Christ’s light will shine upon them. This theme is not only a call to personal spiritual growth, but also aligns with the broader mission outlined by the 22nd General Chapter of the Marist Brothers.

The celebration provided a variety of meaningful encounters to motivate them to awaken and deepen their personal faith and respond to these broader calls. There were talks on essential topics such as ‘Awakening: Navigating the Challenges Facing Marist Youth,’ shared by Br. John Emil I. Alada, FMS, and “Arise: Shine with Faith, Serve with Love,” shared by Ms. Jonalen Casares. The exchange prompted participants to dialogue and converse to increase their motivation to awaken and deepen their personal faith and respond to these broader calls. It encourages them to be proactive in their spiritual journey and in their efforts to support and encourage those around them, especially the marginalised. There were also team-building activities, a Marist party, prayers and worship, and community exhibitions that allowed them to interact, connect, share and inspire each other with their presence and with the presence of the community living some realities outside of it. These were encounters that allowed them **to live their faith in a tangible way, reflecting the light and love of Christ in the world.**

Gelyn Ninofranco – Communications Officer, East Asia



Marist Africa: The future is here!

Welcome aboard our expedition to Marist Africa, where we will take a look at some of the work of the Brothers and lay Marists who are trying to live Marcellin's dream in the Region.

The Marists of Champagnat in the Region have the privilege of working with the youngest population in the world, which makes the Marist mission in the Region very relevant and in demand. Our apostolate is centred on the school. Currently, Marist Brothers and lay staff **educate more than 89,682 students in 84 institutions in 20 countries in Africa.**

It is encouraging that Marist schools have consistently achieved the **best academic results over the years** and have stood the test of time. It is worth noting that Marist schools in the Region have also educated students who have represented the Region at the international level. However, the continued excellence of Marist schools comes at a cost: the high demand for education, both formal and informal, is never fully met. Each year, some of our schools turn away a large number of applicants due to **limited space**.

It is also important to note that in



Several provinces are making efforts to reach children and young people who find themselves in environments or situations outside the usual classroom setting. For example, in South Africa there is the Three2Six project, which targets refugee children. Nigeria has a centre that cares for people with physical disabilities. These are all examples of interventions that seek to give a second chance to children and young people who would otherwise be excluded from society or face significant difficulties in enjoying some of their rights.

The outlook

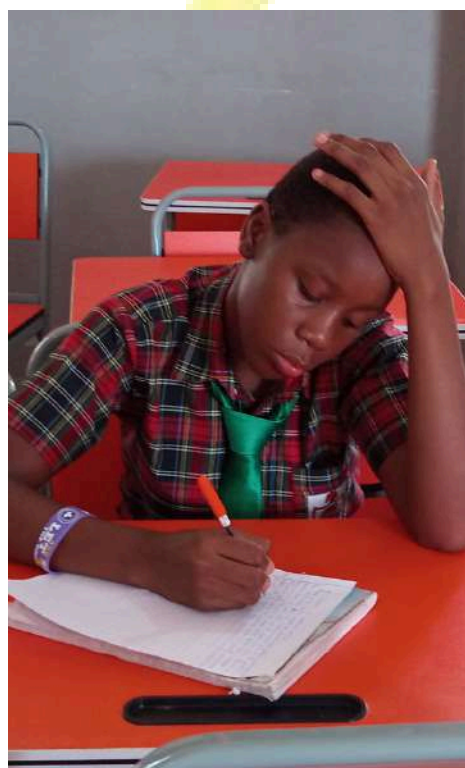
Despite significant progress in education worldwide,

Many children remain excluded from education in numerous communities across the region. The situation for girls is even worse. Political and economic instability and cultural norms in other parts of the continent have severely disrupted education and life in general. The aftermath of COVID-19 persists, and every year crowds of children, especially girls, drop out of school. While some Marist schools can take advantage of the **wonders of artificial intelligence (AI)**, most schools in Africa do not enjoy the incredible benefits of this great invention of our time. To begin with, access to smartphones and the Internet remains a luxury for many.



Marist schools in the region need support to harness the potential of AI in education and other sectors. Therefore, we need help to reduce the imbalance in information technology, in order to provide an education that meets the needs of today's citizens.

Insufficient resources lead schools to focus on academic results and **ignore the development of equally important skills** in our students, a trend that puts our students at a competitive disadvantage on the world stage. Marist schools, considered among the best in the region, must promote a transformative education that expertly combines the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning.



What does the Champagnat Global initiative mean for the region?

Recent global catastrophes, such as COVID-19, have taught us that no one can solve these challenges alone. We need concerted efforts. The Champagnat Global project invites all Marists in the region to build bridges by creating opportunities for greater interaction, in order to share experiences and address common challenges more effectively.

Geographically, the region is very large and presents **many challenges**, including the high cost of cross-border travel. However, we are convinced that the challenges facing the region will not prevent it from taking advantage of the **many benefits of Champagnat Global**.

We remain optimistic about the strengthening of regional ties among the provinces, which will propel Africa to become a strong and effective player on the world stage. The Region's participation in the recent face-to-face meeting in France rekindled the determination to seriously consider the benefits of Champagnat Global. The Region remains committed to making Champagnat Global a household name in all our works.

Br. Francis Jumbe, Regional Coordinator



Saint Pierre Chanel College

Wednesday, 3 September 1986 marked the arrival of the first Marist Brothers in Ihosy. At that time, the diocese was led by Bishop Jean-Guy Rakotondravahatra, who had asked the Marist Brothers to take charge of the education of children and young people in the city of Ihosy. Three Brothers were sent on this mission: Brother Louis Jean Denis Rakotoarivony, Brother Rasabo Jean Bernard, and Brother Randriamihaja Marc.

The first pupils began the school year on Monday 15 September 1986. There were just over 130 of them, divided into three sixth-grade classes. Classes were held in the seminary, as the school building was still under construction. The three Brothers were staying at the bishop's residence. The first class to graduate with the BEPC (Certificate of Basic Studies) was in 1990, and the first class to graduate with the baccalaureate was in 1993. For the 2024-2025 school year, the school will have its 32nd class of Terminale (final year of secondary school).

On 1 May 1987, the school celebrated its first feast day in honour of its patron saint, Saint Peter Chanel. The event was marked by a solemn mass, games, and traditional and modern songs and dances.



MADAGASCAR

BR. ROLAND HERININA,
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

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