



# MARIST LAITY INTERNATIONAL

*With Mary we advance...*

MAY 2017. Issue 4

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N.B. Please send submissions  
for the next issue by 31st July.

## A Word from Michel Macquet:

Dear friends, I write these lines just before the great feast of the Resurrection which marks the passage from darkness to light!

And now we are at the end of May ... the month of Mary, the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Christ. She is the inspiration of all Marists. Mary, a woman present in the Gospel which spoke so little about her and yet we know her powerful influence! As Mary we seek to keep in step with the Holy Spirit as we follow Jesus for when we seek the mother, we cannot help but find the Son and be open to the fullness of the Spirit in our own lives.

To be Marist as a Lay person reflects a choice, a decision based on certainties. Along the road, in chance encounters, we can expect challenges which will test our original enthusiasm. But the tests will also help us clarify our project, renew our energies and

overcome the difficulties of life. This was the experience of Mary and will be ours also.

In October, Bev McDonald and I will be in Nemi, responding to the Superior General's invitation to participate at a part of the General Chapter of the Society of Mary.

It will be an opportunity to meet and share with the Provincials and Major Superiors of the Society of Mary and also to reflect and discern together on the replies to the questionnaire sent to the Lay representatives of the WMLC. It is anticipated we may be able to work alongside the delegates on Chapter decisions relating to Laity.

We are praying for a renewed breath of the Holy Spirit as we gather and for new initiatives for mission. Please pray for the Chapter and also pray with us that the Holy Spirit support and enlighten us in the preparation work and that we all respond with courage and vision to what Mary is asking of her Society at this time.

May you walk in courage with Mary and the Risen Christ.

*Con Maria Avanamos,  
Michel Macquet, W.M.L.C. Coordinator.*



## Prayer for the General Chapter

God Our Father, we thank you that have called us to follow your Son Jesus Christ, and to serve your people according to Mary's way.

As the Society of Mary prepares for the General Chapter and takes a new turn on its pilgrim way, pour out the light of your Spirit upon your Marist Religious and Laity.

May the Spirit teach us all your ways and show your paths so that as Marists we will walk with courage in your truth and witness to your merciful love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, confident in the support of Mary, our first and perpetual superior. Amen.  
*Fr Jean Claude Colin, please pray for the Society of Mary and pray for us.*

# News from Marist Laity Groups and Countries

## Mexico

### 3rd Meeting of Marist Laity - México 2017

In February 2017 Marist Laity held a weekend retreat at Our Lady of Nazareth House, in the community of La Jordana in El Oro, México. The retreat theme was the Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* ("The Joy of Love") from the 2016 Synod of Families. Leaders from different communities presented the themes which allowed us to be enriched by the way each group works.



**An Exceptional Weekend:** Committed Lay people from the different Mexican communities (CPP, CPU, IFC, San Bernardino, Toluquilla and Contadero) and some the Priests along with the Provincial Pedro Alarcón gathered together to listen, reflect and deepen our understanding of the issues raised by Pope Francis. It was an exceptional weekend with Lay and Religious exploring ways to implement *Amoris Laetitia* in Mexico. We shared common conclusions that we can apply in our own communities and apostolic groups.

**The Year of the Family:** Shared activity like this is very helpful as we embrace our identity as a Lay Mexican branch of the Marist family. This retreat continued the work that Laity have been doing for more than two years and the presence of the priests was an encouragement to persevere as Marist Laity in the work of evangelization and building the kingdom of God in the manner of our mother Mary, our supreme superior. We decided to make this 2017 - 2018 the "Year of the Family". This will help each community focus on the needs of families, based on the teachings of *Amoris Laetitia* from the retreat.

In conclusion, the retreat increased our impetus to continue working and learning more about Marist Spirituality in order to continue to spread it in the different communities within which Laity are assigned.

Omar Santamaría



### A testimony of Mission

My name is Andrés Piña and I am 22 years old. In Holy Week I joined my first mission with young people who have shared Marist spirituality with me. We went to the communities of Bassoco and Adolfo López Mateos, El Oro México.

It was fascinating to see how faith in Christ binds members of a community and reaffirmed for me that faith is a gift that can break all kinds of barriers. It was the fruit of prayer, pondering deeply God's Word and especially valuing every moment of the Mass — living it to the max— that we as young Catholics wanted to share .



Although I initially thought that in mission I was going to share knowledge that others were ignoring, but I was surprised to realize their strong commitment to the Lord. I think that one of our most important tasks on mission was awakening a joy and hunger for Scripture in other young people and adults as we taught them how to set up Bible study groups.



Through this Marist mission God helped me see the importance of teamwork and charity towards my neighbor. I learnt that it is not possible to share the love of God without living it and recognizing that each person shares the same dignity. Mary teaches us, as mother of compassion and asking her advice helps me be one with my neighbor. That was

my experience and I only hope that more Catholic's discover the joy of sharing the faith with other communities and demonstrating that for God there are no borders. Greetings and Blessings, *Andrés*



### **May Assembly between Mexican Marist Fathers and Laity**

Last May 1st, Priests and Lay Marists gathered in College Franco - English in México City to begin the process of preparing a Directory for our country. We dialogued between both branches and gave answer to two questions: What can Religious do for the Laity to help them in their Marist vocation and mission? And What can we do for the Marist Fathers to help them in their Marist vocation and mission?

It was a first step, the Religious will form a Council to accompany the existing Council of Laity, to structure the Directory. Please, pray for us!!! *Council of Lay Marists Mexico*

### **Holy Week retreat 2017**

Lay Marists from various communities in Mexico had a Holy Week retreat at the Ex - Hacienda La Jordana. It was very special with about eighty people; children, adolescents, youth, adults and older adults. It was organized by the Polytechnic Center of Projection (CPP) group around three themes: The apostolic exhortation "Amoris Laetita"; the main moments of Holy Week; and the identity of the Marist family.



We are grateful to the Marist Priest who supported and to the large group of singers and animators who helped make it a deep and joyful retreat. It will surely produce much fruit for the growth of Lay Marists in Mexico. At the end many shared what a special four-day experience it had been, and personally I can share that it was very significant to reflect on obedience to God and "to see us as God sees us with love."

*Margarita Curiel*



## SULLANA - PERÚ

*"A Marist heart must be open to all, especially the most needy."*



Here we will carry out our medical campaign and with your help, other projects to help our brothers who have lost everything except FAITH in the Lord of Life.

Dear friends and brothers in Christ Jesus, Marist Laity of the World, this year we want to thank God for everything that we have lived, which has been very difficult for so many of our compatriots and our Region Piura. But despite everything we have felt the charitable hand of our Lord as our Brother in solidarity when we needed it; there were no barriers to bringing aid to those people devastated by the impetus of nature. Also let me thank you for your solidarity with us and our people, thank you for your help. It will allow us to reach the people in most need. So many have lost almost everything, but what they have not lost is their faith in the Lord.

We are coordinating our participation as Lay Marists in the face of the devastating natural disaster. We support a Medical



Campaign in the District and the Farmers of Lancones; in solidarity we will move forward. Our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary continues to encourage us to bear witness in her simple, helpful, hidden but present way, as she lived in the Gospel.

**Holy Week in Chira Valley:** As in every year we accompanied our brothers from the rural areas of our Chira Valley during Holy Week, that they may be comforted in the Lord of Life, who is Risen to give us life in abundance and Grace.



# A.M.D.G & D.G.H.

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM ET DEI GENITRICIS HONOREM

## MARIST FRATERNITIES IN AFRICA,

The dream of Colin to make the whole world Marist resonated in Africa with Cameroonian, Senegalese, Congolese, Rwandese, Burundian, Togolese and Beninese all responding to the free call of the Virgin Mary. The Marist Fraternities are particularly found in Senegal, Cameroon and the Great Lakes region (D.R.C, Burundi, Rwanda).

**CAMEROON:** In Cameroon, the Laity responded to Mary's call more than a decade ago. At present there are three Marist Fraternities in the Central and North-Western Regions, in the parish of Saint Anne d' Obili (the oldest) Archdiocese of Yaounde; In the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Mbalmayo, Diocese of Mbalmayo (the youngest); In the parish of Our Lady of Fatima in Bambili in the Archdiocese of Bamenda.

The Fraternities of Obili and Bambili developed under the impulse of the Marist Fathers who animate these parishes, while that of Mbalmayo grew from the experience of a secular Marist part of Bambili. The Marist Fathers are in that diocese. It is important that the other Fraternities support Mbalmayo to sustain and develop the knowledge and appropriation of the Marist Spirit among new and existing members.

**Our most recent activity** was a training session led by Irène Marlise Kimo Sake and Professor Roger Kasiama in Mbalmayo in February. Irene Marlise currently coordinates the Marist Fraternities of Cameroon. She is also the doyenne of all Cameroon Lay Marists, and has made her final promises.



Most groups are made up mainly of mature women, then mothers of families, and some young men though men are the minority. This reminds us that our Mother was the first to believe and on Easter morning it was women who were the first witnesses of the resurrection. Perhaps that is why women are the first to be fascinated and respond to the gracious call of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through Marist spirituality Marist Lay women in Cameroon first seek serenity in their everyday life following Mary who meditated everything in her heart. They are inspired by her availability and discreet yet effective presence in the Church of her Son. Gradually men come to understand that this Spirit is not just for women, but a way of following Jesus by imitating the first disciple par excellence, Mary, who was there at the birth of the Church and will be also there at the end of time.

This year we are preparing for our **general assembly and spiritual retreat in Yaoundé**, during which some members will make their final promises. This will also be an opportunity for the new Mbalmayo fraternity to meet their brothers and sisters from the other groups. *Emilienne Liliane MVOGO*

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### Three yearly Gatherings

Each fraternity rules its own activities according to the realities of its environment as well as the needs of the local Church. We remain bound by one and the same Spirit: *the Marist Spirit*. Every three years we have combined activities that allow us to meet together within the framework of the Cameroon coordination. These gatherings last between four and five days and are always times of communion and spiritual retreat, communion with fathers and young people in formation, and communion between the members of the different fraternities despite some linguistic barriers.

## SPAIN

**Solidarity with Peru:** The storms in Peru have devastated and isolated some areas next to Sullana and Callao, where two groups of Lay Marists are located. There are some projects being developed in partnership with the local Lay people and Marist Laity in Spain, creating new facilities and supplying material and provisions.



**Holy Week Mission:** A few Lay Marists and Marist Fathers in Spain took part in a mission to share Holy Week with a



religious community of sisters in Sahagún, a town on the Santiago's pilgrimage way. They were involved in the celebrations and helping the pilgrims.

David Sanz

## World Marist Laity Coordination Team

**USA & Canada:** Christine Colomban

**Latino America:** Jorge Lopez

**Australia:** Maria Baden

**Africa/Europe:** David Sanz de Diego

**Asia:** Kenneth Bretana

**Oceania/New Caledonia:**

Suzanne Kono

**New Zealand:** Bev McDonald

**Team Coordinator:** Michel Macquet

### NEXT EDITION submissions:

Thank you for supporting this newsletter. Please continue to pray that Marist Laity in all its expressions bears good fruit as we move forward with renewed commitment and trust in Mary's call.

**The next issue is August 2017 Please**

**send submissions to  
bev@maristlaitynz.org.**

**by the 31st July.**

## FIJI

In mid-January 2017 the staff of Marist Training Centre (MTC), Tutu on the island of Taveuni, Fiji made their annual two-and-a-half day silent retreat. This retreat is an annual event immediately preceding several days of meetings and planning to begin the year of living out the mission of MTC in the spirit of Mary.



MTC is a rural training centre offering holistic formation for married couples, single women and young farmers coming from the north-east of Fiji. MTC staff include Marist Fathers and Brothers as well as Marist Laity.

This year's retreat introducing Christian Meditation was given by the Christian Meditation team in Fiji who are also members of the Marist Family, Laity and an SMSM Sister.



Since the retreat many MTC staff members have continued the twice daily practice of contemplative prayer which is at the heart of Marist spirituality.

Sr Denise McMahon



## Brazil

Firstly we would like to share our memories of the 6th National Encounter of the Marist Laity in Palmas de Monte Alto, Bahia 2017.



The theme was "*How can Marist Spirituality help us face the challenges to be church.*" Those were special days in which we lived our Marist Spirituality and strengthened our ties to the Marist Family. People came from Caruaru, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte, Ribeirao das Neves, Ji-Parana. Also present were seminarians of the Marist Fathers, Marist Sisters and Marist Brothers.

On April 20 to 23 the four branches of the Marist family in Brazil met at a National Meeting of the Marist Family with the theme: *Promise, fidelity and commitment*. It was the first meeting of the entire family of Mary present in Brazil. The Meeting was a time to share the Mission that we embraced 200 years ago.



At least 100 Marists from the north to the south of Brazil were present.

We also had the opportunity to celebrate as Marist family on the Feast of St. Peter Chanel April 28, 2017 with the four branches present in the city of Belo Horizonte,



## New Caledonia.

During Easter **the Third Order of Mary** (the most numerous branch of Marist Laity in New Caledonia with around 1,600 members) had two opportunities to get together despite the distances between each group. The first time was to celebrate **Easter Monday** in the chapel of Dumbarton-on-Sea, about 15 km north of Noumea. The second time was on April 28 for the 176 years of the martyrdom of **St Peter Chanel**, in the Saint-Michel chapel, just outside Noumea.



On both occasions, some 200 people came to share the joy of the Risen Lord living among us, and who led Father Chanel to Oceania. The well-animated Masses (in Wallisian) were presided over by Father Georges Sao, a diocesan priest from Wallis, assisted by Fr. François Grossin, who concelebrated (in French).

The Third Order met for the third time on 14 May in La Conception, about 10 km south of Noumea, for the 60th anniversary of the official presence of

the Third Order in New Caledonia. A lot of people came and many pigs were sacrificed!

On March 24, **the Office of Marist Laity** resumed meetings in Salt River Parish, with representatives from each grouping of the laity embracing Marist spirituality. We reviewed last year's activities and made numerous plans for the year ahead reflecting the dynamism of each sector.



One initiative of the Marist Cells following the encyclical of Pope Francis is that they have committed to participate with an ecological association in the reforestation of a parcel of the Ouen Toro, in Noumea. In 2018, they are planning a trip to neighboring Vanuatu in response to some 70 members of the Vanuatu Cells who came to New Caledonia last year. They were here to take part in



the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the presence of the Catholic Church in Maré, in the Loyalty Islands. Long live these exchanges between churches, and between Lay Marists!

*P. François Grossin, S.M.  
Accompanying priest, Office of Marist Laity in N.C.*

# Australia

In January 2017 Marist Laity Australia conducted an immersion to Davao in the Philippines. The aim was to see what it was like to be a Marist in the Philippines. Four of the Marist branches have communities in Davao (Sisters, Brothers, Fathers and Laity). Marist Laity are significantly involved in all the ministries we visited. There are full stories and testimonies on our website <http://www.maristlaityaustralia.com>.

Below is just a 'taster'. *Andrew Dumas.*



**Orphanage:** Sophie Woodbury writes that 'Balay Pasilungan' a Marist Fathers initiative, is home to almost 30 street boys aged 5-15. It is a thriving community that nurtures both the personal and educational aspects of the young boys.

Sophie shared: "*I am so glad I was given the opportunity to visit the boys. They show great optimism and love; it challenges you to reconsider what's really important in life.*"



**Agdao mothers group:** The Marist Sisters formed this mothers group to help them build an income stream. They also set up a school

where mothers teach preschool children the basics. Bo Dumas, a physiotherapist, taught them about women's health and led them in giving a shoulder, neck and head massage. She said, "*I was really glad I could talk to some mothers. They seemed really happy we came... Their hospitality*

*was heart-warming .*"



**Davao City Jail:** (by Margaret Woods) We went to the prison in Davao and celebrated Mass with men who were ill or over 50. We then moved to the women's prison, passing by where the Marist Sisters teach computer skills to both women and men prisoners. The attractive prison veils the reality that cottages built for 12 to 15 women, have 30 women per cottage. At night they sleep on the floor on mats on their sides so all can fit. This reduces their capacity to turn, lie on their backs, or change position at night.

**Badjao Refugee Pre-school.** Maria Baden wrote: "*What did I learn? Children are children wherever they be. Joy is not contingent on monetary wealth. We have far more than we need – they need far more. Education is key—You can learn to walk on rickety planks with practice.*



*Mary of the Magnificat is calling us!*

**Australian Upcoming Events:**

June 30 – July 3 – Marist Youth Festival

July 23 – Fourviere Celebration



## Invitation

Open to all the Marist Family:

Join with Australian Marists for 20 minutes shared prayer  
each Thursday evening 7:30 pm on Skype.

They share a Gospel, Reflection and prayer.

Contact [maristlaityaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:maristlaityaustralia@gmail.com) for more details.

## Europe

### Upcoming Events:

**3rd June:** Annual Assembly of Lay Marists of Spain at Los Molinos, in the house of the Brothers near Madrid.

**3rd and 4th June:** La Neyière Gathering for Pentecost on the theme: 'What about fraternity!'. Also at La Neyrière, on the 3rd of June, the General Assembly and celebration of 25 years of the Association.

**4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> July:** Sainte-Foy-lès Lyon meeting of EMLC.

**Italy.** Three members of the group of Castiglion Fiorentino will celebrate their joining the Marist Family at the beginning of this summer, whereas the fraternity of Pratola Peligna will finish their formation course in the autumn. For a couple of years the fraternity of Castiglion Fiorentino has been an active part of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Laity, where various Catholic movements meet with a view to preparing initiatives in common.



## SM European Chapter

In considering their relationship with Laity some interesting points came from the SM European Chapter as follows:

- a. 'Laity' means more than Marist Laity. Let's welcome all laity to work with us and share with them our ideals, visit Marist Places etc.
- b. Laity working with us should have real responsibility (*not only depending on the religious*)
- c. How to re-start with younger people?
- d. How many of our relatives or friends know about Marist Laity?
- e. We should move towards full cooperation with Laity.
- f. Let us remember: the *raison d'être* of the Laity is not our need of them.
- g. We should promote among them the Marist Spirit, a spirituality adapted to their state in life.
- h. There are no levels or degrees of Marist life, there are just different groupings: 1) those who cooperate with us religious; 2) those who live their Marist life in the context of their own vocation.
- i. A form of cooperation is also the ministry of intercession.



## New Zealand

**KAUTAHA MALIA:** On Saturday 22nd April about 60 Tongan Marist young people aged 10-25 gathered in Auckland for their retreat. Bev gave one of the morning sessions and was inspired by their Marist identity and commitment.

Then forty Tongan Marist adults gathered in May for a weekend retreat. Apart from the sadness of a senior member passing away, that weekend also went very well.



For more pictures & news go to <http://maristlaitynz.org/index.php?Home>



**Auckland Retreat Day:** Marian Mothers, Marist Laity and others met in Auckland during Lent for "A Lenten day with Mary." We reflected on the seven sorrows of Mary and how we relate to them in our lives and some extracts from *Amoris Laetitia*. We shared a rich experience of Mary and the Holy Spirit working among us.