

▶ ECHOES FROM THE LIFE OF THE EUROPEAN PROVINCE

*“To be more  
closely united,  
work more  
creatively, and  
act in greater  
solidarity  
we form one  
province  
beyond national  
limitations...”*



## GREETINGS FROM PARIS!

This month we bring you some reflections from Marists on ministry away from home. Last month we promised you news of the continuing Bicentenary celebrations in various parts of Europe, and these were also an opportunity for the provincial to visit confreres in these places. Jan Snijders (NI) has published another chapter of his remarkable book on the history of the missions in Oceania, we offer you a link to this work. We continue to invite you to share with us material that gives a sense of life in the European province.

Joaquín Fernández and Martin McAnaney

## Herman Nikolai Reimers Massen (No) in Obili, Yaounde, the Cameroon, July - September 2016

Each year students from Casa di Maria, the International Marist theologate, leave their base in Rome to take up pastoral placements usually in locations where Marists already minister. This year Nikolai, a Norwegian from the European province, journeyed to the Cameroon. He writes: “... Naturally the pastoral placement consisted of many challenges... I was struck by the way the people celebrated mass, and saw how a whole group consisting of many people, made a visit to one single family, very different from my previous experiences. Different cultures intersected each other in my mind. In the prayer group I could hear the way they sing the Sanctus with different dances, rhythms and languages which are unknown to me... The more I experience this situation, the more I come to an understanding of people in an international context which has both a Marist and a Church identity.” Nikolai returns to Rome during the month to continue his studies. Let us remember in our prayer, all those preparing for Marist life wherever they may be in the world!



## Prayer intention

The retreat and assembly of the Italian Marists took place a short distance from the centre of the deadly earthquake in Amatrice, on 23 August. We pray for all those touched by this event and all people who suffer in natural disasters. Merciful Father, we know that your thoughts are not our thoughts, and your ways are not our ways. Help us to bring good news to those who are despairing. Help us to hear the cries of those who are enduring trials and suffering and may we be your hands and heart on the earth.



## Jimmy McElroy (Ire) in Marist Mission Centre, Ranong, Thailand

Over the last 9 years Jimmy, an Irish Marist, has been travelling to Ranong to assist the Marist community there in their education project ([bit.ly/MaristMissRanong](http://bit.ly/MaristMissRanong)) located on the border between Thailand and Myanmar (formally Burma). He reflects on his experiences of crossing the short stretch of water which divides the two countries. “Has Myanmar changed? Judging by my yearly one day visit I would say to some degree. It appears more relaxed. Going through immigration used to be a foreboding experience. All officials in military uniform and dour about checking and indeed taking your passport and giving you back a temporary one. Now you only see the uniforms hanging in the back room. Just ordinary vests are worn. After immigration a more than kind Fr. Gregory showed us around in his battered jeep. We were allowed to go no more than two miles from where we embarked. We visited a beach where we bumped into young Burmese trainee monks (about 10 years of age). They thought they were seeing aliens, certainly we were the first Europeans they had laid eyes on. Then back again across a very rickety wooden bridge. And alongside that bridge were the concrete pillars of a half-finished new bridge, begun by the charity World Vision, but refused permission to continue by the then Burmese government. We never visited that beach again as Fr. Gregory was officially reprimanded for taking foreigners to it. I think however it is now possible to visit it in the new more relaxed Myanmar.” To read more of Jimmy’s experiences click on the link [[bit.ly/29znwP5](http://bit.ly/29znwP5)].



## Bicentenary celebrations and provincial visits to Italy, Spain, Germany, England and Ireland, 22 August to 17 September

The Bicentenary of the Fourvière Pledge was marked by Marists in Italy and Spain by a retreat concluding with a pilgrimage to a Marian shrine. Members of other branches of the Marist family joined them there for a common liturgical celebration during which all renewed the Fourvière commitment. The provincial, Martin McAnaney, joined in the celebrations in these two countries, and he was also present at the assembly of Marist confreres in Spain. He took the opportunity to meet with the superiors of local communities. In Germany, England and Ireland he also met local superiors, and in Dublin confreres used the occasion to celebrate the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, various jubilees and the inauguration of the new Statutes. All these events offered an opportunity to consider the best way to work together at the local and provincial level.



## A Mission too Far, Jan Snijders, Chapter 15 – 1843

“As Guillaume Douarre had moved straight from pastoral work in the Diocese of Clermont-Ferrand into the novitiate of la Favorite when he joined the Society, we can assume that at that stage he knew very little of the problems that had beset the missions in Oceania ...” Thus begins Chapter 15 of Jan’s history narrative of the Marist mission in Oceania established in 1836. To read more of the story consult the website [[mariststudies.org/docs/Main\\_Page](http://mariststudies.org/docs/Main_Page)] or access Chapter 15 by following this link [[bit.ly/mtf-15](http://bit.ly/mtf-15)].

