



# CERDON MARIST INTERNATIONAL NOVITIATE

**Bulletin Issue No. 2 July 2019**



**A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**



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As we about to finish the first half and begin the second half of the novitiate formation, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to all of you: the superior general and his council, to the major superiors and their council, to the formators, to our families and friends, to our material and spiritual benefactors, spiritual directors, for the constant support and prayer you have extended to all of us here in the Novitiate. We also want to thank those who became part of our journey in the last six months. We won't become who are now if not of you help and encouragement. To all for you: Thanks for all that has been and also thank for all that will be.



While we are aware of the time flying so fast, yet underneath, the inner journey in the novitiate both as community and as individual is slow but genuine. We all find out that the cultural transition takes time and usually not that easy. Human conversion is not that fast but takes a lot of painful and joyful purification, radicality, patience and slowing down. Spiritual formation is also not fast as we all know. In many ways it is really slow, gradual and natural. It takes a lot of self-emptiness and self-forgetfulness. Novitiate formation is an avenue to nourish, purify and clarify our Marist vocation. And this vocation helps us highlight to have passion for Christ and passion for humanity.

The time is flying so fast. We are now about to finish the first half of the Novitiate.

Fr. Fernando INGENTE, SM

## EDITORIAL TEAM

### DIRECTOR:

Fernando INGENTE, SM

### SUPERVISOR:

Joaquin FERNANDEZ, SM

### ASSISTANTS:

Joel AMA  
Lesly KINANI

### WRITERS:

Fernando INGENTE, SM  
Jacob ABA, SM  
Joaquin FERNANDEZ, SM  
Fabrice Paul SOUGA  
Hemi ROPATA  
Leonard Wuiz AMORA  
Niklas RODEWALD  
Joel AMA  
Clinton KUBE  
Lesly KINANI

### CAMERA:

JOAQUÍN FERNÁNDEZ, SM  
JOEL AMA  
CLINTON KUBE

### INFOGRAPHY

Joel Ama



## SUPERIOR GENERAL'S VISIT



**F**r. John Larsen visited the Novitiate community in April 2019. Arriving in the community on Saturday 13 April, he was welcomed by both formators and novices. A great joy animated everyone that day. The Superior General spent a week in the novitiate community – a father with his children. During his visit, he personally met with each member of the novitiate family, regardless of their status. First, he met the members of the formation team individually. Subsequently, he met with each novice, to talk with him and come to know him better. After the individual meetings, he had a session with all the novices to talk with them about formation in general; including the different stages of formation, the one-year increase in theological studies, and the challenges facing the Society of Mary today. Fr. Larsen also presented pictures of the scholastic brothers currently in Rome, as well as the formation team. As he spent Holy week with us, he also joined the community's liturgical celebrations. During the liturgy on Holy Thursday, he washed the novice's

feet – what a grace for us novices to see our father belittle himself to wash our feet and to sing with us the resurrection of Christ. On the eve of his departure for the District House, he had a last meeting with the whole community, where he encouraged the participation of everyone according to his role, despite the difficulties encountered. At the end of the Superior's visit, the Master of novices expressed his thanks and that of the community. He also expressed his appreciation for all the work that Fr. Larsen has done for the development of the Society of Mary. Thus Fr. Anggong's words of gratitude concluded the Superior General's visit to the Marist International Novitiate in Eden.

**FABRICE PAUL SOUGA**



**Superior General with the Formators after Easter Mass.**

## A HOUSE INSPIRED BY A NAME



We give names to persons, objects, and places to identify them. Although there are other ways of identification, the name is the

most common; it allows us to know who or what or where it is and some characteristics of the person object or place. The name can also give them a meaning, a purpose telling us why they exist and what they should be.

When we say that the Marist house in Eden, Philippines, is an International Novitiate, we refer more to the purpose of the house, International Novitiate, than to its location, in Eden. And we can go even further and assign it a more specific name to focus further the aim of the house and its specificity.

During his visitation last April the Superior General suggested to give a specific name to the Novitiate House. Many Marist houses, particularly of formation, but not only, are named after known people or places in the Marist world and history. “Our Lady of...” and “Saint Peter Chanel” is probably the most common name. Which could be the name of our International Novitiate, the one which will give it its identity and goal, its inspiration?

After mentioning several names of Marist people and places, we agreed that the most attractive and the one more in accord with the purpose of the house was CERDON. Yes, Cerdon has a lot of references to Marist history and spirituality. The name Cerdon automatically reminds us of the Founder, Jean-Claude Colin, starting there his ministry and his understanding of the mercy of God, receiving inspiration to formally put together the idea and spirit of the Society of Mary and living them in the presbytery. The first Marists, fathers and sisters, came together in Cerdon and their vocation was tested there and there they initiated the first Marist ministry of local missions.

Cerdon could remind us also of the spiritual experiences of Fr Colin. There he learned and grew in the awareness of God’s presence and the active intervention of Mary in the foundation of the Society of Mary. In Cerdon he learned not only to be a priest, but also to be a Marist.

It is easy to see why the name “Cerdon” is so meaningful to a Marist Novitiate and why this house wants to be inspired by this name. Fr Colin would tell us now: “Please, live it”!

**FR. JOAQUÍN FERNÁNDEZ, SM**

## COLIN: MORE THAN A FOUNDER



**J**ean-Claude Colin could never have completed the Marist novitiate. As a student, though diligent, he was particularly sensitive, overly shy and spoke poorly, he was unable to relate with people and had strange notions about women (for example, to look upon a lady was to risk impregnating her). These character faults continued into later adulthood; he treated those closest to him poorly, he had a quick temper that he was unable to control, and he continued his strange notions regarding women (to quote: “only canon law can understand women”). He was obstinate, intransigent and stubborn. In all, Jean-Claude Colin was an inadequate candidate for the priesthood, with red-flags and formation issues abounding.

And yet for every fault there was a grace. He could be relaxed, funny, warm or caring, he had great care for youth, a perceptive comprehension of human nature, an undeniable love for Jesus and Mary and a profound understanding of

the mercy of God which was generations ahead of its time. It is in these graces that we see the real value of Fr Colin; the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* speaks of the prophetic nature of consecrated life – that those consecrated to religious life must speak to the will of God, with a view always to the eschaton. Fr Colin lived by this principle: by thinking, judging, feeling and acting as Mary we can be a witness to the mercy of God for the church now, as Mary was in the Cenacle. As we are called to be as religious, so Fr Colin lived out his life. He was more than simply a founder – he was a prophet.

**HEMI ROPATA**



**Jean Claude COLIN: Founder of the Society of Mary.**

## FRUITS OF THE EARTH WORK OF HUMAN HANDS



After the fall God curses man and woman to work for their food. There is no

more luxury as they did enjoy. Man has to sweat tilting the ground to produce fruit for food. As a gardener where-ever I stay, it always a joy. The joy of reaping the fruits of your hands from the garden, it speaks a lot about the care and love put into the soil. But the most fascinating thing for me that I have experienced is the silence when the plants are growing and the moments just before harvesting.

Since we have started our tiny garden here in the novitiate, with mainly cabbages we more rely on our garden for cabbages. And it has been helpful since then. We sometimes grow other crops but not so fruitful like cabbages. We have come across some obstacle with our gar-

den like insects attacking plants, dogs run around in the garden and chickens too help destroying the plants. But yet we continue to harvest the fruits of our labour.

We are not only benefiting from our garden physically, but psychologically and spiritually also. This is the greatest gift and fruit of our small garden. The gardeners express their negative emotion towards weed and ploughing the soil, they use their joy to plant the seeds and love to care for the plants. At the end of the day we are harvesting not just the fruits only but with the hands and hearts that a participating in the garden. We are happy to have our small backyard garden here in the novitiate to keep us healthy and fit. It has been fruitful.

*FR. JACOB ABA, SM*



## HUMAN FORMATION: INNER CHILD



**O**n the May 27<sup>th</sup> to 30, we had a conference about our inner child with two Filipina women, Ate Oret and Ate Leah. This was a very helpful topic for us novices as we discern our call to be Marist; it really helped us to know and identify our inner child, which could affect us in our discernment.

Basically, the focus of our conference was healing the inner child. The Inner child is an original child, a child of our childhood history and she talk to us and get our attention through our thinking and sensation. As we grow the child lives on in us.

During the five days of our conference we had many activities; drawing pictures, playing children's game, dancing, mirroring, and meditation focusing on embodiment and energy centers (Chakra). These activities helped us to go back and encounter the child of our history. In the sharing of our experiences, some of my brothers said they found it hard to go deeper to experience the child, but at least they experienced the child, and some felt happy talking to their child.

From my own experience, I encountered my child while I was dancing. I closed my eyes and focused on my inner movement, then, out nowhere, I saw the child sitting and laughing at me while I was dancing. Then he was discouraging me from dancing, saying, "sit down, you are not dancing well. Others are better than you. 'So I smiled at him and slowed down, just rocking my body while looking at him. Reflecting on it, I saw

how my inner child affects me in my formation. Sometimes I feel discouraged from doing things in the community, like giving my point of view in meetings, challenging someone, or affirming my own actions and perspectives. Another experience was a meditation using chakra, the energy centers. During the meditation I felt that my throat was blocked and dry, which our directors told me was a sign of fear, a fear of talking which is true. I sometimes experience it during faith sharing or community meetings, before I talk, I will often take a deep breath and clear my throat.

Just as we only see tip of an iceberg, we often know very little about ourselves. However, we can begin to name who we are and still we will not define ourselves fully. These inner child activities really helped me discover more about myself, and at the same time; I felt at ease and happy by encountering my weaknesses, including fear, shyness and discouragement. Becoming aware of these negative elements of myself, I felt like I already healed my inner child.

Finally, as a novice, it was really helpful for us as we are discerning our call to be Marist, because the inner child can be an obstacle in our pastoral work and future mission. I felt that this program really helped us to heal our inner child that is affecting us. Therefore, healing our inner child is essential, as it can restore the self to a new life that is spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically passionate.

**Leonard Wui AMORA**

## AN ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE IN THE NOVITIATE



The primary objective of the novitiate, like all religious formation, is to prepare each novice to say yes to the call of total consecration of one's whole person to God, in the following of Christ, and at the service of the Church's mission. Thus, each novice is on his own journey of discernment, seeking to understand the movement of the Holy Spirit in his own heart. As such, the novitiate journey demands prayer, silence, and solitude. Nevertheless, since the 'yes' of a consecrated person must be a yes of the entire person, formation also includes an intellectual and academic aspect, which, here in Eden, take the form of morning classes given by the members of the formation team. Fr Jacob Aba teaches Human Formation; Fr

Fernando Ingente teaches Marist History and Spirituality; and Fr Joaquin Fernandez teaches Spirituality and Consecrated Life. Additionally, the novices are guided by several important texts, including Justin Taylor's new biography of the Founder, *Jean-Claude Colin: Reluctant Founder*, Pope John Paul II's *Vita Consecrata*, and the *Constitutions of the Society of Mary*. This academic aspect of the novitiate helps to make each novice's journey one of both heart and mind, so that each novice's ultimate 'yes' to God's call – either inside or outside of the Society of Mary – may be a total 'yes' that comes from one's whole person.

**Niklas Rodewald**



Visit of the Marist sister's general



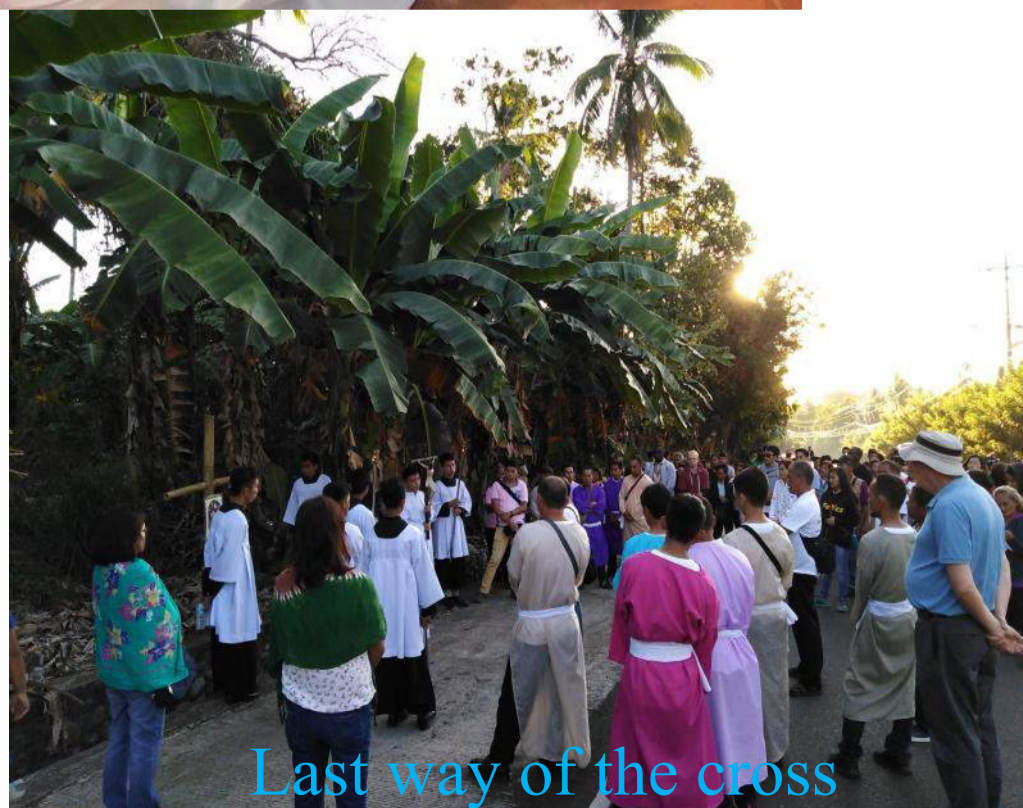
SG washing feet of the former SG



Former SG washing the feet of SG



SG washing the novices's feet



Last way of the cross



Formators with the Superior general