



GREETINGS FROM PARIS!

Each year we celebrate our Marist origins on Fourvière Day (23 July 1816). The Marist pioneers expressed their intention to “spend themselves and be spent” doing the Work of Mary. They may not have known exactly at that time which initiatives would be inspired by their promise, yet almost immediately they were led to recognise they had something to offer to the education ministry.

The founding generation quickly set up initiatives based on the great need for education amongst the disadvantaged whom they encountered in their early years of ministry. This commitment to education is present in the Constitutions of the Society of Mary, and generations of Marists have invested themselves in this endeavour ever since. Of course, it has evolved and changed much over time.

Pope Francis made this bold statement to educators, “Only by changing education can we change the world” (Address to the “Gravissimum Educationis” Foundation, 25 June 2018). In order to face the complex challenges as people of faith in a globalised society, we reclaim our roots and grow in confidence that our Marist identity has something to offer our times. As education centres around the province begin to open their doors for another year (when possible), we read some experiences of Marists in the education ministry, their efforts to offer opportunities to grow, to hand on the Marist vision for education and thus work for the common good.

*Francisco Chauvet
and Martin McAnaney*

EUROINFO

JAPANESE WISDOM SHARED AT ST MARY’S, LA SEYNE-SUR-MER, FRANCE



Paddy O'Hare (Ire) writes: “St. Mary’s is one of the three Marist schools in Toulon. The Christian Culture section of the Pastoral program offers senior pupils a wide range of workshops. A new course, Introduction to Japanese Culture and Way of life, was offered in 2015. I meet every two weeks with ten pupils. It has been a real joy sharing with them something of what I received during my 45 years as a Marist in Japan.

Japanese etiquette is on the program, including the use of chopsticks (picking up peanuts with the chopsticks was our usual training method!). Drinking green tea from little bowls held with both hands (important point!) gave me the opportunity to talk about the “Tea Ceremony”. Answering the many “why this?” and “why that?” was an opportunity to bring up the subject of the cultural and religious values which underly much of Japanese culture. Buddhism and Shinto were often mentioned as well as the beginnings of Christianity there.

Building a Japanese garden was time-consuming and messy but an excellent gateway to learn everything Japanese. Last year I was joined by Akane san, a Japanese teacher, which was great. Calligraphy, which I never learned properly, was introduced at New Year. Another popular item was Origami, the art of folding paper.



The program ended up this year as an unfinished symphony due to Covid-19!”



BEING
MARY'S
PRESENCE
IN THE
WORLD



A MARIST AUTHOR: FRANÇOIS DROUILLY (FR)



A Marist since 1963, François was ordained a priest in 1966. He worked at the French Marist colleges of Senlis, Thionville and Bury. He taught at the Higher Institute of Pedagogy (HIP). François writes: "At the HIP, I worked with a team to revitalise several schools by organising days of reflection for teachers. I have always been interested in the link between the Society of Mary and education - the parents, students, and society."

Marists are not just teachers of English or Art, there is the dimension of a vocation - the role of the SM in its very nature, to know and serve the education sector better. I am not an innovator, everything comes to me from Fr Colin. My approach is part of a long educational tradition handed down to us by our Founder."

PRAYER INTENTION



Lord, we acknowledge we are small but we put all our trust in you and in Mary our Mother. We have been chosen to continue to reveal the Marian face of the Church in the world of today. Give us the grace to be bearers of mercy, life and hope to all our brothers and sisters who await us on our journey of life. Amen.

François has written several texts on the education ministry. A book of meditations for living today according to the Marist spirit, "Weaving a cloak of mercy", was written to mark the 2016 Jubilee of Mercy." A spiritual adventurer's logbook" follows Fr Colin's spiritual legacy. During his time as chaplain at the Espace Bernadette, Nevers, France, François also wrote about Bernadette Soubirous: "Bernadette, companion of hope". "Prier 15 jours avec Jean-Claude Colin, fondateur des Pères Maristes" is available on Amazon (<https://bit.ly/FDrouilly>).



COURS FÉNÉLON, MARIST SCHOOL, TOULON, FRANCE



Just as schools are about to begin a new academic year, Bernard Thomasset writes about how the previous one ended in the midst of the pandemic. "In the three Marist schools in Toulon, life has continued in spite of Covid-19, albeit in a different way. We published a Sunday meditation on different websites for staff and families. Throughout the lockdown, the pastoral animators kept in touch via the internet with both young and old, sharing news, personal reflections and prayers."

As soon as the pandemic restrictions began to ease, we organised various meetings - a meeting to prepare for the confirmation of six young people outdoors in the city gardens; the final meeting of a Marist formation programme with 10 teachers participating; a meeting of 15 members of the 'Maristes en éducation' lay group. An especially moving moment was the farewell of the final-year students ("les terminales") who said farewell to one another and their teachers in these interesting times." What will next year bring?

