



## GREETINGS FROM PARIS!

April is a special month for the Marists because of the Feast of St Peter Chanel (28 April). Traditionally for the Society of Mary, it is the opportunity to hold a novena for vocation fostering. This month's issue is dedicated to reflection on St Peter Chanel's life and example for us today. Like him, may we grow in faithfulness and commitment!

*Francisco Chauvet  
and Martin McAnaney*

## OBITUARY

John Hand (Ire) 15.03.2021  
Helmut Funke (Ger) 25.03.2021

## PRAYER INTENTION

*We invite you to say each day  
the following novena prayer  
starting from 20 April:*

Lord, as we prepare to celebrate the Feast of St Peter Chanel, Marist and the first martyr of Oceania, we pray through his intercession, you rekindle in us the call of our youth and enable us to live our Marist vocation with faith and generosity.

Grant young people the desire and the opportunity to choose the Marist lifestyle in order to give themselves, in your service, to the women and men of our time. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

# EUROINFO

## ST PETER CHANEL SM, MARIST MISSIONARY AND MARTYR, 1803 – 1841 - MARISTS REFLECT ON THEIR MISSION TODAY

Pascal Boidin (Fr) has special responsibility in the province for the ministry of vocation fostering. Starting with this quote from Pope Francis, "we are asked to obey Jesus' call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel" (EG 20), he invited several confreres to reflect on their mission in the light of Peter Chanel's life.

(Click here for the full articles in English [bit.ly/3ta3y5e](https://bit.ly/3ta3y5e), French [bit.ly/3uEdoww](https://bit.ly/3uEdoww), Spanish [bit.ly/3g19kSN](https://bit.ly/3g19kSN), German [bit.ly/3d4DWB8](https://bit.ly/3d4DWB8), Italian [bit.ly/3t91Y3x](https://bit.ly/3t91Y3x))



## ALOIS GREILER (DE), ST TERESA'S PARISH, DUBLIN:

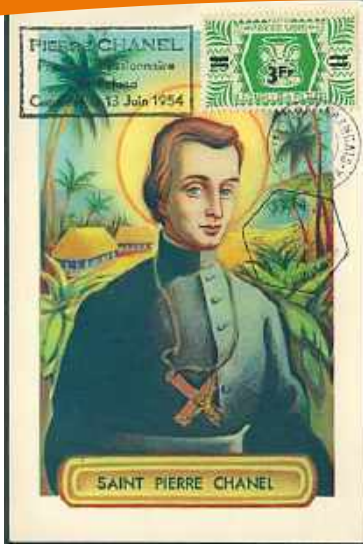


"...Pierre Chanel wanted to go to the missions since his youth but this wish took years to be answered. He joined the Marist aspirants" and got his opportunity to realise his desire as one of the first group of missionaries to go to Oceania... His best friend, Claude Bret, died on the way there and left him lonely. On the island of Futuna, the local people challenged the Christian message he tried to proclaim. In spite of deep commitment and many efforts he saw so little results. His fellow Marist, Br Nizier mentioned the rumours about killing the missionary. Chanel answered: 'They can kill the missionary, but they cannot kill the mission.' That does impress me. Chanel had to face so many questions which make me uncomfortable today: Will the Society of Mary continue? Is religious life a way of life for young people today? Where is God in a secular age? What about the value of our religion compared to other religions – or none? ... These questions are uncomfortable but need to be asked... At least, I need to share that I feel for people who have questions and ... work from my faith as Chanel did."



## DANIEL FERNÁNDEZ (Esp),

**SAHAGÚN:** "... I think that one of the most widespread existential peripheries in Europe is the one produced by having the spiritual dimension removed from daily life. Our noisy, individualistic and materialistic society makes us resistant to the spiritual, withering our soul little by little. Many people would like to recover the spiritual dimension of life ... but they do not know how. I think the Marist mission today ... looks for those spaces in a person which open them up to something more, to transcendence and illuminates them with the light of the Gospel."



## DAVID CORRIGAN (IRE), ST TERESA'S PARISH, DUBLIN:

"So where are the fringes or peripheries today? ... Some peripheries are populated by victims of poverty, drug addiction, abuse, homelessness, exploitation and human trafficking. Another periphery is one populated by divorced committed Catholics, those in second unions, those living together, those in same sex relationships and the blessing of all such unions... The peripheries are occupied by the other, the different, the outsider, the exile, the banished, the besieged. The peripheries are getting crowded... God accepts all those on the

peripheries and the fringes, the way he has created them. He also accepts you and me the way he has created us.



## THILO SAFT (DE),

**PASSAU:** In the context of the current scandals in the Church, "... when Pope Francis says that we are all called to "step out of our own comfort zone" (EG 20), I wonder: what does he mean? Does he mean only our hometown, family and friends? Or does this comfort zone also include structures and ways of thinking within the

Church? St Peter Chanel was open to leaving his homeland. He firmly believed that the Lord would guide him through all the dangers and challenges of his journey as a missionary. We Marists today are called to be open to new theological approaches. We can trust, like St Peter Chanel, that the Lord will lead us through all the dangers and challenges of our time."

**PADDY O'HARE (IRE), TOULON:** "One of the urgent missionary challenges for me now is to find the right vocabulary to reach people of another mentality and culture, especially 21st century young people. Trying to understand their questions and communicate with them is a much more difficult task at the age of 81 than learning Japanese culture and language was when I was 29. St Peter Chanel's patience in struggling with the local language in Futuna, as well as his whole life-style, still inspires me: his deep respect for every person, loving embrace of the poor, unflinching ardour to share the joy of knowing Christ's love and enabling people to avoid the burdens of despair and discouragement..."

The call to Mission, near or far, is just as pertinent today or tomorrow wherever one happens to live."



## HUBERT BONNET-EYMARD (FR), LONDON:

"Pierre Chanel knew what 'leaving his comfort zone' meant. He had the courage to leave his country, friends and family, and set off for a virtually unknown destination. Once in Futuna he had to adapt himself up to new customs, learn another language... The image that comes to mind is that of a parachutist dropped into a completely unknown land... He could hardly have escaped 'culture shock': losing his reference points, suffering from fatigue, even illness, being discouraged, being disappointed by the situation he faced... Although I have not been sent halfway around the world, I face similar challenges: how to absorb the cultural shock of being a French immigrant in London, how to open my eyes, to listen to the poor at my doorstep, to find new ways of communicating, not to remain isolated, to know how to enter into relationships in a selfless and open manner. And, like Chanel, to remain deeply rooted in prayer."



## JAN HULSHOF (NL), LA NEYLIÈRE:

"Pierre Chanel did not start by teaching Futunians French. He began to learn Futunian himself, so that the people could hear the wonders of God in their own language (Acts 2:11) With his humble affability, Chanel fully invested himself 'to make himself all things to all people' (1 Cor 9:22) Our Pope encourages us to go to the peripheries. He is not only thinking of remote islands but also of social peripheries and what he calls "existential peripheries"... We sometimes find ourselves shying away from certain circles because we are not familiar with the language spoken there. The peripheries are everywhere. To follow Pierre Chanel, it is no longer necessary to make long journeys. It is enough to follow his humble openness to what is unknown and unfamiliar. This is the beginning of all evangelisation."