

## NEW LIFE IN NOTRE DAME DE FRANCE



Last February, we had the joy of welcoming two new (one of them actually returning!) arrivals to our community: Martin McAnaney at the end of his sabbatical and Christian Abongbung who was previously at the formation house in Yaoundé. Our community - which was reduced to two members: Hubert Bonnet-Eymard and myself since the departure of Damien Diouf, who left for the renewal at La Neylière - was profoundly transformed. We spent two days in a monastery near London to get to know each other on March 13-14. It gave us all the opportunity to make a fresh start.

The Easter celebrations are an occasion to **welcome new members to our wider Christian community**. It is a great joy to celebrate with them their baptism and confirmation. There were 14 of them this year from France, Congo, China, Belgium and the Ivory Coast, aged from 17 to almost 60 years old... The diversity within the group is astonishing. What is common in the journey of a young high school student who discovered the faith in a hidden protestant church in Beijing, and



and a young father who asks for baptism himself after preparing his baby daughter's baptism? In each of these life stories, the encounter with Christ is a real possibility. This experience of the **Easter vigil is a source of hope** for me. In London, in this great European city, the faith is lived and shared, it has not yet been defeated.



At the beginning of May, the cameras of the whole world turned to Westminster Abbey for the coronation of Charles III, King of England. The city of London was the centre of the world's attention. As I recall these images, I invite you to pray for the community of Notre Dame de France, a haven of peace in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the city.

Notre Dame de France welcomes young adults (men or women) between the ages of 18 and 35 for a specific period of time (one month to one year) to participate in the prayer life of our community and to support the mission. Could this be for you? For more information, please contact us by emailing [Pascal.Boidin@ndfchurch.org](mailto:Pascal.Boidin@ndfchurch.org).

*Pascal Boidin, s.m.*

## LET US CELEBRATE!



103<sup>rd</sup> birthday,  
**Paul Fontanier**  
Sainte Foy,  
Lyon,  
20.04.2023



40<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
of ordination of  
**Hubert Bonnet-  
Eymard and Alan  
Williams**, England  
30.04.2023



## GREETINGS!

Recently, I visited the Marist confreres in Spain. We have four communities there – 1 in Madrid, 2 in León and 1 in Sahagún on the Camino de Santiago. A big thank you to Ángel Antón and the confreres for making me feel so welcome and for their openness with me. Thanks too to François Chauvet, who acted as interpreter. I spoke with many on an individual basis and also had some community discussions.

A highlight of my trip was a communal celebration of the feast of St. Peter Chanel at the Marist-owned retreat at La Vecilla, about 40 km north of León. There we were able to celebrate together with a Eucharist and a fine meal. Afterwards, we had an open forum on the future Marist presence in Spain.

St Peter Chanel can inspire us in that while he was not particularly 'successful' in his ministry, he sowed the seeds of the faith in the Pacific, while others reaped the harvest. Sometimes we are unaware of how we touch the lives of others; only later might we learn that our efforts did indeed bear fruit. May Peter Chanel continue to inspire us in our lives and ministries – always acknowledging that it is ultimately the Holy Spirit who is at work within and through us.

*Declan Marmion, s.m.*

## PRAYER INTENTION

For a culture of peace and non-violence, and especially for the people of Ukraine.

We pray for the spread of peace and non-violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by States and citizens.



## Celebrating the Feast of St Peter Chanel

Photos from the celebration in Notre Dame de France, England with the Fijian community, in Norway, Italy and in Spain.



## MARY: LIKE THE AIR WE BREATHE...

In May 1883, Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote his poem "The Blessed Virgin compared to the air we breathe", which says "that we are wound with mercy round and round as with air." There are worlds of difference between the English Jesuit poet and the French Founder of the Marists, but the two share an intense love for Mary, the Mother of Mercy. The title of Hopkins's poem is slightly reminiscent of what Colin said about how Marists relate to Mary. For Colin this is not a matter of devotions or prayers first of all, but of continually trying "to breathe in and out the spirit of Mary". Hopkins and Colin both use images of "spirit", "breath" or "air" to capture a life-giving presence, which is at once concrete and intangible, nearby and all-transcending.



Though intangible, they know the spirit of Mary is not something ethereal. It is a highly personal presence. That's why Colin recommends Marists to greet Mary, at least twice a day, with the words of the angel: "Hail Mary!", and to converse with her as with their "good Mother". He invites the seminarians of La Capucinière to say to her: "My good Mother, make me faithful to the graces which the divine mercy pours upon me."

For Hopkins, too, Mary is his "dear Mother". He speaks to her and she speaks to him. Despite the elusive images of "air" and "atmosphere", especially the end of his poem betrays an intense sense of personal connection: "Be thou then, O thou dear Mother, my atmosphere; my happier world, wherein to wend and meet no sin... Stir in my ears, speak there of God's love..." (The poem can be read in English: <https://hopkinspoetry.com/poem/the-blessed-virgin>)

Jan Hulshof, s.m.

## Financial Contribution from Europe

The General Administration performs an annual approval process for all the budgets submitted from international formation programs and mission areas. They aim to reduce costs when possible and have limited the increase in budgeting to 1%. In this global outlook to the Marist world, the role of the UESM contributions were consistent and recurring in support of the various projects, programs and apostolates.

The sizeable contribution from the UESM [the legal entity of the Province of Europe] is proportionally large given the size of the province. 40% of the total 'Budget 2023 of Mission Funding' and 37% of the total 'Budget 2023 of Roman Contribution' is covered by the UESM. Besides these main contributions, in the last fiscal year the UESM supported the 'International Formation Endowment' and the 'Endowment for Missions' with a significant amount of over 2 million Euros. In addition, there was some extra support to cover specific grants to Africa (in Senegal and Cameroon) for 150,000 Euros. We are very grateful for the generosity and the unconditional support of the European Province!

John Henry Harhager, s.m. and Giovanni Maria Manozzi