

## A SUNNY VISIT, SPAIN 18-24 APRIL



In the weeks before I left Paris, every now and then there was a welcome appearance of sunshine, but nothing compared to when François Chauvet and I arrived in Madrid for a week's visitation. A clear blue sky without a cloud and bright, strong sunshine. Our visit had started well. Fortunately, it continued in a similar vein.

It was a very enjoyable experience to meet the Spanish Marists individually and as a group. After the two confreres who live in the Marist house in Madrid, we went on to the two houses in Leon and the mission to people on the Camino, in the small town of Sahagún.

A couple of things struck me. One was that I think Spanish Marists have invested more effort in looking for vocations than any other country in Europe. Some of them said, "Well, we put in a lot of effort, but it didn't produce much fruit!" I found myself replying, "I'm not so sure of that – Spain has one of the youngest Marist Fathers in the province and I think also one of the youngest Marist Sisters." That may be the beginning of the story not the end. The Spanish confreres seem to me united in their shared vocation.



The final event of our visit was a meal with the assembled confreres preceded by the Eucharist in the Marist house at La Vecilla. It happened to be the shared birthday of two great European writers, Shakespeare and Cervantes. I preached at the mass in the language of the former while François translated my words into the language of the latter...

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*Kevin Duffy, sm*

## DEAR MARIST FRIENDS

I write these words from ARC, the annual gathering of Marist superiors in Rome with the general administration.

This meeting is proving to be another encouraging event for the Society.

More on this later. The question of vocations to the Society of Mary is not proving to be the elephant in the room in Rome because it is frequently referred to. There are certainly no more powerful means of vocational promotion than praying for them.

Therefore, once more, let's take vocations as the intention of the month.

*Kevin Duffy, sm*

## PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

**to the Society of Mary, especially in Europe**

Jesus, Good Shepherd, we ask you to look on this family of Mary, your Mother, with eyes of mercy.

We ask you, Lord, to enrich the Marist World with the fire of your Holy Spirit. May Mary's subtle and delicate presence enable us to breathe her spirit.

Committed to our own vocation, may we be credible witnesses to your Gospel.

Renewed and strengthened by the fire of your Spirit, may we bring to life the seed of a vocation which you have planted in the hearts of the young.

Enable us to accompany them in the fulfilment of their personal vocations. Lord Jesus, give us vocations according to your heart. Amen.

Jean-Claude Colin-pray for us.

## French Assembly in Paris

Marist religious from France and London met in Paris on the 16 of April, at the Forum104, to reflect together on the future of the French-speaking communities in Europe. There were around twenty of us, representing all the communities concerned: Toulon, Lyon-Rue Sala, La Neylière, Paris and London-Notre Dame de France.

With the help of Sylvia Daum from Nexus, we brainstormed about different scenarios involving the closure of one of the communities, except for La Neylière. The idea behind this work is to enable our group to remain committed to its life and its future and not to be too subject to the events that are bound to happen. The results of the day should help the provincial and his council to take orientations for the future of Marists in French-speaking Europe. The meeting was appreciated by the confreres, who were happy to have the floor and to be able to exchange views on important subjects. It was also an opportunity to get together and share time together, which is not so often the case.

*Pascal Boidin, sm*



## Communication News: Call for Contributions

The Provincial Communication Team met for a working session in Paris on 24-25 April 2024. As one of the team commented: 'We got more work done meeting in person than during six zoom sessions!' - human interaction cannot be entirely replaced by online meetings! Significant progress was made in the planning of the joint **provincial website** which takes into consideration the cultural differences and needs from the different countries. In the next stage we are calling our readers (especially from Europe) to share with us **photos of our Marist mission and communities** in the European Province, by emailing them to: [info@maristeurope.eu](mailto:info@maristeurope.eu).

*Anne Marie Salgo*

## English Assembly in Ilkley, England

Marists from England, religious and lay, met from 8 to 11 April 2024 at the spiritual centre of Ilkley, near Leeds in West Yorkshire, in the north of England.



The meeting began with a reflection on Nazareth in Marist spirituality given by Damien Diouf. Unrecognised in the Old Testament and despised in the New, the name that appeared at the Annunciation will accompany the Crucified One as he proclaims himself to the world. In their humble beginnings, the Marist pioneers thought of Cerdon, Belley and the l'Hermitage as their Nazareth from which they drew inspiration. For Colin, every Marist community is Nazareth, a place of simple living, love, growth, and closeness to God. In the afternoon, Mrs Margareth Stevenson, Fr Desmond Hanrahan, and Br Ivan Vodopivec presented reports on the life of Marists in England as accountants, managers and trustees. A Eucharistic celebration prepared and led by the Marist community of Notre Dame de France brought the day to a close. The following day Declan Marmion spoke on the theme of Synodality, in vogue during the pontificate of Pope Francis. A legacy of Vatican II, it is central to the life of the universal Church today. In the afternoon, the provincial, Fr Kevin Duffy, gave news and led discussions on the life of the province. Mass led by the Hull community brought the day to a close. On Thursday morning, the participants left after Mass led by the Wells community and breakfast, happy with the exchanges and personal reflections.

*Damien Diouf, sm*

### Upcoming dates!

- ◆ **Provincial Council** 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> May in Paris
- ◆ **Education Committee** 17<sup>th</sup> June in Paris
- ◆ **Provincial Council** 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> June in Paris
- ◆ **European Provincial Chapter** 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> July in La Neylière
- ◆ **Provincial Council** 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> July in La Neylière