



## EUROPEAN MARIST EDUCATORS ANNUAL MEETING ROME 14 – 16 JANUARY 2026

This year we were welcomed to the General House in Rome for our meeting. 30 participants gathered on Wednesday evening 14 January for the opening reception and the introduction of 3 new members of the group. Arnaud Patural and Valerie Fournol from Ste Marie Lyon, and Fr. Tony Kennedy who has been given the education brief on the General Council. The provincial, Fr Kevin Duffy welcomed everyone to the meeting and spoke of the importance of the education mission to the Society.

Our keynote speaker this year was Fr. Antony Christy Lourdunathan sdb, working in the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome. His theme was, 'Inclusive and Distinctive – Multi denominational Education in the Catholic Context'. It was a most interesting intervention and generated lively discussion in our small groups.

Of course, we could not visit Rome without seeing some of its glorious sights. We visited the Colosseum and the Basilica of San Clemente which was fascinating and most interesting. ***On Thursday evening we joined the community in Casa di Maria for Mass. The students welcomed us royally and the Mass was a wonderful and joyous occasion. It was great to meet so many young Marists and the Heads of Establishment considered the visit a highlight of our visit to Rome.*** Fr. Declan, the Superior General addressed us on Friday morning (due to illness read by Fr. Tony) and emphasised the role of those present in keeping the Marist spirit alive in our schools.

Fr. Setefano and his team in the General House could not have done more to make us feel welcome. Nothing was too much trouble, even providing a coffee break on the roof of the house to see the view! Arrivederci Roma.



**Frank Dowling, Provincial Delegate for Education**

## DEAR MARIST FRIENDS,

When the participants at the last general chapter went to see the Pope, he advised Marists to read the signs of the times.

One such sign of the times is a changing technological landscape.

The Chapter urged the Society to put energy into "The Digital Mission Field". This is an

expression worth pondering. In the European province we already have an active

Communications Committee and recently revamped our website.

Much more needs to be done. This is why we are hoping to recruit someone to bring his or her skills to the work of

the Committee at the service of a renewed Marist presence in this important field of

contemporary evangelization.

**Kevin Duffy, sm**

## PRAYER INTENTION

that the Holy Spirit will guide the work of the Society in "The Digital Mission Field".

## OBITUARY

Ismael Castellanos

23.01

## NEW ARRIVALS IN SAINTE-MARIE DE LYON



At Sainte Marie Lyon, **MR ARNAUD PATURAL** has been appointed headteacher, in agreement with Monsignor de Germay, replacing Marc Bouchacourt, who has led the school complex for more than 20 years. Mr Patural is a philosophy teacher. He is married and has three children. In his younger years, he taught at Marist schools in Lyon and Riom. Since 2006, he has been headmaster of the Bourges Centre school complex, which has nearly 3,000 pupils from primary to higher education. We welcome him to the Marist network and assure him of our support and prayers for his new mission.



### VALÉRIE FOURNOL : MY WELCOME AT SAINTE-MARIE LYON

I wanted to be a teacher. During my schooling, I attended demanding institutions, where I met people who believed in me despite my difficulties. *I quickly understood the concept of effort, but above all the beauty of everything we can receive and give.* After fifteen years teaching in Cycle 3, I arrived at Sainte Marie in 2012 to teach the final year of nursery school. I enrolled my three children. At first, I had trouble understanding the square, the circle... which one fits into the other?

At Sainte Marie, I found the same high standards of work expected of pupils and adults alike. Over the years, through my experiences, the people I meet, the site and

its architecture, I have come to understand the essence of this school, its spirit... what it allows and instils in each of us. I am touched, my children also receive a lot and are equally touched.

In 2015, Mr Bouchacourt offered me the position of primary school prefect. *This institution welcomed me as I am, it strives for excellence in everyone, but above all, it guides and trusts. This offer is a calling; it is time for me to give back everything I have received!*

I have been head teacher for 10 years, I have had wonderful encounters, I feel nourished intellectually, spiritually and humanly. I feel both strong and humble. In 2025, I was offered the position of headmistress. I decided to take on the role and work in this institution with the aim of welcoming and supporting with hope and joy all those who enter this institution: the pupils, their families, my colleagues and the staff.

## PREACHING FOR THE MISSIONS

Since 2023 I've been preaching for the missions in England. Dioceses and deaneries are assigned to congregations yearly by the Catholic Missionary Union and this allows me to visit various parishes and talk about the Marist charism and our missionary apostolates. At the end of Mass, I stand at the door with a basket and envelopes collecting funds which are ultimately distributed through the General Administration in Rome.

My background in Africa as well as our historical documents such as the edited letters of missionaries are of great help. *Despite their small size and advanced age, parish communities show a real interest in missions*, and this gives an opportunity to meet and share with parish communities and their pastors, who are often alone, not far from retirement and with health concerns.



*Damien Diouf SM*

**COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT**

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## NOW RECRUITING!

We are looking for a **COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT** to support the mission and life of the Society of Mary in the Province of Europe. **Are you (or do you know) a skilled communications professional with a passion to make a difference?**

**More details: [bit.ly/SMCA2026](https://bit.ly/SMCA2026)**