



The Marist Brothers

SPRING 2020



A Lumen Award-winning publication of the Province of the United States of America

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TODAY'S Marist Brother

How the Five Pillars of Marist Identity Taught Me How to Build a Home

A reflection by John (JP) Nguyen, former Marist Community of Welcome member in Austin, TX.

During my sophomore year of college I had a database management professor who wanted to associate everything with a personal story. Unfortunately for his students, he had only one story to tell: the story of him building his house. Everything in our database course was tied together with his experience of building a home. By the end of the course, we had to wonder if he had learned more about building an SQL database or installing a plumbing system into a new home. Though his story seemed incessant, one could not deny the passion our professor had towards building his home. Everything he did and thought of was seen through the lens of a homebuilder.

The Marist Brothers and their passion for building a community where one can encounter faith, hope, and love have reminded me very much of this professor. I have learned through the Marist community the way that the founder of the Marist Brothers, St. Marcellin Champagnat, and his companions built their mission. As I have learned, I have also had the opportunity to contribute to building the Marist Community of Welcome in Austin, TX.

Throughout the time of my stay at the Marist I cultivated a real awareness of the devotion the Brothers have to living out the Marist charism. Through their lives, I began to have a natural sense for the five pillars of Marist identity. As I continued to learn these pillars, I was able to better explain what I was already experiencing at home. I began

to recognize Br. Peter's conversations with me and his help around the home as a display of **presence**. The attention to detail and dedication that it took to maintain our garden and yard by Br. Rob were a sure sign of **simplicity**.

My roommates and I began to recognize these pillars and started to live them out alongside the Brothers. The backyard barbecues, baseball-throwing evenings, and singing began to be our way towards a deeper **family spirit**. My roommates Luke and Andres committed

themselves each Sunday to serving youth communities at parishes, reminding me of the **love of work** pillar. Finally, **the way of Mary** shines brightly as each Brother displayed a discipleship with our Lord that was simple, humble, and constant.

If there is one thing that I have learned in



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FROM THE DESK OF

the Provincial

SPRING 2020

Dear Marist Family,

My thoughts and prayers, as well as the prayers of all Marists of Champagnat, are with you and your families as we live through these very challenging times in our country and world. In the midst of all of the anxiety, isolation, and sickness, we have our Lord Jesus who touches our fragility with his Easter love and light. His message is essential: Do not be afraid, I am with you.

We Marists do believe in, and will continue to commit ourselves to, the message of Champagnat. Even living in our “new normal,” we make Jesus Christ known and loved in whatever ways we can—whatever we are, wherever we find ourselves.

Like you, my heart goes out in gratitude to all who are in public service at this time: healthcare workers, public safety officers, first responders, and government leaders. These days are unprecedented, and unless you are a part of the generation that endured the Great Depression or the Great War, you have never experienced such life-changing times. May the Lord and our good mother, Mary, bring special graces and energy to those who are serving community members who are sick and need extra care. Know that you who serve are making Jesus known and loved everyday.

And, in our Marist education world, I am grateful to all of you who are overwhelmed at the task of keeping the educational mission alive through distance learning. Our school administrators, Marist teachers, parents who are now tutors and teachers, and a generation of students who grew up with new technology and now have to use it to further their studies, you are making Jesus known and loved.

As we live in greater isolation and learn from online platforms more than ever before, take time to pray with each other, especially our young ones. Let’s listen to scripture and enter into the mysteries of our Sacraments. Let’s be committed to bringing new healthy life to all of the people of God. Thank you again, dear Marist Family, for your support and care for the Marist mission in the United States, in both the best of times and the worst of times—your love and care for God’s children goes on.

May the Lord bring you Easter love and light; may Mary, our good mother, bring you and your families the comfort and care you need.



Br. Patrick McNamara, FMS
Provincial
Marist Brothers USA Province



ESOPUS CORNER

Written by: Summer Bourlier & Valerie Savino

Spring is just around the corner here at the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus (MBCE), and the flowers are beginning to bloom. In the midst of such a devastating time in our world we are braving the impacts of the coronavirus together. To echo the words of *Evangelizers in the Midst of Youth*, "We are not only living in changing times but are witnessing an earthshaking time of change. With prayers for all those inflicted and displaced by the coronavirus in our hearts, those of us living in community here at the MBCE remain



true to our mission. As we seek out the light at the end of this tunnel, we continue to offer the center as a place where all are welcomed, all belong, and all are loved, just as Jesus loves us."

Here at the MBCE we had a wonderful fall and calm winter. We welcomed a new group of staff and are trying out some new aspects of already existing programs, such as a refugee simulation at our LaValla Weekend, two Kairos programs from Iona College, and a retreat for Iona College's campus ministers. We also scheduled a fourth Marist Youth Encounter (with a group of Marist Young Adults for the first time ever). We had three incredibly successful events: our bi-annual Century Ride which raised \$43,268.30, followed by a beautiful Family Day, and the annual Esopus Music event, which raised \$6,750.00. Thank you to the many hearts and hands that helped make these programs and events a success.



All of us here at the MBCE are excited for summer, and ready to see what next fall and winter have in store for us.

Due to the recent restrictions and preventive methods put in place to keep everyone healthy, our community has had a lot of downtime. We are using this time to brainstorm and work on many small improvement projects around the property. In these quiet moments, we are reminded of the first community of Brothers who made the most of the simple things they had. With



lots of time to spare, and the shortage of supplies in stores, we are constantly reminded of Fr. Champagnat's favorite Psalm 127: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil;

for he gives sleep to his beloved."

As a community leader, Fr. Champagnat did not abandon his values in times of need. Instead, he used those values along with God's grace to fill him with eagerness, strength, vision, and energy and continued to push forward. This is exactly what we intend to do here at the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus. This is, and will continue to be, a house that the Lord has built.

During this time of need, if you or anyone that you know needs supplies, somewhere to stay, or just simply something to do, all are always welcome here at the MBCE. As we move ahead with our small projects like tidying up outside, cleaning, and painting various parts of our Main Retreat House, please feel free to reach out if you or someone you know needs anything at all. At the very least, we offer somewhere to get outside and take a walk, or to assist in some of these light projects. We will be happy to welcome you home.



As we move ahead in the months to come, we are reminded and strengthened by our community here and our Marist community at large. The Gospel of Matthew tells us: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them," and surely God is with you and with all of us as we band together during these trying times. Stay tuned for more updates to come from the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus, and please feel free to reach out to our Executive Director, Jim Raimo, or our Director of Operations, Valerie Savino, at www.maristbrotherscenter.org. Stay safe, be well, and may God bless you and keep you always.

Lay Marists Visit the Encuentro Project

By Maureen Hagan, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Marist Brothers USA Province

A group of Lay Marists recently visited the Encuentro Project in El Paso, Texas, a joint project between the United States Province and the Province of Mexico Occidental.



Upon our arrival, we were greeted by Brothers Todd Patenaude, Jim Adams, and Juan Boyados (visiting from the Mediterranean Province in Spain). After settling into our rooms and sharing a delicious meal, we had our first

of several presentations of the trip, given by Pauline Hovet, a local journalist and volunteer. She gave us an overview of the realities of migrants in El Paso, the response from the church, and the role volunteers are playing. She explained the acceptable reasons for being granted asylum and how right now no one is being allowed in except those from Mexico and Brazil. Hence, the shelters are not nearly as full as they were several months ago. Many are closed down for now.

We walked over to the bridge and watched people coming and going. The cars coming in are searched by military personnel, who are not usually there. Sacred Heart Church, Fr. Rafael's parish, is just a few blocks from the bridge and we spent some time there, exploring the statuary, architecture, and the beautiful mural on the outside wall of the adjacent building.



We spent time at the CDR, Casa Del Refugiado. We worked jobs including doing laundry (sheets, towels, and clothing), greeting busloads of migrants, handing out water and snacks, distributing clean clothes, helping with bedding, staffing the playroom for the children, making sandwiches, sweeping, mopping, and helping with intake. Our last task was to wash everything in the playroom with bleach. I spent some time sorting clothing—smelly and sweaty and dirty. I reflected on the stories behind those smells and thought about the very real people who had worn these clothes (probably for days on end).

We heard from Anna Hey, a lawyer with the Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Service (DMRS). She shared much historical and current information with us about what's going on at the border.



We spent Sunday afternoon at the El Paso Holocaust museum. Here, we were reminded of some of the frightening parallels between Nazi Germany and what's happening at the border today. Sunday also included a shopping trip to the Santa Catalina store, which sells products made by an indigenous women's co-op in Juarez.

On Monday, we heard the work of the Hope Border Initiative, a faith-based non-profit that works on research, advocacy, and leadership development. We then headed to Juarez to visit the tent cities where people are camped out awaiting their turn to ask for asylum. Afterwards, we visited the University of Texas-El Paso to see their exhibit of artwork done by the children in the detention

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Dear Friends,

Happy Easter season! May the Risen Lord Jesus be with us and protect us now and in the days ahead.

For me, when Easter and spring happen at the same time, I feel very hopeful and encouraged. This year, more than ever with the sad news of the COVID-19, I was happy to welcome both Easter and Spring. Like yourself, I needed God's assurance of new life, a fresh start, and better days ahead. I'm going to guess that Easter and spring make all of us - our families, our world, and our Marist Brothers family - more hopeful, too.

This year the Marist Brothers continue to focus on "New Beginnings" and are staying committed to our mission with renewed hope. Even while navigating through these uncertain times in our country and the world, we are continuing to steadily grow the work begun in 1817 by our founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat.

We are most thankful for your gifts which enable us to look forward and outward—to promote vocations to the Marist Brotherhood and to engage in special ministries which enhance the spiritual development of our students. Your partnership, through your gifts to our annual spring Retirement Appeal, enables us to provide quality care for our elderly and disabled Brothers.

If you have never contributed to the Brothers through either our Annual Fund or Spring Retirement Appeal, please consider making your first gift by using the reply envelope in this newsletter. You can also donate online by visiting www.maristbr.com and clicking the "Donate Now" tab on the top of the page. You will then be among so many of our loyal friends who believe, as you do, in the future of the Marist Brothers and our mission of sound Christian education.

Thank you once again for all you do for our Brothers. And, may you be blessed with good health and lots of hope for better days.

With Gratitude.

Paulette M. Karas

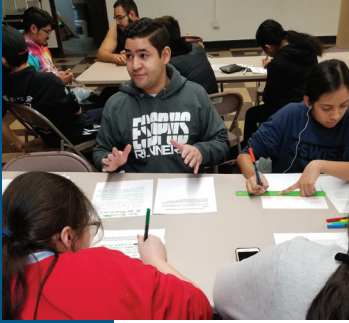
Paulette M. Karas, CFRE
Director of Development



Working with St. Benedict's Youth Group

By Br. Sam Amos, FMS

Every Friday night, over two dozen teenagers gather for the youth group at St. Benedict's Parish in Blue Island, IL. Run by Brothers Sam Amos and Luis Ramos, along with several other volunteers from the parish, the group gives the young people of the parish a space to get together, explore their faith, and have fun! The Friday night meetings involve a number of different activities: fellowship, discussion groups, shared meals, prayer services, video game tournaments, and open gym.



done on Good Friday). We also participate in events in the wider Marist world: every year we send

a delegation to the Marist Youth Gathering, and two of our young adult volunteers, Brian and Andres, participate in Chicago-area Marist Young Adult events.

Throughout the year, we also have special events: retreats, pilgrimages, parties, and performances. St. Benedict's Parish is majority Mexican-American, and many of our programs feature traditional Mexican practices, like our Day of the Dead celebration and our Via Crucis (a costumed re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross



STORY CONTINUED...

Continued from cover page

How the Five Pillars of Marist...

college, it is how to build a home. I learned how to build a physical home with my database professor, but I learned the most vital part of building a home from the Marist Brothers. They have taught me what it means to be present to others despite busy schedules and distractions. They have taught me how to grow with vulnerability and

honesty. Most importantly, they have taught me how to be present to the love that God has for me and others. I am forever grateful for the experience I have had at the Marist Community of Welcome. Let's continue to build this house for those after us!



STORY CONTINUED...

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Lay Marists Visit the Encuentro Project

centers. Back at the house, we heard from Heidi Cerneka, Br. Todd's housemate, who is a lawyer with Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center. Heidi explained the "ways to get in," the problems with the current policies, and the reasons people are fleeing their homelands.

We ended our trip with a prayer featuring these words on the right...

I HEARD AN OWL

By Carrie Newscomer

Don't tell me hate is ever right or God's will
Those are the wheels we put in motion,
ourselves

And the whole world weeps
and is weeping still

Though shaken I still believe

The best of what we all can be

And the only peace this world will know
can only come from love.

IN MEMORIAM

Brother Norbert Rodrigue



Brother Norbert Rodrigue, FMS, a member of the Marist Brothers of the Schools for 79 years, died on November 13, 2019, at the Marist Brother's residence in Miami, FL. He was 97 years old.

Born on February 17, 1922, in Lowell, Massachusetts, Br. Norbert, or "Norby", as those close to him called him, spent

his years as a Marist Brother in various ministries. He lived and worked in Massachusetts, New York, Illinois, Oregon, Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and Liberia. He spent many summers in Mexico teaching English to the young Marist Brothers.

At a mass celebrating his 75th anniversary of being a Marist Brother, Br. Norbert said, "I thank God for my good health...I'm healthy and happy. I've had a good life." In retirement, his favorite daily event was a swim in the pool, after which he would read a book and fall asleep.

Br. Norbert was the last surviving sibling of 18 brothers and sisters. He is survived by many nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews.

"Norby was a great community man, very welcoming and fun to be with. He loved relaxing and having a drink with his community members and friends. He always had time for his friends, and welcomed visitors with enthusiasm. Norby would try to do anything he could for you, even at the expense of his own convenience. Norby let no grass grow under his feet, but tried to live his life to the fullest, taking advantage of everything that came his way. He certainly was not shy, and made others feel at ease. I will certainly miss his cheerful spirit and big heart!"

—Br. Jerry Dowsky



To read additional obituaries on deceased Brothers, visit www.maristbr.com, and go to "Marist Archives" and click on "Deceased Brothers."



Real Brothers. Real Stories. A Real Difference.



For more information about a vocation to the Marist Brothers, visit:

www.maristbr.com

Or contact:

Br. Al Rivera, FMS
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The Marist Brothers Mission

To bring Christian education to young people, especially those who are most neglected.
(Article 2, Constitutions)

The Marist Brothers

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For more updates on what's happening in our Marist circles, visit www.maristbr.com.



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CAROL STREAM, IL
PERMIT NO. 562

Today's Marist Brother • A Lumen Award-winning publication of the Province of the United States of America.
Editorial Staff: Ms. Erin Gilbert. Contributing Staff: Br. Sam Amos, Summer Bourlier, Marueen Hagan, John (JP) Nguyen, Valerie Savino.

The Marist Brothers Remembrance in Prayer Program



The Marist Brothers offer two different series of Remembrance in Prayer cards: Traditional and All-Occasion cards. Our signature Traditional cards feature the image of Christ and a Marial design. Both of these Traditional cards may be used as memorials to remember the deceased. Our two All-Occasion cards may be sent to honor birthdays, weddings, or anniversaries or to extend get-well greetings.

All cards carry a special promise of Remembrance in Prayer from the Marist Brothers. We would be delighted to send you a complimentary packet of our Traditional or All-Occasion cards. Please send your request through email (maristbr@maristbr.org) or to the mailing address at left.