



The Marist
Brothers

SPRING 2012



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

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TODAY'S *Marist Brother*

Marist Youth Celebrate 125 Years of Marist Brothers Presence in the USA

“Never stop telling your children that they are the friends of the saints in heaven, of the Blessed Virgin, and especially of Jesus Christ; that he wants their young hearts, that he loves them jealously, and that he is terribly hurt to see the devil take control of them; that he would be ready, if necessary, to die on the cross again, even right there in St. Symphorien, for them, poor children.”



So wrote St. Marcellin Champagnat in 1832 in a letter to Br. Bartholomew, one of the early pioneer Brothers who had recently been sent to St. Symphorien, a small rural town not far from Lyon, to teach poor children. While the years have gone by, and the

locations of the schools and centers for young people inspired by St. Marcellin have expanded well beyond southern France, the Marist mission of evangelization through the Christian education of youth has remained the same.



This year, the Marist Brothers commemorate 125 years of commitment to this mission in the United States. Through their many schools and educational programs throughout the U.S. Province, they continue to “make Jesus known and loved.” One such program is Marist Youth Evangelization.



Established soon after the canonization of Marcellin Champagnat in 1999, the program aims to spread the “Good News” of God’s love to young people. The Marist Youth Evangelization Program is a Province-sponsored program meant to complement, support and enhance the good work already going on in our schools around the country. It has a more national vision and approach, offering spiritual formation and leadership programs, events and gatherings which cross individual school lines and communities.

The Marist Youth Encounter Christ Retreats, held three times a year at the Marist Brothers’ Center in Esopus, New York are four-day overnight programs which encourage young people to “encounter” Jesus Christ, as St. Marcellin said in his letter to Br. Bartholomew, as “a friend...who loves them jealously...who is

(continued on page 5)



FROM THE DESK OF

the provincial

Spring 2012

Dear Members of our Marist Family,

As we all know, spring is one of the four temperate seasons, the transition period between winter and summer. Spring and “springtime” refer to the season, and more broadly to ideas of rebirth, renewal and re-growth. Spring is always a reminder that new life is being born...we just have to perceive it! As Marists dedicated

to making Jesus Christ known and loved, we are invited to see Mary as an important source of new life in our Church and in our world today.



Father Champagnat and the early Marists understood their efforts “as a sharing in Mary’s work of bringing Christ-life to birth and being with the Church as it came to be born (*Water From the Rock*, #11).” Central to this founding vision was a desire to bring to life Mary’s way of following Christ into a troubled world.

During the Marist Brothers’ 21st General Chapter held in Rome in 2009, Mary’s presence was felt very intensely and influenced the Chapter delegates who challenged each of us—Brothers and laymen and women—to “go out into a new land, to facilitate the birth of a new epoch for the Marist charism...we go on our way with Mary, as guide and companion. Her faith and her openness to the will of God inspire us to undertake this pilgrimage.” Pope John Paul II, in an address to the General Chapters of the Marist Family in 2001, challenged us “to manifest in an original and specific way the presence of Mary in the life of the Church and of humanity.” So what does this mean for us today? Our Marist charism calls us to develop a “Marian attitude” for the world around us. This attitude has as its hallmarks a joyful availability to others, an unshakeable confidence in God, and a maternal attention to the needs and suffering of all, especially those least favored. The Marist charism is alive and well when we follow Mary in her response to God’s call to bring the Good News to others.

In this edition of *Today’s Marist Brother*, we see the evangelization ministry of Brother Dominick Pujia and the “joyful availability” that Brother Phil Degagne brought to his many years of service to the evening basketball program at San Martin De Porres parish in Laredo, Texas. Their “doing good quietly” has touched countless young people and adults. We also remember the lives of those Marist Brothers who have gone before us and who have modeled for us our Marist mission and charism. May they rest in God’s peace.

As we move deeper into spring, let us continue to bring forth new life in Christ to all those we meet. May God bless you and those you love.

Sincerely,

Br. Ben Consigli, F.M.S.
Provincial

Our Star of Laredo

Br. Phillip Degagne, F.M.S.

Our own Brother Phillip Degagne, F.M.S. was recently highlighted in the Laredo Morning Times for the successful basketball program he ran at San Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Laredo, Texas. Br. Phillip has done great work there and we want to share his story with you.

Every Monday through Thursday night for the past 25 years, Br. Phillip Degagne has opened the doors of the San Martin de Porres Catholic Church Parish Center gymnasium in Laredo, Texas, and welcomed local basketball players onto the court.

Known as arguably the best place for pickup basketball games in Laredo, Br. Phillip has kept the rules of the game the same since the Parish Center first began hosting games back in 1986. Since there are no referees, the play can get physical at times. Br. Phillip even admits that things can get a little rough, but the players say that having Br. Phillip there reminds them to be good and keeps them in check.

Over the years, many of the best high school basketball players in Laredo, some of whom have gone on to play college basketball, have played at the Parish Center. They say that these pickup games definitely helped them improve their skills.

Br. Phillip and the courts at the Parish Center have provided more than just great games for local basketball enthusiasts. Many of the players acknowledge these games keep them off the streets and out of trouble.

But Br. Phillip's time as host of these pickup basketball games has come to an end. After recently catching a bad eye infection, Br. Phillip is cutting his time at the Parish Center in half and will no longer be the one who opens the gym for local players. Br. Phillip will definitely be missed by the players and he will miss them too. Of his time presiding over the courts of the Parish Center, Br. Phillip says, "I feel I've given 25 of my good years and I've enjoyed every bit of it."

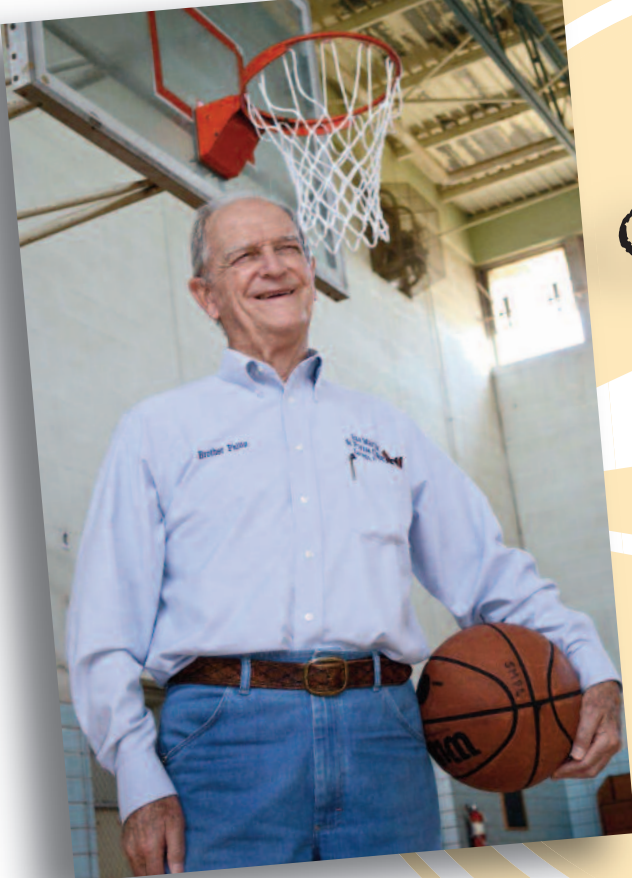


Photo provided courtesy of Laredo Morning Times

"My kids had the ...
BEST SUMMER OF THEIR LIFE!"

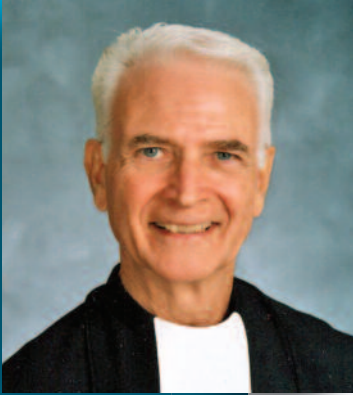
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Dear Friends,



This issue of *Today's Marist Brother* contains articles about our Brothers and their work in youth ministries. The loyal support from our benefactors and your concern for our Brothers and their work with young people is inspiring. Your financial support, your prayers, your inspirational encouragement and participation in our work spurs us on to meet the needs of today's youth ever more effectively.

As we look enthusiastically to the future we realistically see the need for a strong financial future. The care of our elderly and disabled Brothers along with the professional and religious training of our new and current Brothers will make even greater demands on our future financial resources.

If you have never given a gift to the Brothers, or if it has been a while since your last donation, please join in that future by making a gift to the Brothers using the reply envelope in this newsletter. You will then be among so many of our other loyal friends who believe, as you do, in the future of the Marist Brothers and our mission of sound Christian and Catholic education.

As we continue in the footsteps of St. Marcellin Champagnat we ask for your support, prayers and encouragement. And may Our Lord and his Blessed Mother watch over you and your loved ones during the upcoming summer months!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Br. Hugh P. Turley, F.M.S., CFRE".

Br. Hugh P. Turley, F.M.S., CFRE
Co-Director of Development

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paulette M. Karas".

Paulette M. Karas, CFRE
Co-Director of Development



ready to die for them...again." Witness talks, small group discussions, interactive games and initiatives, shared prayer experiences, periods of quiet reflection are only some of the dynamics which build family spirit in an atmosphere which is conducive to personal conversion.

Youths who make an encounter retreat also celebrate the Mass together and the Sacrament of Penance, a sacrament with healing powers which many of them, and us for that matter, have overlooked in recent years. At the conclusion of the Marist Youth Encounter experience, many of our youths report feeling renewed. Their comments and "tweets" on various social networking sites confirm they continue to look for more ways to share their experience and joy; a sure sign the evangelization process has gone full circle. Once they have been renewed in Christ, they want to tell others about it.

Every year the Office of Marist Youth Evangelization also offers a leadership training program. This year's event will take place during Memorial Day Weekend, May 25-29. As in the past, Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York has offered to host the event. The theme of the gathering, which will draw over 300 youths, young adults, and school advisors, is *"The Power of Presence: Celebrating 125 years of Marist Brothers in the U.S.A."* The large gathering will take on the feel of an "international youth festival" with delegations of young people coming from several Marist schools in Mexico and Canada.

A keynote presentation on the *Life and Times of Marcellin Champagnat, Staying Marist in a not so Marist World, and Bringing Marist Spirit and Spirituality Back to Your School*, will set the stage for numerous small group discussions and school level "reaction meetings" throughout the weekend. The weekend will also have several social building activities one would expect when young people join together for a celebration of this type including a dance, an outdoor barbecue and of course the "Champagnat Games," an afternoon of fun games which will "stretch" the mind and the body, all in the name of good wholesome fun.

To mark the historical backdrop for the gathering, a special exhibit covering the first entry of Marist Brothers on U.S. soil and the growth of their educational mission is being produced. The exhibit will be unveiled at the Marist Youth gathering. Once the gathering concludes, the exhibit will travel around the Province—from school-to-school—so even more young people will come to know how their school was established and that they share in a common Marist heritage which makes them part of the Marist story here in the U.S.A. A special commemorative Memorial Day prayer service and wreath laying ceremony which is aimed at bringing back the memories of the pioneer Brothers of the Province who are buried at Marist College will drive this point home in a unique and dramatic way.

The weekend would not be complete without some spiritual exercises which will help the participants remember that when two or more are gather in Jesus' name, He—the one who is their friend...the one who loves them jealously and is ready to die for them...again if need be—is there in their midst. These spiritual activities include morning and evening prayers led by youth from several of our schools, a Taize style prayer sponsored by the Marist Brothers Vocation Office, and the celebration of the Mass for Pentecost. In all, it promises to be a great weekend for building Marist family spirit.

In that same letter to Br. Bartholomew, St. Marcellin Champagnat goes on to say, "...tell them, 'God loves you, and I also love you, because Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints love you so much.' Then tell them, 'Do you know why God loves you so much? It is because you were purchased with his blood, and you can become great saints, and with very little difficulty, if you really want to.'" Here in a "nut-shell" is the aim and goal of the Marist Youth Evangelization Program: tell them (the young people) that God loves them and that they have been purchased with Jesus' blood. They are destined to become saints. That is what we are about.



Planned Giving

Many friends of the Marist Brothers are retired or thinking about retiring. This article provides helpful tips and things to consider as you prepare for retirement and begin to plan your estate.

Friends of the Marist Brothers sometimes find their retirement years to be a good time to plan a significant gift to support our future. Personal satisfaction is the motivating factor behind these gifts, but contributions may provide important practical advantages, such as:

- **Guaranteed income** for life for retirees and their families, plus relief from the burdens of investment management;
- **Reduction of income taxes**, capital gains taxes and federal gift and estate taxes;
- **Relief from heavy taxes** heirs must pay on benefits from IRAs and other retirement savings plans.

Retirees have special planning challenges and opportunities that may make a planned gift to the Marist Brothers especially attractive. Please let us know if you intend to:

- **Withdraw large sums from retirement savings plans** – Income taxes can be drastic, and you can ease them with a planned gift that gives you a partial charitable deduction plus income for life.
- **Name death beneficiaries for retirement savings** – Your heirs may face severe taxes on these death benefits. You can avoid these taxes by directing the benefits to the Marist Brothers.
- **Make or revise your estate plans** – A well-planned bequest or “life-income gift” may leave your survivors better protected and create vital support for our future.

As you begin to think about your retirement and estate planning, we hope you will consider including the Marist Brothers in your plans. Many of our friends have found gifts through wills, living trusts, life insurance and retirement accounts to be easy, fulfilling ways to assist our Brothers and our ministries. Please call our office if you have any questions on planned giving or to notify us if you have included the Marist Brothers in your estate plan.

This article is prepared for the information of our friends and donors and illustrates general concepts and ideas in tax and estate planning. The article is not intended as legal services or advice. You should, accordingly, consult with competent tax and legal professionals as to the applicability of any items to your personal situation.

New Marcellin Guild Members...

A warm welcome and sincere thanks to **Mr. Roland J. Blanchette, Mr. William I. James, Mr. Matthew Murphy, Ms. Ritajean Schmidt** and **Mr. John H. Vanier, Jr.** our newest members of the *Marcellin Guild*. Guild members have included the Marist Brothers in their will or other estate plan and in a special way share in the future of the Marist Brothers. Their distinguished legacy to the Marist Brothers and to the youth of our country is admirable. **Thank You!**

The Marcellin Guild:

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Mr. John H. Vanier, Jr.
Mrs. Pauline Rose Veltry
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Mr. and Mrs. Matthew C. Zebrowski

If you have included the Brothers in your will or other estate plan and are not listed above, please let the Development Office know of your legacy. Recognition as a *Marcellin Guild* member is a statement of our appreciation, and seeing you named among the men and women of the *Marcellin Guild* will proudly remind others of their potential to follow your example.

In Memoriam



Br. Edward Francis Vollmer, F.M.S.

Born in 1925 in the Bronx, New York young Edward joined the Marist Brothers in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1939. After completing his education Br. Edward spent the next 65 years teaching and ministering at Mt. St. Michael Academy, St. Ann's Academy, Resurrection-Ascension School and Archbishop Molloy High School in New York, Aquinas High School in Georgia and our community at

Bellport, Long Island, New York. Br. Edward had a great love for both his Marist family and his birth family. He enriched each by his presence, by his work and ministry. At the age of 86, Br. Ed died on December 10, 2011 at Mt. St. Michael Academy in the Bronx, where he started his teaching career 65 years earlier.



Br. Godfrey Robertson, F.M.S.

Born in Savannah, Georgia 71 years ago, Br. Godfrey entered the Marist Brothers' Novitiate in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1940. After completing his religious and academic studies at Marian College (currently Marist College), Poughkeepsie, New York, he began his ministry at Boys' Catholic High School in Augusta, Georgia. Br. Godfrey taught and coached extensively

at Central Catholic High School, Lawrence, Massachusetts for many years, Marist High School in Chicago, Illinois, St. Mary's High School in Manhasset, New York, St. Ann's Academy in New York City and at Mount St. Michael Academy and Cardinal Spellman High School, both in the Bronx, New York. A funeral Mass was celebrated at the chapel at Mount St. Michael Academy on February 14, 2012 followed by burial at the Marist Brothers' cemetery in Esopus, New York.



Br. James Venantius Gaffney, F.M.S.

Br. James Venantius Gaffney, a Marist Brother for 64 years, died on February 8, 2012. He was 80 years old. During his high school years at our Marist schools in New York City, young James liked the Marist Brothers' way of teaching, how they radiated happiness and lived in vibrant communities near their schools. He entered the Marist Novitiate in 1948. After completing his studies at the Marist Brothers'

training centers in 1951, Br. Jim taught Spanish, French and Remedial Reading at Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx, New York, Central Catholic High School in Wheeling, West Virginia, and Mount St. Michael Academy in the Bronx, New York. Shortly before his death, Br. Jim said he enjoyed every minute of those 50 years in the classroom, and found the years since then, beyond the formal classroom, just as wonderful and happy as the first 50!



Br. Raoul Molnar, F.M.S.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Br. Raoul Molnar entered the Marist Brothers in 1955. He obtained his B.A. in 1963 and later his graduate degree in pastoral counseling from Iona College. Br. Raoul served in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey for more than 50 years: 20 years at Marist High School, Bayonne and 12 years at Union Catholic High School, Scotch Plains. Most recently he served as a guidance

counselor and teacher at Roselle Catholic High School, Roselle. In addition to being a master teacher, many campers and staff fondly remember Br. Raoul as the ever cheerful and humorous "Chief Cook" during the Esopus Summer Camps. To many, he was their beloved, simple, straight forward and single-minded friend. Br. Raoul passed away at the age of 71 on Nov. 28, 2011, at Champagnat Hall, our Marist retirement community, in New York.



Br. Valerian Doiron, F.M.S.

Born in 1913 in St. Alexis, Quebec, Canada, "Val" moved with his family to Westbrook, Maine when he was 10 years old. In 1929 he joined the Marist Brothers and has been blessed with decades of happiness from teaching math to countless junior and senior high school students at St. Ann's Academy, St. Agnes High School, Cardinal Hayes High School and Mount St. Michael Academy in New York, St. Joseph's

School and Central Catholic High School in Massachusetts, Boys' Catholic High School in Georgia and Marist High School in Illinois. Br. Val also spent summers at Camp Marist in Effingham, New Hampshire, directing the arts and crafts programs. Having just celebrated 80 years as a Marist Brother, our Br. Valerian died on December 8, 2011 – the feast of the Immaculate Conception.



Br. Victor Serna, F.M.S.

Born in Spain 87 years ago, Br. Victor became a Novice at our "International" training center in Giugliano, Italy. Upon completion of his studies, he was sent to the Marist School in Cienfuego, Cuba which would begin a twelve year ministry there. In June 1950, he had already earned his Ph.D. degree from the University of Havana where in one of his classes he sat adjacent to a certain Fidel

Castro; they became friends. Br. Victor subsequently taught at St. Joseph's Academy, Brownsville, Texas and at St. Mary's High School, Manhasset, New York. Br. Victor possessed the ability to think positively and radiated a smile. He was a Marist Brother who was faithful to God and to his community prayer. Brother passed away in November 2011 at Champagnat Hall, our Marist retirement community in the Bronx, New York.



Br. Vincent Xavier, F.M.S.

Born in 1932, Br. Vincent entered the Novitiate of the Marist Brothers in 1950. After graduating from Marist College with his BA in History, Brother taught at Mount St. Michael Academy in the Bronx, New York from 1955 through 1960. During those years he earned his Master's degree in Economics from Fordham University. Br. Vincent was a tireless worker, be it in the classroom, the sports field or the "project"

that physically built Marist College during its early days. After his ministries at Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York and Marist Hall in Cold Spring, New York, Brother returned to Mount St. Michael Academy in 1972 as teacher and athletic moderator until 1999. Br. Vincent's last years were spent at Champagnat Hall, our Marist retirement community, where he passed away on January 27, 2012.



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Today's Marist Brother • A Lumen Award winning publication of the Province of the United States of America
Editorial Staff: Br. Hugh Turley, F.M.S., Mrs. Paulette Karas, CFRE, Br. Dominick Pujia, F.M.S.

The Marist Brothers

Remembrance in Prayer Program



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 go to www.maristbr.com and click on "What's New."

The Marist Brothers are excited to announce the addition of two newly designed All Occasion cards! These new designs are unique and created especially for the Marist Brothers by the well known company Barton Cotton, of Baltimore, Maryland.

The new All Occasion cards may be sent in honor of a birthday, anniversary, wedding or to send get well greetings. We still offer our Traditional prayer cards that are used for expressions of sympathy or memorials. Both card designs offer a special promise of remembrance in prayer from the Marist Brothers.

We would be delighted to send you a complimentary packet of our new All Occasion cards or a fresh supply of our Traditional cards. Please request either through email (maristbr@aol.com) or send your request to the address on this newsletter.