

The Marist Brothers

### ADVENT 2023



A Lumen Awardwinning publication of the Province of the United States of America

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## **Welcoming Two New Marist Brothers**

Brothers Robert Dittus and Ryan Richter Celebrate First Vows

ver the summer, Marist Brothers Robert Diittus and Ryan Richter professed their first vows during a ceremony held at the Marist Brothers Center in Esopus, NY. They professed the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, committing themselves for one year according to the Constitutions of the Little Brothers of Mary.



"Brothers, on the day you entered the Novitiate, you received the habit of the Little Brothers of Mary, given to our first Brothers by our founder St. Marcellin. Today, you will receive cords with three knots. A symbol of your commitment to follow Christ — poor, chaste, and obedient." Br. Dan O'Riordan (Provincial, Marist Brothers





USA) announced as he accepted Robert and Ryan's vows.

Br. Robert grew up in Queens, NY. He graduated from Marist-founded Archbishop Molloy High School before attending Saint Michael's College, where he earned a BA in Psychology in 2019. During his time at Molloy, he was able to learn a lot about the Marist Brothers and their mission, especially at retreat programs held in Esopus. Br. Rob has said "The work that the Brothers are doing is work that I find myself called to do. The Brothers have a great sense of community, not only amongst themselves, but in the larger communities they are a part of."

Br. Ryan grew up in Burkburnett, TX. His first connection to the Marist Brothers was through Br. Rob Clark, campus minister at the University of Texas in Austin, which he graduated from in 2019 with his BBA in Marketing. During his senior year, Br. Rob took a group of men, including Ryan, on a vocation pilgrimage to New York, where they spent time with a

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### **FROM THE DESK OF**

the Provincial

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**ADVENT 2023** 

Dear Marist Family,

Advent Blessings to each of you. As we prepare to again celebrate this sacred season of walking with the Holy Family, let us open the "inns" of our hearts and allow Jesus to again come into our world through each of us and our actions. The great spiritual writer Meister Eckhart reminds us, "What good is it to me that Mary gave birth to the son of God ... years ago, and I do not also give birth to the Son of God in my time and in my culture? We are all meant to be mothers of God. God is always needing to be born."



Because of Mary's "Yes", God came into our world. As we reflect on the scripture readings of this season, we are frequently reminded of Mary's journey. As Marists today, we are called to be the face of the Marian Church and so our life and story should be reflective of Mary's life and story. Her song as expressed in her Magnificat must become our song. It's the song of the whole Church. It's the song of anyone who has experienced God's overflowing generosity and grace. It's the song of everyone who begins to see that God loves them individually, personally, and unconditionally. "God has chosen me. Despite my sin and weaknesses, he still loves me and walks with me. Yes, my spirit does rejoice in God my savior!" Maybe sometime during these Advent days, sit and pray with those words of Mary and make them your own.

As I share these few lines, I do so with a grateful heart as we are so blessed to have so many generous and supportive benefactors like you, who partner with us in our mission to Make Jesus Christ Known and Loved, especially among young people and among those most neglected.

We are also blessed to have dedicated Marist Brothers and Lay Marists who joyfully bring our mission to life each day in countless ways. We are similarly graced to have the prayerful witness of our many retired and infirmed Marist Brothers who dedicate much of their day to praying for the many works of our Province and all our benefactors who make those works possible. I am especially indebted to our Province medical staff who take such excellent care of our retired Brothers, whose shoulders we now stand on as we continue their legacy of growing our Marist Mission.

I wish to personally thank you again for your support and care for our Marist mission in the USA Province and in the world. We could not continue to make the dream of St. Marcellin an ongoing lived reality without your support, encouragement, and prayers.

Our Marist life and mission is rich with folks who pray, work, and reach out to others no matter how old or what challenges they face. I see it on a daily basis in the various ways we minister to make a difference through our significant presence in our Marist schools, in our spiritual retreats and camps, our work with refugees on our southern border, and in other creative ways we make Jesus known and loved.

I pray these Advent days will prepare each of us to again be filled with wonder, peace, and love as we journey toward the miracle of Christmas morning with new hope that Emmanuel will again be born. May God bless each of you. Please know that we are praying for you during Advent and we will be entrusting your intentions and those of your families to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and Champagnat,

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Br. Dan O'Riordan, FMS Marist Brothers USA Provincial

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# **ESOPUS CORNER**

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he Autumn season is in full swing here at The Marist Brothers Center at Esopus – the leaves are turning gorgeous shades of red and gold, there's a crisp breeze traveling throughout the property, and change is imminent.



Earlier this year, the Esopus

Runners participated in the Long Island Marathon Weekend and competed

in the 5K and 10K races. The event not only served as a fundraiser, but also as an MBCE team building event to foster camaraderie and supportive friendships. In addition to the Esopus Runners, our 2023 Century Riders raised money for the MBCE by completing a 100-mile bike ride from Central Park, NYC to Esopus. A huge thank you to all of our runners, bikers, and donors!

We had an incredible camp season this summer! As many of you know, the Mid-Hudson Valley Camp has served hundreds of persons with disabilities for over 40 years. What started out as a one-week summer session in the 1970s has turned into a ten-week camp program that caters to many



groups of marginalized children and young people. We would not be able to continue to serve these communities without the generosity and support of those who continue to believe in our mission. Thank you to all of the volunteers



and donors who made this summer possible.

In continuing the spirit of transition, here at the MBCE we are now well into our retreat season, which got off to a great start. In this sacred space, on this holy ground, God's grace continues to touch the lives of people in many ways throughout the year. As we wait in reflection and anticipation for the birth

of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we use the themes of our Advent Season to remind ourselves why our work at the MBCE is most important, to make Jesus known and loved.

At the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus, our programs continue to ignite a fire of hope in the young people we serve, and in turn, continue to inspire our staff and our residents for the future of our young people as they return home, renewed and refreshed, ready to change the world in ways they never thought possible. While reflecting as one program ends and another begins, we are filled with peace, knowing the joy and love that we have for our work of evangelizing to our young people, continuing to make Jesus come alive to the faces of everyone that comes through our center.

From our staff here at the MBCE to you, we wish you an Advent season filled with hope, peace, joy, and love, as we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus in our lives once again. From our family to yours, have a blessed Christmas season, and we look forward to welcoming you home soon! May God bless you, and keep you always.



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Christmas Greetings!

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his Christmas season, The Marist Brothers send our thanks and gratitude for the generosity you have shown us throughout the year, the care you express for our elderly and disabled Brothers, and your enthusiastic support of our educational and youth ministries.

Your gifts to our Annual Fund each year generously provide a groundwork of general support as well as support for those special projects that need funding during the year.

An ongoing concern for our elderly and disabled Brothers is a duty that St. Marcellin Champagnat considered a blessing. You may also have the experience of caring for an elderly loved one in your own family and know the diverse and sometimes pressing needs that can arise. We have the same needs — and your blessings of support through our annual Retirement Appeal greatly help us meet those responsibilities.

Today, we rely on the kindness and generosity of you -- our friends, family, and alumni - to work us to assist in furthering our mission to new generations of young men and women. Your support has and will continue to keep the vital presence of our Brothers in our educational institutions and ministries, as well as enable us to provide for our elderly and disabled Brothers. Your financial support also allows us to expand our vocation awareness program to reach more young men contemplating religious life.

Our very best wishes for a blessed Advent and Christmas season. Surround yourselves with family and friends' peace, love, and joy. May the New Year ahead be filled with happiness and good health.

Merry Christmas! Paulette M. Karas

Paulette M. Karas, CFRE **Director of Development** 

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## **Marist Youth Leadership Camp**

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he third annual Marist Youth Leadership Camp was held over the summer. Marist Students, faculty and Marist Young Adults who represent ten of our schools around the country gathered to learn key skills needed to lead a successful freshmen retreat program. This was the first time the program was held in Esopus.

The main goal of this week-long camp was for students to have numerous opportunities to work on practical leadership skills. Students participated in various sessions focused on how to lead prayer, build small group skills, lead activities, and how to write a cohesive talk. Students have been tasked with taking these skills and going back to their respective schools to plan and run a retreat for incoming freshmen. Through these freshman retreats, being run by fellow Marist Youth members, our hope is that new students in our Marist schools feel welcomed to become a part of the Marist Community, and understand what it truly means to be Marist.





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## LaValla Weekend



ver Columbus Day weekend, students and volunteers from Marist schools in New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Florida, Illinois, and Texas, as well as one of the Marist schools from Quebec, Canada,



gathered at the Marist Brothers Center in Esopus for the 13th Annual LaValla Weekend. The theme involved looking at past LaValla weekends and what they have taught us about familial displacement, acts of war, and natural disasters. Participants went through a simulation experience to understand the ideal "Utopia" and how economic inequality has a great impact on our world. Returning to the original theme of LaValla, students and volunteers also spent time working on various service projects around the Esopus property. The biggest project was digging the holes that will be the foundation for solar panels that will be installed later outside some of the houses on the property. This is a huge step in the effort to move Esopus in the direction of more sustainable energy.



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variety of religious orders. Br. Ryan recalls "In the Marist communities and ministries we visited I felt immediately at home. The sense of community, mission, and passion these Brothers held was inspiring. I fell in love and I had to try it out."

Brothers Robert and Ryan entered the Marist Brothers Postulancy in September 2020 and lived in community with Brothers in the Bronx, NY. They became Novices to the Marist Brothers on September 12, 2021 and lived at the Marist Brothers Novitiate on the campus of Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY with the late Brother Sean Sammon serving as the Master of Novices. In the fall of 2022, they moved to the Saint Barnabas Community in the Bronx, NY, where Br. Don Bisson served as Master of Novices.

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This fall, Br. Robert is teaching religion at Christopher Columbus High School in Miami, FL and Br. Ryan is teaching religion at Saint Joseph Academy in Brownsvile, TX. During the next year they will continue to discern their calls to a lifetime commitment as Marist Brothers.

## **IN MEMORIAM**

## Br. Henry Sawicki

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Marist Brother and former educator Br. Henry Sawicki, FMS, died on October 8, 2023, at the age of 77. He was a Marist Brother for 54 years.

Br. Henry was born in Brooklyn, NY and entered the Marist

Brothers Novitiate in 1963 in Esopus, NY, before receiving the Marist Habit in August 1964 and professing first vows in 1965. In 1968, he received a BA in Biology from Marist College, and he received an MA in Biology from Fairfield University in 1975.

Like many Marist Brothers, Br. Henry served in several Marist Ministries, where he had the chance to impact the lives of thousands of young people. He especially enjoyed being a sailing instructor and assistant waterfront director at Camp Marist in Effingham, NH, where we worked over the summer for more than 50 years! Br. Henry also worked at several schools, including Saint Joseph High School in Trumbell, CT (1973), John A. Coleman High School in Kingston, NY, (1973-1985), Bishop Carroll High School in Ebensburg, PA (1986), Marist High School in Bayonne, NJ (1986), and Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Poughkeepsie, NY (1996-2015).

Br. Henry professed perpetual vows in Esopus, NY, in 1974 and attended a second Novitiate at the Marist Spirituality Center in Manziana, Italy, in 1995. After retiring, he moved to our Marist community in Manhasset, NY.

Died October 8, 2023

Real Brothers. Real Stories. A Real Difference.



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

www.maristbr.com/vocations Or contact:

Br. Brian Poulin, FMS

Marist Brothers Provincial Office 70-20 Juno Street Forest Hills, NY 11375

Phone: (718) 480-1306 Email: vocations@maristbr.com

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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**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 413 Worth, IL 60482-0413 Phone: (773) 881-5343

Email: maristbr@maristbr.org

Website: www.maristbr.com

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



**The Marist Brothers** Provincial Development Office 4200 West 115th Street Chicago, IL 60655-4397 NON PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE **PAID** CAROL STREAM, IL PERMIT NO. 562

Today's Marist Brother • A Lumen Award-winning publication of the Province of the United States of America. Ms. Erin Gilbert, Director of Communications. Contributing Staff: Ms. Marissa Berrios

# The Marist Brothers Remembrance in Prayer Program



he Marist Brothers offer two 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.



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