Friday Notes

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 14, 2026

060



Marist communities across Colombia are assessing damage following a strong earthquake that particularly affected the western part of the country, home to several schools and communities of the Norandina Province. Provincial Br. Leonardo Yepes reported that no injuries were sustained among Marist Brothers, students, personnel or their families. Communities in Cartagena and Popayán are safe, with no damage reported at Colegio Champagnat or Bicentenario.

Marist schools in Armenia, Manizales and Cali sustained significant material damage, as did Casa del Refugio. All members of those communities have been reported safe. Pereira was heavily affected by the earthquake, with electrical and communication outages making contact difficult. While some Brothers have not yet been reached, there have been no reports of injuries within the Marist community at this time. The earthquake was also felt at the Novitiate in Medellín, where the community and facilities were not damaged.

Across the Arco Norte Region, Marists are joining in prayer and solidarity with the Norandina Province and all those affected in Colombia.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Deaf Camp
MID-HUDSON VALLEY CAMPS
MBCE - Esopus, NY
August 16 - 22, 2026

Kids 2 Camp
MID-HUDSON VALLEY CAMPS
MBCE - Esopus, NY
August 23 - 29, 2026

MYP Mission Trip
MAGNIFICAT FARM
Jackson, KY
September 3 - 7, 2026
REGISTER NOW

Provincial Council Meeting
via Zoom
September 12, 2026

Sharing Our Mission: Creating Communities of Belonging
MBCE - Esopus, NY
October 3 - 6, 2026

Provincial Team Meeting
MBCE - Esopus, NY
October 6 - 7, 2026



Marists Transforming Lives

Beginning August 20, the Marist Institute will launch "Marists Transforming Lives," a new weekly series highlighting the mission and impact of Marist social works serving children and young people in vulnerable communities around the world.



Columbus Prepares for New School Year

Faculty and staff at Christopher Columbus High School in Miami, Florida, returned to campus this week to prepare for the start of the new school year. The days included professional development, prayer and time together, culminating in a faculty and staff retreat today before students return to campus.



Voluntas Dei Congress

Br. Pat McNamara served as a facilitator for the annual USA Voluntas Dei Congress, held August 5–6 in Hartford, Connecticut. During the gathering, he also had the opportunity to reconnect with two former colleagues from Christopher Columbus High School in Miami, Rev. Julian Gonzalez and Rev. Alexis Ibarra. Voluntas Dei is a Roman Catholic secular institute gathering clergy, singles, and married couples.

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

USA Province Communications

10 Years at Marist: A Reflection by Erin Gilbert

This weekend marks ten years since I began working for the Marist Brothers. After a decade of using Friday Notes to tell Marist Brothers USA's ministry stories, I am taking this as an opportunity to tell a little bit of mine. **Province communications is a ministry, too.**

In August 2016, I walked into this job at 21 years old with absolutely no idea how much it would shape my life. I could not have imagined the places this work would take me, the people I would meet along the way, or how much growing I would do here.



When I think about the last ten years, some of my favorite memories are not necessarily the ones that would have made the front page of Friday Notes. They are lunches with the retired Brothers at Champagnat Hall, jubilarian interviews that were supposed to last an hour and turned into afternoons of stories about people and places I had never known. They are conversations with Brothers about ministries they left decades ago but can still describe like they were there yesterday.

One of my favorites came pretty early. On February 14, 2018, Br. Dan took me to Lawrence for the first time. It was Valentine's Day and, as it happened, Ash Wednesday. The restaurant had a Valentine's Day prime rib special. Naturally, every one of us ordered the fish fry instead.

I looked around the table and realized I had somehow ended up with over ten Valentine's Day dates.

Luckiest girl in the room.

That story still makes me laugh, but I think it also explains something I have come to love about the Marist Brothers: they have always made me feel that way.

Long before I knew enough Marist language to call it "family spirit," I knew what it felt like to be welcomed into a Brothers' community and immediately be treated like I belonged there. I have been invited to tables and included in stories that began long before I arrived. I came here to help make the Brothers and their mission known and loved, but over ten years, they made room for me to know and love them, too. I am so incredibly grateful for them.

And then there are the Marist women. If the Brothers taught me what family spirit feels like around a table, the women in my Marist life have taught me what true accompaniment looks like. They knew the 21-year-old who showed up in 2016 with a lot of enthusiasm and even more to learn. They have watched me be nervous and excited about taking on new challenges and grow into new responsibilities. They have celebrated the wins with me and supported me through some necessary lessons in humility. They have challenged me, advocated for me, made me laugh, and reminded me when I needed it *that I belong at the table, too.*









Some have been colleagues, some have been mentors, and many became some of my closest friends. They have been there through new jobs and new cities, through the moments when I was absolutely certain of myself and the ones when I was anything but. When I look at pictures from the last decade, I can see myself growing up in them, with so many of those women standing right beside me. One of my favorite parts is knowing that they were growing through these years, too.

We talk a lot in Marist circles about walking alongside young people. When I look back at the last decade, I can see just how many people have spent those years walking alongside me. How many of them made the choice, again and again, to invest in me, giving me the grace and space to grow. I don't know that I understood how special that was at 21. I certainly understand it now.

Maybe that is one of the gifts of accompaniment: not recognizing it while it is happening. You look back and realize that someone was quietly walking beside you all along. And the longer I have been Marist, the bigger that circle has become.

My Arco Norte Communications Committee has become one of the most unexpected and life-changing parts of this work. Somehow, colleagues spread across different countries and languages became some of the sweetest, most supportive people in my life. They have made the Marist world feel both so much bigger and so much smaller at the same time.



Over the last ten years, that world has also taken me farther than I ever imagined. I have stood in places I had only read about and eventually made it all the way to the Hermitage, even if my suitcase did not. Many of you know that story, and what began as a slightly ridiculous travel disaster became one of the biggest catalysts for change in my life. Apparently, simplicity was going to be part of my Hermitage experience whether I planned for it or not!

But for all the places Marist has taken me, it always seems to come back to the people.

I am reminded of that every time I have the opportunity to sit in on the Presidents and Principals meetings. I spend so much of my year telling stories about our schools that it can be easy to forget how extraordinary the people leading them really are. Then I get to sit in a room with our school presidents and principals and listen to them talk about their students, their faculty, the challenges they are facing and the futures they are building. Hearing the questions they are asking and watching them challenge one another to do better for their communities reminds me how deeply this group of people cares.

I get a similar feeling when the Province Team is together. Each person brings a different area of Province life to the table, and I love getting to hear about the work they care so deeply about. Because we are spread out most of the year, the chances we get to actually sit around a table together are especially meaningful to me. There is something about being in the same room, bouncing ideas off one another and getting to dream a little about what we could do together that always leaves me energized.









Communications gives me a strange and wonderful view of Province life. I am often there for the moments everyone sees, but I also get a front-row seat to so much that happens quietly. And if there is anything I have learned from ten years around Marists, it is that an awful lot of the good happens quietly.

Over the years, Brothers have trusted me to tell stories about their ministries, their vocations, their communities, and sometimes very personal parts of their lives. They have let me ask questions, dig through old photographs, and sit with them as they remember people they loved and ministries that formed them. I have heard stories that made me laugh until I cried and others that I knew immediately were gifts simply because someone trusted me enough to tell them.

And I am especially grateful to Br. Dan. When I was hired, Br. Dan was Vice Provincial. He had written the proposal to create the Director of Communications position, found me, and hired me to fill it. On my first trip to MBCE, he told me that, in a nutshell, his job was to make Br. Pat's job easier (Provincial at the time). I don't know if Br. Dan remembers saying that, but ten years later, with him now serving as Provincial, I have quietly adopted it as one of my biggest goals, too: make Br. Dan's job easier.

For ten years, he has been part of so many chapters of my Marist life, from taking a 22-year-old communications director to Lawrence for a Valentine's Day fish fry to trusting the person I am today with the responsibility of helping tell the story of this Province.



But one of the things I have always appreciated most about Br. Dan is that he knows I am a dreamer. When the day-to-day work starts to take over, he is often the person who reminds me to look beyond it and asks me to dream a little bigger. He will sit with me while I throw 34 ideas at him in ten minutes, asking what communications and marketing for the Province could look like if we let ourselves dream a little. Some of my favorite conversations with him have been those dreaming sessions, when we stop talking about what needs to get done today and start talking about what might be possible tomorrow.

Anyone who has spent much time around Br. Dan knows that his version of accompaniment often involves getting in the car, going somewhere, and meeting people where they are. I have been lucky enough to be along for a lot of those rides in his "mobile office." His confidence in me, his friendship, and the ways he has helped me become better at what I do have meant more than I could adequately fit into a Friday Notes article. When I look back at the 21-year-old who walked into Marist in August 2016, there is a lot I wish I could tell her. But mostly, I think I would tell her how lucky she is about to become.

She doesn't know the words "presence," "family spirit," or "accompaniment" yet, at least not in the Marist way she eventually will. She doesn't know that some of the people she is about to meet will still be sitting beside her ten years later. She certainly doesn't know how many tables she is about to be invited to.

Nor could she imagine just how big her Marist world is about to become. That it will stretch across countries, continents, and languages. That she will one day walk through the Hermitage, albeit without a suitcase (or proper footwear for a pilgrimage). Or that she will find herself sitting around tables with people who inspire her, believe in her, and make this enormous Marist world somehow feel like home.

But she will come to understand what those Marist words really mean.

Presence will become the people who show up and stay. Family spirit will look an awful lot like a fish fry on Valentine's Day. And accompaniment will become less something she hears about and more something she experiences for herself.

And she will learn that "making Jesus known and loved" can happen through words and photographs and stories, but first you have to take the time to know and love the people whose stories you are telling.

Ten years later, I understand the words better.

More importantly, I have lived them.

And I still feel like the luckiest girl in the room.





SEASON OF CREATION

SEPTEMBER 1–OCTOBER 4

The theme for the 2026 Season of Creation is *Living Water.* The Biblical text is Ezekiel 47:1-12, which describes life-giving water flowing from the temple of God. As the river deepens, barren land is restored and damaged waters return to life. Creation begins to flourish again.



The vision calls us to recognize ecological harm and our interdependence with creation. It also invites us to take responsibility for protecting the waters that sustain human life and the wider community of creation.

Living Water is an invitation to move beyond observation and enter more deeply into the work of renewal. Guided by the Spirit, Christians are called to act together so that environmental healing and human well-being may flourish.

THE SYMBOL FOR 2026 IS IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER

The symbol reflects the call for transformation. Christians are invited to step into the living water flowing from the throne of God, moving deeper as the Spirit leads us.

Immersion reminds us that care for creation cannot remain at the surface. We are called to join the renewing work of God and help living water flow through our communities and across our common home.

ACCESS MORE RESOURCES FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION HERE

FAITH LEADERS INVITE YOU TO THE SEASON OF CREATION 2026

TURN OVER A NEW LEAF

Summer Ecology Reading

Brian Roewe, "Catholic groups urge EPA to halt actions that devalue human life, God's creation." National Catholic Reporter, July 31, 2026.

Interested in making a difference in your community? See our USA Marist Integral Ecology Resources document *here*.

MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT

NOW AVAILABLE: EPISODE 11 OF MY MARIST LIFE!

Join host Eric Gonzales as he welcomes Tim Kelly to My Marist Life to reflect on his recent pilgrimage to The Hermitage in France. Tim shares how walking in the footsteps of St. Marcellin Champagnat deepened his faith, strengthened his connection to the global Marist family, and renewed his commitment to living the Marist mission each day.



LISTEN NOW ON SPOTIFY!

New episodes will drop the first of every month.

We hope this podcast becomes a space for reflection, storytelling, and connection as we continue to live the Marist Mission together. Spread the word and share with anyone who might be inspired by these conversations!

One of the greatest gifts of this summer's National Assembly was simply being together. Longtime friends reconnected, new relationships began, and members from across the country had time to share in the family spirit at the heart of the Marists of Champagnat. Prayer remained part of each day, inviting participants to reflect on what it means to be Beacons of Joy in their own Marist communities.





SUPPORTING THE MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT

The work of the Marists of Champagnat continues to be largely subsidized by the Province. Members are invited to consider making a contribution to help support formation resources, Lay Council gatherings, and Assembly expenses. Any amount is appreciated, and monthly contributions are especially helpful. Questions may be directed to Chuck Lamphier or Maureen Hagan. DONATE

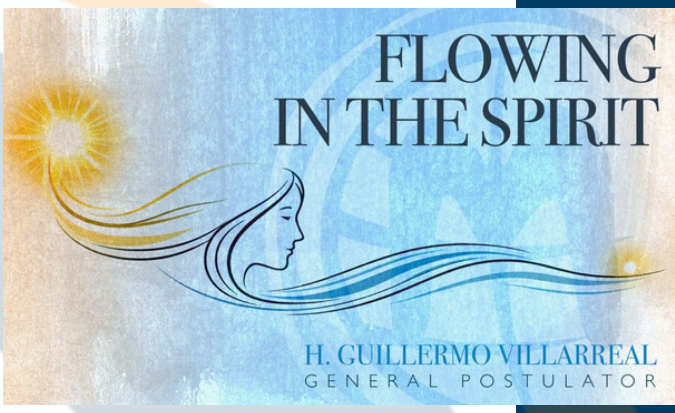
NEWS FROM THE GENERAL HOUSE

FLOWING IN THE SPIRIT

WEEK 23 - INVESTIGATING HOLINESS: METHOD, LAW, AND DISCERNMENT IN THE DIOCESAN PHASE

In the latest installment of "Flowing in the Spirit," Postulator General Br. Guillermo José Villarreal Cavazos looks at the diocesan phase of a cause for canonization and the process the Church follows to investigate a candidate for sainthood. He explains the steps involved, from the opening of a cause and collection of documents to the examination of witnesses and eventual transmission of the acts to Rome. These safeguards help ensure that each cause is grounded in careful research and verifiable evidence before moving forward.

--Read the complete article here.

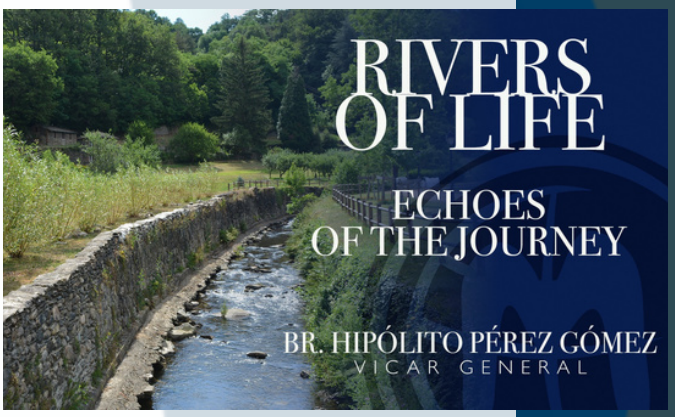


Flowing in the Spirit *is a year-long series of weekly reflections offered by Br. Guillermo Villareal, our Postulator General responsible for advancing the causes of our Marist saints.*

BR. HIPÓLITO PÉREZ – AUGUST 2026: COUNT THE STARS, IF YOU CAN!

In his August "Rivers of Life" reflection, Vicar General Br. Hipólito Pérez considers the declining number of religious Brothers and invites Marists to look beyond statistics through the "logic of hope." Drawing on God's invitation to Abraham to "count the stars, if you can," he reflects on embracing smallness not as failure, but as an opportunity to return to what is essential and discern what God may be bringing to life among us. Br. Hipólito also calls Marists to remain attentive to the wounds of our world while continuing to trust in the promise God is writing through our smallness.

--Read the complete article here.





YOUNG VOICES TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF AI IN MARIST EDUCATION

Champagnat Global is inviting students across the Marist world to participate in an international research project exploring artificial intelligence, education, and human values. Led by Leonteios School in Greece, the initiative will gather young people's perspectives on AI and the future of learning, helping inform future Marist educational strategies while keeping human dignity and the voices of young people at the center of innovation.

--Read more.

--Take part in the research.

OUR MARIST FAMILY: Across Arco Norte

MÉXICO CENTRAL

BR. MARK OMEDE VISITS MÉXICO CENTRAL



General Councillor Br. Mark Omede, liaison of the General Government with the Arco Norte Region, joined México Central Provincial Br. Luis Felipe González for visits to two Marist universities in Mexico earlier this month.

The Brothers visited Universidad Marista de Querétaro on August 3, where they learned more about the university's approach to Marist education and its commitment to service, solidarity, and care for our common home. The following day, they visited Universidad Marista in Mexico City, which serves high school, undergraduate, and graduate students through an educational mission centered on service and social transformation.

Both institutions are part of the Marist International Network of Institutions of Higher Education, connecting Marist universities through opportunities for collaboration and exchange.

MORE NEWS:

- Next weekend, alumni of the former St. Joseph Academy in Laredo, Texas, will gather to honor Br. Phil Degagne with a special event and Mass celebrating his years of service and his lasting connection to the school community.

- Bros. Dan O'Riordan, Brian Poulin, and Rick Carey were in Canada this week for meetings and time with the Brothers. While visiting the Brothers in Québec City, Br. Brian also had the opportunity to spend time with Frère Armand Morin, the oldest Marist Brother in Canada at 100 years young!



- MYPs are invited to join a fall mission trip to Jackson, Kentucky, September 3-7. The experience will include service projects, prayer, shared life, and opportunities to explore the natural beauty of Eastern Kentucky. The cost is $300 and includes transportation, lodging, meals, programming, and service project expenses. Space is limited, and interested participants are encouraged to reserve their spot early.



AUGUST Birthdays

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1
BR. FELIX ANTHONY ELARDO

MONDAY, AUGUST 3
BR. PATRICK HOGAN
BR. FRED SAMBOR

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5
BR. RYAN RICHTER

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7
BR. RENE ROY (RIP)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9
BR. BILL MASKE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11
BR. DONALD RICHARD

MONDAY, AUGUST 17
BR. RICHARD VAN HOUTEN

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19
BR. CHRISTOPHER SHANNON

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23
BR. JOHN KLEIN

MONDAY, AUGUST 24
BR. STEVE SYNAN

READING THIS WEEK

MARIST NEWS

MATTHEW 24:15-29

CANADA NEWS

CHAMPAGNAT GLOBAL

This week, please remember in your prayers...

- All Marists and their communities affected by the earthquake in Colombia this week.
- Brian O'Riordan, longtime volunteer at the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus, who moved to a nursing facility this past week.
- The repose of the soul of Br. Rene Roy, FMS, whose funeral was last Friday.

  MEMORIAL BOOKLET ⇒
- The repose of the soul of Marist Father Ron DesRosiers, SM, who died this past week. He worked for a period of time at Marist high school in Chicago and lived with our Brothers.

  READ HIS OBITUARY ⇒



- Pope Leo XIV, as we ask God's blessings throughout his journey leading our Church.
- Our Blue Marists in Syria and members of the Fratelli Project in Lebanon.
- All victims of the ongoing wars in the Middle East and Ukraine.
- All victims of gun violence in the USA and around the world.
- Br. Owen Ormsby, who is recovering from recent heart surgery.
- All of our Brothers in residence or rehabbing at Champagnat Hall, particularly Bros. John Herrmann and Pat Hogan, along with all those dealing with significant health concerns.
- Bros. Jim Adams, Charlie Filiatrault, Jim Halliday, and Larry Lavallee, who are all receiving care outside of Marist community.
- Terry Paul, Province Affiliate, who is suffering from Stage 4 Kidney Disease.
- Bill Cornforth, former Marist Brother ('69), who is experiencing serious medical concerns.
- David Irwin, who continues to need treatment for a brain tumor.
- Gail Cassidy and Rita Greco, retired teachers from Roselle Catholic High School, both of whom are battling cancer.
- Jason Wolf, a cousin of John Venturella, who is receiving experimental treatment for a brain tumor.
- Laura Blando, sister of Br. James Norton, as she continues a new round of chemotherapy.
- Mrs. MaryAnn Safrey, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- Mrs. Olga Dunning, sister-in-law of Br. John Dunning, who has been diagnosed with cancer.
- Saoirse McGarry, who has been diagnosed with Stage 4 lymphoma.
- The young son of Br. Jim McKnight's niece, Jacqueline, who is being treated for leukemia.
- Angel Herrera, a junior at Mount Saint Michael Academy.
- Cathy Puszcz, a teacher who spent her entire career at Marist in Bayonne, who is in critical care.
- Elaine Pelliciari, who is recovering from surgery and intense rehabilitation therapy.
- Laura Gural, as she regains the use of her left side while recovering from a stroke.
- Mike Encke, husband of Jean Dalton (niece of Br. Jim Devine), who has cancer.
- Patrick Hughes, nephew of Sean O'Leary (Mount St. Michael '90).
- Patricia Hayes Franzem, who is recovering from surgery.
- Steve Mason, brother-in-law of Rick Martin, who is recovering from surgery.
- Teresa Kelly, wife of Mike Kelly (Tyngsboro, 1965).
- The husband of Eyda Alegret in Miami, who is recovering after a stroke.
- Tom Rubbone, a longtime Camp Marist volunteer and benefactor.
- Vince Andiorio in Chicago.
- William Ling, father of Province archivist Michelle Ling.
- Bill Taylor, brother-in-law of Br. Ken Curtin, who is recovering after a heart attack.
- Frederick Marinelli, father of Michael Marinelli and husband of Carmen Marinelli in Miami.
- Rosemary Shields, cousin of Br. Michael Laratonda.

and let us remember... to pray for each other!