



Friday Notes

JANUARY 9, 2026

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We offer prayers of gratitude and farewell to Br. Yves Mbiatem, who departs New York tomorrow after completing two years in the USA Province and his graduate studies. Br. Yves will return to West Africa to serve at the new Marist school in Liberia—may God bless him in this next chapter of mission!

Br. Dan will be traveling to West Virginia this weekend to visit Br. John Byrd.

Next week, Ellen Salmi Van Cleef and Br. Dan will lead a Mission Trip to Jamaica with members of the USA Marist Young Professionals, fostering service, reflection, and Marist community. Participants will share daily prayer and reflection, engage in opportunities for service and shared life with fellow MYPs, and visit children with special needs and the elderly through ministries led by the Missionaries of Charity and the Missionaries of the Poor in Kingston, as well as visit the Don Bosco Vocational Training Center.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- MYP Mission Trip**
Jamaica
January 16 -
January 21, 2026
- Green Team Meeting**
via Zoom
January 15th
4pm EST [JOIN](#)
- Provincial Council Meeting**
Miami
January 21 -
January 23, 2026
- Marist Youth Leadership Conference**
West Palm Beach, FL
January 30 -
February 1, 2026
- Sharing Our Call 2**
MBCE
February 22 -
February 24, 2026
- Marist Youth Encounter**
MBCE
February 26 -
March 1, 2026



National Championship Semifinal

Best wishes to Fernando Mendoza (Christopher Columbus '22) and Pat Coogan (Marist Chicago '21) as they lead the Indiana Hoosiers into tonight's National Championship Semifinal. We wish them every success on and off the field!



School Board Meetings

The School Board of Mount St. Michael Academy will meet next Tuesday. We are grateful for the generous men and women whose leadership and service continue to foster the Marist mission across our USA ministries.



2026 Pilgrimage to L'Hermitage

We're delighted to announce that our USA Province Pilgrimage to l'Hermitage in France will return next summer!

- Arrival in Lyon: July 1, 2026
- Departure: July 6, 2026

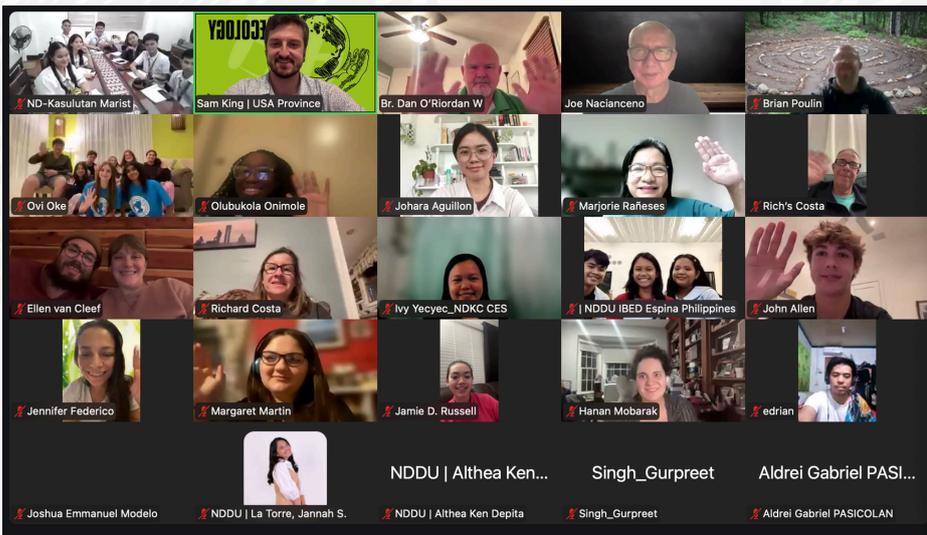
[Learn More Here!](#)



THANK YOU to all who participated in Marist Eco-Advent this holiday season!



Special thanks to all who joined us last month for **Sowing Seeds of Hope: An International Youth Gathering on Ecology**. It was amazing to have more than 70 people gathered from across the Marist world to share youth-led projects living out the ethics of integral ecology. Thanks again to Andres Vidal from Columbus for sharing his inspiring story of recycling electronic waste--and to Ovi Oke, Lucas Liu, Lily Kacziba, Vanessa Guilfoyle, Emily Mussalli, Alex Gonzalez, Hannah Abenante, and Oona Woods from Molloy for their insightful reflections on agroforestry, climate change, and biodiversity in Belize. You can watch the recording [here!](#)



- Check out **this recent video** featuring Marist Chicago's new rooftop solar project harnessing the renewable energy of the sun!

- Follow us on Instagram!

@MaristGreenTeam

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

2026 Green Team Meetings!

Please note - our first meeting of the year will be held **next Thursday, 1/15**, at 4pm EST. 

- Thursday, **January 15th** at 4pm EST / 3pm CST / 1pm PST
- Thursday, **February 12th** at 4pm EST / 3pm CST / 1pm PST
- Thursday, **March 12th** at 4pm EST / 3pm CST / 1pm PST
- Tuesday, **April 14th** at 4pm EST / 3pm CST / 1pm PST
- Thursday, **May 14th** at 4pm EST / 3pm CST / 1pm PST

- Do you have friends or colleagues who are interested in environmental work? Feel free to share their emails with Sam King or encourage them to **sign up here.**

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

Marist Brothers Center in Esopus

ESOPUS, NEW YORK

CAMP COUNSELOR RETREAT

Last weekend, volunteer counselors from the Mid-Hudson Valley Camps gathered at the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus for their annual Counselors Retreat.



DISCERNMENT RETREAT

Our postulants gathered at the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus this week for a discernment retreat as they prepare to apply for novitiate, spending time in prayer, reflection, and shared community. (pictured left)

MARIST YOUNG ADULT SUMMIT

Last weekend Marist Young Adults from Canada and the USA gathered in Esopus for the annual Petit Summit. They ascended the metaphorical mountain and took time for reflection as the new year began. They tossed some axes, made some s'mores, and built bridges across borders! (pictured below)

NEW MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Mackenzie Cutruzzula

Mackenzie is excited to begin working with the team at the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus and is grateful for the opportunity to create content that uplifts the Marist Brothers' message of service, faith, and community. She currently serves as the Social Media and Content Marketing Manager at NYU School of Professional Studies and is also an Adjunct Professor at The College of New Jersey, where she teaches Social Media Strategies.





BUILDERS OF A NEW HERMITAGE

The Message of the 23rd General Chapter, ***Builders of a New Hermitage***, was published on December 8. The next several editions of Friday Notes will include the presentation of each of the 5 Calls as they appear in the text which you can access [here](#).



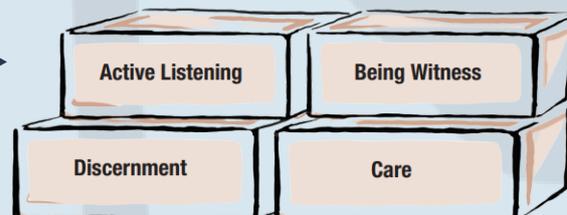
FIRST CALL: To Be Builders of a Culture of Vocations



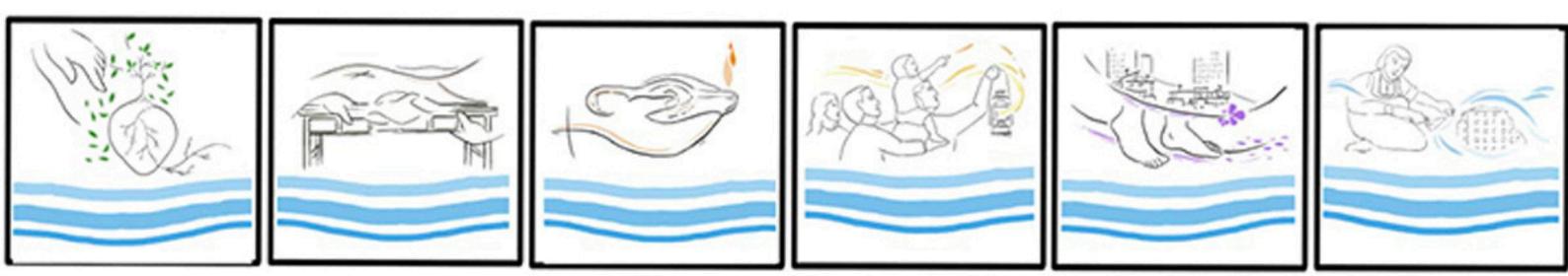
God calls us today to the Marist VOCATION and invites us to live it with passion, as true lovers of life and mission. By giving ourselves wholeheartedly, we become living witnesses of the Gospel, inspiring and accompanying others to discover and embrace their own Marist vocation. In this way, we generate, nurture and sustain the richness of all Marist vocations.

BRICKS / FOUNDATIONAL VALUES →

This call invites us to a conversion of heart and mind where we:



- Promote a holistic and vibrant culture of vocations.
- Focus on processes of authentic discernment, not mere numbers.
- Commit to vocational care, personally and communally.
- Foster creative audacity within the Institute that prioritizes vocational promotion.
- Awaken the commitment and enthusiasm of our communities for all projects related to a culture of vocations.



STRATEGIES:

As Marists of Champagnat, Brothers, and lay women and men together we stand as builders of a New Hermitage, called to raise walls of hope, open doors of welcome, and lay foundations of faith for the generations to come. Each call of this Chapter offers us a set of tools - carefully crafted and entrusted to us- not for ourselves alone, but for the flourishing of the global Marist family.

The strategies that follow are not simply plans or tasks; they are instruments for shaping a common dwelling where the Spirit breathes life.

As artisans of this shared dream, we are invited to take up these strategies with courage and creativity. May they be for us not only blueprints but also signs of communion, so that together we may build a hermitage where all feel at home, and where Christ is joyfully at the center.

1. Explore and reimagine key issues such as the identity of the brother, models of being a brother, the relationship between brothers and lay people and initial and ongoing formation.
2. Strengthen the culture of vocational care through personal and community discernment, ongoing formation, personal planning and accompaniment.
3. Develop a vocational culture across the Institute through integrated plans that use technology, social networks and best practices shared between provinces. This will promote support and meaningful engagement with young people.
4. Develop an integrated vocational culture across the Institute so that there are welcoming spaces capable of connecting with, caring for and inviting youth to follow Jesus as Marist Brothers. In collaboration with Formators and Formandeas, ensure our Formation houses are contemporary, open, and flexible.
5. Expand vocational ministry through exploring new spaces, developing networks of animators and collaborating with other Church groups.

Through Vocation, we sharpen the tools of listening and accompaniment, helping new generations discover the beauty of God's call.

More Marist News...

Episode 4 of the 'My Marist Life' podcast has been released!

In this episode of My Marist Life, Madeline Picou and Br. Dominick Pujia reflect on how their relationship has grown through shared work and mission. Rooted in kindness, openness, and mutual trust, their journey together reveals how relationships can build genuine community, uncover shared gifts, and lead to a deeper understanding of Marcellin Champagnat and his living mission.

Listen now on Spotify. New episodes will drop the first of every month.



Marists of Champagnat: Formation Year 6!

A beautiful opening prayer marked the beginning of Cohort 6 and the second year of Pathway 1 on January 2, the Feast of the Foundation of the Marist Institute. More than 100 participants gathered on Zoom, including Brothers, previous cohort members, mentors, and companions, as the prayer—offered in English, Spanish, and French—joyfully welcomed more than 30 participants from Canada. Special thanks to Ellen Van Cleef and the Formation Committee, Neila Pereira and Jonathan Druin for their translation support, and Lindsay Irwin and the Membership Committee for their dedicated work with registration and companion pairings. These are exciting times for our Province as the Spirit continues to grow the movement of making Jesus known and loved in the USA Province.

National Assembly 2026: Beacons of Joy

SAVE THE DATE for the National Assembly, July 14-17, at San Alfonso Retreat Center in Long Branch, NJ.

We are honored to welcome Sister Bernadette Mota, FMA as our keynote speaker, who will help guide and inspire our reflection as we gather as *beacons of joy*.

Cost is \$400/ person plus travel. Many options for financial assistance will be available. Stay tuned for more details.

LOOKING AHEAD:

May 1-3: Deepening Our Call, an in person retreat held at the Marist Brothers Center at Esopus.

Dates TBA: Local group spring retreat. Held in each local area and on Zoom for those not near the school hubs. Join in to explore the calls of the General Chapter.

Lent, 2026 - Our annual Hearts in Action province-wide service initiative. Watch for more details.

July 1-5: USA Province Pilgrimage to L'Hermitage in France. Join other Marists to walk in the footsteps of Champagnat. More details here.

STAY CONNECTED:

New England: [Chris Sullivan](#)

NY/NJ: [Alice Miesnik](#)
[Maureen Hagan](#)

Miami Area: [Daniella Rodriguez](#)

Brownsville: [Mary Beth Martin](#)

Eugene: [Alice Meyer](#)

Chicago: [Erin Kelly](#)

Virtual: [Madeline Picou](#)

JANUARY Birthdays

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2
Br. James McKnight

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4
Br. Philip Degagne

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7
Br. Luis Ramos

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13
Br. Armand Lamagna

NEW READING THIS WEEK



[EAST ASIA NEWS](#)



[SHARING THE LAY MARIST VOCATION](#)



[MATTHEW 15:21-28](#)



[CHAMPAGNAT GLOBAL](#)



[MARIST NEWS](#)



[CANADA NEWS](#)

This week, please remember in your prayers...



- **Br. Rick Shea and Br. Jim Adams, who both are rehabbing at De LaSalle Hall in Lincroft, NJ.**
- **Steve Mason, brother-in-law of Rick Martin, who is have surgery today for lung cancer.**
- **Mrs. Terry Paul, who is in the hospital.**
- **Mary Jensen, who died recently. Mary was the sister-in-law of Brigid Wolff, a teacher and MOC from Chicago.**
- **Patrick McMorrow, a former Marist Brother ('66), who died recently. As a Brother, he served at Christopher Columbus High School in Miami, FL.**
- **Br. Stephen Olert, FSC who died recently. He served for several years on our Province's Senior Brothers Committee.**
- **Kenneth G. Gamble, a Mount St. Michael Academy Alum and Long time benefactor, who died earlier this week.**
- **Catherine Coleman, mother of Mr. Jim Coleman, who died earlier this week.**
- **John Clark, brother of Brian Clark, who died earlier this week.**
- **John Wilcox, a former Marist Brother ('57), who died recently. He remained a close friend of several brothers over the years.**
- **Albert Karsten, who died recently. Albert was the father of Richard Karsten, President of Molloy and member of our Lay Council.**

- David Irwin, who continues to need treatment for a brain tumor.
- Ronald Kappes, brother of Br. Steve Kappes, who is experiencing the beginning of Alzheimer's disease.
- Pope Leo XIV: We ask God's blessings on his journey ahead in 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 in the Ukraine.
- All victims of gun violence in the USA and around the world.
- All of our Brothers in residence or rehabbing at Champagnat Hall, particularly those dealing with significant health concerns: John Herrmann, and Pat Hogan.
- Bros. Charlie Filiatrault, Jim Halliday, Bernie Nolan, and Rene Roy who are all receiving care outside of Marist community.
- Br. Frank Garza as he continues to recover from a fall-related injury.
- Bros. Phil Degagne and James Maher, who are recovering after recent hospital stays.
- Bill Taylor, brother-in-law of Br. Ken Curtin, who is recovering after a heart attack.
- Dan Waters (former Marist Brother) who is recovering from a stroke.
- Mrs. Paulette Karas, Province Director of Development, who is undergoing cancer treatments.
- Tom Rubbone, a long-time Camp Marist volunteer and benefactor.
- Mrs. MaryAnn Safrey, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- Elaine Pelliciar, who is recovering from surgery and intense rehabilitation therapy.
- Mrs. Sue O'Keeffe, as she struggles with pancreatic cancer.
- Jason Wolf, a 22-year old cousin of John Venturella, who was recently diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor.
- Laura Gural as she regains the use of her left side while recovering from a stroke.
- The husband of Eyda Alegret in Miami, who is recovering after a stroke.
- Patrick Hughes, nephew of Sean O'Leary (Mount St. Michael '90).
- Vince Andiorio in Chicago.
- The young son of Br. Jim McKnight's niece, Jacqueline, who is being treated for leukemia.
- Rosemary Shields and Margo Andrew, cousins of Br. Michael Laratonda.
- Mike Encke, husband of Jean Dalton (niece of Br. Jim Devine) who has cancer.
- Angel Herrera, a sophomore at Mount Saint Michael Academy.
- Bishop Timothy McDonnell as he battles stage 4 cancer.
- Frederick Marinelli, father of Michael Marinelli and husband of Carmen Marinelli in Miami.
- Patricia Hayes Franzem, who is recovering from surgery.
- Luis and Irma Segura, as Luis continues to deal with a serious illness.
- Mrs. Olga Dunning, sister-in-law of Br. John Dunning, who has been diagnosed with cancer.
- Lourdes Melendez, godmother of Br. Al Rivera, who is undergoing chemo treatments for ovarian cancer.
- Laura Blando, sister of Br. James Norton, as she is beginning a new round of chemotherapy.
- Fr. Kevin Duggan, SM who has had a recurrence of cancer.
- Mrs. Peg Kelly, mother of Br. Frank Kelly, who is recovering from a broken hip.
- Teresa Kelly, wife of Mike Kelly (Tyngsboro, 1965).
- Saoirse McGarry, 23 years old, who was recently diagnosed with stage 4 lymphoma.

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