

Rome, 17 Feb 2020



A big Hi to all Lavalla200>, MDA and Fratelli 'graduates'.

It has been a while since we sent out a newsletter to you all and much has been happening within our special family.

Mt Druitt: **Fabricio Basso** arrived in Sydney early in January to settle into the community before the school year which started at the end of January. He flew into a country on fire, with lots of smoke choking the atmosphere. Now they have local floods! His English is fine and he is getting the others to help him at home rather than attend a language centre. So now their community is even more international. **Argie** had to make a quick trip home to fix up some personal papers and is now back. She and **Rodrigo** are planning to return to Mexico in August. Did you read Argie's article on their presence among the aboriginal people in Marist News recently? **Noynoy** is now a registered teacher in Australia. Congratulations. He is investigating studies in counselling in Australia for 2021. **Lawrie** just revels in the intercultural experience and the new life and mission it offers to a 70 year-old.



Moinesti: a very mild winter this year, not the -17° I experienced with them at the end of 2018. Their daycare centre is operating ... at last. Our congratulations to **Mario Meuti** especially for getting through the bureaucratic trials and to them all for imagining and creating a warm, welcoming centre. At the moment there are 11 children who come on weekday afternoons after school (in the morning). They may be few in number but they are a handful, each one with his or her unique set of circumstances and learning deficits. They are 'sent' by the local Council authorities because of particular family difficulties. **Barsen** excels at arts and crafts. The picture below shows the community with their new colleagues at the daycare centre. Right now, **Nanci and Francesco** are in Brazil on holidays. They have been granted an extension by their home Province to remain at Moinesti until July. **Qalista Dhony** will join the community in early April – provided her visa comes through. Qalista, by the way, is on the Marist International Child Protection Group, building on her experience in Geneva and East Malaysia.



Syracusa: Have you seen the latest video about Syracuse that **Rosa** prepared to promote Lavalla200> communities? The link is on champagnat.org. Since mid-December when **Gabriel** headed home to Brazil, they have been adjusting to life as a four-some (**Giorgio, Rosa, Nina and Ricky**, plus two immigrants staying with them). Recently the CIAO centre has its first birthday and there were many reasons to celebrate. It now houses regular Italian classes with government-paid teachers besides their suite of activities and classes for immigrants of all ages. Congratulations to the present community and to **Ono, Gabriel and Mario**, who brought the CIAO to birth. Ricky has taken over from Mario in connection with the two apartments their



Foundation has leased, each with four immigrants; a third is intended but is proving more difficult to arrange. Nina is enjoying the sunshine of Brazil at the moment. The diocese has made available to the Marist community a separate two-storied residence on the same property as the Caritas building where they are currently housed. It needs some repair but they are hoping to move in together by the middle of the year.

Holguín: All four members of the community took a break in January and have now returned. We can imagine the noise in the Miño household when **Ricardo and Sylvia** arrived, welcomed also by our Laura. Last year the community described something of the social situation they are living in: the welcome of the people and the challenges they face. After much consultation, they decided to focus their energies and service around four focal areas: church support (multi-dimensional presence on weekends at a parish on the outskirts of Holguín; diocesan commissions / activities; ...); education, social and cultural activities (revision and tutoring; sports; faith and justice formation of university students...); promoting the Marist charism; ongoing discernment. Their witness as an international, mixed, non-clerical Christian community provokes comment. **Jong and Jorge** are entries in the local beard competition.





Tabatinga: the new community is yet to gather. **Martha Martinez** and **Mario Araya** joined **Paul Bhatti** for two months at the end of last year and then they all went away over Christmas. The Spirit was with them as they communicated in multiple languages! **Luke Fong** from Fiji joined Paul in the middle of January, Mario returned from home in the first week of February, but Martha is still waiting for her missionary visa. Fachi and Jeff are working

closely with them in their community-building and ministry discernment.

Paul will return to Pakistan at the end of March at the request of his Provincial. Thank you Paul for your Marist presence these past two years. **Veronica** has chosen to remain in Tabatinga as a diocesan missionary supported by her home Province.

Atlantis: Lots of comings and goings here as well. At present, **Diogo** and **Juliana** are on home leave in Brazil as is **Tony Clark** in Australia. The community continues to commute on weekdays from their house in Darling to Atlantis. There they offer much appreciate tutoring support in both primary and secondary classes (**Nnodu** and **Diogo**) and after-school activities. As a community they support various youth groups and were a significant presence in the Taizé event in Capetown late last year. They have discerned that their specific Marist focus for this year will be a leadership program for older adolescents. We wish them all the best with this. You may have seen the article in Marist News last November about the weekly visits of **Maria Bobillo** and **Juliana** to the women's refuge in Atlantis. Maria, by the way, is on the International Mission Commission (wow, our representation goes so high!). She and **Br Pietro Bettin** complete their three years this year and will return to Europe in July.



And what about our MDA friends?

Ricardo Piña and **Larry Lavallee** are sweating it out at the MAPAC centre in Manila, Philippines where there has been an East Timorese invasion (of postulants) to add to the Asia/Pacific group of scholastics. **John Nyuyidine** has returned to Cambodia from a break after three years at home in Cameroon where he finally was able to meet his family (the civil disturbances make all movement in the English-speaking part of the country dangerous). John and Bernard Tremmel are the odd couple in a small hamlet, a six hour journey from the capital and near the border with Vietnam, helping with English language classes.



Anselmo Kim has moved to Quoc Oai, near Hanoi, with two Vietnamese Brothers, Thuc and Hung. If everything goes well, they will to the northern countryside in the months to come (Kim asks for our prayers as they have been waiting for more than a year already).

Jiji is enjoying life in the hostel at Talit in North India, especially the outings! **Francis Attah** is now on the District Council. He promises fresh cake to all visitors to Pailin. He and **Pierre Joseph** can speak any of four languages to one another: English, French, Khmer or Malgache.

Réal Sauvageau (Golden Jubilee last year) is doing great work with the Novices from across Asia in Tudella, Sri Lanka. He is also trying to finish his doctorate this year, a big challenge to find the time and focus.



Cesar Barba is in the school community at Giasnogos, Bangladesh: the Marists are four Brothers, two Marist Missionary Sisters and two laypeople.

And others in the family?



Beth Code is loving life in Johannesburg, South Africa. Did you see the article in Marist News at the end of January? She is the volunteer support person for the Three2Six program and assists in Marist youth ministry in South Africa. **Esteban Ortega** finally arrived in the Fratelli community in Lebanon recently. He had been delayed first of all for health reasons and then waiting for a visa. He has launched himself enthusiastically into all the activities, but we do not know if he is wearing his Arab outfit.

Bruno Socher is now the Volunteers Co-ordinator in his Province of Brazil Centro-Sul. **Gabriel de Silva** obtained his Italian citizenship before leaving the country. He also received news that he has won a Rotary scholarship for a Masters program at Duke University in North Carolina, USA. We wish him well.

Ono is settling into his new post as community leader at Guiliano, near Naples. It is a mixed community of three Brothers and a married couple who live nearby. **Jim McKnight** misses the vitality of East Harlem and tries to keep in touch with some of the families. He considers himself an ongoing member of the Lavalla200> family and follows our news avidly. **Isidoro García** is in Mataró, Catalunya, a community of Senior Brothers.

Juliana Kittel managed to find some work as a support person for international students at Adelaide University. She is thoroughly enjoying being with friends and family again and preparing to have Rodrigo from Sao Paulo with her later this year if possible. **Almera Ibañez** is home with her family, enjoying her grandchildren. She will join the community at the Marist Asia, Spirituality and Mission Centre in Lake Sebu, In Mindanao Philippines in May as a volunteer for some time.



We are always being asked about candidates for this year 2020. We would love to be able to give a definite answer but we are still waiting on confirmation from the candidates and their respective home Provincials. We have booked San Martino and the program will run from April 19 to June 25 with our customary presenters. It will be good to go "home". Thanks to those of you who have encouraged others to think of joining.

Rosa Schiaffino has done some outstanding work for us in recent months: the promotional video at the end of November and the recent clip from Syracuse. Our hope is that there will be such a clip for each of the communities in the months ahead. Rosa has married her technical expertise with her Marist insight and humour to create a product aimed particularly at committed laypeople. Grazie mille, Rosa.

The General Administration has a project of “encouraging, accompanying and evaluation mixed communities” of Brothers and laypeople around the Marist world. We thought you may be interested in the results of the first phase of this survey. According to replies sent in, **there are currently at least 37 mixed communities in the Marist world in 12 administrative units or 21 countries**. This figure includes our six Lavalla200> communities. Maybe you were asked to complete an Appreciative Inquiry in Phase 2.

A recommended article for you: “Intercultural Life as a Sign of Prophetic Hope” by Sr Adriana Milmanda SSpS: https://www.mercyworld.org/f/45074/x/66aee6a159/pl-2019_-adriana-milmanda_eng.pdf

Our continued thanks, encouragement and affection for each of you personally. We hope that you recognise the witness and significance of your option to be in a “community for a new beginning” and that you value this in one another, each led by the Spirit. You are living what others are saying when they speak of “beacons of hope, bridge-builders, homes of light, the face and hands of God’s tender mercy, living on the margins, responding boldly to emerging needs”. You may not feel this way every day! But take a step back, and in the quiet of your heart, praise God for the action of God’s Spirit in your life and that of your community.

Jeff, Angel and Fachi

Mixed Marist communities (Brothers and Lay)

Prompted by the **2017 General Chapter suggestion** that “Each AU discerns, proposes and accompanies concrete ways of building up communion as Marists,” the Strategic Plan of the General Administration included as a **project**, “To promote simple and open communities, “homes of light,” beacons of hope, bridges of humanity” (2.2). One of the **Initiatives** identified to advance this project is called “Mixed communities” (2.2.3): *Encourage, accompany and evaluate experiences of communities composed of Brothers and Lay Marists (e.g.: Lavalla200 Communities, and others ...)*. We want to learn from our own experience as an Institute across our different contexts.

The initial survey carried out this year revealed that current mixed communities can be found in:

America Central	4
Australia	1
Canada	4
Compostela	1
East Asia	3
Hermitage	3
Mediterranea	2
Santa Maria de los Andes	9
Marist District of Asia	1



Alto Hospicio, Chile

This is in addition to the ‘special’ international communities at Hermitage (France), Fratelli Project (Lebanon), South Sudan Solidarity Project (South Sudan), and six Lavalla200> communities (Australia, Brazil, Cuba, Italy, Romania, South Africa).

That is, *according to the replies sent in*, **there are currently at least 37 mixed communities in the Marist world in 12 administrative units or 21 countries.**

Types of mixed communities mentioned:

1. Brothers and Lay people living under the same roof as equals, with a common budget and shared leadership, sharing life and mission: Lavalla200> communities in Moinesti (**Romania**), Syracuse (**Italy**); Mt Druitt (**Australia**); Atlantis (**South Africa**); Holguin (**Cuba**); Tabatinga (**Brazil**); Mulhouse (**France**) 7
2. Brothers and Lay people living under the same roof as equals, having a community life plan, sharing life and sometimes mission: Hermitage (**France**); CUM university centre, Salamanca (**Spain**); MDA (**China**); Puerto Maldonado (**Peru**); Guiliano (**Italy**), Llinars del Vallès (**Catalogne, Spain**) 6
3. Brothers and lay people forming an intentional faith community, not living under the same roof but sharing life and having a community life plan: Lagny (**France**); Alto Hospicio (**Chile**); Curicó (**Chile**); La Compañía Alta (La Serena, **Chile**); La Pintana (**Chile**); Los Andes (**Chile**); Sullana (**Peru**); Barriolindo (Santa Cruz, **Bolivia**); Comarapa (**Bolivia**).; Champville (**Lebanon**) 10
4. Lay people (volunteers – local or international) living within a Brothers’ community and working alongside them: Chichicastenango, Iteck (**Guatemala**); Condega (**Nicaragua**); Marcellin Home,

GenSan (**Philippines**); Malutok, Palawan (**Philippines**); Cotabato, (**Philippines**); sponsored communities (**USA**) 5

5. University students / young workers (male and female) living in community with Brothers, independent finances: Fitzroy (**Australia**); Willowdale, Montreal (**Canada**); Drummondville (**Canada**); Paradis – Quebec (**Canada**); Bellevue de Sherbrooke (**Canada**); 5
6. Brothers and Lay people (single and married couples), not living together, but forming an intentional faith community and sharing life together for a period of time: Esopus, (**USA**) – summer camps ;
7. A candidate living in a Brothers' community: Santa Ana (**El Salvador**) 1
8. A priest living in a Brothers' community and working alongside them (not just as Chaplain): Marist School (**Guatemala**) 1
9. Mixed congregations, sometimes laypeople as well: SSS, Riimenze (**South Sudan**); Fratelli, Rmeileh (**Lebanon**) 2

The AUs listed above, in general, as well as the General Administration in both Geneva and Rome, have also had other experiences of mixed communities in the past. In the replies, mention was also made of mixed communities that existed previously in the three Provinces of Brazil, the Provinces of Iberica, PACE, Southern Africa, South Asia and the Districts of the Pacific and West Africa.

Not included in this list are communities who are hosting migrants, chaplains or others in need.

Learnings and Appreciation

In the replies received, there are already some 'evaluations' mentioned: e.g.

"We believe that it is the Spirit who is inviting us to multiply ways of living communion and mutual enrichment between religious and laity in the Church. In short, these communities reveal a new way of living as Church... For many brothers and laypeople living in a mixed community has been a very important life experience, becoming indispensable in living as Christians and as followers of Champagnat's charism." (Br Saturnino, Santa Maria de los Andes)

"Our three experiences were positive, but all three cases had to end early, due mainly to the presence of small children who demanded care that parents had difficulty providing in a community context... We have tried to encourage laypeople to start new initiatives. There are willing brothers, but we have not yet found the right key to give continuity to these experiences." (Br Moses, Iberica)

Next step

The combined secretariats of Brothers Today and Marist Laity have prepared instruments of Appreciative Inquiry for all AUs (1) and the current mixed communities (2). The survey forms are attached. **Please send the relevant survey form to each mixed community.** Our hope is to encourage these communities and to provide an international forum for their learnings. A complete report will be prepared for the Institute.

The Marist Life Area of the General Administration