

Being Marist

WEST CENTRAL EUROPE



Staying present
with each other

What a privilege to be asked to welcome you to this October 2020 edition of Being Marist.

A few minutes of true presence with each other, while we read about so many positive events happening in our province. One of those being, the news that Br PJ is home and thankfully recovering well after a few very difficult months health-wise. We wish him only the best in his continued recovery.

What a crazy few months it's been across all our worlds in other ways. Today the norm for us all, has become about intentionally placing, distance, screens, and masks between each other for safety. It's logical to doubt how 'present' we can really be together amongst this. Amazingly though, many of our realities are showing that our Marist values have come

alive, even more because of these circumstances.

Across the province, people are going above and beyond to provide services to young people; are going the extra mile, to ensure the environment is comfortable for those who need it;

and are making so many unspoken personal sacrifices while doing it. All of this with an amazing sense of Marist Solidarity for each and every person around. It is so inspiring to see this love and dedication for Marist mission.

As we travel together as a Marist family in the coming months, I urge you to reach out to each other, to stay

Marcellin: Suffering tempered him, setbacks strengthened him, determination drove him, and grace helped him move beyond his circumstances.



A Heart That Knows
no Bounds
– Sean Sammon –

connected, and to continue to prioritise your personal wellbeing and that of those around you. Regardless of the restricting physical safety barriers, it is clear there is a strength and depth to the Marist bond in our province that we can be very proud of.

So, sit back and enjoy reading about just some of those moments in our beautiful province of West Central Europe.

**Aisling Demaison -
Secretary
of the Mission
Council**



Leerhuis Westerhelling

September 2020



After we were unable to receive groups at Leerhuis Westerhelling in Nijmegen for months because of the measures taken by the Corona virus, we are going to start up again! It is very nice to have some exercise and life in the house and on the grounds again.

In August we tried with two groups to see if we could receive people with 1.5 metres and the hygiene measures

that everyone knows in the meantime. The experience was that it is possible, albeit more intensive, to accompany a group, and it is more difficult to make real closeness and homeliness possible. Because we are now using the House of the Brothers and the House of Silence at the same time to welcome a group, it is possible to start up activities again.

It remains important to us that the experience of silence can be gained

and that Attentive Living comes into its own.

Not all projects can go ahead, but it is very nice that we will be planning a number of groups again until next September.

Particularly at this time, there is a clear need among young people for space to search for meaning in life, the space to find life questions and to connect with each other.

Conny Stuart





Anti-Racism Week Mindelheim

On 25 May George Floyd died after being arrested by police outside a shop in Minneapolis after a white police officer, Derek Chauvin, was kneeling on George Floyd's neck while he was pinned to the floor.

Chauvin stayed in this position for eight minutes and 46 seconds. During this period Floyd said more than 20 times the following sentence: "I can't breathe". Many people were sad and angry about his death, which led to many protests demanding the end of violence and racism against Black people.

We, a group of current and former students at Marist schools, CMI volunteers and a Marist brother, were deeply shocked by the happenings in America as well as by the racist murder that took place in Hanau in February. Furthermore, we knew that confrontations with racist statements are even in 2020 often still part of the everyday life of People of Colour.

Regarding all these terrible happenings coming together, we realized that it was time to act, that not being racist is not enough and that acting in an anti-racist manner is the path we want to choose moving forward. Therefore, we decided to organize an anti-racism-action week that included both, virtual and in-person events, e.g. a youth service, supported by members of "La Canne Careaux" that provided the musical framework, informative posts on Instagram and the CMI page, explaining terms used in the context of racism, providing literature and movies one can pick up in order to learn more about the issue, educating talks by Helene Batemona-Abekin and Serdar Akin and cinema showings. In addition, a part of our group currently working in the media sector produced several short videos featuring People of Colour talking about their experiences with racism that were published on the Instagram account of the



Marist Youth Mindelheim and the page of the Augsburg based Media collective About. Furthermore, we established a challenge to raise awareness for the topic: the #runagainstracism-challenge, many local associations took part in. Although some did not decide to run but to sing or dance against racism, it was an impactful opportunity to reach as many people as possible in our area. We also had the opportunity to discuss the issue with students in year 11 at Marist schools. In the entering area of the Marist school in Mindelheim, an artist even installed a piece dealing with an assumption that is often conveyed in kindergarten, namely that the word skin-coloured can only be used describing the skin of white people. With her installation she exposed this idea as a misconception and made visible that the term skin-coloured also includes people with black skin. I learned many more things during the



anti-racism week, e.g. about the importance of talking about our colonial history or about privilege, too many things to list them all. Before all, I realized one thing: that we have to continue learning, listening and doing anti-racism work, comprehending one obvious thing: that People of Colour and their stories are not only valuable and important when #BlackLiveMatter is trending but every single day.

Jasmin Nimar - cmi Germany

Report on our Anti-Racism Week Mindelheim

A CMI Alumni event

9 June 2020. 19.00. The second lecture within the framework of our theme week is scheduled. Serdar Akin, since 2020 for the Greens in the Augsburg city council, will talk about, among other things, "Racial Profiling", the NSU murders, the press coverage about them and the lack of representation of people with migration plus in political committees.

Serdar begins his lecture with more than depressing figures from the Amadeu-Antonio Foundation on the subject of right-wing extremism. According to the foundation, 208 people have died as a result of right-wing extremism in Germany since 1995. If a day of remembrance were established for each of these people, more than half of the year would be spent thinking about them. "Rostock, Solingen, Mölln, Hanau, Halle, the murders of the National Socialist underground - to pick out just a few events - all these events show that racism is not a purely American problem, it is also a German one," he says. But racist tendencies are not only visible among right-wing extremists, but also among the population or in press coverage.

For example, this is visible in the name that was given to the NSU murders: they were called "Dönermord" (kebab murders). "People are killed in their kiosk, but they are not mourned as human beings, instead



they are classified in their value like the food kebab, because the German connotation to Turks is döner. But these are not food products that have died, these are people. How do people feel when they see that they are being "mourned" in this way because of their origin, skin colour or religion? How do they feel?"

He asks us to remember that half of the NSU murders took place in Bavaria. "You can look at this kiosk in Munich where a person has died. It is located 100 metres from the police station. I say it again, these dangers are not far away."

Afterwards he criticised Minister of the Interior Seehofer, who rejected a study on "Racial Profiling" (i.e. the targeted control

of BIPOC, based on the assumption that they are rather criminal), saying that this could not take place within the police force, because it was forbidden. "According to this logic, he would also have to remove radar equipment because speeding is prohibited. He also refers to Seehofer's joy that on his 69th birthday 69 people were deported to Afghanistan, "still one of the most insecure countries on earth". "What does it matter to people when their Minister of the Interior considers their disappearance from this country a birthday present? Seehofer's statement "Migration is the mother of all problems", he counters with the statement "Migration is the mother of all opportunities".

Often, however, these opportunities are overlooked because people are so focused on the problems without realising, for example, that our current system in Germany would probably not work without migrants. His utopia for Germany is real unity of all, but in which the diversity of people exists and is valued - social



inclusion instead of integration. If a child came to school and could already speak English or French, this would be admired from all sides, while other languages were given deficient connotations, although they offered just as many opportunities.

At the end, Serdar puts forward ten theses.

1. «Racism is not a purely American problem.»

2. «Words become deeds.»

The AfD, for example, speaks very derogatively of people who visit shisha bars, claims that group rape, drug abuse or tax offences take place there on a permanent basis and paints a picture that simply does not correspond to the truth of the "lazy foreigner who sits and smokes in the shisha bar". These images are also reinforced in the social media, the AfD posts 100 to 150 articles on its Facebook page every week, which further reinforce the image of the "stealing, evil Muslim woman" and the "evil, idle politician". The following image could emerge in some people's minds, which could result in the death of people: "The people up there are doing nothing, and I, as a strapping patriot, am called upon to do something if the party of my heart does not get away with it."

3 «We need a broad social alliance.»

"Of course, experts who delve deeply into the subject matter are necessary. But equally, democratic parties and civil society are needed in the fight against right-wing extremism. Because only united we can fight it."

4 "The higher the social hierarchy, the less it reflects social reality."

At the top, the vast majority are male, heterosexual and over 40: "What about women, homosexuals, people of colour? Why are they so insufficiently represented? Can and should this not be changed?"

5 "We must delete the word race from the constitution."

Indeed, to use the word in this context suggests that there are different races of



people. All humans belong to the same species. "This insight is actually so banal... It is absurd to have to explain this again and again. We are all human beings."

6 "Victims of racism or discrimination can also be perpetrators."

People, even if they have experienced discrimination in one context, are themselves discriminating in other contexts and are part of the dominant society. Everyone must be aware of this. "I may experience racism, but I am not immune from being sexist." In the same way, women can be victims of sexism and at the same time reproduce racist patterns.

7 "People who experience racism have too few places to turn to."

Serdar calls for independent anti-racism commissioners in every municipality, following the example of Frankfurt.

8 "People affected by racism need places of refuge."

One often hears the statement "Migrants stay too much among themselves, they seal themselves off."

Instead, PoCs such as members of the LGBTQIA+ community or single parents simply need spaces where they can recharge their batteries and exchange ideas with people who have experienced similar things.

9 "Wherever there is dialogue, racism is refuted."

Even a city in East Germany, where 50% vote for AfD, would therefore not declare Serdar a no-go area in principle. Instead, he would talk to the people so that they realised "His name may sound different, but his ideas may be similar. He also likes to play football, my fear is unjustified."

10 "We have to come to terms with colonial history."

"History should not be smoothed over. We must present a differentiated picture. In doing so, we must not leave out our own shortcomings," says Akin. Even if you look at the Welser and Fugger trading families in Augsburg, you have to make sure not to look at them too one-dimensionally.

Simon Faerber – cmi Alumni

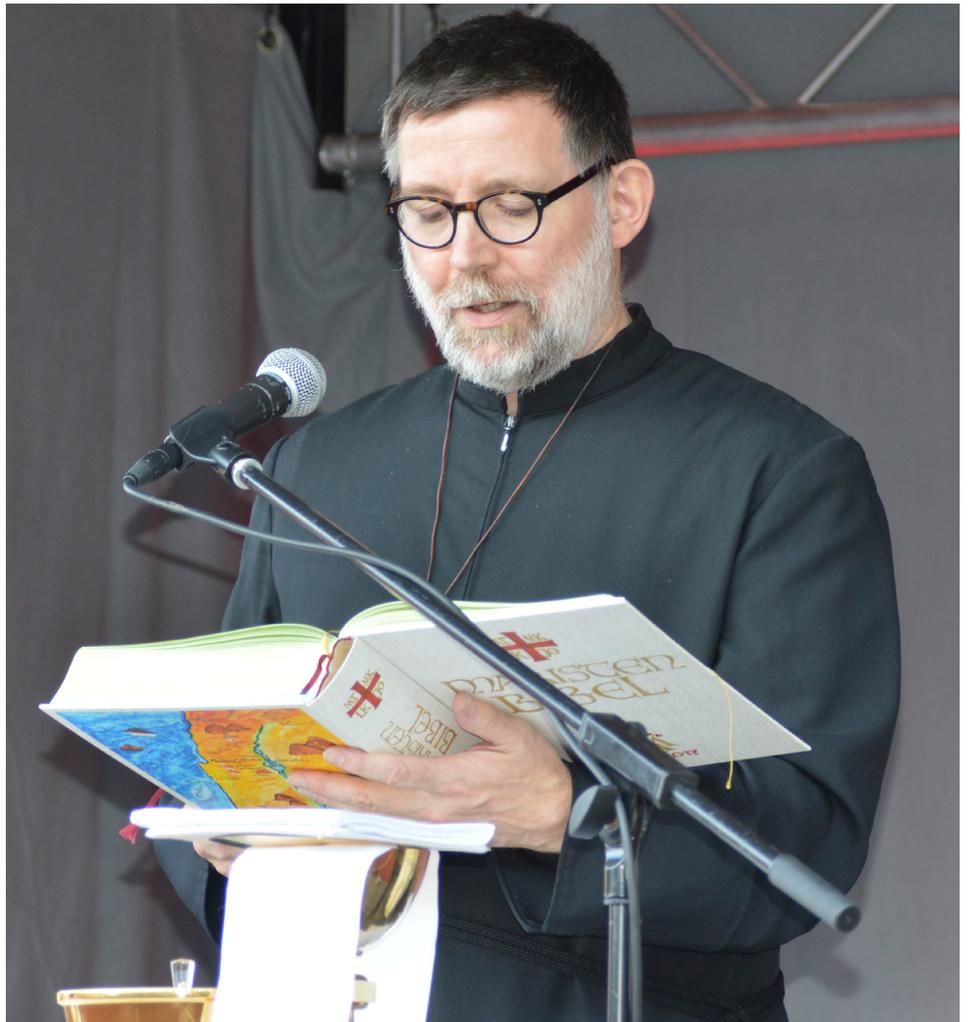
Blessing of the new Marist youth centre in Mindelheim

11.09.2020

"Good things take time" is the popular saying, but in the case of the reconstruction measures in Mindelheim this is more than true.

More than two years have passed since Mindelheim - guided by a vision and a dream - started to rebuild the house next to the CMI office. Under the watchful eyes of the building owner, Brother Michael Schmalzl, an extension on the ground floor was added to the building. A new floor below and photovoltaic systems on the roof above, hands were put to work everywhere.

But not only the house and its inventory were newly acquired. After a long search, the Marists were finally able to fill the position of director of the house with Mr. Holoubek Dominik. He is supported by Mrs. Julia Müller, who will work for the youth centre as well as for CMI. Unfortunately, the Corona Pandemic has somewhat dampened their plans and enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the youth centre was officially inaugurated on 11 September 2020. So here, too, the vernacular knows: "what lasts long will finally be good". The many hours of work invested by craftsmen, the Marists and volunteers culminated in a beautiful celebration with a solemn service in the open air. About 50 guests followed the invitation of the Marists. Among them were about 30 former CMI volunteers who had done their international youth volunteer service in one of the numerous Marist projects around the globe in the past years and who now belong to the group of "Young Marists". Also present were co-workers and friends of the Marists as well as the Marist Brothers and



Marist Laymen from Mindelheim. Brother Robert Thunus, the Provincial of the Marist Brothers of the Province of Europe-Central-West, which includes Belgium, Holland, Scotland and Ireland, as well as Germany, also came from Brussels especially for the inauguration ceremony. The outdoor Eucharist was celebrated by youth pastor Tobias Wolf. At the beginning F. Michael welcomed all guests and introduced the two new employees to the congregation. Finally - according to the good ecumenical tradition - pastor Erik Hermanns of the Protestant parish

said a prayer for the youth centre and together with Tobias Wolf, Frater Michael and active helpers of the last weeks they blessed it on site.

In the future the youth centre is to become a place of meeting, of joy and togetherness. Here young people should be able to feel what it means to live according to Marist values and to be part of the Marist family. To feel, not only to know that one is loved and wanted, but to know that one is loved and wanted exactly as one is.

These goals are to be achieved through

various aspects of youth work. On the one hand, open youth work is to be offered: here young people can visit the house completely free of purpose and have fun, leisure activities are also included. Furthermore, networking and cooperation work with schools is to be aimed at. Teachers will be given the opportunity to hold teaching units outside their usual environment, to call on experts on more complex subjects or to offer their pupils units with a more pedagogical, pastoral approach, such as working on the classroom climate. Another important point is to be personality development. In workshops and other units, young people are to be given knowledge and orientation which is not necessarily taught at school. Finally we want to build up our own Marist



youth. Youth groups that are oriented towards Marcellin Champagnat and his vision are defined by a strong sense of community, social commitment and the questioning of God or the deepening of the relationship with him. Elementary in all these efforts, besides cooperation with local institutions, is the orientation towards the young people themselves. The management of the youth centre would like to reach and meet young people in their own world, for this it is necessary to ask questions and above all to take them seriously. In this way, the Marists in Mindelheim put young people at the centre of their efforts, following the example of their order founder Marcellin Champagnat.

Fr Michael Schmalz
- Mindelheim



Julia Rosa Müller



- Age: 26 years
- Profession: Occupational therapist
- Task: Youth officer at "s'Jugendhaus" & CMI (Volunteer- Incoming)

● My motives/ goals for the work: Through my background as a therapist I would like to strengthen the young people in their personality so that they are prepared and equipped for the coming and existing everyday life with its psychological and physical demands. My hobbies are, horses as they are good for personality development and prevention.

Dominik Holoubek



- Age: 29 years
- Occupation: Secondary school teacher
- Task: Management of the youth centre

● My motives/ goals for the work: I was a volunteer in youth work for many years and had the chance to meet many interesting people and gain experience. I would now like to give these opportunities to other young people. Similar to teaching, I want to impart knowledge and experience to young people, but here I have the chance to go far beyond the school curriculum and work on a more human level.



CMI pilgrimage to L'Hermitage from 25.07.2020 - 29.07.2020

As in the past six years, the Cmi team set off again with seven young people and a few accompanying Marists to France to follow in Marcellin's footsteps and to feel what it means to be Marist today.

Although it looks like routine, this year's pilgrimage was very different from previous years.

The big difference was that this time we did not go to L'Hermitage for the final preparation for a volunteer service, but knew that we would have to cancel the planned volunteer service 2020/2021 definitely. We would have to have a conversation with each of the young people on the trip.

Accordingly, we were nervous about the progress of the trip: What would the atmosphere be like, will we experience ourselves as a group, can the young people even perceive Marcellin's spirituality, what can the trip do if there is no concrete collaboration afterwards? But as soon as we arrived, during a quiet hour together at the cross on the hill, looking at the sunset and the surroundings, all our concerns were dispelled.

A special moment was the visit to the city of Le Puy-en Velay, where we were able to attend a mass in the impressive cathedral and

then received some initial information about the beginning of a community of Mary - the Marists. Afterwards we enjoyed the wonderful ancient center of Le Puy.

The next day we visited Marcellin's birthplace, Rosey. We dealt intensively with the family history of Champagnat, but also with our own roots and our own family. The baptist church in Marlhès impressed the group, especially with its wonderful atmosphere and silence.

Before we received an introduction to the house in La Valla on Tuesday, the participants had to find and walk the way there themselves. Without being accompanied by a team member, they were sent on their way with the help of a map, sufficient water, first aid equipment - and of course a cell phone for cases of emergency. Which turned out to be a challenge that could be solved easily, the group arrived in La Valla before the team members. After a joint picnic with the Brothers, Brother Michael gave us an introduction to the concept of the house and finally each worked on a letter to themselves. With suggestions to reflect and think about the past months, the current situation and the future. These letters were sealed in a solemn ceremony and symbolically placed under the cross. Next year the Cmi Team will return the letters

to the participants. The working day will end with an informative tour of the exhibition at L'Hermitage, led by Brother Maurice.

We would like to thank especially the brothers in L'Hermitage, La Valla and Rosey, for welcoming and accompanying us in this challenging times.

The next day we had to pack our bags and start our journey home. Tired but happy we arrived in Mindelheim in the evening.

All our previous fears turned out to be unnecessary, the group was open for the contents and the Marist spirituality, they were team-oriented, creative and in a good mood.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the beautiful days and are happy, that you have grown together as a group and experienced what it means to be part of the Marist family. We wish you all the best for the future and we are happy if you would stay connected with us - and who knows, maybe in some years you will be able to do your voluntary service with Cmi-Germany

**Your Cmi- Team, Michael,
Brigitte and Renate**

A place to grow, a place to mature



Due to the pandemic, it was a small group that celebrated the blessing of the Marian Chapel of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary on September 12, 2020, the Feast of the Name of Mary. Florian Wörner, Auxiliary Bishop in the Diocese of Augsburg, had personally come to Mindelheim on this occasion to consecrate the chapel, which is, as it were, the heart of the "Marist Campus" in Mindelheim. Just as the heart sits in the middle of the body, so this new prayer room is located in the middle between the Brothers' house

in the west and the Cmi house of the volunteers in the east, as well as the Marist College in the south and the new youth centre in the north, and for this reason it is called "Corum" by the brothers and staff on site.

True to the words of the opening song, Corum and the new youth house may become "a place to grow, a place to mature", a place that especially young people can visit and leave again strengthened and with a new orientation.

The special design feature is the raw, unhewn rock in the floor of the chapel in front of the altar, which is bedded on black sand and framed by a bronze writing band. The favourite verse of St. Marcellin Champagnat from Psalm 127 is carved into the metal in German and French: "If the Lord does not build the house, those who build it labor in vain". But not only this verse refers to the founder of the order, but also the stone itself, which was pulled out of the greed two years ago by students of the Marist College. The stone flows directly past the mother house of the Marist Bursars in ND de l'Hermitage, which Marcellin and the first brothers built themselves in 1824.

Just as St. Marcellin Champagnat and his brothers trusted in God and the protection of Mary 200 years ago, recognised the needs of young people and responded to them with vision and courage, so the people who follow him want to do the same. According to the opening song of the service "here is a place to grow, a place to mature", young people should be given the opportunity to develop spiritually and as human beings.



Marists Mindelheim

Marist activities at Maristengymnasium Furth during COVID-19

Lockdown was not the time for major Marist projects at MGF. On the contrary! We had our hands full following the new restrictions in our lives and managing online classes. Despite these challenges, some good came out of this. During the lockdown we put higher value to the small, daily things. The teachers of our Marist Core Team remembered their Marist roots and simply tried to take care. Students have been asked more often than usual how they were doing and teachers gave them more often the opportunity to talk about their worries, problems and also about their positive experiences.

As our school has its own learning platform our Student Marist Team had the chance to be active during lockdown. Students were distracted from their everyday life at home by smaller projects. They even managed to finish the largest project during the school year: the planning of a Marist corner in our school building.

Another offer for the whole school family was provided by our colleague who is in charge of pastoral care. Every week videos or texts were uploaded on our learning platform which helped students, teachers and

parents to relax, recharge their batteries and overcome the difficulties during lockdown.

Apart from that, as it was not possible to attend service at the end of the school year, mass was filmed and posted online, accessible for the whole school family.

The beginning of the new school year was marked by the restart of classroom

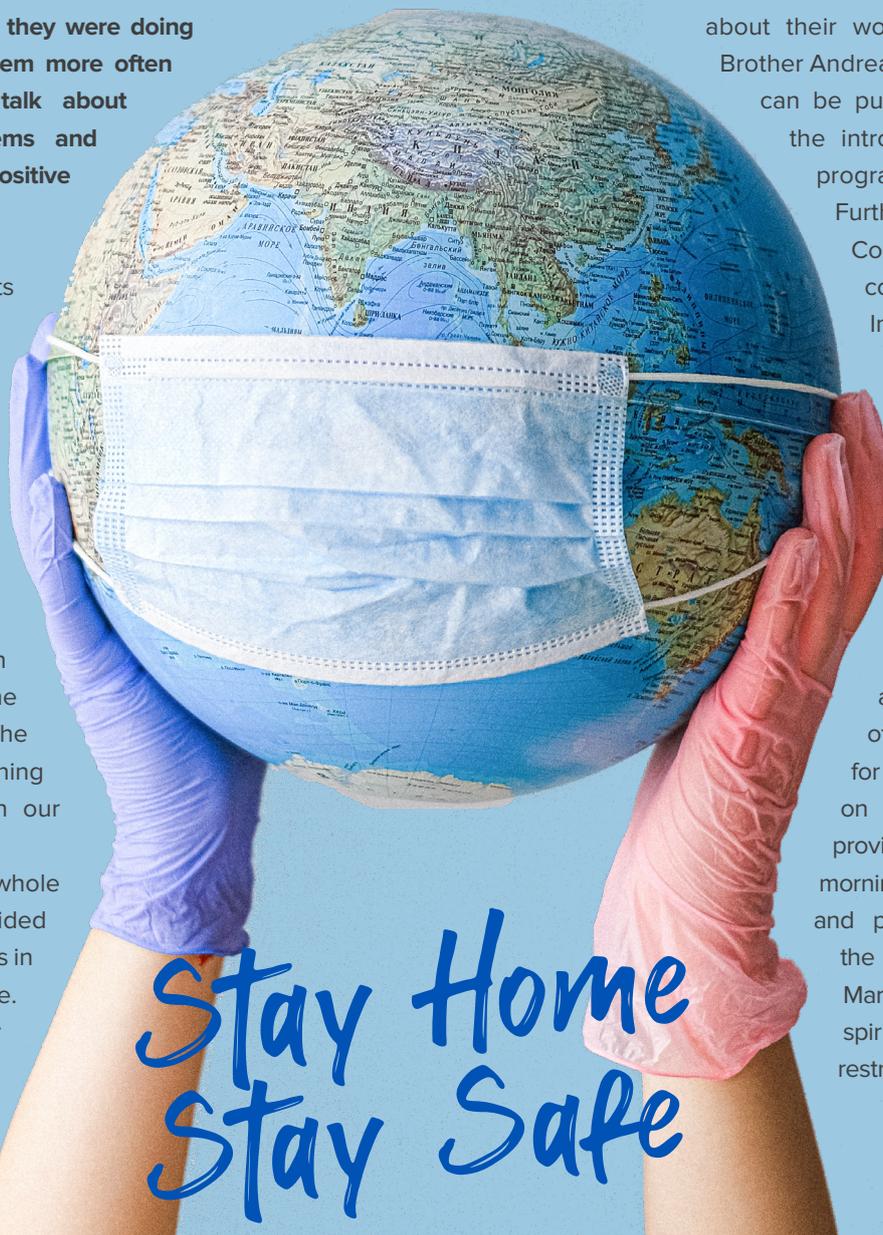
teaching under COVID restrictions. Trying to get back to work as “normal” as possible the Marist Core Team started its work again.

So at the moment we offer activities which are compatible with COVID restrictions, for example interested teachers are invited to visit the monastery and the newly built convention centre in Furth. This way, especially the new teachers have the opportunity to learn about their workplace and its roots.

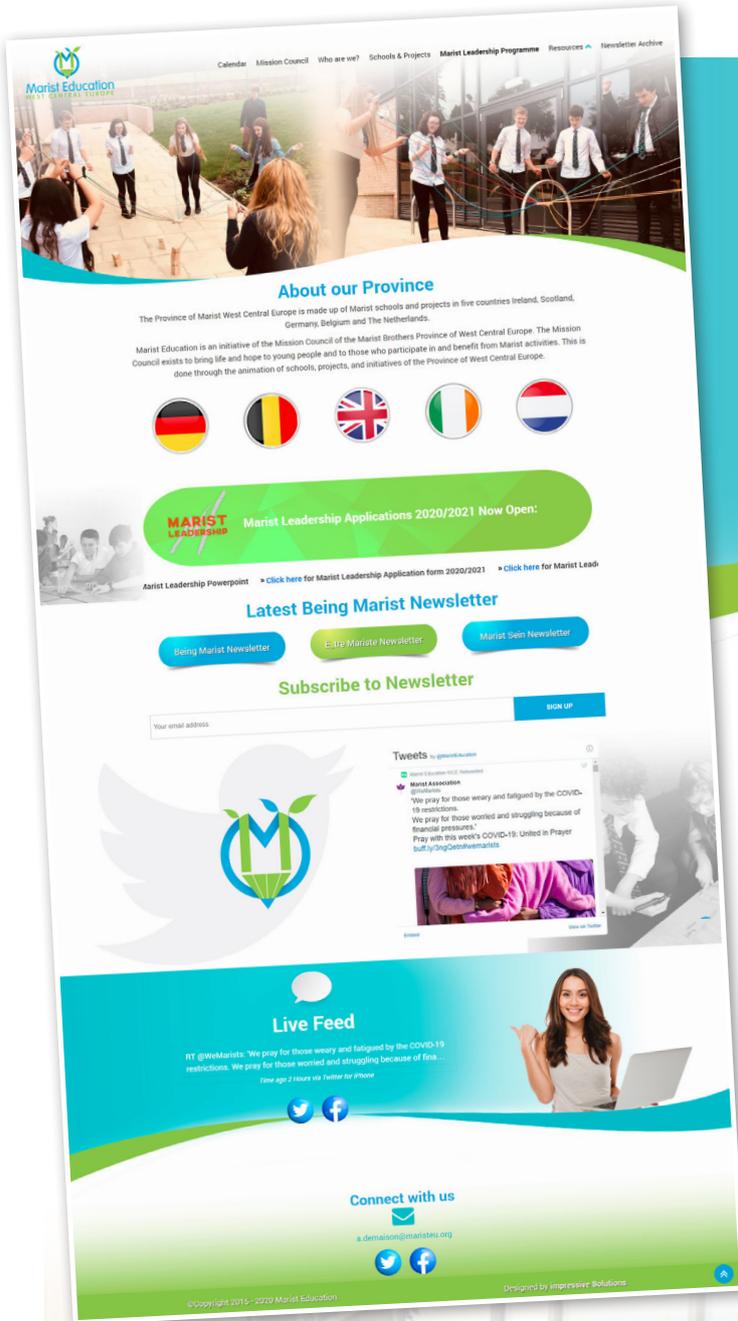
Brother Andreas guides the visit which can be put into practice only by the introduction of a hygiene programme.

Furthermore, the Marist Core Team started a cooperation with the International Department of our school in order to make use of synergy effects.

The Marist Core Team plans a two-day meeting which focuses on the promotion of the team spirit on the one hand and on the elaboration of further Marist activities for students and teachers on the other hand, e.g. providing a collection of morning prayers for all classes and preparing a project for the 6th graders about the Marist core value “family spirit” – considering COVID restrictions, of course.



Eva Alfranseder
-Maristen Gymnasium
Furth Germany



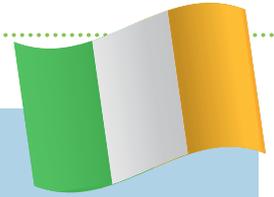
Our Mission Council Website



We are delighted to let you know our Mission Council website has had a makeover. Have a look at www.maristeu.com to find out about all our province of West Central Europe has to offer. Learn about our Mission Council, read from the archive of all our Being Marist newsletters, tap into our Champagnat documents, plus many more resources.

If have any feedback or if there is anything you would like to see on our website please contact Aisling Demaison a.demaison@maristeu.org





My Marist Leader Experience

I began my Marist Leader experience at the end of my third year in school when myself and the other Marist Leaders in my year at Marist College Athlone took part in our first leadership training day.



The focus that day was on the importance of working together, something that has stuck with me ever since. All of the tasks and games we did were impossible to complete on one's own, but the way forward became clear when working together. The idea of working together and the idea of leadership are intrinsically linked. While at first this might seem contradictory, the Marist Leadership programme has shown

me that this fact is absolutely true. Whenever people are working together some style of leadership, be it democratic, autocratic or otherwise, must be shown. This is a vital lesson to learn and it has helped me personally in many situations throughout my time in school.

One of the most important things I have learned through the Marist Leadership programme is that there are times where one should not take the lead. Through my interaction with other Marist Leaders from schools in both Ireland and Scotland at leadership training events, I have learned that it is equally important to know when to be a follower as well as when to be a leader.

I would encourage any students with the opportunity to do so to apply to the Marist Leadership programme. Not only will you learn new skills which will help you throughout your life, but you will also be given the chance to help your school in a way that matters. The programme encourages leaders to take on action plans for the improvement of their skills and through these plans you can really make a difference.

For me, the highlight of my time as a Marist Leader was the trip to L'Hermitage in Lyon during my time as a senior Marist Leader. As well as getting to see the birthplace of the Marist Order I was able to put what I had learned about leadership into action while leading activities for the new Marist Leaders.

Edward Clarke – Marist College Athlone

Looking back on the Marist Leadership Programme

Eleven days. As I sit here writing this, that's how long I have left before starting my cadetship. Seventeen months of intense military training to get me from schoolboy to commissioned officer.

As I think about what the future may hold, I am drawn back to my last 3 years as a Marist Leader. Two things immediately stand out to me, our trip to Scotland and Ms. Dooley's funeral. The trip to Scotland was to an outdoor adventure center, and was very enjoyable. We crossed gorges using ropes, paddled across lakes and did night orientation. Ms. Dooley's funeral was perhaps the most important thing we did as Marist Leaders. Ms. Dooley was a math's teacher in our school who was tragically killed in a traffic accident. We represented the school at the funeral and

I felt we filled an important role on such a hard day for the family. All these varied experiences helped me build an excellent foundation to move forward upon. The ability to develop and practice Leadership skills cannot be underestimated and has given me great confidence in my ability's, something that will be a great advantage in the Defence Forces. Flexibility was another skill gained from my time as a Marist leader. From helping first years one day, to representing the school at events on



another, we covered a wide variety of situations.

The transferable skills I gained as a Marist leader will always stick with me. I will always remember my time as a Marist leader and would like to thank Ms. McGrath for the amazing opportunity.

Eoin McCarthy – Marist College Athlone

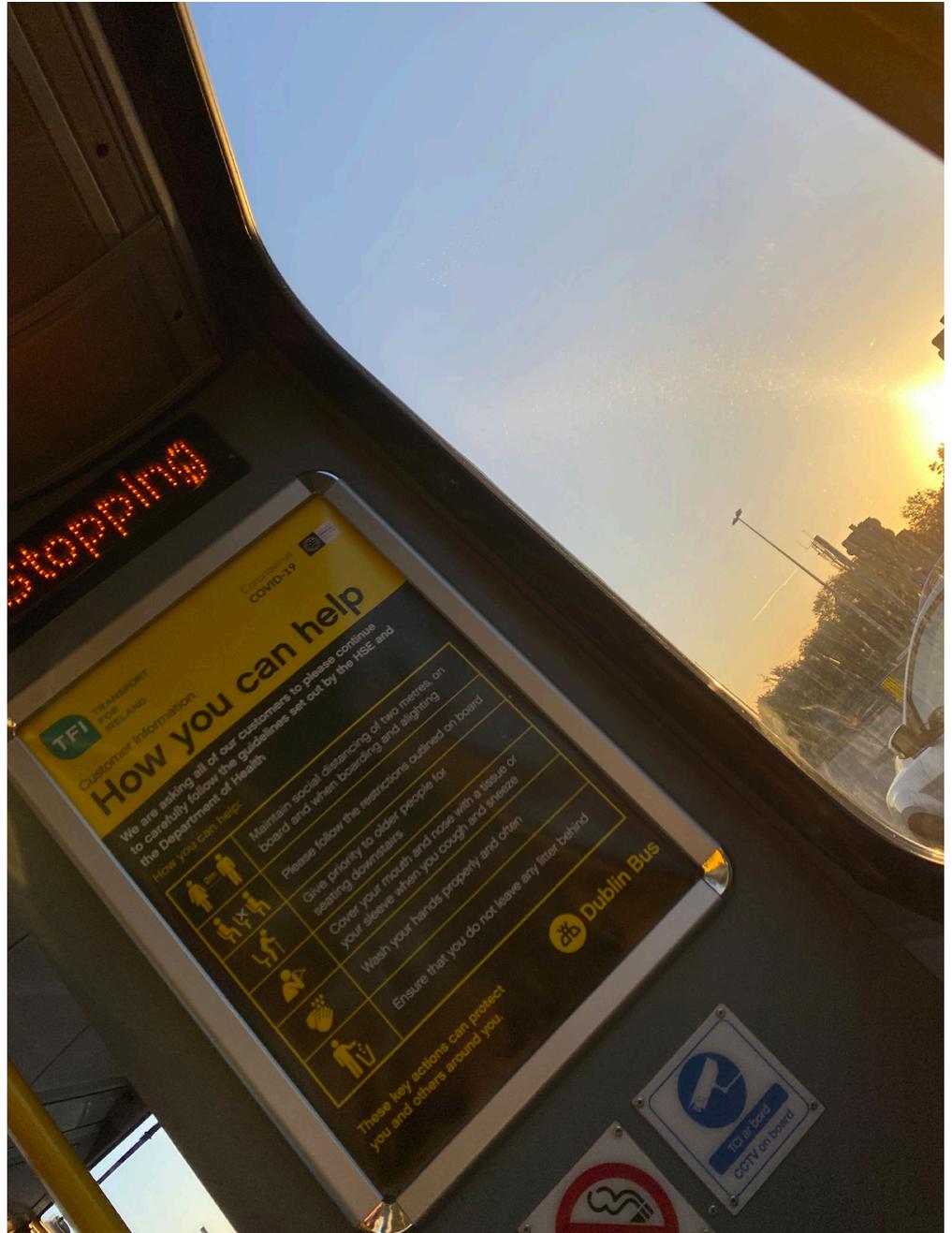
Presence is the best present

Welcome back to school everyone. I hope everyone is finding their return to school is smooth and comfortable, despite all that is happening. This school year is definitely going to be a different, perhaps more challenging one. But if we work together we will power through it as a school community ! This leads onto my catchphrase "Presence Is The Best Present".

As we all know (hopefully !), our school is a Marist school. This means we are encouraged to use our Marist values and help each other as a community. According to our Marist calendar, we are now in a time where we need to focus on and celebrate our Marist value "presence".

This is, of course, easier said than done ! As you know we can't exactly get too close to our friends, share things with them or hug them due to our current circumstances. The only thing we can do for our friends and family is to have a presence in their lives. This new world we live in can be mentally challenging. Some may find it harder than others to adapt to, even if they don't show it ! We, as Marist students, need to use our Marist value "presence" and make sure that our friends and family know that we are here for them. We need to assure them that they are not alone ! Just because we are told to keep a distance from our peers does not mean we need to shut them out completely !

The point I am trying to get across is that we need to check in on each other and be present in each others lives, especially during these strange times. If you yourself are struggling to adapt to this change (or even with personal



things), Just remember you are not alone ! We as a Marist community stick together and grow together.

If you feel you need some presence in your life, don't be afraid to talk to Marist leaders, teachers, friends or anyone you feel comfortable talking to.

Remember, we are one big community in Moyle Park and we want to grow and flourish together.

Don't forget.

**PRESENCE
IS THE BEST PRESENT!**

So please check up on each other and yourself !!

Robert Glynn
Moyle Park College Dublin

The Magnificat; Mary's Song of Praise

The noted theologian Karl Rahner has said that our image of Mary has always been closely tied to our image of women at any given time. Since our culturally conditioned image of women is undergoing radical change, this raises serious questions about our current image of Mary.

Our view of Mary up to now was presented through a patriarchal lens, which was a reflection of the perceived role of women in society at any given time in our history. We often placed her on a pedestal and didn't always see her immersed in a human context as a strong woman who had to live the reality of poverty and Roman oppression. The historical life of Mary was also a journey of faith and today she can be a companion in faith for all of us struggling the challenges of daily living and finding God in our lives. However we need to reimagine Mary in the context of the role of women in society today. In the 'Magnificat' Mary's song of praise which she shares with her cousin Elizabeth express key elements of her faith and gives us a template of the journey we are invited to follow. The first part proclaims the greatness of God and her gratitude for God's involvement in her life, while the second part of the song is a revolutionary call that condemns all forms of injustice and stands in solidarity by lifting up the lowly and calling for a new social order by bringing down the mighty from their thrones.



It is significant that devotion to Mary today is stronger in societies that face the greatest injustice. Mary continues to be a prophet for the poor and the marginalized. As the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in 1933. 'This is not the gentle, tender, dreary Mary,

whom we sometimes see in paintings; this is passionate, surrendered, proud, enthusiastic Mary who speaks out.' Time for us to reclaim Mary in our time where remnants of patriarchal society still need to be challenged.

PJ McGowan - Ireland



Around the classroom sandbox, on this 1st September, the first contacts between our students are made...

Back to school in Belgium

Since 15 August, our school has gradually emerged from its summer lethargy, the one that allows it to regain its beauty, the one that allows teachers to regain their iron constitution for the coming year.

As the days went by, the teachers came back to prepare their classes, to put away their materials, to look for the list of their pupils, to discover the new first names they will mention so many times in the months to come.

It's true that this September 2020 start to the school year is like no other, since 2020 is a year like no other.

Apart from the pleasure of finding classes full of pupils, which was no longer the rule between 15 March and the beginning of June, teachers will have many challenges to face.

The challenge of welcoming: welcoming the child they don't know yet, welcoming the child who comes from elsewhere, from another school, another country, sometimes from another continent... A child who doesn't always speak French, a child brought up sometimes in a culture very different from ours.

The challenge of serenity: in this time of fear, fear of the virus, fear of the other sometimes,

the right words will have to be found so that the rules of distancing do not generate indifference or even mistrust. The right words will have to be found to create confidence in oneself and in others.

The challenge of differentiation: in each group as many situations as there are children will coexist: Some will have been lucky enough to have been able, during the confinement, to see the family bonds become closer, others will have by force of circumstance grown up in autonomy and resourcefulness with two parents teleworking, physically present but so busy... Some will have been able to carry out all the educational proposals put in place by their teachers, now seasoned in digital tools, others will on the contrary have laid down their weapons, and the differences will probably have grown even more between the pupils, despite the good will of all! Benevolence will have to remain cardinal, because the child did not choose anything of what happened to him!

The challenge of continuity: we have been observing this for almost two weeks now, with noses running and throats itching, in the

respect of the imposed procedures, it is very complicated to have a whole class in front of you. This means even more than usual constantly updating each other in their work, filling in the gaps, supporting, remedying, compensating for the difficulties caused by absence.

And what about the challenge of solidarity? Because teachers too will have a runny nose and an itchy throat... and will be subject to the same constraints: to move away a little, to be tested if necessary... Good will, and we know that there is no lack of it among our teachers, will have to be shown so that the pupils do not suffer from all this. We will have to be creative, inventive, to imagine solutions to problems that we may not yet know about on a daily basis.

But aren't welcome, listening, solidarity, creativity, ... at the heart of Marist values?

So, no doubt, we will roll up our sleeves, take up the challenges that will come our way as time goes by, and make this school year that is beginning an EXCEPTIONAL one!

**Testimony of Mrs Michèle GAVROY,
Director of the Basic, Nursery and
Primary School, of the Sainte Marie
d'Arlon Institute (Belgium)**

Profoundly Inspiring Visit to LaValla School, Cambodia



My journey from central Phnom Penh to LaValla School in Takhmau south of the city, was the usual chaotic, stop – start, exhaust filled experience I have come to appreciate as normal here in the short time since I arrived in Cambodia. It's a chaos that works and has me make a mental note never to complain about traffic in Scotland again – I know that won't last. .

LaValla School is an initiative of the Marist Brothers of Australia, set up 25 years ago to offer education to children experiencing physical disabilities. Brothers Tony and Brian generously gave of their time, helping me understand how the school operates and the philosophy that drives all that they do.

My experience of being at LaValla School was a truly moving one. I found Tony and Brian really inspiring - dedicating themselves tirelessly to helping each young person find and realise their potential. This is a place filled with a contagious spirit of hope, promise and possibility.

I learned so much – how the Buddhist philosophy can generally be perceived as a compassionate one, and often is. However, a belief in reincarnation, aligned



with certain perceptions of disability, means some see disability as deserving Karma for some less-well-lived previous existence. Disability for many families creates feelings of shame and consequently, some children can find themselves hidden from the local community for fear of the possible humiliation and distress that may descend upon the family. Obviously, this has major limitations for any such child, their education and their development as well as any prospects for future possibilities and employment opportunities.

This thankfully, is such a significant contrast to what the children experience in this truly amazing school. Here, the children are not defined by their perceived limiting disability but rather, they are defined by their abundance of capability and possibility. This is a place where a child can arrive self-consciously hiding a disabled hand from the sight of strangers, to within a short period of time and with care-free abandon, enjoying an environment where everyone is encouraged to explore what they CAN do rather than remain limited by what they can't. Contributing to this attitude of what can be achieved, I learned



about the surgeons who visit from Spain during their vacation time to volunteer their unique professional services to provide significantly life changing operations for students who would otherwise remain untreated - compassion and generosity for sure.

The impact on how disability is experienced and perceived here is





remarkably powerful. When the vast majority possess disability, there is a 'normalising' effect, meaning individual conditions somehow fade more to the background. This means - the who of a child - becomes more foreground and results in children being seen simply as children. Curiously, this makes disability far less visible than in general. This 'normalising' effect is further compounded by the fact that teaching staff themselves here have disabilities, providing students everyday inspiration that limitations can be overcome and that the aspiration to be a meaningful contributor to society is within everyone's reach. This is another important and motivating signal never to be bounded by narrow or limiting messages and beliefs.

Meeting the children was an absolute delight! I was struck most of all, by their smiles. This isn't just a school, it's a place where children get to be

at home and are tenderly accepted for who they are. This is a place of love and much genuine affection and the children demonstrated this in great measure by the way they are with each other, the staff and with me. Many were curious to engage with me, wanting to know my name and eager to tell me theirs. With limited shared language, the conversation often stopped there but the sense of welcome, openness and acceptance, left a lasting impact on me. I had a profound sense that what these children had received at LaValla, they were freely giving me and everyone else they encountered.

At Kinharvie, our mission is to co-create an abundance of life giving spaces where people realise their potential. If ever there was a place that best demonstrated what such as space is, LaValla School is it.

Paul Cummings – CEO Kinharvie

Paul Cummings

It's all change at Kinharvie. From today, Tuesday 1st September, Paul Cummings begins his role as the new CEO of Kinharvie. Paul's appointment is the result of a



planned process of succession as Gerry Devlin steps aside as Executive Director and Ronnie McEwan as Director of Organisational Facilitation. Both Ronnie and Gerry each have been involved in leading the success and development of the charity for 30 years. Through their leadership, Kinharvie has been successful in responding to the needs of the times and adapting both focus and services as needs have demanded. Ronnie will continue as a Kinharvie Fellow and Gerry will provide support to the finance function until the end of November 2020. Gerry's role in supporting the Brothers continues as before.

Looking ahead in his new leadership role, Paul says, "I'm excited and enthusiastic to be taking on the new role of CEO for Kinharvie. I hadn't envisaged my appointment would take place in the midst of such a pandemic, though I did appreciate the role of CEO to be a challenging one at any time. So I look ahead and face the challenges and opportunities with energy and optimism, confident our newly defined vision and mission for Kinharvie will inspire us and those we work with. In times of immense change and boundless uncertainty, I am convinced more than ever of the need to co-create life-giving spaces where people realise their potential. Discovering and harnessing our individual and collective potential will serve us well in finding a way through these challenging times. For the latent possibility of each of us to flourish, it has never been more important that our communities and workplaces be spaces of psychological safety where we can be more authentic and where our true potential can reveal itself. I'm fortunate and delighted to have such a skilled, highly capable and much praised team who will join me on the adventures ahead."

CMI Mindelheim

Interview with Renate Hacker

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself

My name is Renate Hacker and I am 54 years old. I have been married to Wolfgang Hacker since 1991. We have 4 children, three sons aged 27,26 and 24 and a daughter aged 17. Wolfgang and I grew up in Munich, but since 1993 we have been living near Mindelheim, in a small village. Another true companion is our dog Ayoka, who is a member of our family for almost 15 years now. I am a qualified physiotherapist and have been doing this profession until 2018. Thereby I was especially influenced by the years of work with mentally and physically handicapped children and adults.

2. How did you get involved with the Marist world?

In 1993 my husband was able to take up a position as a sports teacher at the Maristenkolleg Mindelheim. He consciously chose a Christian school for his professional career and quickly came into contact with the Marist Brothers. When our children were old enough to visit the secondary school, they all attended the Maristenkolleg. During this time, I was involved in the school's parents' council for many years. This gave me the opportunity always to be involved in the concerns of the school and the Marist Brothers. After Brother Michael's return from Dessau, he accompanied the Parents' Council for several years as head of the boarding school. From one of these meetings we got the information that with Cmi Germany a new Marist project will start. In November 2013 Brother Michael offered me to participate in Cmi and to support him in building up this new project. In February 2014

Brother Michael, my colleague Brigitte Riedmaier and I started as the new Cmi team.

3. For those that don't know Marist Germany can you tell us a little bit about it?

The Maristes of Germany developed from four Marist schools. Three schools are located in southern Germany, in Furth near Landshut, Cham and Mindelheim, another school is located northwest in Recklinghausen. All four schools are today handed over to the respective dioceses and most of the brothers have retired from active work due to their age. The teachers try to live on Marzellin's idea and include his thoughts to the daily teaching routine, inspiring each other by Marist education, formation and lot of personal contacts. Besides the school activities, in Mindelheim is the center of the youth project Cmi-Germany. Cmi is the project I am mainly involved in. It is a department of the General House in Rome, which has made it its mission to enable Marists of all countries to do an International Voluntary Service between the Marist Provinces. Based on this, we are able offer young graduates of the four German Marist schools the possibility to do an international voluntary service, participating in Marist projects all over the world. This service is thought for

a for a duration of 9 to 10 months. In the course of the last seven years a whole program of training and accompaniment for the young candidates and volunteers has developed, which extends over a period of 2 years.

Since this summer there is a new Marist Youth Ministry House in Mindelheim, which is now being filled with new life. After their return, the young past Cmi volunteers are encouraged and trained to commit in the Marist work to support other young people.

4. What is an interesting fact that most people may not know about you?

As a young woman I was an inspired motorcyclist, I have the motorcycle driver's license and had my own motorbike. Now there is only one Vespa scooter left in our garage.

5. Who is a person you admire and why?

In fact I am very impressed by the American judge Ruth Bader-Ginsburg.

She has managed to live her own ideals as a woman, and has made significant progress as a lawyer and later as a judge, in terms of gender equality before the U.S. law- for both men and women. She spent her life working for people who had no lobby behind them, to make their daily lives easier. I am also impressed by her ability to perceive and respect all people, even in politically different minds.

Besides all her activities she was happily married, raised two children and overcame several diseases of cancer. I find her energy, discipline and attitude amazing.



6. What accomplishments are you most proud of in your life?

I think, that together with Wolfgang, I have managed to offer our four children a safe and stable home, to give them a "normal" and peaceful childhood, and to offer them education and values. In spite of all mistakes I certainly have made as mother, I am proud of how our four (almost) grown-up children have developed and how we stand together as a family today.

7. What is the best part about being a Marist for you?

The best thing about being a Marist for me is the mindfulness with which I feel accepted and the openness and love with which I was included into the Marist family. Being part of the Marist family means a lot to me.

I am also grateful for the trust that the Marists place in me and by being accepted into the Mission Council I am given the opportunity to get active involved in the life of our Province and to take responsibility.

8. How would your family and friends describe you?

My family drew a picture of me as an athlete who participated in multi-discipline competition and who works intensively to achieve the best possible performance in all disciplines.

9. What is a significant event in your life?

The birth of my four children and the disease of a kidney tumor this summer.

10. When is your birthday?

31.01.1966

11. When you're having free time what do you like to do?

I love to read a good book, discuss with my children, playing music, meeting with friends and I enjoy hiking with my husband. I am also a passionate pilgrim on the Way of St. James.

12. Now that you are a member of the Mission Council, what is your vision for West Central Europe?

My vision for WCE is that we experience ourselves as a community where we know we have the same source and where we can learn from each other through our diversity. I would love to contribute to this vision as much as I can.



MARIST WEEK IRELAND 2020

Theme: Presence

OCTOBER 19TH - 23RD



1st Year students talks from Marist Brothers on Champagnat and Marist History.

Daily classes on of Marist Curriculum



Marist Breakfast Morning.

Socially distant Marist breakfast to show the family spirit!



Marist Whole School Prayer Service.

intercom/Google Meets and classroom projectors
A student from each year group will do readings and will go around to light the candles in every classroom.
Staff Wellbeing Packs to be left in staff boxes.



Marist Friendship Boards.

Students write name of loved one during reflection for mass. They are stuck onto the year groups “friendship boards”.



Daily reflections over the Intercom- Someone we are thinking of during these tough times.



Marist Photo Project and Competition depicting Marist Values.

Exhibition of the images will be displayed.



Special Marist Display

- An altar and candle with a picture of Marcellin Champagnat will be set up beside reception for the week.

Marist Leaders and student council will display positive affirmations around the school corridors.



Wellbeing mentors to speak to individual classes about mental health and Marist values.



Fancy Dress Fundraiser.

Charity non-uniform day

The importance of Marist Core Teams

A Marist Core Team is responsible for driving forward the Marist ethos of the school, the organisation of Marist events throughout the year including the ever-successful Irish Marist Week, and also personal reflection and spiritual development for its members. There are around twenty members on the Moyle Park College Marist Core Team, including the four Marist Leader coordinators and an array of teachers from all different subject backgrounds.

In recent years the team met regularly, either before or after school to discuss Marist issues and to plan for events such as Marist Week, Wellbeing Week and Catholic Schools' Week as well as staff and student pilgrimages to L'Hermitage. We have organised many guest speakers on topics ranging from the Marist community worldwide to mental health and resilience. We have also organised workshops, whole school art projects and prayer services throughout the school year. We liaise closely with Aisling Demaison, Director of Marist Education West Central Europe, who keeps us in touch with Marist friends from all around the world. Nowadays our get-togethers are slightly different due to COVID 19 and the issues that come with it. None the less our team has persevered! We met recently to plan for our annual Marist Week. Aware that our celebrations this year will be a lot different than usual, we gathered (socially distantly!) to come up with events and activities to celebrate this special week in our school calendar. A time for the whole school community to reflect on what it means to be Marist. While the Marist Core team is often busy organising events and activities,



we also take time to reflect and discuss what it actually is to be Marist. The five particular characteristics which have been identified as the Marist values are: Presence, Simplicity, Family Spirit, Love of Work and In the way of Mary. Your values are the things that you believe are important in the way you live. They help determine your priorities. As Marist students and teachers, we learn our values from Marcellin and the way he lived his life. Our actions are led by our values. In these challenging times our Marist values are more important than ever in keeping our school a happy and productive place!

Initiatives such as teacher pilgrimages to L'Hermitage, staff and student training events and local and province wide Marist gatherings all contribute to the ongoing faith development of the staff and students of the three Irish schools. The development of the Marist Prayer Booklet by Bro. PJ has proved a very useful tool in helping us do so. It has been

incorporated into our Marist Core Team meetings for reflections and prayer and on a whole school level to further share our schools Marist identity.

In Ireland we are blessed to have very strong, family like connections between the three Marist Brother schools. There are rich relationships between people that go back many years. There is fantastic collaboration between all three Marist Brothers schools in Ireland and growing connections each year with other countries in the province. In these difficult times we need the support and care of others more than ever.

'Dear Marcellin, you are the light that guides us, leading young people on a journey of personal growth and self-discovery. Continue to inspire and support us in our mission to follow in your footsteps.'

Mr. O Mara- Chairperson of the Marist Core Team- Moyle Park College

MISSION COUNCIL WEST CENTRAL EUROPE

INVITES YOU TO



Zoom Event

THE POWER OF VULNERABILITY

An adventure in the encounter



**GUEST
SPEAKER -
TONY LEON**

DATE: Saturday 28TH NOVEMBER

TIME: 10^{AM} - 12 SCOTLAND / IRELAND

11^{AM} - 1^{PM} NETHERLANDS / GERMANY / BELGIUM

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

FACILITATED
BY
KINHARVIE



The Magnificat**:

*My soul proclaims your greatness,
O my God
and my spirit rejoices in God,
my Saviour.*

*For you have blessed me, your lowly
and serving woman.*

*From this day all generations will
call me blessed,
for you who are mighty, have done
great things for me;
and holy is your name.*

*Your mercy is on those who fear
you, from generation to generation.*

*You have shown strength
with your arm.*

*You have scattered the proud in
their hearts conceit.*

*You have put down the mighty from
their thrones,
and have lifted up the lowly.*

*You have filled the hungry
with good things, and have sent
the rich away empty.*

*You have helped your servant Israel,
remembering your mercy,
as you promised to Abraham
and his children forever.*

** 'Truly Our Sister' By Elizabeth A Johnson 2003

