

# Being Marist

WEST CENTRAL EUROPE

## Christmas 2022

**This advent is the first advent my oldest child understands bits of the rituals and traditions we practice during this time of year. Lighting an extra candle every week, baking Christmas cake and crafting decorations for example. For me, these kind of rituals are valuable. They allow us to slow down, to connect with people who are important for us and to be thankful and hopeful.**

Although we could practice rituals in our family homes, I am also looking forward to sharing these kinds of experiences again with other people. Due to covid 19 the last two years we had to miss this. At the Westerhelling

we have a tradition that is called: «around the fireplace». People who join on this evening often bake something, we have silent time around the fireplace and also time to meet. There is a walk in the dark and silent forest. People form a choir and we sing together. It is a simple and (therefore?) very rich event. This tradition is nourishing for our community. I am really grateful that it is again possible to connect, meet and just be together.

In this Being Marist we can read stories of our traditions, celebrations and practices in Christmas time. I think for all of us it is a comfort that, in a time

with many global uncertainties, we can practice our rituals again. This can give us faith and hope, especially in Christmas time. In this newsletter we see our different traditions based on the same values. May the reading inspire and thereby deepen your own traditions and rituals.

Many thanks on behalf of the Mission Council for the contributions in this Being Marist and especially to Aisling

for her work in making this newsletter possible. I wish you an advent with time to connect through rituals and a merry Christmas.

**Judith Rotink,  
The Netherlands**





# Reflections on Champagnat Global Mexico

November 28th - December 6th 2022

**My recent trip to Mexico for the Global Champagnat Gathering was an exceptional experience to meet with Marists from all over the world. My abiding memory will be the personal connections made and the sharing of ideas and best practices from a range of Marist contexts.**

The meeting did reflect on the major issues affecting our world at the moment and the responses that we as Marist educators have to implement to face the challenges that we are all experiencing. Student engagement, climate change, migration, equality of educational opportunity, emotional wellbeing, global citizenship, our Marist identity, innovation and technology are realities we are all facing as Marist educators. Part of the reflection at our gathering was to explore our distinctive Marist response to these challenges. Marcellin Champagnat spoke of education in terms of developing students to be Good Christians and Good Citizens and we have to interpret these ideals for our time. Global Champagnat

has set up an online platform called Agora to facilitate Marist schools to collaborate, explore and share their responses to the above challenges. The method used is to provide a meeting place online to network with Marist colleagues and students throughout the Marist world. The concept of global citizenship is a further development of Marcellin's dream that belonging to something bigger than ourselves is a common search we all aspire to as Marist family. This Global Champagnat agora platform will allow us to collaborate and build up the Marist community by sharing our resources and experiences to help all of us, fulfill our true potential as educators and students. Aisling our Marist Education Director has been working on this worldwide project with others for the past year. We plan in the new year to help schools become more aware of the possibilities of Global Champagnat and encourage them to get



involved. Some schools in our Province have already become involved in this new exciting project. During my stay in Mexico we visited a number of Marist schools, had a chance to visit a number of cultural sites and experience Mexican food, music and dance. A most enjoyable experience and I must thank all involved in the organisation of the Gathering for the tremendous Marist hospitality.

**P.J. Chair of Mission Council.**

# Champagnat Global

The invitation from the Marist General Government to walk together as a global family is becoming more evident every day through initiatives such as the Marist Global Network of Schools: Champagnat Global.

The meeting of Champagnat Global held in Mexico from 28 December to 3 January and the subsequent visit of its participants to some of the Marist schools in the country have shown that Marists, even though we come from a large number of very different countries, feel like family wherever we meet: <https://champagnat.global/chronicle/>

Nowadays technology is helping us to shorten distances and to feel more international, so Champagnat Global has become a meeting point where the whole Marist school community: principals, teachers, brothers, students, families... have the opportunity to interact globally and to promote activities of interest, which promote educational quality, connection, exchange, innovation and technology, evangelization and social transformation.

<https://champagnat.global/>

Technology is a tool and that is why the most important thing in this type of process is that together we create a culture of internationalization that enriches us as Marists in all areas of life. Through the AGORÁ platform, we are invited to foster communication and the meeting of the entire Marist school community. Being part of AGORÁ allows us to unite around a topic, one or several groups that discuss, debate and work on interesting initiatives, with other members of the Marist educational community. <https://champagnat.global/groups-2/>



The District Education Co-ordination of West Central Europe, led by Aisling Demaison, is undertaking a wonderful initiative to internationalize the student councils of some of the schools so that the leadership growth of the students is shared with other students from Marist schools in different countries around the world: <https://champagnat.global/groups-2/global-marist-student-council/>

The invitation is open to the whole

school community: Principals to share concerns, training, knowledge, advice... with other colleagues who are carrying out very similar responsibilities. To teachers who have an enormous opportunity to carry out international projects with their students by taking advantage of the interaction with other Marist schools, to families who can find a space to develop their role in the school. Champagnat Global is a place to which we all belong and which we are co-creating in a collaborative way. The meeting point is given, the way of interacting is open to initiative, always thinking that Agorá can help us to find and make visible the different proposals that arise.

If, as a member of the Marist school community, you are willing to take an initiative, you can find information at: <https://champagnat.global/marist-global->

**Francisco Javier Llamas Fernández**  
Marist Global Network of Schools  
Project Manager

# Why be a Marist Brother today?

**The General Council has proclaimed a «Year for Marist Vocations» for the period from 20 May 2022 to 6 June 2023. There are two ways of life for following Jesus as Marist: As Marist Brother or as lay Marist. In both ways we together are committed as Marists to the «matter of Jesus». I would like to take a closer look to the way of life of the Marist Brothers: Why be a Marist Brother today?**

At the beginning I want to describe our living in community: we pray together, we work together, we celebrate together, we present to each other our diversity, our abilities, we help each other and console each other. And we want certainly always to forgive each other.

In our personal prayer we ask ourselves: «What does God want from me today?» We also pray a

lot for other people. The laity, because of their professional duties, do not have as much time to pray as we do. We also pray in their place and for them. It is not always easy for us to find the right balance between prayer and work.

We have our possessions in common. «They shared everything they had» (Acts 4:32). By our life without personal tenure,

each brother has access to the common possessions and facilities. We love a simple lifestyle.

As consecrated men we give ourselves at God's disposal with our whole existence. In obedience to our superiors, we work where we are really needed. Our superiors have a greater overview of the needs than we do. In this way, obedience gives our lives a higher sense.

This kind of our total commitment of self-giving to the service for God, the willingness to be available and mobile to everywhere, to change our place of work as needed, this is only possible

without marriage: we live in celibacy. By the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience we try to become like the virgin, poor and obedient Jesus. Our way of life wants to be a testimony of the Lord.

It may seem harsh to break away from relationships that have become dear to us when we move, but we are given the gift of Holy Mass every day in all our local communities. We may receive the Lord in the Holy Eucharist. It is a great gift and gives us strength for the day. Whoever receives Christ will be transformed, will be transformed into him. Our model is Mary. In the same way as



she said «yes», we too want to say «yes» to God's plans for us. Mary shows us the way to Jesus.

Our founder, Saint Marcellin, had many visions. We want to make these visions a reality. For him it was very important: every child has its own personality and dignity. In education, we have to take time for the children, explaining them instead of strong discipline. We are in special ways concerned about the most disadvantaged, the marginalised. We want to be witnesses of hope for them, courageously arouse the world and radiate joy.

The life as Marist Brother is a real option. In my prayer I ask the Lord if he wants this for me. Do I hear the silent call of God?

**Br Bernhard Seigel FMS -  
Archivist in Furth Germany**

“They shared everything they had”

(Acts 4:32)



# Marist Leaders around the Province



## St Johns RC HS Dundee, Scotland

In St Johns RC HS Dundee Scotland our Marist Leaders have our Christmas Fayre coming up. Our Year 1 ML have created two amazing items that they are raffling off for charity.

The Year 2 ML are in the process of creating a Santa Stocking with lots of goodies which they are also going to raffle off. The Charity is The India Village Project, founded by Br Douglas.



## Marist College Athlone Ireland



Our Marist Leaders have been producing regular Podcasts that has got lots of attention throughout our school community. All leaders have been involved in our school open night. A group of them gave guided tours around the school and were very proud to show off the achievements of our school. A small group of the leaders conducted a live podcast in our events hall. They provided great entertainment to visiting families and kept staff and students motivated with energetic music and funny commentary. Leaders have also helped out in front-of-house for parent teacher meetings and are currently planning school wide activities and fundraisers for Christmas.





**St Josephs College  
Dundee Scotland**

Here are some of our leaders wrapping gifts for the local primary school, St. Andrew's Primary - they are wrapping the 180 selection boxes and 40 books for Santa to deliver at the end of term Christmas party.



**Marist Leadership  
Saint Mungo's Academy**

We are the Marist Leaders from Saint Mungo's Academy and in October this year, we had the opportunity to visit France and see where the founder of the Marist brothers, Marcellin Champagnat lived and set up the first Marist community. During our trip, we developed our leadership skills and were able to talk to other Marist Leaders from Ireland and Scotland. However, it did not stop there... Once we returned to school, we introduced ourselves to the new S1 students by creating an RE lesson talking about our Marist values and what a Marist school looks like. Following our lesson, we started «Our Acts of Kindness» project... We visited classes during tutor time and spoke to the S1 students about our plan. We asked the young pupils to think about acts of kindness they would like someone to do for them or kind things they could do for someone else. Over the next three weeks we returned to

classes to receive updates from the students and to present them with an «Act of Kindness» certificate. We look forward to sharing this initiative with other year groups in the future!

Since returning from France, we have also led our Marist «Helping Hands» initiative whereby we offer our help to the teaching staff in our school. This has included assisting staff with preparations for our recent «Rights Respecting School» visit for the Gold

Award from UNICEF, supporting staff with our school mass to celebrate Catholic Education Week and helping at after-school events.

We are currently planning our activities for Advent and these include our contribution to the RE lessons being delivered across the school in preparation for the season of Christmas and making and distributing Christmas cards to a local care home.





## Marian College Dublin

Our Marist Leaders decided to focus on the value of Family Spirit this Christmas. They have been in touch with the local St Vincent De Paul and are running a food and toy drive from now until the end of the year. Students have set up an area at the front of our school for students to drop off any non-perishable foods and toys that will be donated to families in our local area.

As a separate task, the leaders are looking at the possibility of designing a mural that will be created for the side of one of the school buildings.



## Moyle Park College, Dublin, Ireland

The Moyle Park College Marist Leaders have been keeping very busy between charity fundraisers and events for our First Years.

We wrapped up our October midterm with our annual Halloween Hangout event. All proceeds from the costume day were donated to BELongTo (Irish LGBTQ Charity).

The Marist Leaders set up the canteen space and ran a day of events including Kahoot quizzes, dance parties and Halloween Bingo!

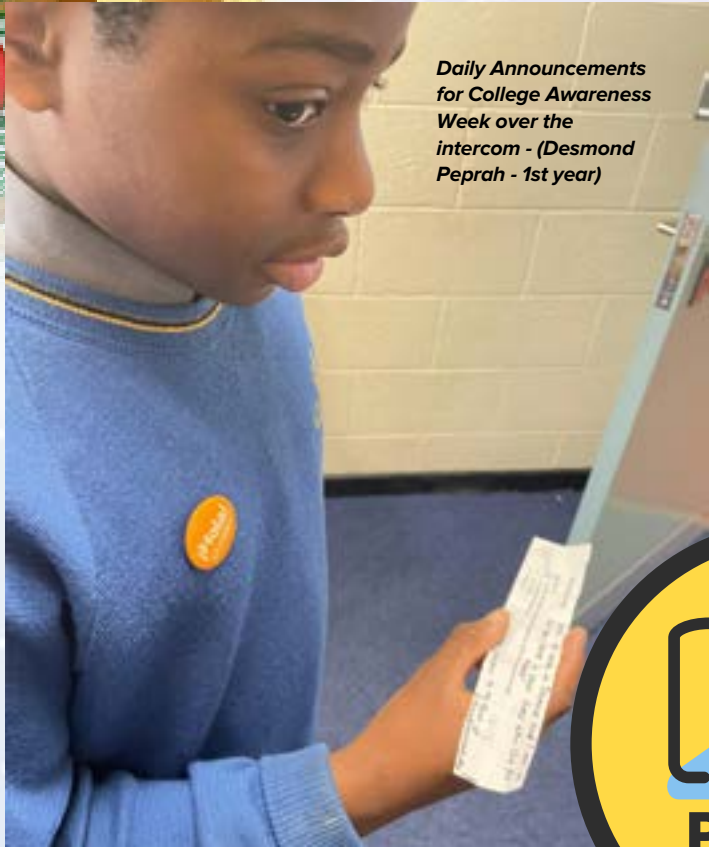
A fantastic day was had by all! Our charity focus continued as we prepared for the annual Stand Up week celebrations. Our events included a whole school quiz, non uniform day, LGBTQ themed subject lessons and a bake sale. We managed to raise €1,575 for BELongTo. We will be inviting representatives from BELongTo to come into school for a presentation ceremony. This week we are focusing on College Awareness Week and giving a hand with Parent teacher meetings. The Marist Leaders help to set up the hall, welcome parents and students, host a colouring

table for younger siblings and help with the car parking.

These Parent teacher Student meetings give us an opportunity to help out and live the «Family Spirit» and «Presence» values.

We spoke about our experiences at L'Hermitage to our Marist Core team this week. Each of us wrote a reflection on either, «A highlight of the trip for me was...», «A Marist Value that resonates with me», or «A lesson I learned...».

It has been a busy 2022 - we look forward to seeing what 2023 has in store for all at MPC!



*Daily Announcements for College Awareness Week over the intercom - (Desmond Peprah - 1st year)*



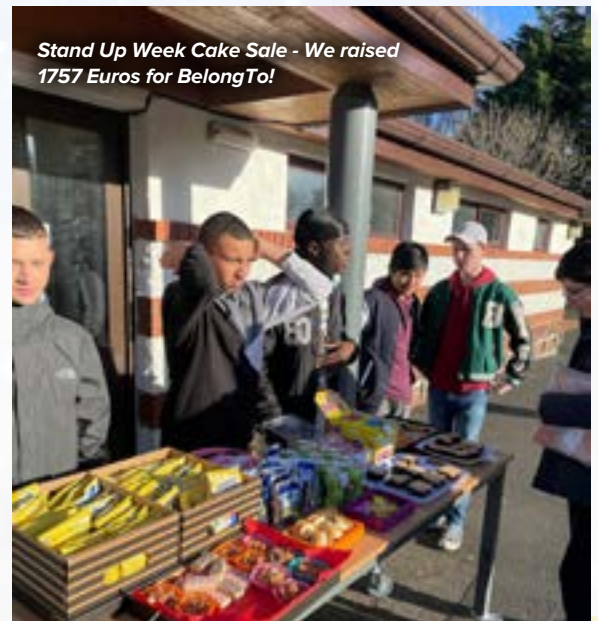
*Stand Up Week Quiz winners 6.5 won a pizza party for their class*



*Brothers Bryan (Marist Leader ) and Séan (1st Year) helping at the Parent Teacher Student meetings*



*Beautiful Advent Wreath By Brother Nick*

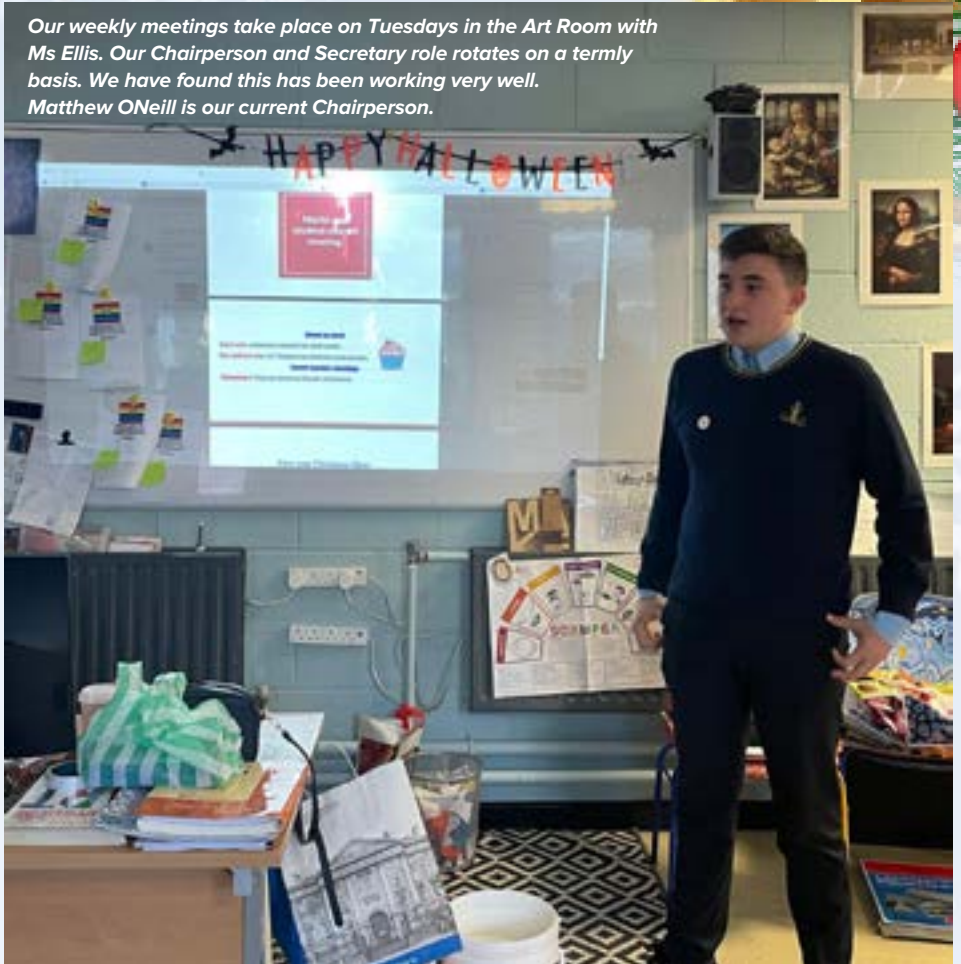


*Stand Up Week Cake Sale - We raised 1757 Euros for BelongTo!*





Stand Up week  
PingPong  
Tournament for the  
First Years! (Sean  
Whelan - 1st Year)



Our weekly meetings take place on Tuesdays in the Art Room with Ms Ellis. Our Chairperson and Secretary role rotates on a termly basis. We have found this has been working very well. Matthew O'Neill is our current Chairperson.



Marist Leaders who travelled to L'Hermitage presenting their reflections in our sacred space to the Marist Core Team.



Speech and Drama workshop for Stand Up week (Marist Leaders - Senan and Callum Gore are acting in a rendition of Red Riding Hood!)

# Meeting of the Marist Commission on the focus of international communication

Since March 2021, our Province of Europe Central West has been joined as the fifth Province to the International Commission of Communication to the Provinces of Meditéranea, Iberica, L'Hermitage and Compostela, in order to create a European platform of communication.

Since then, the representatives of the provinces connect monthly to online meetings to bundle the news of the provinces and publish it on the now newly designed homepage [www.champagnat.eu](http://www.champagnat.eu) and in the social networks. Occasionally, meetings are also held for personal exchange. And so, from September 26-29, 2022, the representatives followed by a secretary traveled from Spain to Mindelheim to get a first impression of our Marist institutions in Mindelheim and our province.

The enthusiasm was felt from the beginning when they got to know our newly designed rooms of the Corum (chapel between the Bruderhaus and the Cmi House), the accommodations in the Cmi House for the volunteers and the «s'Jugendhaus», designed for multiple activities. It was an advantage that all participants could be accommodated on the campus near the training room of the youth house and could be served meals in the bistro «Haba haba».

An evening by the fireplace in the youth house, a visit to Mindelburg Castle,



a walk through the typical colorful buildings of Mindelheim's city center and two dining experiences with typical delicacies of our region rounded off the program.

All visitors were visibly impressed by their experience in Mindelheim and praised the open hospitality and the varied program. My thanks go to all those who made this possible and supported me in my efforts to take a remaining positive impression back to Spain.

**Brigitte Riedmaier**  
(Cmi staff member and Commission representative of the Province Europe Central West)



## Being secure

Being secure is a word that fits what happens in the garden at Westerhelling. The people of the Garden Club experience the garden as a place where they are seen and allowed to be as a person, with what own qualities.

Something else also happens, which belongs to the word secured. The essence is guarantor: to stand surety.

That means: to vouch for someone or something, to be responsible.

The people of the Garden Club and the Westerhelling vouch for each other, are responsible for each other. The reciprocity is that the Westerhelling ensures that the place to work is a good, peaceful place. Where the Garden Club can set up its own space and make a familiar environment.

In turn, the people of the Garden Club vouch for the garden to look well cared for and beautiful, and thus be part of the offer that the Westerhelling wants to provide. The Garden Club guarantees that people who come for stillness can enjoy the beauty of plants, shrubs and flowers in the garden. They can enjoy everything that grows and blooms. The Garden Club makes it possible for people to come in wonder and so their lives may (re)shine.

When people know from each other that they are secure with each other, people become powerful. They start looking and walking differently.

Such small miracles happen in a small place on the outskirts of Nijmegen. Just without fuss.

Once in a while it becomes visible and tangible through a chestnut cake or other attentive, valuable gifts.

## How so an enrichment of activities?

**The Westerhelling wants to be a place of Attentive Living. These are words that say in a simple way how our Marian spirituality can be lived. Attentiveness wants to be the guide to make space for facets of life and the uniqueness of mission at Westerhelling.**

Attention leads to a contemplative attitude in one's own everyday life and in looking outwards. To the world around us.

The attentive outward gaze has shown us the young generation that in our time is looking for stillness and for a place to embark on the quest to live their lives, received as a gift, their own way.

In recent months, the question of the people of the Garden Club has caught our attention: can we find a place with you to give meaning to our lives? They have come our way.



The people of Westerhelling have said, «come and join us. Our house and grounds are what you are looking for».

The Garden Club gives the Westerhelling the opportunity to answer a need in our society: to provide a simple, quiet place where people, doing well, can work in the garden and with satisfaction themselves.

## Chestnut cake

**It happens regularly that people come to gather chestnuts in the front garden of the Westerhelling in October. This year, one of the Garden Club participants said he would be the first to gather chestnuts. He said he had his own recipe to make a cake.**



**A few days later, he brought a piece of his own baked chestnut cake.**

The Garden Club is an activity of the RIBW (Regional Institution for Protected Housing) and gives people with a distance to the labour market an opportunity to work in a garden project. For several months now, there has been an agreement between RIBW and the brothers. About 25 people come to work in the garden every week.

The Garden Club is not only a good help in maintaining the garden. It is also, and certainly first and foremost, an enrichment of the activities at Westerhelling.

Jacques Scholte



## 18 – 20 November / Furth

**The Province Assembly which took place in Furth from 18 – 20 November was an important moment in our life as a Province, as it was the moment when we entered more intentionally into the process of moving from being a Province to being a District of the Province of the Hermitage.**

The Assembly began with a presentation about the history of the different countries of our own Province. I thought this might be rather boring, with too many details, but it proved to be interesting. For example, I learned that at one point the Belgian Brothers were responsible for 70 schools in Belgium. The Province of West central Europe also has its own points of celebration, not least the significant achievement of forging one new Province with its own identity from the four previous Provinces which came together in 2000, managing the process of diminishment while at the same time supporting mission, and the establishment of the Mission Council with the active participation of many lay people across the five countries of our Province. The presentation from the Hermitage

province, which was represented by the Provincial, Br. Gabriel Villa – Real, the Vice-Provincial, Br. Xavier Giné, Llorens Claramunt from Catalunya, and Danai Anagnostopoulou from Greece, focused on establishing a «network of networks» as a way of working together which represented differences, and avoided a way of working which was overly hierarchic or centralised.

As the Assembly progressed, one of the key points that emerged was the tension between some key tasks which we need to attend to, and the process which will take us into this new reality, given some of the concerns that have been raised about aspects of the process which has led us to this point. Tasks include preparing and writing statutes, establishing clearly what is meant by «depending» on The Hermitage Province, dealing with the loss involved in no longer being a province, focusing on opportunities for working together in mission, and how to engage with the Province of the Hermitage, which has a number of Province structures. The Province of West Central Europe could be seen as «structure-light,» partly due to our limited capacity, but also due to

a concern not to create structures and meetings which can become burdensome to manage and maintain.

The meeting was characterised by a spirit of openness and co-operation. Rob Walsh facilitated in a way which helped the important themes to emerge and for the key points to be presented and discussed. At the end of the meeting there were two important energies in the room, both of which need to be heard and respected. In the first place it was suggested that the two provinces need to do their own work to discuss the implications of this change for themselves, and to devise a process that helps us to end this stage of our history well, so that we can embrace the change positively. At the same time there was recognition of the need to have more clarity before 23rd November 2023, when the Province will become a district of the Hermitage Province. The Province Assembly was an important point in the journey towards this destination, with Brothers and lay people from each of the countries and Provinces involved in this process of change.

**Brother Brendan Geary**  
2nd December 2022

# Province of West Central Europe

## Provincial Assembly from 18 to 20 November 2022

From the 18th to the 20th November, 19 Brothers and Lay Marists from the Province of Central-West Europe, as well as 4 Brothers and Lay Marists invited from the Province of L'Hermitage, met in Furth, Germany, for a Provincial Assembly.

After the meeting of the Provincial Councils of the two Marist Provinces which took place in September in Dublin, this Assembly marked a new stage on the common journey.

On the 15th of August, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, informed the Provinces of Central West Europe and L'Hermitage that the present Province of Central West Europe will become a district canonically dependent on the Province of L'Hermitage from October 2023.

### The objectives of the meeting were as follows

- To review together the path taken by the WCE Province in recent months;
- To get to know better the realities lived in the two Provinces;
- To share what is important for each member of the assembly in relation to Marist life and mission;



■ To propose measures to be taken in the months to come.

In this way, the participants had the opportunity to become better acquainted with the realities lived in the two Provinces, with their challenges and priorities for the future. They were able to freely express their feelings and what was important to them. Several themes to be worked on in the coming months were retained: communication, the continuity of the dialogue between us, the priorities concerning the mission, the drawing up of the Statutes of the future District, while deepening mutual knowledge, etc.

Indeed, it is by fostering relationships and

mutual knowledge that trust is built. This makes possible a good collaboration in view of the development and continuity of Marist life and mission in the countries where we are, with fewer Brothers and more lay people in positions of responsibility.

The spirit of openness and fraternity, the moments of exchange in small groups, the moments of conviviality and the warm welcome of our confreres from Germany and from the host centre, allowed us to live a pleasant meeting. I thank each participant as well as Rob Walsh who guided the exchanges and Nancy Camilléri who helped with the translation.

**Provincial Robert Thunus**



# International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation Programm in Rome 2022

**The world-famous Marist welcoming culture also awaited me in Rome. I felt warmly welcomed in many languages when I entered the Spiritual Retreat House «Nostra Signora Madre della Misericordia» on Monte Cucco. Immediately a lively exchange with old companions and an interested meeting of new faces began. This multicultural dialogue and the willingness to communicate with each other were a tangible and visible sign of personal joy and an open heart for global understanding.**

After a day of getting to know each other, the work on the main topics 1 with 4 followed on Saturday. This process was only interrupted by the Sunday excursion to Ancient Rome and the subsequent visit to the General House. The cordial invitation of Superior General Ernesto Sanchez - the house is always open to all Marists - was clearly concluded by a joint lunch, an interesting tour of the house and the impressive Eucharistic celebration in the evening.

In the following week, the focus was on intensive exchange in small groups and the plenum. Here, the many personal contributions and testimonies of Marist life on the ground enriched the struggle for substantive syntheses.

The efforts to find a common path that includes the broad diversity of Marist life were energetic dancing and music, loosening dances, meditative exercises and creative elements with various materials.

Enriching and motivating at the same time were the many gifts brought from the individual provinces. The work on the four focal points progressed well due to this encouraging abundance of impressions.

The prevailing diversity of cultures was not felt as a hindrance that separates us from each other, but rather the participants enjoyed the different experiences in the provinces of this world as an enriching element that broadens their personal horizons.

Purposefully steered by the competent management team, it quickly became clear that the broad basis of the opinions submitted could not be conclusively presented within a week by a document and draft resolutions for the four topics to be dealt with could be taken! The event with the motto «Welcoming, nurturing, living and sharing» was relieved of the time pressure. With the help of the example of a running relay, it was pointed out that optimal conditions should be created here in Rome, which must be adopted and further worked on in the following two years, worldwide in the local provinces.

At the concluding divine service on the last day of the meeting, gratitude for the time together and the joy of the experienced togetherness were in the foreground.

There is no question that in the phase of the subsequent, two-year online consultations, the cooperation will be significantly improved by the fact that we are now dealing with well-known companions with whom we can share beautiful memories sustainably.

Many thanks to all those who contributed to the success of this forum.

**Wolfgang Hacker - Germany**



## Ukrainian refugees in Habay-la-Vieille

At the beginning of March, we welcomed a Ukrainian family temporarily to our Maisonnette, with great joy and, to tell the truth, with some apprehension. This extended family consisted of two grandmothers, three mothers and four children, as can be seen in the photo opposite, taken at our Champagnat party last June.

In July, one of the mothers, Liliia (dressed in black) returned to Ukraine with her two children.

And now, at the end of the year, the welcoming experience is slowly coming to an end. Indeed, Zoriana, who recently gave birth to a baby Monika, will have the opportunity to live with her husband and little Wanda in a social house at their disposal from Monday 4 December. The two grandmothers, Tamila and Alona, will return to a refugee centre not far from our village on Tuesday 5 December.

We still have to find a solution for Yana and her 8 year old daughter Ramina in the coming days, so that they can continue to live in the best possible conditions.

**Brother Albert ANDRE**



# KEY DATES 2023

**JANUARY**

**29 th**

Irish Marist Core Teams Gathering –  
Catholic Schools Week

**FEBRUARY**

**16 / 17 / 18**

Accompaniment Programme  
Part 1– L’Hermitage

**MARCH**

**10 / 11 / 12 th**

Province Pilgrimage L’Hermitage

**JUNE**

**16 / 17 / 18 (TBC)**

Accompaniment Programme  
Part 2 –The Netherlands

**JULY**

**26 – 31 st**

International Gathering  
of Marist Youth «Into the Deep»

**OCTOBER**

**6 / 7 / 8**

Marist Leadership  
Gathering L’Hermitage

**OCTOBER**

**16 th – 20 th (TBC)**

Marist Week Ireland

# Marist Interview

## Kimi MacLean

### *Tell us a little bit about yourself*

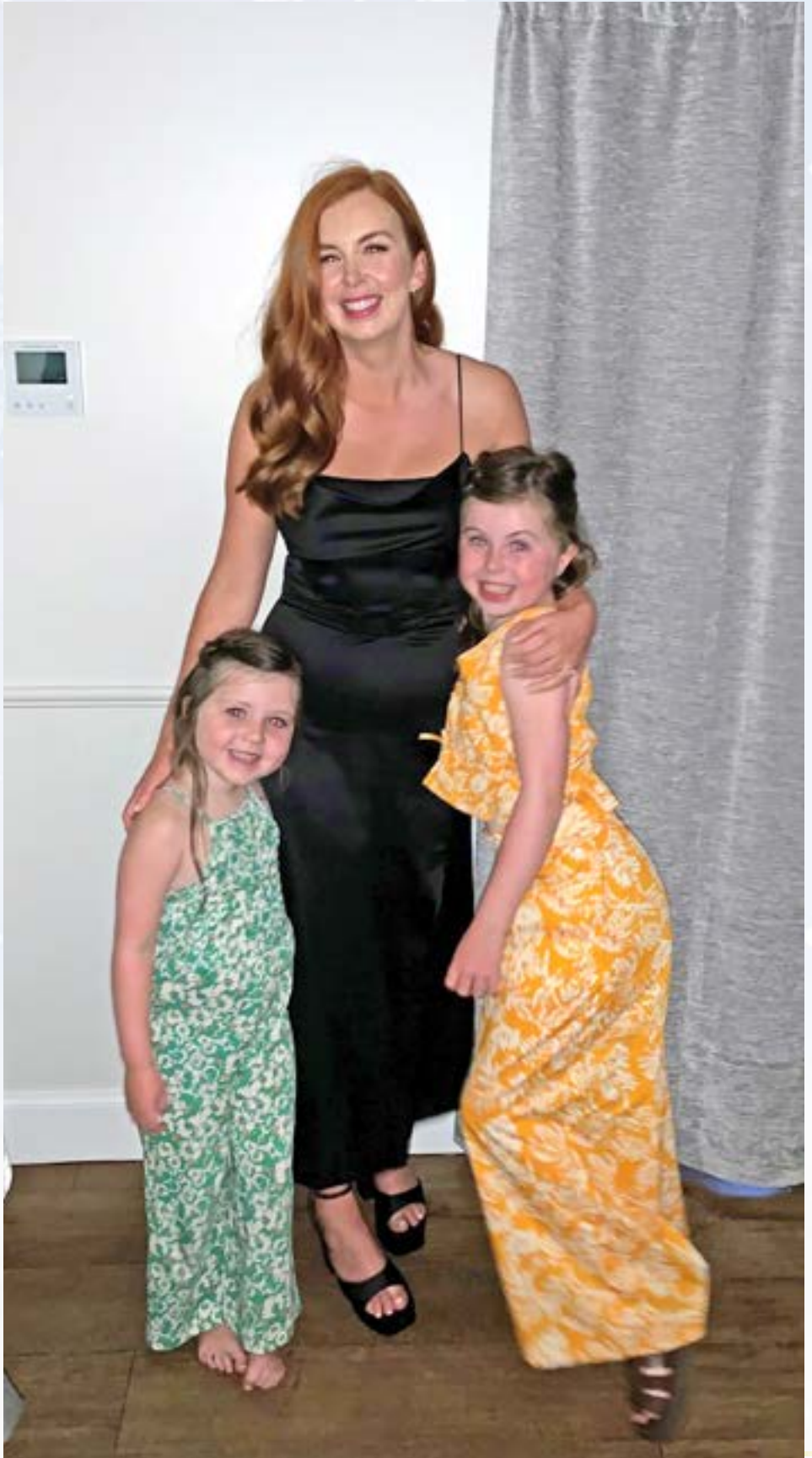
Hello, my name is Kimi MacLean, and I am 32 years old. I am a Business Studies teacher and Marist Co-Ordinator from St John's RC High School in Dundee, Scotland. I left St John's as an S6 pupil in 2008 and returned in 2014 as a newly qualified teacher (NQT). I have been with my fiancé, Ryan, for 10 years and we are getting married in July 2023. I am definitely a sociable person (and a bit of a chatterbox); I really like spending time and going out with my friends and family. I am also a member of the Social Committee in St John's which I love being a part of! I get to organise parties, plan Secret Santa's and other whole school events!

### *How did you get involved with the Marist world?*

My involvement in the Marist world began when I returned to St John's as an NQT. The school's aims and ethos reflect Marist Values and traditions, focusing on the importance of family, love and building community. I have contributed and participated in many «Marist Week», which is a whole school project where each department in the school deliver a lesson to their classes, incorporating St. Marcellin Champagnat, the Marist Brothers and their values. It was in 2021 that my former Head Teacher offered me the opportunity to become one of the school's Marist Co-Ordinators, which I happily accepted.

### *What is an interesting fact that most people may not know about you?*

Not sure if these are that interesting, but one fact, that my pupils find very confusing is, I dye my hair red! Another (not so interesting) fact is I LOVE Fleetwood Mac and I eventually got to see the whole band live in 2015 and I cried when they came on stage! Also, I am a member of





a book club which I thoroughly enjoy; however, if I told 20-year-old me I would enjoy reading in my spare time, and be in a book club, I would never have believed it! We meet up every month to discuss the book and we also leave a review of the book on our Instagram page.

***What accomplishments are you most proud of in your life?***

Even though it was a long time ago, I would say one accomplishment I am most proud of is achieving my Bachelor Honours degree in Accountancy. I have always struggled with exam stress and put far too much pressure on myself, which resulted in a lot of average exam results! After 3 years of stress and tears, I somehow managed to change my mindset and finished my 4th year with a 2:1. I still remember the day I received my results and checked the results board at least 4 times to make sure I wasn't looking at the wrong person! Achieving an upper second-class degree is something I never thought was possible, but I worked hard and was determined to do my best, so I am still very proud of this! Something else that makes me proud is seeing the young people I teach passing their exams and achieving their goals! Bumping into ex pupils and hearing how well they are doing is something that makes me very happy.

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

I didn't realise how much I would enjoy being a Marist Co-Ordinator and being part of the Marist Brothers Province. As this is my second year, I have had the pleasure of working with two amazing groups of Marist Leaders. These young people are motivated, enthusiastic, thoughtful, caring...this list could go on. They all work so well together and within the first few weeks were demonstrating brilliant leadership skills and I can't wait to see this continue.

***How would your family and friends describe you?***

I think my family and friends would



describe me as someone who likes to have fun. I love having a laugh with my friends and I love a funny story or a funny video. I spend far too many hours on TikTok watching people get pranked, scared or falling over. They would probably say caring and helpful. I don't like seeing people struggle and try to help people whenever I can. After playing card games, dominos or taking part in quizzes with me, my friends would 100% say I am competitive. I sometimes get over excited playing card games...

***What is a significant event in your life and how did it influence the person you are today?***

I wouldn't say I have a significant event that has influenced me, but like the majority of people, I do re-evaluate life when someone I know passes away. Life is too short and I try not to take it too seriously at times. I make sure I have fun, spend time with the people I love, do things I want to do and buy that outfit I want!

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

I should say I like going to the gym, but this would be a lie! That said, I do go to the gym a few times a week and even though it feels like a chore, I do enjoy it when I am there. I also dance twice a week which I love doing. I started dancing when I was 3 years old and gave up when I was about

23 years old. I then joined an adult's dance class in 2019 and have been going every week since. I've performed in 3 shows in the past 3 years which has been very scary and nerve-wracking but I loved every minute of it! I also love spending time with my family and friends. I am very close with two of my nieces and I try and spend as much time with them as I can! Olive is 9 going on 19 and is the sweetest and most sassiest little girl you've ever met. Clemence is 6 and is the cheekiest and most charming little girl who keeps me entertained. Lastly, as much as I love socialising, I also love a chilled Friday night watching a good film or series with a nice gin, or wine, or both!!

***What has been your highlight in your work in Marist Mission to date?***

It would definitely be the overall experience working with Katie, the other Marist Co-Ordinator, and The Marist Leaders. Even though I love it, being a teacher can be a bit stressful at times and it is a very demanding job; however, getting to work closely with a friend and a group of young people out with the normal «classroom context» has been so worthwhile. The Marist Leaders love our meetings and if they had the chance, the meeting would be weekly! Seeing how much they enjoy it and seeing their confidence develop has been the highlight for me.

God grant you peace at Christmas  
And fill your heart with cheer,  
God grant you health and happiness  
Throughout the coming year,  
God guide you with His wisdom  
And keep you in His care –  
This is my special wish for you,  
This is my Christmas prayer.

Merry Christmas