

# Being Marist

WEST CENTRAL EUROPE



## Dear Friends!

As we approach Christmas, we live in a very unstable world, a world where war dominates in many places especially Israel, Gaza, Ukraine with many people killed, suffering and displaced. We are also facing a serious world climate emergency in the decades ahead. At Christmas we also are aware that there are many people facing poverty, homelessness and family breakdown. Many families

are grieving the loss of loved ones since last Christmas. The message of Christmas is very much one of hope in the midst of this instability and suffering all over the world. Some will say that they have not experienced the presence of God in their lives. The message of Christmas is very much that God has come among us and is with us. The challenge posed to us at Christmas is to contribute to bring the presence of God into the lives of the people we interact with each day. I

thank all of you for the difference you have made to the lives of the people you live and work with in Marist Mission. May you and your families be blessed this Christmas. May you experience peace and bring peace where you can to those you can reach out to in life. Let us pray that hardened hearts may be filled with compassion and peace may reign in the troubled regions of the world. Have a happy, restful and blessed Christmas.

**P.J McGowan FMS.**

# Wish List through Advent

*Advent season at Maristen Gymnasium Furth with the «Wish List through Advent» - first week: Peace*

At the Maristen Gymnasium in Furth, the Advent motto this year is the wish list. A large wish list hangs at the Advent stop in the assembly hall and at the beginning of each week a new wish is added to the list, which then leads thematically through the whole week and is also the topic of the Advent meditations.

The first wish on the Advent wish list in the first week of Advent was «Peace» - a wish that many people are probably wishing for at the moment! To make this wish clearly visible in the school building, some classes made peace doves to decorate the Advent tree in the assembly hall.

The 5th and 6th classes of the MGF made an even clearer statement in favour of peace: 5A studied the shape of the

peace sign in maths class and prepared a large peace sign on the football pitch using measuring tape and ropes. Pupils from all 5th and 6th classes then came together in bright sunshine and formed a large «peace sign» on the snow-covered football pitch, which could be seen from far above. The whole thing was photographed with a drone. Everyone worked together peacefully - so hopefully everyone will carry the peace sign not only symbolically, but also in their hearts and out into the world during the Christmas season.

The second week will focus on the wish «Community» and in the third week, the week directly before Christmas, the wish «Love» will appear on the wish list.

**Stephanie Peis,**  
Maristen-Gymnasium Furth





# The Night of Lights in Regensburg Cathedral

## with the Marienrealschule Cham

A small group of pupils from the Marienrealschule set off with their school chaplain Johann Staudner to celebrate the «Night of Lights» in the cathedral. Even the German Federal Railways (half an hour late) could not prevent the event. In the cathedral, they were allocated one of the scarce seats in the choir room shortly before the start (7.30 pm). Most of the young people set up camp on the floor of the cathedral with blankets, sleeping mats and sleeping bags.

The BDJ and the Evangelical Youth

of Regensburg have been organising a «Night of Lights» in Regensburg Cathedral for many years. This year's motto was: «God is bigger than our hearts». Based on the prayers in Taizé, the night is organised with songs from Taizé. These songs consist of a simple text, usually just one line. This is sung again and again - easy to remember and easy to join in. The repetition has a meditative character, you come to rest and reflect on the essentials - prayer with God. The meditative atmosphere invited people to sing along, listen and reflect. The altar area was decorated

with lights and cloths, there were no bright spotlights. Each guest was given a light, which created a unique atmosphere in the cathedral. Our pupils were able to immerse themselves in this special atmosphere: Candlelight that allows you to calm down. Silence that makes you feel carried. Songs that make the soul vibrate. Prayers that pray for peace, reconciliation and community. The group arrived back in Cham at around 11.00 pm, somewhat tired but full of wonderful impressions.

**Hans Staudner -  
Marienrealschule Cham**

4 – 9 th December.  
General House,  
Rome



# Sources and Streams: Marist Symposium 2023

**The first Marist Patrimony Symposium was held in Rome from 4 – 8th December 2023. The purpose of the Symposium was to bring together Marist scholars, writers, and directors of Marist mission and life, to share research, experiences, and ideas. The Symposium enabled people to meet, to establish relationships, and foster new scholarship, and to provide a focus for research to be shared and discussed in an international Marist context. The symposium also created a space to nurture new and potential researchers and writers and to encourage intergenerational links.**

The Marist spiritual family was represented by Brothers and lay people, and members of the Society of Mary, with whom we share significant parts of our foundation story. Participants came from twenty-five different countries, including Kenya, Guatemala, Brazil, France, Italy, Hong Kong, Madagascar, France, Spain, Australia, USA, Scotland, Vietnam, Rwanda, Zambia, Ghana, Côte D'Ivoire, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Bolivia, Chile, Fiji, Colombia, and Argentina. There were Marist Fathers from Ireland, USA,

Germany, and New Zealand, including Fr Larsen, the Superior General of the Fathers. Two Marist Sisters were present. Twenty presenters from different parts of the Marist world provided interesting and stimulating sessions in the course of the week.

Br. Michael Green began with a presentation on the Christocentric sources of Marist spirituality. He said he was concerned that in recent years Fr. Champagnat often seemed to be the focus of our Marist spirituality rather than Christ himself. He contrasted the tradition passed on to Fr. François (Superior General from 1839 – 1860) from Fr. Champagnat, with the very different ascetical spirituality that was promoted by Brother Louis Marie, who was Superior General from 1860 until 1879, and his successors, and which was influential in the Marist Institute until the 1960s. Br. André Lanfrey in his presentation, where he reinterpreted significant aspects of the Marist Foundation story, also pointed to Fr. François as a more authentic interpreter of the Champagnat tradition. He also explored the complex relationship between the brothers and the Society of Mary which were not fully

resolved until the 1870s. We are indebted to these two Brothers who have used their research skills to reclaim the Champagnat tradition which has been hidden behind the ascetical and moralistic accretions of later generations.

Br. Antonio Estaún delved into the writings of Fr. François to reveal the personality behind this often elusive figure. He also explored the people and sources that inspired the thinking and writing of Brother Basilio Rueda, who was Superior General from 1967 – 85, at a time of great change in the Church and the Institute. Other presenters examined the Marist tradition from the perspective of a spirituality of the heart, moving from the dark night to a spirituality of light, and the need to move to interiority in our educational work.

Fr Alois Greiler SM asked if Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, founder of the Society of Mary, should be canonised. He noted that the cause of Fr Colin was often stalled due to lack of enthusiasm on the part of many members of the Society of Mary themselves. This presentation opened up the life and writings of Fr Colin to many participants. He left the question of Fr Colin's relationship with



Jeanne-Marie Chavoin in the air, saying it required further study. Jeanne Marie Chavoin, co-Foundress of the Marist Sisters, had a different vision for the lifestyle and apostolate of the Sisters, which involved working in villages to offer support to women and girls in a range of ways. Fr Colin, as was the case with so many nineteenth century bishops and male founders, wanted the sisters to be cloistered. Fr Colin imposed his own preferred candidate as leader of the Sisters, and Jeanne Marie-Chavoin was put aside. It was noted that this is a difficult history at a time when significant parts of the Church want to promote the leadership and involvement of women in the Church. This aspect of Fr. Colin's life has to be considered alongside his important insight about offering mercy in the manner of Mary as the preferred way to evangelise the «men of our time», which continues to be relevant today, his ability

to inspire the young priests who joined the Marist project, and the management of the Pacific mission from such a great distance.

Dr Michael Connolly from Coatbridge near Glasgow, a lecturer in Sport at Stirling University, gave two workshops based on his research into the life of Brother Walfrid, who founded Celtic football club in order to raise money to provide meals for poor children in the East End of Glasgow. Michael's engaging manner and the quality of his presentation made this workshop a popular choice, and many people have made contact with Michael to share more stories about the involvement of Brothers in sport in other parts of the world. Michael said that the most interesting question he received was whether or not Brother Walfrid had played for Celtic!

Br. Colin Chalmers and Dorotea Cinanni, the Archivist, led two workshops to

«open the treasures of the archives» to the participants. Both workshops were popular and one was oversubscribed and had to be divided into two groups. I offered a presentation entitled, «I don't like teachers who are executioners: Safeguarding in Marist origins and recent developments». The quotation is taken from Fr. Champagnat, and I used the presentation to demonstrate that Fr. Champagnat was ahead of his time in his policies and practice regarding the protection of children.

As well as benefiting from the research and study of the presenters, the Symposium offered an opportunity for social gatherings, conversations, networking and encouragement for each other. Researchers often work alone, and sometimes do not benefit from the interest and encouragement of other Marists. The shadow side of our fine Marist tradition for pragmatism and practicality is that taking time for historical research may seem either a luxury, a quaint obsession, or of rather arcane interest to some of our confrères and colleagues. The Symposium allowed «kindred spirits» to share their enthusiasm for Marist history, charism and tradition, and to support each other in our conviction that awareness and understanding of the «sources and streams» of our tradition can be life-giving and can illuminate new paths for mission and Marist life.

Br. Michael Green said at the end of the Symposium that there are plans for a second Symposium in 1825, the year of the General Chapter and the bicentenary of the opening of the Hermitage. Hopefully, the next Symposium will be an opportunity for further sharing of research, writing and initiatives that open up and explore our heritage, with new presenters – including more women and voices from more parts of the Marist world – for the benefit of the whole Institute.

**Br. Brendan Geary**  
9th December 2023

# Our Marist Leadership Programme 2023



## Marist College Athlone

To start the year, all Marist leaders were assigned five 1st year students to support and as part of our Buddy Group system. The role of the Marist leader is to check in on how they are settling into life in Marist College. We arranged a meet up in October to chat and answer any questions the students had for us. This programme helped the junior students feel at home and gave them a go-to person in case they ever feel overwhelmed or upset. They enjoy having this connection with a senior student and it can mean a friendly face to meet in the school hallways.

Marist week was celebrated in our school at the end of September and the Marist

leaders were involved in many activities during this week. They read morning reflections over the intercom, organised and attended our annual Champagnat Mass and held a ceremony to inform new students of what is meant to Be Marist. During this welcoming ceremony Marist Leaders presented first years with Marist Bookmarks made by the Leaders and all first years were invited to add their name into our iconic wooden Marist Heart. We also saw our Year 1 Marist leaders and Year 2 Marist leaders go to Notre Dame L'Hermitage in France to improve their leadership skills and mix with other Leaders from Marist schools in Scotland and Ireland. The trip consisted of different leadership activities and social activities with the other schools. Every group had to

*Marist College Athlone*



Trip to Crogh Patrick May 2023

do a presentation about their school and the variety of activities done as part of the Marist Leader programme. This helped us bring ideas back to our own school such as letting students decorate the school for Christmas and different types of fundraisers. The trip helped improve our social skills and made us better leaders. The Marist podcast was set up by Marist leaders to spread news of events and different things going on within the school. The hosts of the podcast also interview various people around the school to create more awareness of the impressive variety of talent from sporting individuals to teachers setting up new programmes within the school. Another key feature about the Marist podcast is how inclusive it is. The logo of the podcast was created by a Marist student. We ran a competition for the whole school to see who could create the best entry and allow students to display their art and creativeness. This displays the Marist value of Family Spirit, something we try to exercise around the school wherever possible and something that is seen time and time again when walking around the school. The podcast is just another part of what it means to Be Marist!

As Marist leaders we also organized a whole school donation to the Christmas Shoe Box Appeal for Team Hope. We informed staff and students of the worthy



Trip to France – Sept 2023

charity that delivers gifts straight into the hands of children affected by poverty in countries across Eastern Europe and Africa. Marist Leaders demonstrated the core Marist values of Family Spirit and In the Way of Mary in choosing this school activity.

To mark the end of the school year last year Marist Leaders along with their coordinators walked in the footsteps of our Founder Champagnat by taking to the mountains. The group trekked up Crogh Patrick in the beautiful sunshine and all made it down in one piece. It was a wonderful day out where Marist Leaders got to reflect on the year and we plan on doing a similar activity at the end of this school year also.



Trip to France – Sept 2023

# 2023/24 JUNIOR MARIST LEADERS

## Marist Athlone Year 1 Leaders



Darragh Glynn-Desmond



Barra Powell



Jack White



Rían Gaynor



Feidhlim Byrne



Jacob Bourke



Shane Killian



Boris Zhang



DJ Connaughton



Conor McCormack



# 2023/24 JUNIOR MARIST LEADERS

## Marist Athlone Year 2 Leaders



Conor Devaney



Cian Norris



Daniel Ganley



Gearoid McCarthy



Jim Carney



Kolm Regan



Martin Murray



Mathew Turner



Leon Macken



Jack Collins

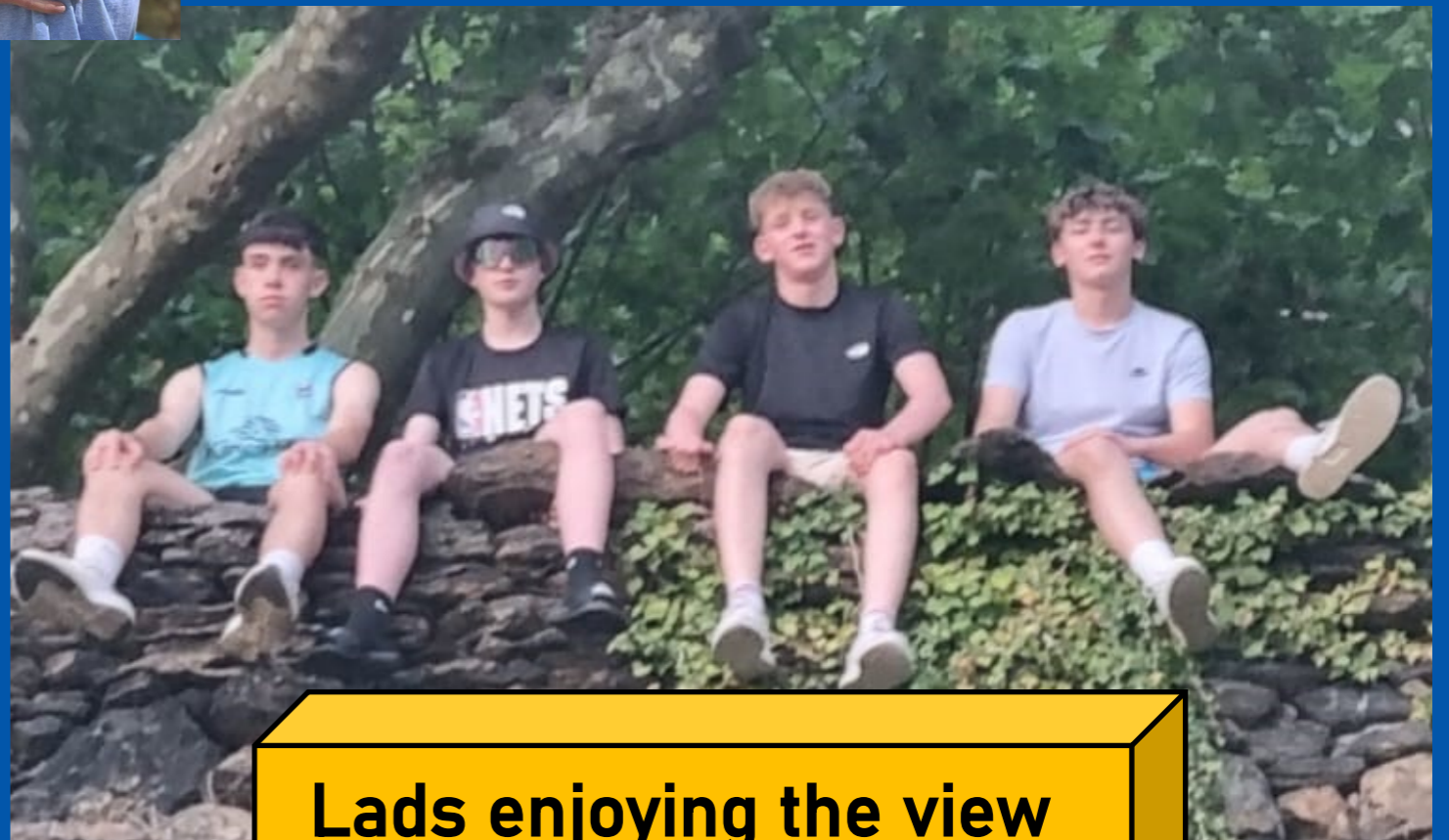


Arrival in Geneva Airport

Notre Dame de l'Hermitage



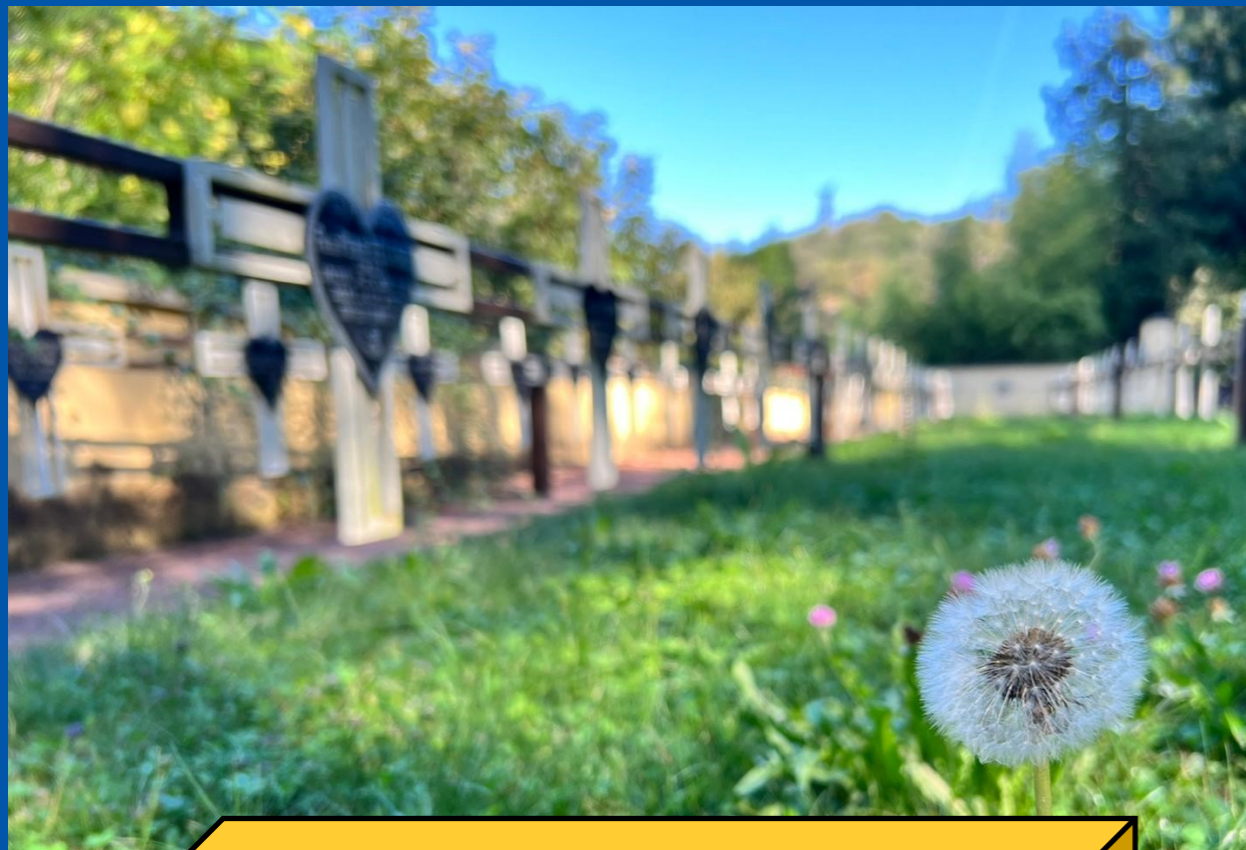
# Marist Leader trip Notre Dame de L'Hermitage



Brother Paul's tour of  
The Cathedral

Lads enjoying the view

# France September 2023



Graveyard at l'Hermitage

Church at La Rosey

Cross listing all countries  
with Marist presence



Hiking through the footsteps of Marcellin



First Marist House



# Marist Leaders in L'Hermitage France



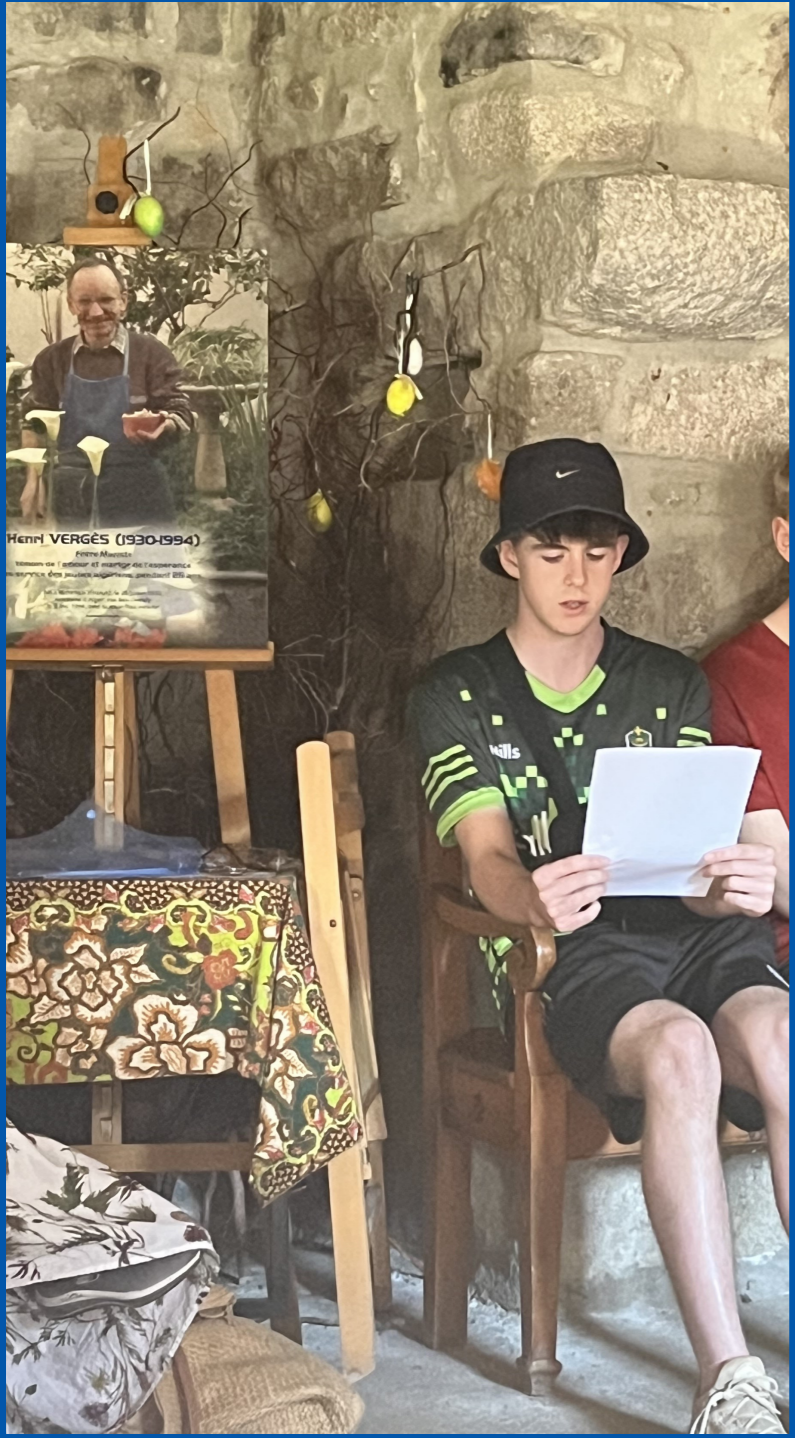
Original Table used by Marcellin

Leadership activities



Outside L'Hermitage

# September 2023



An evening in Saint Étienne with other Marist Leaders

# Marist Leaders at Marian College Dublin

Our Marist leaders have been busy this year so far. From helping our first years on what could have been a daunting trip back to school for them this August, to our annual trip to L'Hermitage, our Year 1, and Year 2 leaders have been working hard to set goals and tasks for the year ahead.

Our first task of the year was to welcome the new first years back to school in September. Marist leaders were on hand to assist first years as they navigated their first few weeks around the school. Finding classrooms, working out lockers, and following new timetables can all be daunting tasks for young students. As leaders we were on hand to help the First Year Year head to settle the new students into the Marian family.

From this we have taken our role even further by starting up a mentor programme with the group. Each first-year student has been allocated a Marist leader to act in a mentorship capacity. We have been acting in an almost big brother role around the school. The aim is to check in with the students on a regular basis, to see how they are doing. This was particularly important around the time of Christmas exams. This was the first time the first-year students had ever experienced exams in such an environment. As mentors we discussed the idea of creating study timetables, reducing exam stress, getting enough rest etc.

This year we have decided to work closely with Pieta house. In Ireland Pieta House is a charity organisation that works closely with those who have been impacted by suicide. Mental health and suicide awareness is something which is incredibly important to us in Marian College, and it is one of the reasons why we have applied for Pieta's Amber Flag which is awarded to schools for their support and promotion positive mental



health and well-being. As part of this initiative, we will be running a positive mental health week. As well as these events we also plan to participate in the now worldwide «Darkness into Light» walk in May in aid of suicide prevention and support.

This Christmas we have continued with what has become our annual food drive appeal. We run this event in aid of the local Saint Vincent De Paul Charity. We ask students and staff to bring in non-perishable foods that will be donated to those less fortunate living in the area over the Christmas period.

This year we have also decided to run a

new event in the school. We are currently promoting our SVP Giving Tree. The Giving Tree is an idea which we felt was something that all our students and staff could get behind. The concept is for people to take a tag from our giving tree and buy a small gift matching the tag to place under the tree.

Like our food drive the gifts will be donated to young children whose families have fallen on difficult times over this Christmas period.

We're hoping that coming into the New Year we will be able to contribute even more of our ideas to our school community. We have many more goals that we would like to achieve in our first year of the Marist Leadership Programme. We

want to ensure that we can add to the positive community as much as we can here in Marian.

For now though we wish all readers a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and peaceful New Year for 2024.



# 2023/24 JUNIOR MARIST LEADERS

## —• Marian College Marist Leaders •—



Nathan Oates



Killian O'Hare



Gabriel De Gomez Costa



Tristian Colclough



Glen Roche



Reuben Keogh



Nessian O'Neill



Oisín Burke



Ciaran Roche



Markuss Ivanovs

# Marist Leaders Moyle Park College Dublin

## Senan Doyle 5th year / Year 2 Marist leader

Hey, Senan here from Moyle Park College. Even with Christmas just coming up now, we've already gotten loads down over the school year so far. Simple stuff like bake sales to raise money, setting up and helping parents out for our Parent teacher meetings across the board. Some of the bigger things consist of completing our library project which had been in the books since last year, a successful Halloween hangout for our first years, as well as organising a day in Moyle Park for students from a Marist School in France who had been on a school trip.

In bigger detail, our library idea had been in the works for about a year, originally the idea of a book club in honour of a previous year's student. But at is it now, with the help of Mr. Kerins who had renovated the library to make it look clean and proper, the Library has become a place for students to study, do homework or read during our big breaks. As per usual our Halloween Hangout



was a success, Pirate themed again this year, all the helpers were fitted out in pirate costumes and the study hall had been decorated with cardboard cutouts of pirate ships, seas, beaches

and Islands. With the first years we had planned out a few games, a Halloween/Marist/Moyle Park themed Kahoot quiz, a raffle with similar theming and perhaps the event best received amongst the first years, a contest to wrap teachers in toilet paper like mummies. I remember in particular having me and my fellow leaders walking around to try to rile up everyone to support their form class's representatives.

In addition to our first years, we had a French Marist school on a trip to Ireland for the week to join us. It was great having them there with us, they brought a lot of energy to the room and even taught us a dance. We spent a lot of the day trying to get to know each other and showing them around the school. Overall they were great fun the two days they were there.

## Alex O'Leary Marist Leader Year One - Fifth Year

On the 7th of September, the marist leaders of Moyle Park College went to L'Hermitage in France. We had lots of fun and learned a lot. On the trip, I made



new friends with people from my own school and people from other schools such as some of the boys from Marian college. I learned a few new things about myself such as how I am better at communicating with others than I thought. I was really happy with this. I was very proud of how I cooperated with other leaders from Ireland and Scotland during the many activities around the grounds as I can now use this skill with others in my own classes and school community.

I also enjoyed mentoring the first years at the beginning of the year as it felt very nice to provide them with answers to their many questions. It was good to help them starting out and to do simple things like help organise their lockers and to write down their timetables for them. They were a friendly group and we are glad to have them as fellow students in Moyle park college.

This year has been a wonderful year and outstanding experience for me. Not only did we get to do so much stuff but I got a lot closer to the other Marist leaders, especially Timmy and Kevin.

As a Marist leader my highlight of the year has to be going to France at the start of the year, we got to learn about Marcellin Champagnat and how he lived. This was so cool and interesting to me as I got to literally be in his footsteps, I even sat at

## Tadgh Worthington TY - Year One Marist Leader

the same table he did. We saw where he lived, the first school he built and even where he had walked and even where he ate everyday.

In France we met other schools from Ireland and Scotland. This was so fun as I made new friends. I made so many new friends but some very close ones as well.

People in Scotland are so nice and I loved their accents! I even play Fortnite with some of my friends from Scotland. That is how close we are, there are around 7 of them and we talk on Snapchat call every single day. I am so happy I was able to come here and would definitely want to go again so I can see them.

## Oskars Ravejs

Hi my name is Oskars and I have done a lot of work while being a Marist Leader throughout the year so far.

After our trip to L'Hermitage we had principals coming over to our school who came all the way from Australia. Kevin, Timmy and I, presented what our school will be doing this year and we also told them about our experience on the trip to L'Hermitage.

In September I volunteered to help out along with other Marist Leaders in the Ciaran Carr Run in aid of the Ciaran Carr Foundation. Where we were there helping out by guiding people on where they had to go. Myself and Timmy have done a lot of presentations about the Marist Leader Programme along with giving advice to 3rd years for their exams that they will be sitting in May 2024. We have also been getting involved in a lot of activities.

We have organised the Halloween Hangout for the 1st year students in our school in October which was great fun and was a massive success. We have also helped out with the Christmas Shoebox Appeal, where we would donate some clothes, toys, stationary in a shoe box which is organised by Team Hope, which is then given to kids who have been affected by poverty.

Near the end of November it has been really busy for Kevin, Timmy and I where we got involved with Languages Connect. We were spreading awareness of the benefits of learning different languages to people in our school and even outside of school. We were all over social media posting about different languages, cultures and benefits from learning different languages. We were then short listed by Languages Connect out of all the schools in Ireland where we got the chance to win a trip



to Belgium. We had to then organise a Think Languages Day where we managed to get a bunch of speakers teaching about different languages.

Students learned about Japanese traditions, the Japanese Language, the Chinese Language, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and all about their different cultures and traditions. We even did an African style dance workshop. Where we taught students an Afro dance which was a lot of fun. Overall that whole day was so much fun! In the same week, on Friday Kevin and I were hosting the finals of our 1st year student's «Annual Spelling Bee Finals», which was a lot of fun as well. The highlight of my year so far as a Marist Leader is the trip to L'Hermitage which was absolutely incredible, which was such an amazing experience and also Think Languages Day. On that day we were having so much fun doing so many activities along with learning about different languages and cultures. We were having great fun dancing, taiko drumming and having a great time.

## Dawid Super 6th year - Year 2 Marist Leader

Since joining the Marist leaders in 2022, I've been taken on an extraordinary journey. From gaining respect within my school community, taking part in the L'hermitage trip and navigating through experiences that stemmed from that, to learning more about myself and gaining greater self confidence.

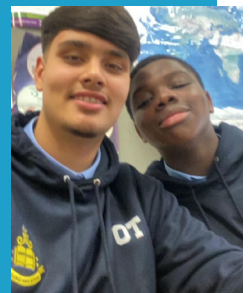
Over my time as Marist leader so far I've helped out with the 2022 MPC Halloween hangout. Unfortunately, I wasn't present at this year's hangout due to being away however I've made my presence felt through being there for incoming first years and also helping out with parent teacher meetings, greeting parents and students at the doors of the school with a smile and serving them tea and coffee. My Marist highlight of the year so far has been reuniting with friends I made in L'Hermitage. Since the start of 2023 I've visited Dumfries Scotland twice in February and August, and I also visited one of my friends who has gone on to study law at her accommodation in Edinburgh for a weekend in November. The Scottish Marist leaders also came to visit in July and stayed with me for a week, which was absolutely fantastic. I have also stayed in close contact with one friend from Marist Athlone, and we have also seen each other on several occasions since. These are memories that I'll cherish forever and I'm sure I'll make more with these fantastic people, and it all wouldn't have been possible without the Marist order, so for that, I'm forever grateful.

## Thomas Ojha Marist Leader - Year One

Hi, my name is Thomas. This is my first year of being a Marist Leader and I remember the first day of it. We had a breakfast together, all the Marist Leaders did before school and it was great, that was the beginning.

My first task as a Marist Leader was to represent Moyle Park in the Darkness into Light event, which was very good as we all went together. We helped set up the Moyle Park section in Corkage Park and I really enjoyed it. We then ran around the park even though we could have walked, we decided to run which later was bad because I couldn't walk straight anymore.

My biggest highlight was definitely the trip to L'hermitage in September. It was definitely one of the best experiences of the year and I'm glad the school gave me such an opportunity and I'm grateful. I grew so much in leadership skills on the trip and I met some great people while over there. It really opened my eyes to Marcellin Champagnat and all he has done. We explored L'hermitage and it was just overall a really good experience and I would love to go again.





## St Joseph's College



### St Joseph's College Dumfries

The Marist Leadership team in St. Joseph's College have been looking at ways to make the Marist Values more visible within their school and encourage pupils to be familiar with them in their everyday lives.

The school English Department has a «Reading Programme» which is followed by both S1 and S2 pupils to encourage reading on a daily basis. This term the Marist Leaders have produced bookmarks, with the Marist values on them, and they have gifted them to the S1 pupils who have recently joined our school community. Their intention is to make the Marist values visible to pupils and support the English Department in their quest to make kids love reading! Marist Leaders have also been in discussion with the Art Department in relation to creating an art space in the school foyer. The Marist Leaders would like to use the empty walls to tell the story of Marcellin Champagnat's life through the different mediums of art, using the artistic talents of members of our school community, to bring this project to life. Watch this space for a new art installation...



## St Mungos Academy



### St Mungos Academy

#### «Helping Hands»

Since returning from L'Hermitage, the team have also been continuing with their «Helping Hands» initiative; offering practical help in the RE department and in other departments across the school. The team look forward to the continuation of «Helping Hands» during the busy season of Advent!



Catholic Education Week and attendance at the High Schools' Mass in Saint Andrew's Cathedral. The Marist Leaders were also actively present at the Saint Ninian Prayer Breakfast and helped to support this occasion through their participation in the liturgy and offering practical assistance to set everything up and serve teas, coffees and food to those who attended.

#### Riverside Care Home Project

In November, the Marist Leadership Team at Saint Mungo's Academy, started planning their annual Christmas card project for Riverside Care Home. This has been built upon the relationship established with the home last Christmas and the team are delighted to be continuing with this as part of their preparations for Advent and the festive season.

#### Student-Led Learning

This month and as part of sharing Marist values across the school community, our Marist Leaders created the resources for a lesson which was delivered to all S1 students. The Leaders then took on the role of «teacher» and led the lessons; taking full responsibility for all aspects of learning and teaching. This was a resounding success and our S1 students gave really positive feedback! It was a wonderful opportunity to introduce our S1 students to our identity as a Marist school and for the Marist Leaders to share their experiences of their Marist journey and what they have gained from their role in the school.

#### Presence

Also in November, the Marist value of presence was very much in evidence through the team's participation in Masses at our local parishes during



St John's RC High School



# Christmas Fayre

Some of our Marist Leaders involved in St John's RC High School annual India Village Christmas Fayre. Our S4 Marist Leaders created a stall to sell Croc Jibbitz and created two festive games for pupils to play – Ho, Ho, Hole in One and Candy Cane Limbo! Al ltogether

they raised £105.25! Our S5 and S6 Marist Leaders created a festive hamper which included an Oodie, face masks, chocolates and much more! They went around the school selling raffle tickets and managed to raise a fantastic £330.30!



# Farewell to Aisling Demaison

Many of you are already aware that **Aisling Demaison our Director of Education is taking up a new job in a school in Geneva in January 2024. On behalf of the Mission Council and all of you I would like to express our deep gratitude for the enormous contribution Aisling has made to the District of West Central Europe and to the building up of the Marist community during the past eight years.**

Aisling has the ability to engage with everyone, to bring people on board and to make everybody feel welcome and part of the Marist Family. She has been responsible for a number of very important initiatives including the student leadership programme, the annual pilgrimages for teachers every year to L'Hermitage, the accompaniment programme, her contribution to building up the Global Marist Schools Network and the development of social media. The Being Marist newsletter which she created has been very much welcomed

by all as an excellent way of keeping all up to date on all the various Marist activities taking place and a very effective way for all to share their Marist experience. The schools and projects really appreciated her work in promoting Marist Characteristic spirit with her visits, regular contacts and programmes to support the work of implementing Marist values.

I thank her for all the work behind the scene to build relationships and networks across the entire Marist world. I really appreciate her personal integrity, her living out of Marist values in her own life and her incredible work ethic, always prepared to go the extra mile in everything she was involved in over the eight years, having also to care for her own family. She will always to be part of the Marist family and will continue to be involved in different projects with us in the future. I wish her well in her new job and again thank her for her incredible contribution to Marist life so far.

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





# Always Marist

**I couldn't let my last edition of Being Marist go by without taking the opportunity to say a huge thank you. Thank you to everyone in the Marist family for all the wonderful years working together.**

I wanted to choose a picture which reflected my Marist journey. When I look at the picture above, I can't stop smiling as I recall all the memories with each person. Whether we connected through a school, a project, at an event, or from around the Marist world, they all became part of my Marist family.

I started my Marist journey in a Marist school in Dublin and instantly fell in love with everything about Marist Education. It spoke to me. I have often reflected back and am sure that the Holy Spirit guided me to the Marist family.

My first Marist family was at the Moyle

Park College Dublin, and they will always hold a special place in my heart. After ten wonderful years at Moyle Park College, I took a career break and started working in international education in Switzerland. My knowledge grew and the strong base and experience Moyle Park had given me, allowed me to move through different roles. Throughout this time, it became so clear that the Marist value-based education had something special that could not be replicated. My links remained strong with my Marist family in Ireland, and as I was moving to France to be close to my husband's family, they offered me a one-year role as Director of Marist Education in West Central Europe. I am so grateful that, at this moment, I was open and listened to the holy spirit. As you can guess, one year became eight cherished years. Each year in this role have been life changing and each



moment will continue to be treasured.

Thank you to all the Marist family for the memories and opportunities you have given me.

I will always be a Marist and will continue to be part of the Marist family.

**Happy Christmas everyone,  
Aisling**

A Christmas Poem From John Bell.

# Merry Christmas!

Light looked down and saw the darkness.  
I will go there', said light.  
Peace looked down and saw war.  
'I will go there', said peace.  
Love looked down and saw hatred.  
'I will go there', said love.  
So he, the Lord of Light,  
the Prince of Peace  
the King of Love  
came down and crept in beside us.

