

# Being Marist

WEST CENTRAL EUROPE

## TOGETHER WE MAKE

## A FAMILY

**Our appreciation of family has never been so heightened following what many of us experienced recently in terms of covid restrictions, separation, and distance from those we love. It really does bring a greater sense of awareness to something, we can at times, take for granted; the love we have for our family.**

We always talk about the unmistakable Marist Family spirit that exists in our schools and projects. Many of us have spoken about how much we have missed this and how we now appreciate how precious it is since we have returned to a 'normal' version of our daily lives.

I for one will try not to take any of that for granted again.

In this edition of 'Being Marist' we can see so many examples of the lifegiving Marist family we are part of in the province and internationally. We learn how Marist schools in our province are part of an exciting new initiative called 'Champagnat Global'.

The 'Champagnat Global' project is bringing all our Marist Schools around the world together to be one family unit. We have always known our Marist schools are part of one family, but now thanks to the Secretariat for Education and

Evangelisation, our Marist schools will be closely connected to more than 600 Marist schools in 80 countries. A vibrant, connected, welcoming family. No more separation or distance between us; but now an opportunity for everyone to visit, learn and connect with each other across the world as a loving family.

The season of autumn is now with us and it feels like a great time to do something new, something beautiful. As one global Marist family we may have many branches, growing in different directions, but our roots remain as one with Champagnat.

"Let there be among you just one heart and one mind. Let it always be said of the Little Brothers of Mary as it was of the early Christians: See how they love one another!"

*Marcellin Champagnat*

**Aisling Demaison –  
Director of Marist Mission**



# Feedback from the anti-racism weeks in Mindelheim- from all over the world

Our theme days against racism took place for the second time this year and we all learned more about racism once again. Here is some feedback from the participants of the Anti-Racism Weeks. Because the days took place almost exclusively online, the content could be shared and discussed worldwide!

Besides the panel discussion and the lecture on white saviorism, my personal highlight was the poetry slam evening. Slammers from different countries performed their poems and texts about profound and touching, even moving stories in different languages. The evening was accompanied by blues music from the 1920s, played by Philipp Schneider. This impressively powerful rhythm, yet with such powerful colours, was a kind of music I had never heard before. I was also particularly pleased that even some 10th grade students from the Marist High School in Furth attended the online evening and that we as Marist Youth Mindelheim were able to reach people of all ages worldwide beyond the regional borders.

[Simona,](#)

ex-volunteer, 20 years,  
Jena/ Furth (GER)

The anti-racism theme week was a strong signal! The mix of events from lectures, workshops and an interactive challenge and much more totally appealed to me and made me think deeply about the issue of neo-colonialism. Experts like Nicole Amoussou gave depth to the discussions and showed me that post-colonial racism has to be seen in context. Different explanations of terms and backgrounds on the topic were super researched and published in small posts on Instagram. This was a perfect complement to the lectures. I also found it exciting to talk about the topic with people from all over the world. All in all, it was a great event and very well organised. I would like to hear about initiatives like this more often!

[Felix,](#)

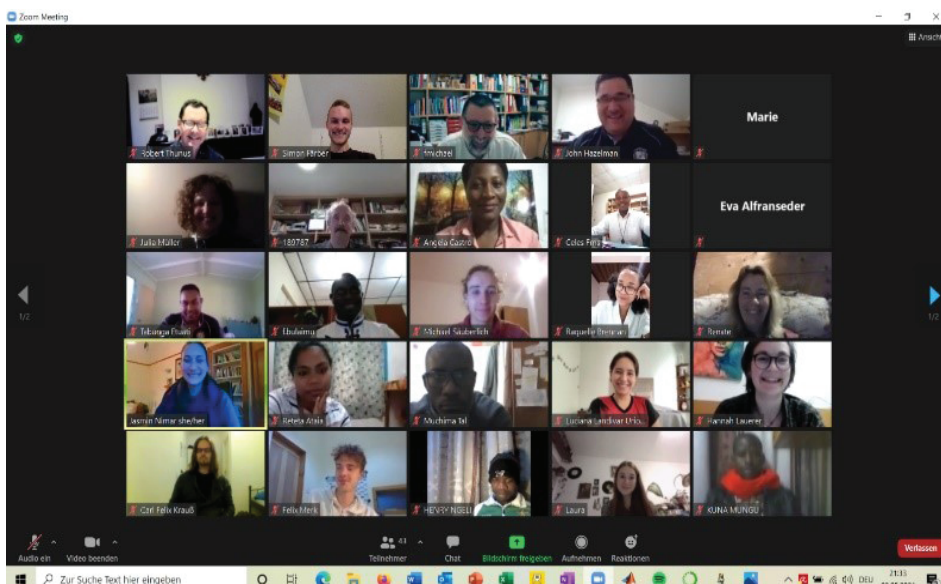
ex-volunteer, 24 years,  
Glasgow/ Mindelheim (GER)



For me, the days were very instructive. Despite the upcoming baccalaureate exams, I wanted to and was able to take part in a few meetings. I found it very interesting and it definitely helped me because now I simply know how I should behave in certain situations. The days have definitely prepared me for my upcoming everyday life at home as well as abroad!

[Laetitia,](#)

pupil of the Maristenkolleg  
Mindelheim, 17 years old



Picture of the panel discussion, which was held internationally and reached about 50 people!

First of all, I would like to thank Marist Germany for organising the Anti-Racism Week. It was a great moment to draw attention to the monster in our world called racism. Racism is still visible, audible, active and deeply rooted in our world and only the culture of speaking out will end it. I think Marist Germany has started the process of speaking out so that no more George Floyd dies a tragic death. What gave me joy and hope as a young Marist Brother was the way our global family from Africa, Asia, Oceania and Europe worked together to raise awareness about the problem of racism. The event reminded me of what it means to be a Marist, which is to belong to a global family that cares. The conferences also reminded me of the two calls of the XXII General Chapter: to journey together as a

“global charismatic family” that is a “beacon of hope in a turbulent” world where racism is still an issue. Secondly, the call: to “respond courageously to the emerging needs” of our world, and I believe racism is one of them. I have also seen the global Marist family say NO to racism and other issues that plague humanity with passion and determination. This was a collective effort in line with the Marist mission to reach out to the dioceses of the world with the message of LOVE, a message envisaged by St Marcellin Champagnat, our founder. That is, to love all equally, irrespective of their faith, colour, region, language and creed, thus creating a human brotherhood where all people can live in bonhomie.

**Br. Tayu Celestine S., FMS.**

*Country: Cameroon. I belong to the new “Marist Province of West Africa” but am temporarily on mission in Lebanon.*

The Anti-Racism Week in May 2021 was an informative, inclusive and encouraging event with panelists from around the world.

The event raised many difficult but necessary issues such as neo-colonialism, climate justice, allies and microaggressions.

Coming from a "Commonwealth" country and being a member of the BIPOC community, I particularly enjoyed the workshops on neocolonialism.

I believe that education is the first step to change, so in today's political climate it is essential to have a platform to talk, inform and learn about such a complex and nuanced struggle. It was great to hear testimonies and stories from people who, despite being from a different country to me, are going through similar experiences to my own.

During the anti-racism week, I also had the opportunity to participate in a poetry slam, something that is very close to my heart. The evening was filled with beautiful words performed by beautiful people and lively music performed with great enthusiasm. Sharing art is a vulnerable act, and I felt honoured to have the space to share my lyrics and also hear those of others.

All in all, Anti-Racism Week was a week to remember. I am grateful for my Marist community, and I look forward to more events like this.

**Raquelle Brennan, South Africa**

## kidsCamp in Mindelheim

by Rotaract in cooperation with the s’Jugendhaus of the Marists

In the first week of August, many young adults equipped with walkie-talkies romped around the entire grounds of the Marists with the areas of the Marist College, the Youth House and the former internat in Mindelheim. The background was the kidsCamp of Rotaract. In the organisation team, Rotaract was supported by motivated women & men from CMI and the Marists.

Due to the restrictions caused by the Corona pandemic, the groups of children as well as the supervisors were divided into consequently separate groups. The walkie-talkies proved to be a useful tool! The entire camp was held under the motto of sustainability, which was accompanied by the Disney film “Moana”. In line with the theme, the groups went on a scavenger hunt with sustainability stations, visited



**Michi from CMI dressed himself as Vaiana to make the testing proceder oft he childrem a bit more humerous**

an organic farm and a nature garden in the surrounding area, made bee hotels and a barefoot path through upcycling and, of course, games and sports were not missing from the programme. Through expressions of thought by the children, it became apparent that they had developed motivation for environmentally friendly behaviour.

Thanks to the very strict hygiene concept, minor irritations in the individual groups were quickly resolved and the camp itself was not disrupted.



**Selfmade rain- maker, made by the kids**





# The new Marienrealschule - a beacon in the Cham school landscape

**The architect's office Schnabel und Partner from Bad Kötzing achieved a precision landing. Right at the beginning of the new school year, the school could start operating in the new rooms.**

The teachers, parents and pupils are very happy that despite all the obstacles, the Marienrealschule was able to open on time, albeit with a few restrictions. However, the planning and preparations have been going on for many years. For the school management team, the focus has always been on the fact that

it is not just a matter of moving into a new school building, but also of merging two previously independent schools with different religious and also school traditions.

Because of Corona, our merger process was severely hampered, especially in the past two years, which were so crucial. We were no longer able to organise joint works outings and other events. Teachers' meetings in larger groups were no longer allowed. Nevertheless, we did everything we could with a lot of tact to reduce the existing fears of the staff about the completely new situation.

Many questions were discussed in numerous teacher conferences, in joint committees and especially in the school development team. A management consultant also accompanied our school merger process in several joint meetings.

The profiles of the former religious schools of the 'Poor Sisters School' and 'Marist Brothers School', which were maintained a few years ago under the auspices of the School Foundation of the Diocese of Regensburg, now merge into the co-educational Marienrealschule on the Chamer Schulberg. We have

documented this on a large display wall in the entrance hall for future generations of pupils. We want to show that something new is beginning, but that the old traditions are not being lost sight of: The best of two good things.

The new school brings a big plus for everyone:

All boys in the 7th grades also have four options in their choice of elective groups from now on. The Marienrealschule Cham is the only secondary school in the district that also offers the branch "Nutrition and Health". This branch is very popular. The option of choosing the technical branch is also guaranteed for girls in the future.

The French branch offers the best prerequisites for transferring to the health branch of the FOS. The

commercial branch has always been a popular choice for girls and boys.

The enrolment figures for the new 5th classes show that the primary school pupils and their parents have great confidence in us, even though the information and presentations for the transfer had to be done purely digitally because of the building site and Corona.

Upon entering the school building on the first day of school, all visitors were amazed. State-of-the-art classrooms and subject rooms are located in the renovated old building and the new building. The design of the auditorium is truly unique and unparalleled.

A well-equipped teaching kitchen is available for the "EG" branch and for the compulsory lessons of the subject with the same name. Furthermore,

there is a new, modern, light-flooded refectory with a shady courtyard where more tables and chairs are available in summer. Several cosy attic rooms will also soon be ready and waiting for the small groups in the Open All-Day School.

We are all looking forward with our pupils and with the parents to a completely new state-of-the-art secondary school, which has already been described as a "lighthouse" in the district school landscape. It should guarantee our young people the best possible education and prepare them for adult life as mature Christians and committed citizens, all in the spirit of Maria Theresia Gerhardinger and Marzellan Champagnat.

**Josef Maier, Realschule Director**  
**Photos: Dieckmann/Maier**

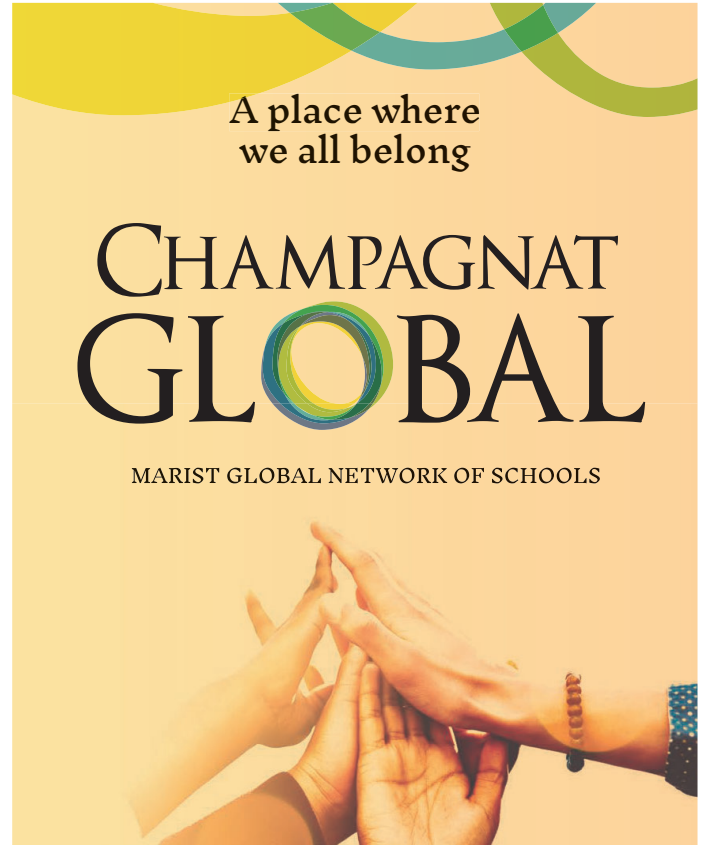


# What is the Marist Global Network of Schools?

The Marist Global Network of Schools, to be inaugurated October 22-29th, responds to the call of the 22 General Chapter to Journey Together as a Global Family. It is a project that is being created in a collaborative way involving the whole Marist Educational Community. However, like any serious project, it involves rigour and a process, which implies following defined stages such as communication with all interested parties.

It will be a place of promotion for the Marist mission that is carried out in more than 600 schools in 80 countries. On behalf of the General Council, the Secretariat for Education and Evangelisation, in collaboration with the network of Marist publishers, is organising the launch of the network, which will take place from 25-29 October 2021. Further information about the network can be found here (<https://champagnat.org/en/marist-mission/schools/>).

As a result of the work carried out over two years by a team representing the different Regions of the Institute, a framework document has been drawn up which lays the foundations for the further evolution of the project. It includes the following aspects, here presented in a very condensed form: The aim of the network is: **To contribute to the development, vitality, and sustainability of our Marist Mission in schools.** Its scope is the **secondary and pre-secondary schools that are Institute-owned or those associated with it.**



The **added value** provided by the network will be:

- ✓ **Identity** and sense of belonging.
- ✓ **Innovation** and the quality of education and evangelisation provided.
- ✓ Commitment of students to think and **work globally**.
- ✓ Use of technology to **share** human resources and educational materials.
- ✓ Opportunities for education coordinators to relate more personally and support one another, fostering interconnection and **collaboration**.

As a **starting point** in the launching process, some **principles** have also been adopted as key guidelines for moving forward:

- ✓ It is to be **inspired by the call** and principles of **the XXII General Chapter**.
- ✓ It is to be a **global project**.
- ✓ It is to be a **collaborative project**.
- ✓ It is to create **opportunities** for **sharing and maximising resources**.
- ✓ It is to **provide a platform** for sharing.
- ✓ It is to address **the whole educational community**.
- ✓ It wants to **contribute** to the **school improvement cycle**.
- ✓ It is to **build on existing** Marist **networks**.

Based on these principles and guidelines, produced by a group of experts, a creative, participatory process has taken place, and on the week of 25-29th October 2021, we invite you to **get involved**.

# Co-Creating the Marist Global Network of Schools

Our **objective** is for the network to contribute to the **growth, vitality and sustainability of Marist Mission through schools.**

Once the General Council decided in 2021 to proceed with the launch of a Network of Schools, **a process of co-creation began,** with planned, collaborative activities carried out by the Secretariat of Education and Evangelisation.

There are **three important moments in this collaborative phase** for imagining and designing the network through collective creativity:

In **May 2021, an online meeting of Education coordinators** from all regions of the Institute took place.

The Asia, Oceania and Africa regions met on 27 May, with 26 participants from 9 Administrative Units. On 28 May the Europe, South America and Northern Arc regions met with 40 members from 16 Administrative Units present.

The on-line **workshop** lasted 4 hours. Its main purpose was for participants to **begin to get a feeling for the project of having a network** and fall in love with this dream, and for them, in turn, to encourage the participation of others by sharing their experience with their contacts.

At the end of **August** and the beginning of **September, inter-regional lead-up events of educational leaders** will be held, in which other representatives of the educational community besides the coordinators will participate: (Brothers, principals, teachers, students, parents...) It will also be held by regions: on 26 August, the regions of Asia and Oceania, on 9 September, Arco Norte and South America and on 23 September, Europe and Africa. Around 1,100 participants are expected to attend.

During the week of **25-29 October,** a series of activities are planned with the aim of making known, on a massive scale, what the Marist Global Network of Schools intends to be.

To this end, it was decided to seek the **assistance of the Institute for Dialogue and Appreciative Inquiry (IDEIA).**

Appreciative Inquiry is a **methodology of dialogue,** encounter, proposal design and alignment of vision, mission and action.

Appreciative enquiry involves the disciplines of **appreciation, inquiry and planning.**

Its approach is to build on **recognised strengths and open new possibilities,** aligning individual, congregational and collective aspirations; to **create common dreams** as we look at issues in the design of proposals and commitments to get the network going.

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During the week of **25-29 October,** a series of activities are planned with the aim of making known, on a massive scale, what the Marist Global Network of Schools intends to be. We invite all our Marist Schools in West Central Europe to get involved. Please contact the Marist Global Network of Schools Coordinator for West Central Europe, Aisling Demaison [a.demaison@maristeu.org](mailto:a.demaison@maristeu.org)



# Accompaniment Programme Year 2

**In 2019 I had an opportunity of a lifetime, to attend the 2019/2020 Accompaniment Programme in Rome. My Accompaniment journey as I mentioned in my article in 2019 began with feelings of anxiety, nerves, excitement and wonder as I didn't know anyone completing this programme. However, by the end of the week in 2019 I no longer had the nerves, as I felt like I was part of this large Marist family, we all had something in common... Our Marist Mission.**

Year two of the Accompaniment Programme was supposed to begin in July 2020 but unfortunately due to COVID19 the course was postponed. Roll forward to January 2021, we got news year two of the programme could go ahead. However, due to COVID restrictions in each country year two would take place over zoom. We had a preliminary meeting February 2021 to catch up with everyone who was in Rome 2019, and it was if no time had passed. The feeling I got while on that first call was there is my Global Marist family. We spent over an hour on the call catching up with everyone, many having very exciting news of babies being born, houses being bought or marriages that had taken place. Then it got down to business...people's thoughts and ideas about the course taking place over zoom. Initially everyone's thoughts were that the situation was unfortunate, and we all felt a little disappointed we could not be together for year two in person as we had bonded well in year one and looked forward to meeting everyone again.

Year two began on the 12th of July 2021. We began with an opening ceremony where we discussed topics around our feelings/emotions. Our first day revolved around expressing emotions, how to identify



the emotions we have within us but also how to help someone else recognise the emotions they are expressing. This session was one I really connected with and got a lot out of. As the morning session broke up, we were told we would be divided into our language groups that we were in, in Rome. I was in the English group and because I was the one who spoke English full time I was quickly nominated as the spoke's person for our group. We had to discuss this topic of emotions and as I mentioned it was a topic I really connected with. As a teacher it was nice to see and hear what is happening in other countries in relation to emotions/feeling in other schools and how teachers around the world are dealing with

emotions in their students. It was a quick realisation that for us labelling our own emotions at times can be difficult but also then we realised during this session if we are finding it difficult at times to express our emotions, then teenagers too can find it difficult. This topic then opened conversation around other topics that we would discuss later in the week. Day two July 13th we had many discussions and talks on how to support a person who is called "The Accompanied" who is the person being supported. This person can range from a young child to a teen all the way up to an adult. We were given tips on how to deal with situations, one situation was what to do in the case where



we may feel we as a supporter might be emotionally attached to the supported person's situation and acknowledging that we might not be the best person to help them. We looked at how people who are the supporters, take care of themselves while accompanying others. We explored the idea of when the supporter might be seen as an authoritative figure, how we might change our roles from being the authoritative figure to the supporter to ensure the person we are supporting/accompanying feels more comfortable, and it ensures they will truly open up to us. Day three and day four were the more intimate and interesting days but also were days where I learnt something about myself. The topics discussed were very deep. We had a guest speaker Leandro Miranda from Guatemala. He was training us in the areas of sexuality and affection. Many topics were discussed over the two days. Within the two days we had to dive in deep and explore our past around the topics of sexuality and affection. We were given questions to answer to help us reflect on how we as adults have evolved our ideas around sexuality and affection. We broke up into smaller groups and when we all met in the English group, we all found some of the questions being asked intriguing but others hard to discuss. The questions we found easy to discuss were around stories of our births and childhood and how our birth/ childhood stories can give us certain ideas around sexuality or affection and sometimes these ideas might have to change to suit the society we are living in. We were brought back to the large group and as the designated spokes person for our group I stated we found some of the questions hard to discuss particularly questions surrounding adolescence/adulthood sexuality and affection. We were asked why and to try and go back to the cause of why it is difficult to discuss certain questions. I then was quick to realise, if I am finding it difficult surely a teenager/child having these discussions with an adult would find it difficult too. Out of these two

days we were given techniques on how to guide/ support a child and teenager openly around the areas of sexuality and affection, but we were also linked in with what we were told on day one around emotions. Our last day revolved around the idea of miracles and being aware of our own lives and the miracles within them. This day for me was a very reflective day in which we were truly able to reflect on all the elements in our lives we are grateful for. Some were grateful at the time, for their summer break, others the coffee in which they were drinking and for some others being able to meet friends again for the first time in over a year. For me I have had a difficult year as many know I lost my Dad, who was my best friend, I also lost my Nan three weeks later, all while going through lock downs in Ireland because of COVID19. I had already been very grateful for the birth of my niece Sophia who was born in 2019, shortly after year one of the programme. But I suppose for me I was able to reflect on her life and how we as a family see her as our miracle who was sent to us. Labelling her aloud as our family's miracle from above really allowed me to connect again with my own faith since my dad and nan passed away. We believe she has a purpose, and we believe she was sent to us to bring all the family through the most difficult time. At the end of the last day, we broke back into our language groups again and we were asked to reflect on the course over the two years. We all felt the same. We were all

individuals who came from different schools across Europe, we came from different Marist provinces but also spoke different languages. At the end even though it was over zoom we all felt connected as if we were one large family. We all felt this sense of a global community all trying to achieve one goal and that is to support the younger generation as they go on their journeys in life. However, the one thing we all missed besides being together in person was the amazing Gelato in Rome which we would get each evening... Irish ice-cream just isn't the same. The most valuable lesson I received from year two was on dealing with a situation that I might be dealing with. If I as a person have not dealt with a situation/ emotion I cannot support another person who possibly might be going through the same thing. I must deal with my situation/ emotion first to be able to help someone else. This was a valuable lesson I learnt over the week while on the course. I have gained many friends while completing this programme along with skills to help me support my students in Moyle Park over the next number of years. **I want to take this opportunity to say I am truly thankful to Aisling Demaison, Br. PJ (Ireland) Br. Xavi (Spain) and Br. Nacho (Spain) for allowing me to complete this journey in Rome and online. I have gained a lot and without your support this would not have been possible. Thank you.**

**By Sarah Kelly -  
Moyle Park College**



**What does the Westerhelling mean to you, what is your experience with/in our projects?**

# Listening to what silence has to say

**For me, silence is not a natural fact. In daily life it is easier to keep running and not stand still. Yet I regularly get stuck in that daily life, precisely because I don't listen. Westerhelling is for me a place to become still and to learn to listen to what silence has to say. Becoming silent requires courage and the trust that what the silence is about to tell you will not blow you away. It is nice to be able to do this in a familiar place, together with people who are searching for the same thing.**

During the Silence Weekends that I attend, I try to make myself a little quieter each time. The first few times, I kept myself busy by walking and reading. I was not yet ready to become really quiet. I still cannot go to the House of Silence without books in my bag, although I am increasingly daring to leave the books closed and to experience what happens then. Often it feels as if I am being put on the charger, finally some peace and quiet. But sometimes it also throws me off balance and I experience the restlessness or a deeper feeling that needs attention. The more I dare to let go, the more addictive silence becomes.

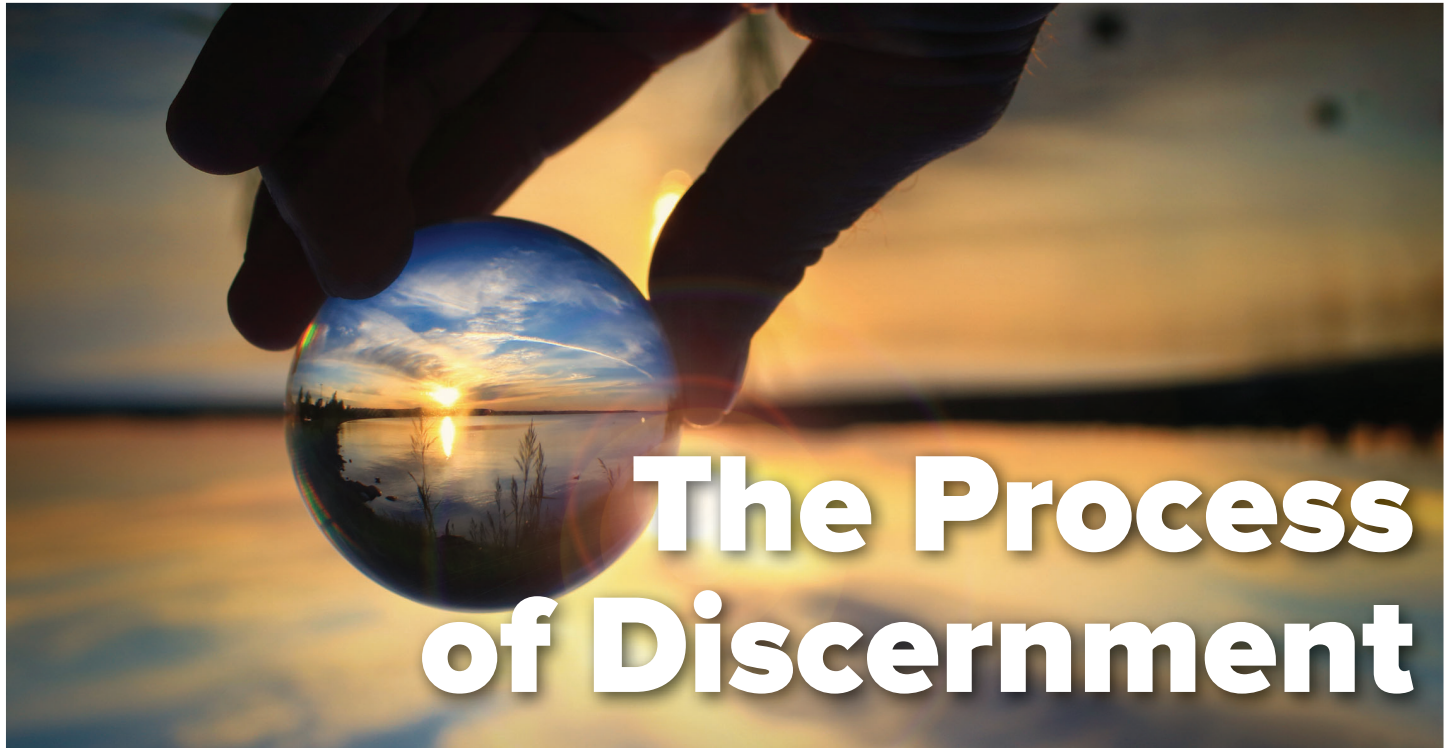
The Spiritual Year of Learning, in which I participated in 2017-2018, helped me to find the confidence to listen to what



silence has to say to me. It gave me a wealth of stories of people who are shaping a different kind of existence, an attentive life. It gave me confidence to find and walk my own spiritual path. I discovered a desire to integrate the monastic life into my own life, but I also discovered that there is no moment when I can say that I have succeeded. The search is worthwhile as a journey in itself. At the end of the year, I quit my job because I knew it did not suit me. I had

found the courage to jump into the deep end and explore what would suit me. At the last meeting, one of the participants gave me a beautiful stone in a box, for a rock-solid faith in the path I had chosen. The gap between the life I can now experience on the Westerhelling and my daily life is getting smaller. I am very grateful for that. At the same time, silence is becoming more and more important and I need a place like Westerhelling to be put on the spiritual path again and again and to stay in touch with my longing. Whenever I doubt and lose faith, I think of the stone. In small steps, I am on my way to an attentive life, with silence as source.

**Anke Van Miltenburg –  
Westerhelling The Netherlands**



# The Process of Discernment

**The Provincial Council has begun a process concerning the future of our Province of West-Central Europe. It involves setting up a structure that can ensure the viability and vitality of Marist life and mission in the 5 countries of our Province, in the coming years.**

A working group has been set up to facilitate this process. It is composed of two members of the Provincial Council: Brother Ronnie McEwan and Provincial Br Robert Thunus, two members of the Mission Council: Mrs. Aisling Demaison and Mrs. Renate Hacker, as well as Brother Jacques Scholte. This group is accompanied by Ms Roswitha Vesper, a professional facilitator. She had already accompanied the Provincial Chapter of 2016 to Freising.

The task of this group is expressed as follows:

- Create a roadmap that includes all locally representative voices, lay and Brothers, within the province.
- Reflect and evaluate the data and next steps, focusing on the needs to strengthen and continue the Marist life and mission in the future.
- Present 2 or 3 models to Brothers and lay people on the future of the province.

The working group met three times online. It will meet again on October 1st for an expanded meeting with all the members of the Provincial Council and the Mission Council.

I entrust this approach to your prayers and reflections so that the Holy Spirit may guide us in fulfilling what God expects of us in this period of our history.

**Provincial Br Robert Thunus**

***“If the Lord does not build the house, it is in vain that the masons struggle...”***  
***(Psalm 126)***

# Greetings Marists of West Central Europe from the USA Province

I hope this short note finds you well as our world continues to struggle with the ongoing impact of Covid-19. Our USA Province lost three Brothers and many lay members to the pandemic. Thankfully, our two summer camps were able to re-open this past summer and all our schools likewise are back in session at full capacity (at least at the moment).

While Covid-19 presented immense challenges all around our world, our USA Province was blessed by a number of graces that occurred in the midst of those difficulties.

- On January 2, 2021, our first Cohort of Marists of Champagnat began their six-month Formation program which resulted on June 6th with 42 Marists of Champagnat making public commitments to live our Marist Charism and spirituality daily in their lives as well as to find ways to foster our Marist Mission.
- Two young men, Robert Dittus and Ryan Ritcher completed their Postulant year and last Sunday entered our USA Novitiate as our newest Marist Brothers.
- Each of our USA Marist Schools heroically rose to the challenges caused by Covid-19 in quickly moving education from the classroom to a remote setting and then into a variety of hybrid models that ensured all our students continued to receive their education. This combined effort by our many administrators, teachers and staff may have been our finest moment as Marist Educators. The



video link below was recently shown to all our Marist School Faculties as they began their school year. I imagine your schools had similar stories of success in meeting the needs of those young people entrusted to your care. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pg0FuUGvLGg>

- Since the General Chapter of 2017, we as a USA Province have tried to concretely find ways to live the Calls of the General Chapter. One successful way has been a joint effort with the Province of Mexico Occidental in El Paso, Texas on the USA/Mexican Border. Our community there consists of three Brothers and two Lay volunteers who daily respond to the Chapter Calls to journey with children and young people on the margins of life as well as to respond boldly to emerging needs. They work closely with the many refugee and migrant families that cross the border daily in hope of a better future.

We pray this new school year will continue to be somewhat more normal and that we as a Province will again be able to focus on fostering our Marist Mission and not be hindered by the many limitations and restrictions of travel, gatherings, etc.

We are grateful over the past number of years for a growing awareness and desire as a Province to be more mindful of our Global and Regional Marist connections. We continue to seek ways to deepen those possibilities as we are all part of the one Marist Family. May each of our Provinces strive to allow Champagnat's dream to continue to grow and impact many lives in this third century of Marist Life.

**Fraternally,**

**Br. Dan O'Riordan**  
USA Provincial

# Marist Interview

## Simon Faerber – Mindelheim

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

I'm Simon, 22 years old and I live in Mindelheim, a small town in the South of Germany. I have a younger sister, with whom I usually get along really well. I'm in the penultimate term of my Bachelor studies in Mechanical Engineering and this semester I'm working at a company for my mandatory internship, which is a very welcome change to the normal study-focused time at the University. I'm pretty bad at doing nothing, that's why I'm part of many projects and groups. For example, I'm part of the University racing team, where we build a race car every year and participate in races against other Universities from all over the world. On Saturday afternoons I spend time with a young man, who is paraplegic, which has helped me a lot appreciating my personal life and be aware, that not everybody has the same opportunities as I do. Before the pandemic came across, I was playing with kids at the refugee home, which has always been a lot of fun and I hope, that it will be possible again soon. I also enjoy doing sports, especially playing soccer at my local football club and every now and then, along with others, I organize Marist actions, for example anti-racism-weeks or our monthly gatherings here in Mindelheim. To relax, I like to cook or to ride my bike.

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

I've been a student at a Marist school for 8 years, but never really had the Marist connection. But after my time at school, I volunteered with CMI in San José, which is in Bolivia. For those who don't know CMI, it's a Marist volunteer program. In my preparation for that year and during my time there, I got to know what being Marist really means and

ever since I feel a strong connection to the Marist world. After I came back, I kept in touch with the Marist community in Mindelheim and got to know the brothers here quite well.

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

As in many other countries around the world, the number of Marist brothers in Germany is decreasing constantly, but luckily there is a growing number of lay Marists, who are continuing the Marist presence here. I think, that the main focus of the Marists in Germany has shifted from education to personal development outside of the schools, for young and older people. That includes spirituality, active action in our daily life

and standing up for our convictions. On one side I'm one of those who organize the monthly meetings, work in and organize different Marist activities like theme weeks, help with every kind of craft activities and translating to Spanish, if needed. On the other side I receive so much from other Marists, be it from the incoming volunteers, the talks with other volunteers, that have been abroad, or from brother Michael, who is always there for me, when I need something.

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

Usually I speak pretty dialect-free German, but if I'm with others it can become very hard for non-dialect speakers to understand what I'm saying.



**5. Who is a person you admire and why?**

In the Marist context, there are two people, that have really had an impact on me. That's Brother Michael and Jasmin. She has such a positive attitude and impact on others and can motivate a group like nobody else. At the same time, she has a really strong opinion on social issues and takes action in many different ways. I cannot imagine, what the Marists in Mindelheim would be without her, because she was one reason why CMI was created and why young people, who had been volunteering abroad also become a part of the marist community in Germany and stay connected. To a high degree, it's her merit, that so many young Marists have developed into who they are today and that everybody feels super welcome in the Marist community.

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

It's the small things in life for me. Making somebody smile, constructing a part of the race car and seeing it operate well with the rest of the car or working on something and afterwards seeing the positive result of it. If I look back at how my life has developed, what I have done and how I have developed as a person, I can honestly say, that I'm very happy with it. And it makes me proud, because that's one of the most important things in life in my opinion: be happy with the things you do.

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

It's that feeling of a huge community. It doesn't matter where you meet other Marists in the world, there is always that sense of belonging to the same community and helping each other in many different ways. Being openminded to everybody and always have a shelter and time for others, who look for it.

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

Very patient, open minded, busy and fun loving

**9. What is a significant event in your life?**

Certainly my time as a volunteer in Bolivia and all the preparation, that came along with it. I very much enjoyed my time there, met many great people and saw many wonderful places. However, I had all those things in other moments of my life as well, but never in my life have I developed that strong as a person. Before that time, I was very sure, that I'm going to work as a Mechanical Engineer all my life having my own family and I didn't question many of the things, that seemed obvious to me at the time. When I returned, it took me a really long time to decide what to study. And even though I choose Mechanical Engineering, I was certain now, that I want to pursue that career. Because I went through many processes like that one, I'm a lot safer in what I really want to do in life and therefore do those things with full effort. That allows me to do a lot more projects apart from school or university and all of that will have a lasting impact for the rest of my life.

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

I meet friends, do sport, cook or listen to music

**11. What has been your highlight in your work in Marist mission to date?**

It has been a Marist Youth Gathering in Spain. What I most enjoyed was, that there were many young people from all over Europe and even from Lebanon and all of us had different backgrounds. But we all had that same passion about our different types of Marist actions, that connected us. There was also a great spirit between us, and I had the feeling, that all of us felt good in the group.

**12. What is your vision for the Marist West Central Europe?**

I see a bright future for the province, because I got to know so many great people, who are already part of the province's presence and will be even bigger parts in the future. I don't know how many brothers will be there in the future, but I'm certain, that this doesn't mean the end for the Marist Mission here.





# **Let your God love you**

**(Anonymous)**

**Be silent.**

**Be still.**

**Alone.**

**Empty before your God.**

**Say nothing.**

**Ask nothing.**

**Be silent.**

**Be still.**

**Let your God look upon you.**

**That is all.**

**God knows.**

**God understands.**

**God loves you with an enormous love and only wants to look upon you with that generous love.**

**Quiet.**

**Be still.**

**Let your God love you.**