

## ▶ ECHOES FROM THE LIFE OF THE EUROPEAN PROVINCE

“To be more closely united, work more creatively, and act in greater solidarity we form one province beyond national limitations...”



### GREETINGS FROM PARIS!

We have evidence that EuroInfo is received and read also on far off shores! Marists are connected by a common mission to share the Gospel carried out in various places including a detention centre in the Netherlands. From Southern Italy we hear about how others are invited to think about their neighbour and its link with the Marist charism. The province and many confreres from the German region rejoice with Thilo Saft (De) and his family, on the occasion of his ordination to the priesthood, Osnabrück, Germany. To all our contributors we say a sincere word of appreciation.

*Joaquín Fernández & Martin McAnaney*

### Thilo Saft's (De) ordination to the priesthood, Osnabrück, and his First Mass, Ankum, Germany, May 23rd – 24th

“What binds us all together is the yearning for life which God has bestowed upon each of us ... It is God who seizes the initiative ... Do I trust God's initiative? Can I entrust myself to him? ... His initiative is one aspect of the dynamic and the other one is my response to this call”. Ludger Werner (De) posed these questions to the congregation of 400 people during the homily he delivered at Thilo's First Mass which he celebrated in his home parish of Ankum. By presenting himself for ordination to the priesthood, Thilo expressed a part of his response to God's initiative and the event was the occasion for his family, friends and confreres to celebrate this commitment with him. Local choirs and musicians drawn from neighbouring parishes accompanied both liturgies. The events were festive and full of local colour and since they were the first such events in the European province, they were particularly moving. The provincial, Hubert Bonnet-Eymard reminded Thilo of the road-map to priestly ministry found in the words of Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (49, 104 and 107): all the more as Marist, to be a person who witnesses to the Lord's Mercy; to be at the service of those communities to which God calls him; and to accompany young people on their personal journey and help them discern their own vocation.

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## Holy Week in the detention centre, near Schiphol, the Netherlands



Tom Kouijzer (NI) and Fernando Torres (Mexico), two Marist seminarians from Casa Di Maria, (International Theologate, Rome), as part of a pastoral

immersion, spent Holy Week in the detention centre accompanied by Marist Father Wim van Broekhoven (NI). He serves as a chaplain and together they participated in the liturgy of Good Friday. Tom and Fernando spent their time listening to the stories of the people detained there, a number of whom are refugees from war-torn countries such as Syria and the Yemen. Other people there have been used as drug mules, often coming from backgrounds of disadvantage. Tom and Fernando said the experience created “a chance to ... reflect more deeply on the Marist vocation to serve the most neglected”.



### Prayer intention

“When I was in prison, you came to visit me...” (Mt 25: 36). A number of parishes and projects in the European province respond directly to the needs of those people who, for various reasons, are deprived of their freedom through imprisonment and detention. We pray for those people and all those who care for them, especially in the province. Lord, break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist and reveal to all of us that no fences, walls or bars can keep us from your unconditional love and mercy.

## A testimony from Fr Jean Hénaff s.m. in response to an article in EuroInfo 80, April

“I am in my 91st year of life and I have been in Oceania since late 1954 and now live in the Regional House, New Caledonia. I read with interest your article on "Centre City Churches Ministry Seminar".

I try to be active in this ministry but not always connected to a particular church... I try to engage in what is called at the beginning of the article "direct evangelisation". While addressing people on the street or in shops, I ask them about something simple to prolong the conversation... As I am parting from them I say, "God keep you" or "God protect you". God is increasingly absent from the lives of people and it seems to me we need to begin telling people that he is with them... At the moment of paying the toll-fee for the motorway, I would say to the clerk "God keep you", and I always got a big smile and a 'Thank You' in return! In the village of Païta where I said mass on Sundays, several people have imitated me and greet each other with "God keep you". I do not know if I have converted two or three people but I try to say, when appropriate, that God exists and that he is not far away.

## Marist Mission and Vocation Week - Marconia, Italy, February 23rd-28th

The week was animated by Luigi Savoldelli (It) and Sister Beatriz Matos (SMSM) and was a continuation of activities initiated in November 2014 in the parish of Marconia and local schools. Teachers and pupils participated in exercises of listening, sharing and acting on ways of living as Christians “here and now”, and being attentive to the presence of the ‘Other/s’.

The main theme of the event was drawn from the phrases of Pope Francis: “No more slaves, but brothers and sisters”, and “Never without the other”.

There will be more next year!

