

## Gordon International Novitiate



This newsletter talks about the first quarter of our Novitiate journey. From the start of our program last March, the 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 until the present. Such a lovely life to feel and be challenged through the many experiences we live. That makes us see the Joy of Community.

Newsletter Vol. II



"Novitiate is tasting God  
and knowing oneself".





# EDITORIAL

Fr. David Sánchez, sm  
Novice Master



In the international novitiate of the Society of Mary we have started a fairly diverse community a little over three months ago. We come from different units and countries, where all of us, in different ways, are called to do our part so that this year is for all of us a year of real “tasting God.” In a sense, different (and in other, new) responsibilities and activities make our journey within Marist spirituality. Between moments of prayer and the Eucharist, classes, manual work, sports, care of the garden and the

different animals we have on the farm, pastoral work outside the novitiate, social and recreation times, as well as accompaniments, we all remain in constant discernment to give greater glory to God and honor to our Blessed Mother. The texts that we present in this first newsletter are testimony to this.





# Community Outing

## Raul Angelo C. Bautista



**I**t's a simple day, full of excitement and well-prepared. This is how it served my morning to start this activity in community outing. It's a life giving for myself having a new community, a new family to be called, and a lot of difference culturally to be prepared to know.

What a great expedition, riding with a small boat comes into my mind that being with the 11 nationalities seems like the early missionary who been sent to mission. But the reality our community outing served with different purpose such building relationship, have fun, eating together, playing volleyball, swimming together, visiting animals on mini

zoo and telling stories.

Our time together in Samal Island prepares to the upcoming novitiate program. I feel that our time together is not only a story that we spent to each one of us, but a memory that we remember the rest of our life.

**We don't have any purpose unless we recognise, accept, love and embrace our brokenness.**



Shot on vivo S1  
AI Triple Camera









# Cultural nights in our Community (Philippines, Fiji and Mexico)

Jean AMANI CHONGERA



**C**ultural nights are times to share and learn more about each other's cultures. So far at the Novitiate, we have experienced three cultural nights.

The first one to share was the Philippines. After the national anthem, we learned about the values and several meals of this country, and, played some homegrown games.

On the Fiji cultural night, after eating the delicious traditional meal, the "*Lovo*," we learnt about their values and played the "Husking of the Coconut" and threw the Javelin.

For Mexico, we tried "Tequila", for some of us, our first time. After learning about geography and Marist places there, we enjoyed Mexican food like "tortilla" and hot-chocolate.

What stuck out to me from all the three cultural nights so far was that each of them held hospitality and fatherland as essential values. We are grateful for these wonderful moments which help us to appreciate each other in our uniqueness and diversity, and enjoy life together as brothers.







A Filipino game



Throwing the Javelin  
Fiji



Husking of the coconut

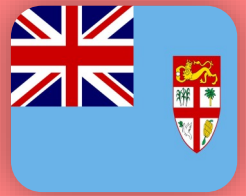
Our highest  
desire is to deeply  
taste God during  
our Novitiate  
experience





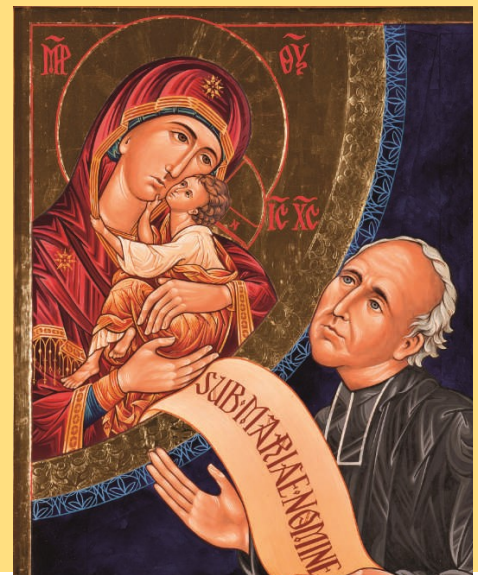
# Daily life in the Novitiate: Joy and Struggles

## Iowane Edwin Smith



My daily life in the novitiate rotates from Monday to Friday, from 4: 40 am to 8: 30 pm when the gran silence begins. The day begins, by morning meditation from 5 am to 6 am followed by mass and different activities such as classes, inside and outside manual labor, sports, spiritual reading, journaling, sharing of feelings of the day, evening prayer and night prayer. For Saturday and Sundays: different activities are scheduled like community meeting, group sharing, cooking, pastoral and weekly review of feelings.

However, joy and struggles has been part of my life as a novice. For example, because of waking up early morning sometimes I turned to fall asleep in my meditation. It is a struggle for me! Despite of the struggles, joy has reminded me to overcome the downfall moments in my spiritual journey. Community programs like sports, outside manual labor and social time: these are moments where I find life, giving me that help to discover myself in discerning my vocation.





Happy birthday to our Nanay



Visit of RNDM Sisters



When we truly love one another with empathy, we become united, with one mind and one body; and then, we deeply taste God and get intimately united with Him.





# OUR FIRST RETREAT DURING THE HOLY WEEK FROM MARCH 25 TO 27, 2024

Macarty Augustin DORNYOH



**I**t was a retreat that allowed us to revisit the purpose to be Marist. The first day's theme was *Men of Prayer*, through Fr Patrick Devlin we understood that as religious and followers of God, we must pray to be the light in the world. The second day was with Fr Sione Hamala on the theme *Men of Learning*. We understood that we can only give what we have. Therefore, merely being a man of God is not enough; we need to use our skills and intellectual capacities to acquire knowledge in order to be useful to others. Fr David Sanchez talk about *Men of the Church*, as Marists, we have goals within the Church. Therefore, we

must be present to discern the role that the Lord Jesus has given us in the Church and to fulfill it. We are called to emulate Jesus in the world for the sake of others, not for our own interests.



The vow of Chastity is the essential key to live religious life because it helps us not only to form a communion for mission, but to understand that my confrere is worthy to be loved with compassion.





Celebrating Easter Vigil

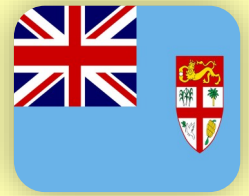






# Our Spiritual Exercise

## Maciu Jimi Banicakau



*Our* founder reminded the novices "to taste God." When we started the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, I wondered, "How will I handle this? How will I get through it?" The idea of staying silent for a whole week stirred up many thoughts and feelings.

On June 3rd, we began our first week of exercises. It was tough at first because I'd never done anything like it before, but over time, I learned to appreciate the beauty of connecting with God and seeing His influence in my life. I started noticing the amazing things God has created and realized how selfish I've been from a young age until now. Despite my faults, I'm thankful that God's grace is always there for me, even when I stumble and don't feel His presence.

This experience has shown me how deeply God is involved in my life and helped me understand how to build a meaningful relationship with Him. I now see the importance of being open to God's guidance, staying consistent, and recognizing His presence in my daily life.







## PASTORAL SUNDAY PATERNO JR. P. BERNADIO



Pastoral. This has been my exposure in my previous formation. But is there something new when it is in a different setting?

Early morning, most of the people are preparing to enjoy the Sunday and go to mass. The novitiate compound prepare itself for something else. We go to town, a no-liked place of the most because of its suffocating noise.

True, there is noise, but a noise of pleading, comfort and asking for love. We are welcomed by a bunch of sickly, mentally ill and disabled elderly. This is in "Home for the aged" of the Charity sisters. Some brothers are assigned to Balay Pasilugan and St. Michael Archangel Chapel youth group. They are challenged by the naughty and energetic kids and youth. Our pastoral does not end in spending our time into different areas. But,

to sit and talk about our experiences in a "Pastoral review" time. The goal of it all is our continuous and growing self-discovery.







Pastoral at Charity Sisters



Pastoral at Balay Pasilungan



Filipino cultural night





## Our piggery and vegetable garden Teguebou Patrice



There was a certain fun around the table at Cerdon's kitchen about that "the community is having a new member soon". On the afternoon of the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, we welcomed our new member, a pig, and we named her "Lizy". It has been a responsibility that demands attention so to keep her place clean and comfortable, and to provide food few times during the day. To prevent a bad odor, we have regular schedule to clean our piggery and help her to maintain it as a hygienic place. In addition, the community have his own vegetable garden that unites the brothers to learn and perform their skills to provide greens for our international Marist novitiate in Eden. We have contributed with our time and expertise to promote a healthy living by cultivating, using our "Vanua". The garden is often seen as a place to

release stress, connecting ourselves with the creation and of course taking with us our Marist values of simplicity and stewardship.





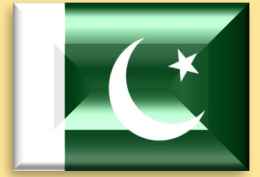






## Socialization Moments & Free Day

### Zubair Yaqub



**L**ife in novitiate is pretty hectic with many spiritual and emotional challenges. It is in these situations that a moment of leisurely activity helps us to get ready for our next ride. On weekends, strumming guitar, cracking jokes and sharing personal stories breathes new life into us. Also, the free day we have every two months is like getting a Christmas bonus. We look forward to this day. It gives us an opportunity to explore and walk around the city, to watch the latest movies and dine at our favorite place.

Where socialization breathes new life, free day nourishes that life. These very moments help us set aside our differences and reunite once more as brothers.

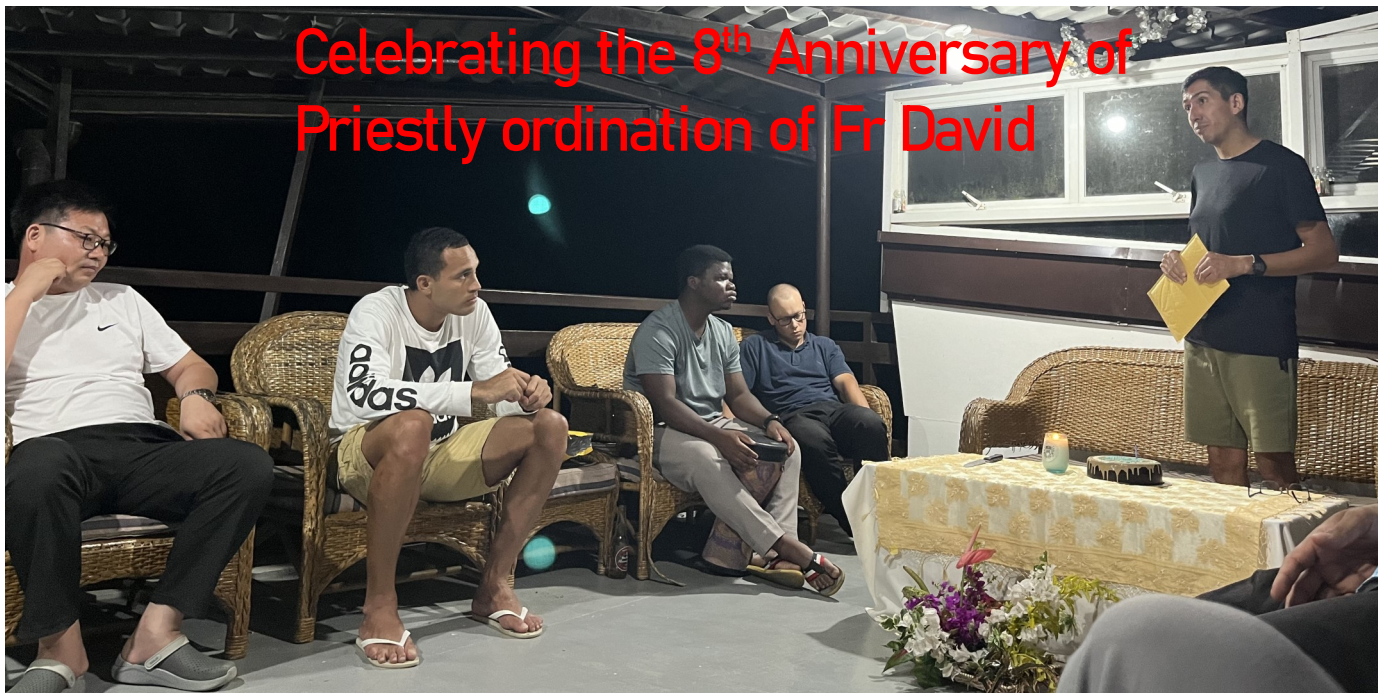
If the spiritual exercises bring us closer to God, socialization brings us closer to each other. Both are important for one's growth and formation. I am glad to say that here, in that sense, we are offered a holistic

formation program, which is taking care of our spiritual, emotional and social dimensions.



*Integrity is about  
conforming the  
external life to the  
inner life.  
Therefore, we need  
to always be aware  
of the movements of  
our heart.*









## Our community sports TELLA NEMBOT Alex Junior



Sports in our community play a crucial role. Firstly, fostering relationships among us; secondly, physical health; and thirdly, relaxation. Through sports, we promote brotherly love, bridging our differences to build a supportive community. Sports, in particular, highlight the beauty of diversity and strengthen our bonds. Through our sports time, we can enjoy the beauty of internationality and improve our relationships. Also, we can enter in touch with our real-self and therefore work on our awareness and how to manage our different emotions and feelings.

I am grateful to the *Society of Mary* for enriching our lives with this international community experience in the Novitiate here in Cerdon. As St. Anthony of Exupery said, "If you are different from me, you are not disturbing me but enriching me." Sports here are not

just activities; they are moments of connection and understanding, where we celebrate our differences and grow together.



*We are called to be  
Mary's presence  
in the world,  
starting from our  
own community  
in our daily life.*



Our joy after finishing with immigration Process



Fraternal joy after our presence to the vocation youth camp at St Michael Chapel Eden

Shot on video  
AI Triple Camera





# Weekly accompaniment and spiritual direction in the novitiate

## Vincent Brzowski



Weekly accompaniment and monthly spiritual direction are times to discuss the various areas of life. They are chances to see what is going on beneath our comely expressions and pretty sentiments. By probing deeper, we come into contact with emotions, desires, statements lacking logic, and so on.

Each hour we spend looking at these parts of us helps to know ourselves better, so that we can develop within us a clearer vision of the direction in which we are called. Amidst the many activities of the week arise many questions and things that want discussing. Accompaniment, by realigning our focus, seems to, intentionally or not, settle these queries and uncertainties.

Discernment, in order to be fruitful, must be rooted in human life. Delving into the heart and mind helps us to get in touch and remain rooted, in order that we continue our discernment in a healthy and effective way.

