

# Society of Mary

An International Religious Congregation

*Marists in the United States*



April 17, 2026

## Welcome Fr. Pierre Marie Chanel Affognon!

Fr. Pierre Marie Chanel Affognon, a diocesan priest from Togo, Africa, recently arrived in Washington, DC to attend English class for a couple months at the International Center for Language Studies (ICLS). ICLS was founded in 1966 to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) and foreign language training.

During his time in Washington, DC he is staying with the Marist community. Fr. Pierre has shared with the community that Togo is a geographically narrow country located in West Africa, stretching north from the Gulf of Guinea. It is bordered by Ghana to the west, Benin to the east, and Burkina Faso to the north.

His class at ICLS is from Monday-Thursday for 4 hours a day and he has a different teacher for each hour, one for conversation, one for listening, one for grammar, and one for reading/writing. Fr. Pierre's class consists of four other students, one from France and three from Brazil.

In speaking of the ICLS program, he shared, "I am very excited to be able to have this opportunity to study English... the program is excellent and the teachers wonderful. It is a very good program."

Pierre is attending ICLS to advance his English skills for personal growth and to help him with teaching courses in English at the local seminary in Togo in the future.



# Marist School

Atlanta, Georgia

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Marist School celebrated current and past recipients of the MacGinnitie Award for Innovation at a luncheon. Established in 2007 by Barbara and Jim MacGinnitie, the award recognizes educators whose inventive approach and forward-looking initiative shape the student experience in meaningful ways. This year's recipient, Mr. Scott Tufts, Media & Broadcast Journalism teacher, is honored for his visionary leadership and commitment to student empowerment. His thriving, student-led program reflects both collaboration and creativity. MacGinnitie Award recipients receive professional development support and stipends to further their efforts and bring new ideas to life across campus. Their work reflects Marist's commitment to growth, excellence, and service to others. The Marist School community is deeply grateful for the dedication of the teachers and for the generosity of the MacGinnities.



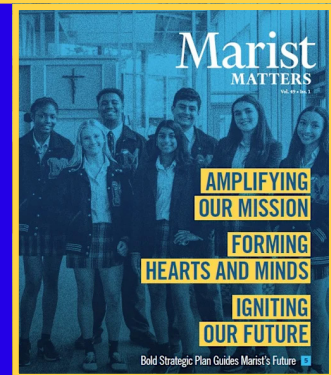
Prior to Easter, Marist School students led the community in a reverent Stations of the Cross service, guiding peers, faculty, and staff through each moment of Christ's Passion. Through reflective readings and carefully composed living tableaux, students brought each station to life and invited all present into a personal encounter with themes of love, sacrifice, forgiveness, and human dignity. Upperclassmen volunteered for every aspect of the service, creating a fully student-led experience. Students served as readers and vocalists, offering peer-centered reflections and leading the hymn "Were You There," while others managed lighting, sound, and visuals. Projected text supported participation in communal prayer and song. The service grounded the community in the solemnity of the Lenten season and reflected the voice of the Marist student body. This time together offered a meaningful opportunity to reflect on God's enduring love.



## Marist Students Explore the World Through Transformative Travel



## Marist Matters Magazine



## HUMANS FIRST

Adolescent Education in the Age of AI Conference

Marist School

## Humans First: Adolescent Education in the Age of AI Conference

Prior to Easter break, NDP's lower, middle and upper schools each prayerfully gathered for their own Stations of the Cross. Throughout the ceremonies, students demonstrated a deep sense of respect and devotion, praying together through each station with quiet focus and intention; a powerful witness to their understanding of this sacred tradition.



**Three NDP Students Earn NJHS Outstanding Achievement Award**



NDP students made a powerful impression at the Michigan Youth in Government Spring Conference (high school), held at the end of March at the Lansing Center and the Michigan State Capitol. Representing NDP with integrity, leadership and determination, 44 students and four advisers joined peers from across the state for four days of hands-on civic engagement. The NDP delegation participated in a wide range of programs — from the state Legislature and Governor's cabinet to lobbying, press and the Model Judiciary Program — demonstrating both skill and passion for public service.





**All-School Mass for the 2nd Week of Easter celebrated by Fr. David Musso, SM, ND Academy's chaplain.**



**The Class of 2026 led ND Academy's annual Stations of the Cross, guiding the school community in reflection prior to Easter break. A moving reminder of faith, leadership, and community!**



**ND Academy's Literary Team competed at GAPPS State Literary Class A competition at the end of last month. The overall team placed 2nd!**

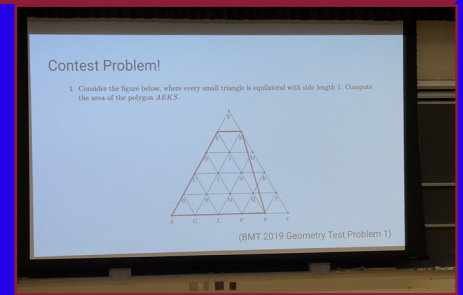




A team from NDV recently participated in the Berkeley Math Tournament, a mini competition of puzzles and relays designed to challenge students and prepare them for future academic endeavors. While we did not place overall, our students earned two honorable mentions, an exciting accomplishment that reflects their effort and perseverance.

It was a wonderful day filled with energy, teamwork, and a genuine love of learning. The NDV community is especially grateful to the junior high math teacher for leading the group and embracing the spirit of the event, even during her vacation. As she shared with the students, “let’s go be math enthusiasts for the day,” a phrase that captured both the joy and enthusiasm of the experience.

Opportunities like this allow the NDV community to reflect on and strengthen math practices while giving the students the chance to engage alongside other high achieving peers. NDV looks forward to continuing to grow in this area and to providing experiences that inspire curiosity, confidence, and excellence in mathematics.



## Dedication of Marist Chapel of St. Peter Chanel at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Atlanta, Georgia)

(Content and pictures shared by Susan J. Illis, Archivist, Archives of the Society of Mary, U.S. Province)

On March 25, 2026, the Feast of the Annunciation, the Most Reverend Joel Konzen, SM, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, dedicated the Marist Chapel of St. Peter Chanel at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The newly renovated adoration chapel honors the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Mary for building Sacred Heart Church and serving there for nearly 70 years, from 1897 until 1965.

The late Rev. John Howren oversaw the renovation of Sacred Heart over the past several years. The decoration of the Marist Chapel pays homage to Society of Mary history with a portrait of St. Peter Chanel, Marist saint and protomartyr of Oceania, stained glass featuring the coats of arms of both Bishop Konzen and Most Rev. John Gunn, SM, bishop of Natchez and founder of Marist School, and prayer kneelers that date from the earliest years of the church. Speaking at the dedication mass, Bishop Konzen paraphrased Sir Christopher Wren’s epitaph: “If you seek his monument, look around you.” The renovated Sacred Heart Basilica and its new Marist Chapel are monuments not only to the many Marists who served there, but also to Fr. Howren, who showed his respect for the beauty and history of Sacred Heart through this glorious restoration.



### MARIST CHAPEL of Saint Peter Chanel

This chapel was blessed on March 25, 2026, by the Most Reverend Joel M. Konzen, S.M., Auxiliary Bishop of Atlanta. It honors the legacy of the Marist Fathers and Brothers who built this church in 1897-1898, founded Marist College (now Marist School) on this site in 1901 and served the parish for almost 70 years.

The chapel was created through the vision and under the leadership of Father John T. Howren (Pastor 2020-2026) and completed through the generosity of Marist School alumni, parishioners and friends of the Basilica.

## Memorial Mass in Michigan for Fr. Gaston Lessard, S.M.

Fr. Joe Hindelang, SM, Provincial of the U.S. Province, presided over a Memorial Mass for Fr. Gaston Lessard, s.m., at Holy Innocents Parish in Roseville, Michigan. Fr. Lessard, who died on March 28, 2026, in Quebec, Canada had maintained a close relationship with the Marist Sisters of Michigan, many of whom served alongside him during his tenure in Canada.



(left to right) Sr. Frances Feeley,sm, Fr. Jim Strasz, S.M., Sr. Teresa O'Connor,sm, Fr. Joe Hindelang, S.M., Sr. Linda Sevcik, sm, Sr. Rita Riddell, sm, and Sr. Eileen Lynch, sm



## Celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday



## Year 5 Graduation





On April 18<sup>th</sup>, the Marist Family will remember a milestone: the canonization of Marcellin Champagnat in 1999 in St. Peter's Square. This moment, presided over by Pope John Paul II, marked not only a recognition by the universal Church, but also a renewed call to live and share the Marist charism with the world.

Revisit that historic day through the photo archive, which captures the atmosphere, the people, and the spirit of that celebration. The photo archive can be viewed [HERE](#).



**Sr. Regina Cohene, sm visited Callao/Lima, Peru, at the invitation of Fr. José Maria, S.M., to assist with a formation retreat for the staff of São José School, focusing on Marist spirituality and Colin's vision for education. She met members of the Marist Family, youth of Marist Vocational Pastoral, and Venezuelan families from earlier missions. Her presence and sharing of life and mission were warmly and joyfully appreciated by all who attended.**



## Novena for Feast of St. Peter Chanel

It is a long-standing tradition in the Society of Mary to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life during the nine days leading up to the Feast of St Peter Chanel. The Marists invite you to join us starting April 19<sup>th</sup> in a Novena to St. Peter Chanel whose feast we will celebrate on April 28<sup>th</sup>. The Novena prayers can be found [HERE](#).

Read more about the artist of the watercolors in the novena, Fr. Léopold Verguet, S.M. [HERE](#).

Learn more about St. Peter Chanel [HERE](#).

(Novena credit: [https://data.over-blog-kiwi.com/0/55/35/30/20220419/ob\\_ef01ce\\_neuvaine-stpchannel-2022-en.pdf](https://data.over-blog-kiwi.com/0/55/35/30/20220419/ob_ef01ce_neuvaine-stpchannel-2022-en.pdf))



## Celebrating Earth Day - April 22<sup>nd</sup>

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated around the world on April 22<sup>nd</sup> to demonstrate support for environmental protection. This year's theme is "Our Power, Our Planet."

As Marists, we are actively concerned and pay close attention to the consequences of global warming and climate issues. We seek to educate ourselves and others about issues affecting our world.

We are reminded of the words by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* "All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents."

To find out more about Earth Day 2026 resources and events click [HERE](#).

## *Prayer for Peace*

*Lord of Life,  
you shaped every human being in your image and likeness.  
We believe you created us for communion, not for war,  
for fraternity, not for destruction.  
You who greeted your disciples saying, "Peace be with you,"  
grant us the gift of your peace and the strength to make it a reality in history.*

*Today we lift up our prayer for peace in the world,  
asking that nations renounce weapons  
and choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy.*

*Disarm our hearts of hatred, resentment, and indifference,  
so we may become instruments of reconciliation.  
Help us understand that true security does not come from control fueled by fear,  
but from trust, justice, and solidarity among peoples.*

*Lord, enlighten the leaders of the nations,  
so they may have the courage to abandon projects of death, halt the arms race,  
and place the lives of the most vulnerable at the center.  
May the nuclear threat never again dictate the future of humanity.*

*Holy Spirit,  
make us faithful and creative builders of daily peace:  
in our hearts, our families, our communities, and our cities.  
May every kind word, every gesture of reconciliation,  
and every choice for dialogue be seeds of a new world.*

*Amen.*



## **PRAY WITH POPE LEO XIV**

View the Holy Father's monthly  
prayer intention **HERE**.