

## MARIST COMMUNITY IN MEPPEN (GERMANY)

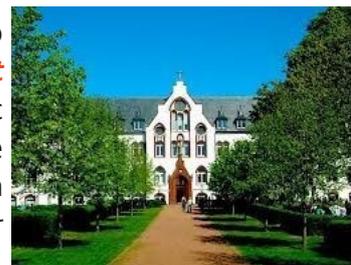
The Marist Fathers and Brothers arrived in Meppen, a small town in the north-west of Germany, in 1899. Our residence, the impressive 'Marist Monastery' was inaugurated in 1901. The community today consists of nine confreres in the house, and three living nearby, attached to the community. Apart from two confreres everyone is over 80. We are blessed to have a community of religious sisters living on the premises.



Our chapel, once a popular wedding venue, was recently reopened to the public and now hosts both joyful and sombre occasions, such as funerals. We gather in there for the Lauds, Vespers, and Midday Prayer, devotions, and the Eucharist. *We are few but our singing and prayer bring the place alive.* We

also celebrate Mass daily in the neighbouring *Marienhaus*, a nursing home run by religious Sisters.

We share our site with over 1,000 students who attend the former *Marist Gymnasium*, which is now a Catholic diocesan high school. During breaks, the students frequent an ecological garden with herbs and a variety of fruit. In former times it provided us with potatoes and vegetables.



Today it is surrounded by a path leading us past delightfully fragrant wild blackthorn bushes. The buzzing of bees from nearby hives adds to the serene atmosphere. We have guest rooms available, and we can accompany visitors on retreat in German or English. You can also simply enjoy a time of peace and silence. If you wish to visit us, please do so!



*Wilhelm Tangen, s.m.*

## DEAR MARIST FRIENDS,

Thanks, no doubt to many prayers, I'm happy to be back in the provincial office in Paris, after successful surgery and recuperation.

So effective were the Vicar Provincial Declan Marmion and the Provincial Secretary Odile de Villenaut during the months I was in the UK that it reinforces an important truth: none of us is quite as irreplaceable as we might imagine!

We have a rich menu in EuroInfo this month: a personal testimony from Paris, the German community of Meppen open for visitors and retreatants, a successful interchange between Europe and Africa, and Marist reflections on synodality.

*Kevin Duffy s.m.*

## VISIT FROM JOHN LARSEN AND JUAN CARLOS PIÑA IN PARIS



## PRAYER INTENTION:

the provincial retreat in La Neylière this month

## FATHER COLIN AND THE SYNODAL CHURCH



The synodal process presented by Pope Francis resonates with the teachings of Jean-Claude Colin. The documents emphasise the importance of ecclesial participation, inclusion,

and the opportunity for people at the margins to contribute to the building of the People of God. This echoes Colin's vision of **the Marist project as a diverse and inclusive family**.

The synodal process is described as a path to Church renewal, emphasizing the need for listening, dialogue, and community discernment. Father Colin also recognised the value of embracing diversity within the Marist family, envisioning multiple branches coming together to form **a unified body under the guidance of Mary, the Mother of Mercy**.

The synodal approach goes beyond mere meetings. It calls for a rediscovery of a Synodal Church where everyone has something to learn, emphasizing the importance of mutual listening and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Colin emphasised the need to **start anew**, in a Church modelled on the nascent Church, **'cor unum et anima una'**.

The documents also recognise the Christian community as a partner for social dialogue, reconciliation, and inclusion, emphasizing the importance of promoting fraternity. Father Colin saw the **Marist mission to be at the service of communion in the world**, with loyalty to the Pope and the Church, and a broad vision that seeks to bring communion to the most excluded.

The synodal process highlights the need for unity in diversity in a mission-oriented Church. It calls for conversion, acknowledging the need for continual reform. Similarly, Colin believed that the Marist mission needs saints to accomplish its mission.

**Mary, our superior and model, wanted to gather everything under her mantle**. A Marian Church is an inclusive Church, open to all.

To read the full reflection in EN and FR ([bit.ly/ColinSynod](https://bit.ly/ColinSynod)) *Paul Walsh, s.m.*

## VOLUNTEERING WITH SECOURS POPULAIRE

In 2012, upon arriving in Paris, I was looking for a suitable ministry. A friend suggested volunteering at *Secours Populaire*, a French Aid organization. For over a decade now, I have been



faithfully dedicating my time to them, attending every Monday and Thursday for two hours. My primary responsibility involves working alongside a French teacher in educating immigrants, economic and political refugees, in literacy. **This role gives me a sense of "hidden and unknown."** I ensure that classes run smoothly, and, in tense moments, I use mime and drawing to lighten the atmosphere. I also identify students who need help and provide individual support. Throughout the years, I have seen the challenges participants had to face. **My greatest joy comes from witnessing** some of them conquer their challenges, discover new horizons, and make progress in learning the French language. What is remarkable about *Secours Populaire* is the strong sense of community among all the people involved. The atmosphere is exceptional, and the interactions are genuine and warm. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to make a modest contribution to this mission. *Secours Populaire* has become much more than just a volunteer activity for me; it gives meaning to my presence in this city.

*Jean-Yves Denizet, s.m.*

## EDUCATIONAL VISIT IN FRANCE

*Father Youssouph Stev Youm, director of the new Marist school in Dakar, Senegal* writes: "From

12<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> May I visited the French Marists Schools in Bury-Rosaire, Sainte Marie La Seyne, Cours



Fénelon, and La Cordeille. My aim was to study pedagogical systems and their approaches to organizing teachers and staff, relations with parents, administration, secretarial work, accounting. My visits were beneficial and enriching. I collected many inspiring ideas and practices. Pedagogical approaches varied, but all shared the Marist spirit. I would like to thank the Marist communities and all those who made my visit possible, especially Vincent Langlois."

## DATES

Provincial Council in Paris 13-15 July • SM Provincial retreat in La Neylière 16-22 July • **23 July Memorial of the Fournière Promise** • European Marist Laity gathering in England 30 July - 4 August • World Youth Day celebrations in Lisbon, Portugal 1-6 August • Relais Marist (French Laity) in Alsace 13-20 August

