



## VIA LATINA 22

# 294 - November 2020

News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

### First professions in the Region of Japan



**L-R: Bro. Phero Le Van Sinh, SM, Bro. Gioan Baotixita Le Ngoc Doan, SM and Bro. Anton Van Cau, SM**

On Friday, October 2, 2020, three Vietnamese from the Region of Japan, Gioan Baotixita (John-Baptiste) Le Ngoc Doan, Phero (Pierre) Le Van Sinh, and Anton (Antoine) Ham Van Cau pronounced their first vows and became religious of the Society of Mary. The Eucharistic Liturgy was held in the Chapel of the Chaminade Marianist Community Residence in Tokyo.

The ceremony was presided by Fr. Koichi Ichise, SM, Superior of the Region of Japan. In attendance were representatives from each of the other Marianist Family branches, Sr. Fumiko Sumida, FMI Provincial, Mr. Kiyoshi Hirata, MLC President, Ms. Masae Tanaka, AM representative, as well as the members of the Chaminade and Gyosei Shudoin Communities and one representative from Kosei Shudoin, Meisei Shudoin, and Kaisei Shudoin.

It was a day of solemn and great joy for it was the first profession ceremony for Region of Japan in 21 years.

The day of the profession ceremony itself was the one on which the Foundation of the Society of Mary is commemorated and the three new religious professed their vows with the same spirit as those first religious. They had begun their Marianist community life experience in Ho Chi Minh City in 2012, arrived in Japan in April of 2014 and then completed their formation in the novitiate in Tokyo.

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## Perpetual professions in the Region of Togo, the District of Ivory Coast and the Province of USA.



**L-R: Bro. Justin Agbo-Hola Kodjo Ayéna, SM, Fr. Jonas Hodabalo Kpatcha, SM (Regional Superior), and Bro. Jules Amouzè Prénom Along, SM.**

On Saturday October 3, 2020, the Society of Mary and the Region of Togo had the grace and the joy of welcoming the perpetual profession of two brothers : Jules Amouzè Prénom Along, SM and Justin Agbo-Hola Kodjo Ayéna, SM. Fr. Jonas Kpatcha, SM, Superior of the Region of Togo, received the vows.

Monsignor Célestin-Marie Gaoua, Bishop of the Diocese of Sokodé, presided at the Eucharist. It took place in the parish of Saint Francis Xavier of Sotouboua, in the presence of an assembly composed of representatives of the four branches of the Marianist Family, parents, friends, acquaintances and personnel of the Marianist works.

In his homily, Fr. Jonas exhorted the faithful to redouble their efforts in prayer for the newly perpetually professed who now have greater need of them.

It was also the occasion for the Region of Togo to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of its presence in the Diocese of Sokodé (1995-2020). A joyful reception with refreshments followed this prayerful and beautiful celebration.



**L-R: Bros. Narcisse Agoua Anoman, SM, Roméo Ahouo Angba, SM and Joseph Ebah N'guessan Allou, SM.**

On Saturday, October 10, 2020, Bro. Narcisse Agoua Anoman, SM, Bro. Roméo Ahouo Angba, SM and Bro. Joseph Ebah N'guessan Allou, SM , members of the District of Ivory Coast, pronounced their perpetual vows in the Society of Mary. The celebration took place at the National Marian Sanctuary of Abidjan (Ivory Coast), and the Eucharist was presided over by Monsignor Jean Salomon Lezoutier, Bishop of the Diocese of Yopougon.

At the end of the Ceremony a warm and fraternal sharing took place with the families of the perpetually professed and the whole Marianist Family in the gardens of the Marianist residence of the National Marian Sanctuary of Abidjan.

The day was very convivial with all the Marianist family, who were gathered together on this same occasion for the World Day of Marianist Prayer.



**L-R: Fr. Oscar Vasquez, SM, Bro. Allen Agpaoa Pacquing, SM and Fr. Timothy Kenney, SM.**

Bro. Allen Agpaoa Pacquing, SM, professed perpetual vows in the Society of Mary on Oct. 3, 2020, at Guadalupe Chapel on the campus of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. Fr. Oscar Vasquez, Provincial Superior of the Province of the United States, presided at the Eucharist and received the vows. Fr. Tim Kenney, Assistant for Religious Life, concelebrated and presented Bro. Allen for the Rite of Religious Profession.

Due to precautions taken in light of the coronavirus pandemic, physical attendance of the celebration was limited to 45 friends and members of the Marianist community donning masks and socially distanced. However, the vow ceremony was livestreamed so that Marianist family members and friends from throughout the world were able to virtually witness the celebration.

Bro. Allen Pacquing, 50, was born to a religious, Filipino-American family and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii. He earned a master's degree in Pastoral Ministry from Santa Clara University in California in 2003. In 2013, Allen asked himself, "Who would have guessed that I would enter the novitiate at this stage in my life? Certainly not me, but God had other plans. I just needed to listen and to be open to His call."

With his knowledge and willingness to serve in the Division of Student Development,

he has accepted the position of Associate Director of Community Engagement, Marianist Student Initiatives at St. Mary's University.

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## Priestly Ordination in Ivory Coast



**L-R: P. Koutouan Eugène Adingra, SM, Msgr Alexis Touabli Youlo, P. Kouakou Elie Oka, SM and P. Kouame Georges Gbeze, SM**

The District of Ivory Coast and the Province of France joyfully celebrated the sacerdotal ordination of Kouakou Elie Oka, SM in Abidjan on Saturday, October 24, 2020. The ceremony took place at the National Marian Shrine, where Bro. Elie has been living in community and serving in ministry as a deacon, since his return to Ivory Coast from the International Seminary in Rome.

The imposition of hands was made by Most Reverend Alexis Touabli Youlo, Bishop of Agboville, in the presence of Fr. Georges Gbeze, SM, District Superior, many

members of the SM, other branches of the Marianist Family and the family and friends of Fr. Elie. Before ordaining him, Bishop Alexis insisted in his homily on the Priesthood as a mystery, as a call to live fully the life of Christ in the midst of one's brothers and sisters. It was a very beautiful celebration of God's calling of a religious to the service of his community and the faithful, and the generous acceptance of that vocation.

Born in Abidjan, Fr. Elie attended school at the Collège St. Jean Bosco in Abidjan, staffed by the SM. After entering the Society and completing his initial formation, he served as a member of the community, and later director at Village Chaminade, a center for spirituality on the outskirts of Abidjan. Later, he temporarily left the Ivory Coast for studies at the International Seminary in Rome, completing his preparation in June 2020.

We congratulate Fr. Elie and assure him of our prayers as he begins priestly ministry. He has been assigned to the same Marian Shrine, where he will be engaged in pastoral and sacramental work with the other members of the Marianist community there.

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## Appoint of a New Secretary General of the Society of Mary

Fr. André Fétis, SM, Superior General, is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Secretary General for the Society of Mary. We are grateful that Bro. Kodjo Frédéric Bini, SM, of the Region of Togo, has accepted this nomination. He will take over from Bro. Michael J. McAward, SM, who had resumed that role, *ad interim*, since September of 2018. The appointment is effective as of November 15, 2020.



Brother Frédéric was born in Zogbégan /Wawa, Togo in 1971. He entered the pre-novitiate in Kara after graduating from high school in 1997. He made his first vows in the Society of Mary in 2000. In 2004, after his formation at the scholasticate in Abidjan, he was assigned to the Blessed Chaminade community in Kara. There he spent twelve years as a member of the community, including nine years as Director of Chaminade College.

In 2019, while he was still Director of the Saint Joseph community in Sotouboua and Assistant for Education in his Region, Brother Frédéric accepted his nomination as Vice-Rector of the International Marianist Seminary Chaminade in Rome. He therefore continues this service, adding to it the role of Secretary General.

The Office of Secretary General is a vital service within the General Administration. It is the center of communications between the General Council and the membership of the SM, and it handles myriad responsibilities from record keeping to publications. He is also the Notary for the SM. He will be assisted by a team of very competent and dedicated lay collaborators who have been very instrumental in the functioning of the Secretariat for many years.

We are grateful to Bro. Michael for his willingness to serve in this role during these last years, in addition to his other responsibilities. Likewise, we welcome Bro. Frédéric and thank him for his generous response to additional service to the General Administration and to the SM.



## Visit of the General Council to the Region of Eastern Africa

The four members of the General Council have just returned from their visitation of the Region of Eastern Africa. The visitation began on October 9, and concluded on October 28, when they returned to Rome. Thanks to some quick organization and open flexibility on the part of the Regional Administration, and their members, this visit was successfully organized on relatively short notice. It came in substitution of the planned visit to the Province of the USA, which needed to be cancelled due to the pandemic. It was, nevertheless, a difficult visit to schedule, even to be able to arrive there, given all of the restrictions in effect throughout the various countries.



**Celebrating the Eucharist at an assembly of Marianist religious in Nairobi.**

The Region is spread across three different countries: Kenya, Zambia and Malawi. Because of the complications brought about by COVID-19, it was not possible to include Malawi in this visitation. It is hoped that the Council can visit there in the not-too-distant future. Thus, Fr. André and Brother Michael traveled to Kenya for the first two weeks, while Fr. Pablo and Brother Maximin went directly to Zambia. Each pair visited the communities and mission of the Region in these

countries, before uniting in Nairobi during the final week, for the visits to their Novitiate and Scholasticate, and the conclusion of the visitation.

Throughout Kenya, the religious of the Region conduct several educational institutions, in Nairobi, Mombasa and Ukunda. One of these, Our Lady of Nazareth School provides formal education to pre-primary and primary students from the Mukuru Slum. Several other centres, in all three cities, provide technical training in both a formal and non-formal settings. In Mombasa, the SM has a parish, St. Martin de Porres. There are other works of social justice animated by the SM. All of these works benefit from very dedicated lay collaborators and serve the needy with respect and dedication. Kenya hosts two of the three formation communities of the Region. Currently, the Scholasticate has 22 religious, mostly from Eastern Africa, but also several from other Units in Africa. There are two novices in the Novitiate. In addition, there are active groups of Marianist Lay Communities in both Mombasa and Nairobi.



**Celebrating the World Day of Marianist Prayer at Matero Boys School in Zambia.**

In Zambia, the main work is the well-respected Matero Boys School, located in the capital city of Lusaka. For many decades, the Marianist have provided a solid education at this signature institution. MLC groups are also active here. The Region's pre-novitiate house, in Lusaka, is the only of the Region's formation

communities outside of Kenya.

In Malawi, the Region also has longstanding presence in Karonga, at Chaminade Secondary School and at the M.I.R.A.C.L.E. Program for technical formation. There is a newly founded secondary school in the capital city of Lilongwe, Chaminade Marianist Secondary School. The General Council is anxious to visit each of these as soon as it is possible.

The Region of Eastern Africa is generally young in its membership and very “alive.” They have a strong commitment to mission and community life. They also have a good number of religious in the various stages of formation, so there is much hope for their future. Yet, there also are many challenges. Some of these are economic, others are how to best use their personnel and resources. Of course, vocations ministry is always a concern, and can never be taken for granted.

The General Council is very grateful for the welcome afforded them, and for the opportunity to experience Marianist life and mission within the Region. Let us pray that they continue to deepen and persevere in these, with the guidance and protection of our Blessed Mother.

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## **A Brother Martyr: Sabino Ayastui**

On November 6, the Church in Spain liturgically celebrates the memory of 1,891 martyrs of the religious persecution that took place in that country from 1931 to 1939. That is why on that day, in the liturgy of the Society of Mary, we celebrate the memory of four of our martyred brothers: Miguel Léibar, Joaquín Ochoa, Sabino Ayastui and Florencio Arnaiz. These four martyrs were beatified on October 28, 2007.

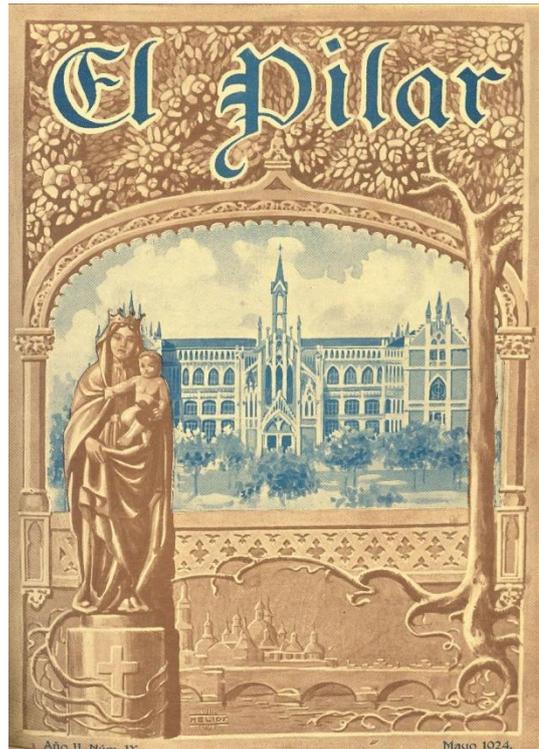
This month, we wish to highlight the life of one of these four religious, Sabino Ayastuy. He was born on December 29, 1911 in Aretxabaleta, Spain. When he was 11 years old, he entered the postulate of Escoriaza. From there he went on to the novitiate in Elorrio and made his first vows on September 5, 1928.



Sabino was a young man of deep religious sensitivity, but at the same time, he needed to grow and mature as a human person. In the report that his novitiate formators made of him, we read: "*Difficult character; rash, rebellious. However, he seems to possess a fair amount of good will. He has to work at taming the passions that are present in his personality with unusual vigor...We hope that he will continue to fight against his defects and be a good religious...*" He did his scholasticate years in Vitoria and Segovia.

He had a difficult time. It seems that his spiritual director advised him to leave religious life. However, he reaffirmed his vocation: "*I'd rather die than leave the Society of Mary.*" When he finished his scholasticate in 1931, he worked as an educator in the postulate of Escoriaza and in the school of San Sebastian. Reports concerning Sabino highlight his maturation in the years of initial formation. At that time, Religious persecution was becoming more and more intense in Spain. In 1933, in the first of the letters he sent asking for perpetual vows, he wrote, "*The same difficult circumstances that religious congregations in Spain are going through move me to join the Society of Mary in a more complete way. Persecution does not overwhelm me, for God who allows it, will give me the grace to endure it for the benefit of my soul.*"

He made his perpetual vows on September 2, 1934. The following year, he went to Colegio Nuestra Señora del Pilar in Madrid. In the context of the religious persecution of the time, a "*martyr's spirituality*" began to develop among the Spanish Brothers. Sabino possessed a prayer about martyrdom that he said every day. In July 1936, the military uprising that would give rise to the civil war took place. The school was closed and the community had to disperse and seek refuge in the houses of local families. Some people betrayed the religious and the anti-religion faction pursued them.

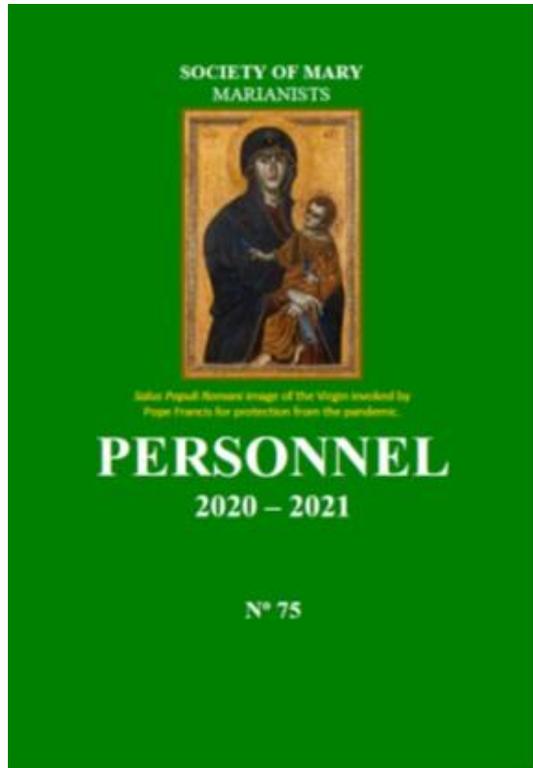


On September 13, 1936, the soldiers searched the apartment where Sabino was living with other religious. They arrested all of the religious who were in that apartment. After being tortured, the soldiers took these religious to the outskirts of Madrid and shot them.

Let us not hesitate to ask for graces through the intercession of Blessed Sabino so that one day he may be canonized.

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## 2020-2021 International Personnel To Arrive Soon!



This year's edition of the *International Personnel* has been printed and mailed to all Unit Administrations. When the copies actually arrive will depend on the various postal and courier services involved. We sincerely hope that the complications from the pandemic do not cause long delays, and that these arrive soon.

Once they have arrived to the Unit Administration, they should be distributed, as usual, throughout that Unit.

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## Prayer of Charismatic Families

The Charismatic Family is like a stained-glass window, which was formed by collecting the various elements of different shapes and colors. Each piece has full value in itself and by giving all its splendor it gives the whole a value of excellence, reflecting the beauty of the Church in its unity. In this spirit of communion and reciprocity, on November 1st, the day on which we celebrate the Feast of All Saints, we unite in prayer to entrust our Charismatic Families to God the Father. Our Founders/Foundresses are celebrating in Paradise, the place of perfect communion. May the Lord bless us with His Wisdom so that every Charism may be a light of hope for the Church and the world.

*Click below for the text of the prayer...*

[A prayer from the Charismatic Families of Rome](#)

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### G.A. Communications recently sent

- **Death Notices: # 29-32**
- **Sep. 23: *Extended General Council*** to the Presidents of Zonal Conferences, sent by Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, SM, Superior General.
- **Oct. 5: *Fratelli Tutti***, Encyclical of Pope Francis, sent to all the members of the Society of Mary.
- **Oct. 7: *Global Compact on education***, in three languages, sent to the Assistants of Education from the General Assistant of Education, Bro. E. Maximin Magnan, SM.

### G. A. Calendar

**Nov. 7-8:** Online meeting of the World Council of the Marianist Family  
**Nov. 19-20:** Online meeting of the Extended General Council  
**Nov. 25-27:** Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, SM, Superior General, attends online meeting of USG (Union of Superiors General).  
**Nov. 25:** Fr. Pablo Rambaud, General Assistant of Religious Life, attends online meeting of “Patronato SM” (Ediciones SM).

## **Address Changes**

**Bro. William Bolts (US):** [bbolts@gmail.com](mailto:bbolts@gmail.com)

**Bro. Magdaleno Ceballos (US):** [mceballos1@udayton.com](mailto:mceballos1@udayton.com)

**Bro. James Facette (US):** [jimface33@gmail.com](mailto:jimface33@gmail.com)