

SMBulletin

Friday, 27 September 2019

Dear Confreres,
Greetings from Rome!

There are changes in the leadership team here in Rome.



Father Paul Walsh has resigned his post as General Councilor. Paul has been a wonderful team-member for the last two years – generous, competent and wise. We are deeply grateful for his service. However, after a long period of prayer, discernment and consultation and for reasons of personal health and well-being he has decided this is not the right place for him. We wish him well as he returns to his Province of Europe, presumably after a time of rest and recuperation.

We have invited Father Albert Kabala, the District Superior of Africa, to accept the additional role of General Councilor. He will remain based in Africa and will contribute from there, while coming to Rome regularly, at least for the plenary sessions twice or three times a year. We are most grateful to Albert for accepting this extra responsibility. Of course, we will need to make some adjustments to his work-load so that it is well manageable.

Although we are very sad to see Paul go, we see this new approach to leadership, with Albert serving as a Councilor from his home-base in Africa, as a possible way to exercise leadership into the future of the General Council. We hope it is new life. We can experiment with this way of leadership, discerning as we go along, and then evaluate it at the Council of the Society in 2021.

Pray for each other.

Fraternally in Mary,

John Larsen s.m.

CRITICAL TIMES FOR THE MISSION IN RANONG

The Marist Mission in Ranong, Thailand, has been supporting Burmese migrant children and families since 2006. Recently an order was issued from the Thai *Department of Labour* to search and scan all 10 Burmese migrant learning centers in Ranong. 32 Burmese migrant teachers were arrested and deported. Along with the 9 other migrant learning centers, the *Marist Asia Foundation* decided to close its preschool and secondary education programmes to protect and keep the Burmese staff safe from the possibility of arrest.



Fr Frank Bird, the director of the mission, writes “As we closed our doors, we went visiting the families and listening to their stories. They are struggling with not being able to go to work as their children cannot go to school. Some children wander the streets, are exposed to the dangers of fish factories, child labour, trafficking, prostitution. (...) As we journey into the next few weeks, we ask for your prayers and support as we continue to dialogue with the government and find a way to get our children back into the classroom”. For more information, visit the [JPIC blog](#).