

# The Marists in Aleppo

1904 - .....



# The beginnings

In August 1904, four Marist Brothers arrived in Aleppo to run the school for Armenian Catholics in Telal Street. Later, they worked with the Greek Catholics by running the school of Saint Nicholas and with the Jesuits in their school in the old city. In 1932, they built their own school, Champagnat College, in Fayçal Street (currently called Georges Salem School). In 1948 they moved to the section of the city called Mohafzat. Since 1967, when the college was nationalised, they have worked with the Amal School. Their presence has been in the areas of the scouts, catechesis, the accompaniment of young people and in solidarity with the poor. In August 2004, the centenary of the presence of the Marist Brothers in Aleppo is being celebrated.

The group Champagnat-Brothers has educated hundreds of young people in the Marist spirit through scouting since 1976 until today.

The group Champagnat-Jabal (referring to the neighbourhood of Jabal el Saydé) was started first. Some young people, feeling the urgency of a Marist scouting education in the poorer neighbourhoods, dared to start a group for the children of this neighbourhood. Brothers and young people are continuing with this project in a spirit of enthusiasm and hope.

# P r o m i s e





Beginning  
of the year









# Champagnat 2013



لقاء العائلة 2013-10-19

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# End of the year Ceremony



# Champagnat Marist Family Movement

Several lay people have participated in Marist formation sessions in Europe. On their return, they invited couples to form the "Champagnat Marist Family Movement". Families, meet on the average two times a month to reflect, pray and share Marist spirituality with the brothers. One couple has made a step forward. They have started the "Marist Club" for young people from the ages of 15 to 17. Through informal education, these young people are shown how to live with Marist values and to be aware of the reality of other young people who are not as well off as they are.

عائلة عيد الحب 2008

لنبدأ ندرى لنا الحياة هكذا!!

لنكتفينا ندرى ان ما يحصل اقل أهمية من حياتنا فالحصول فالحياة ليس بعيدا منا على الإطلاق --

ولا شيء مستحيل ان يفلح فيها بيتنا وبين حب الله

من نيل و كيتي :

من قصبي و ليلي :

من كمال و رانيا :

من رانيا و كمال :

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كل عام وانتم بخير



# St. George Monastery



# St. Maroon Ruins





# P A L M Y R A





# Old Church, Aleppo



# Solidarity Work

In 1986 a group of brothers and lay Marists inspired by Marist spirituality and the Charisma of St. Marcellin Champagnat, to live the Gospel in everyday life with simplicity, modesty and humility. This group is made up of a directing team, consisting of 2 Marist Brothers and 7 lay (4 women and 3 men) and 70 volunteers. Under the name of "The Ear of God", took in charge, the needs of poorest of the poor Christians of Aleppo by supporting and assisting in the area of housing, education, health and work.

They have also started an education project for the children who have not reached school age. "Learning to grow" has as its objective the eradication of poverty through education, teaching and the development of the whole person.

The brothers work with some ladies in the project "Training and Development for Women", which has as its objective the development and personal growth of women through communication, listening, reflection in common and through dialogue. This project addresses women's issues in destitute families.

The project "Mosaïque" is aimed at adolescents from the poorest families. It hopes to give these adolescents the chance to meet each other in a simple and healthy atmosphere marked by the Marist spirit.

In the same educational perspective, the community keeps its doors open to young people who want to pray, study, seek spiritual accompaniment, play or simply share the daily life of the brothers.





March 2011, Syria  
July 2012, Aleppo,  
The Crisis starts

In July 2012, the rebels armed groups, affiliated to Al Nosra, branch of Al Qaida, invaded the East and South neighborhoods of Aleppo causing, in few days, the displacement of 500,000 people who fled and took refuge in West Aleppo under the control of the Syrian government. During 4 and half years, Aleppo was divided in two: The Est neighborhoods with 250,000 people living there, under the rebels control and the remaining neighborhoods, representing 75% of Aleppo area, called West Aleppo, with 1.5 million people living there under government control. For 4 and half years, West Aleppo was surrounded by the rebels, submitted many times to complete blockade causing a shortage of essential products such as gasoline, fuel, medical drugs and products.



The Alepins lived without water nor electrical power, the pumping stations and power plant being in the rebels controlled area. A rain of mortar shells and gas canister filled with nails launched by the rebels fell every day on Aleppo killing dozens of persons and wounding as many. The Syrian army tried few times to take the control of the rebels controlled area by ground battles and air strikes without success.

# Destruction



# Thirst





# Innocent Victims



# The Blue Marists

Since the beginning of the conflict in Aleppo, in July 2012, we changed our name to be "the Blue Marists " and we have expanded our scope to include (in addition to the poorest families) hundreds of displaced families, Christian and Muslim.



# The activities of aid and relief

## 1- The Blue Marist Program for the displaced families









## 2- The Blue Marists Medical Program

Because of poverty, unemployment and the incredible increase of the cost of living, the people of Aleppo have not anymore the means to be treated adequately if they are sick or if they need surgery. Medical insurance, Medicaid or Medicare do not exist in Syria. The program helps the families in need to pay the lab tests, X-ray, drug prescriptions, hospitalization and surgical procedures.



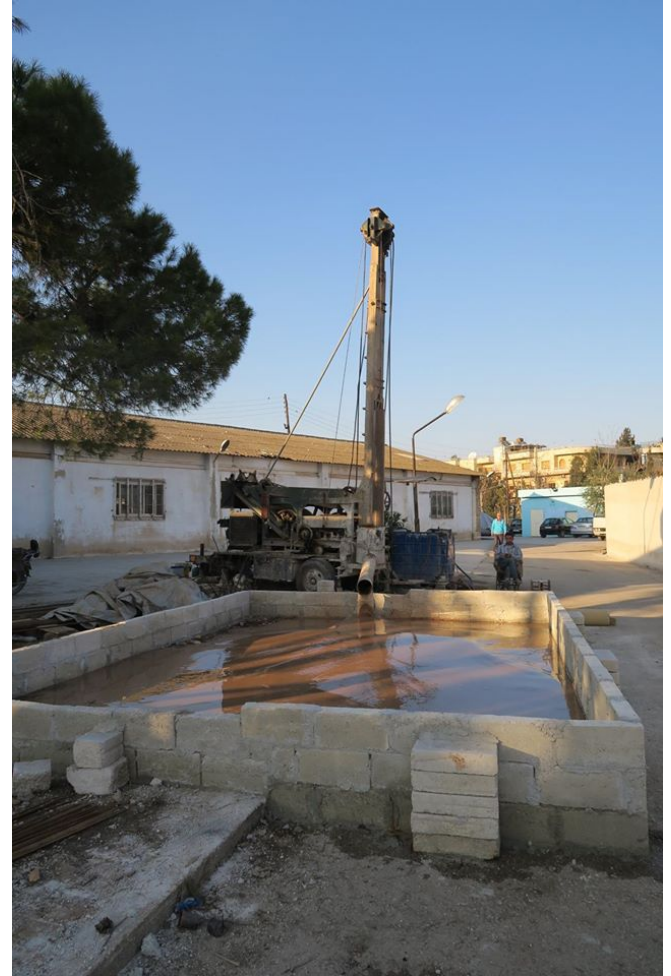
### 3- « War- wounded civilians » project.



## 4- “Drop of Milk”









# The pedagogical activities:

The principal mission of the Marists is the education of children, especially the least favored; therefore, we have developed our pedagogic activities to respond to the immense needs created by the war.

1- « Learn to Grow » program.



## 2-« I want to learn »



### 3-« Skills School »

Is our program for the teenagers allowing the young people to discover themselves and develop their skills. They are now over seventy.



## 4- “Douroub”



## 5- “Marists Institute for Training” (M.I.T.):



6- "The Blue Marist Program for the Eradication of Illiteracy"

7- "Cut and Sew"

8- "Hope"

We would like to emphasize that our various programs are all directed to disadvantaged and/or displaced families and are entirely free.



# Our spirituality

We believe that evangelism is not done by speeches but by the everyday life and example. We endorse what His Holiness Pope Francis said on July 5, 2014 "The witness of charity is the royal road of evangelization". The Pope asked the Church to "infuse in the society that supplement of spirit that gives hope." Indeed, our motto is that of all the Marist World: Sow Hope.

We support the families, we want to listen to them, to provide psychological support, to understand their needs, to restore their dignity that is often flouted, to give them a little bit of hope and make them feel that we are in solidarity with them.

Revolted by all that we experience, see, hear and feel, we, the Blue Marists are revolted. We cannot accept the unacceptable.

Compassion is one of our values. We share the suffering of our brothers and sisters, their distress, their despair and their tragedies.

Solidarity is our way of living charity and love with them and for them.







*Pour les gens que nous rencontrons  
chaque jour, nous essayons d'être  
des reflets de Dieu.  
Nous cherchons à être visibles  
et mémoire permanente  
de la présence aimante  
et compatissante de Dieu  
au milieu de son peuple:  
signes vivants  
de la tendresse du Père.*

*Eau du Rocher, 137*

**JOYEUX ANNIVERSAIRE  
FRERE GEORGES**

**MARISTES ALEP - 2012**



# Useful links

<https://www.facebook.com/MaristesAlep/>

<https://www.facebook.com/champagnat1/>

<https://www.facebook.com/nabil.antaki.14>

<http://oraprosiria.blogspot.com/2017/03/i-maristi-di-aleppo-con-cauto-ottimismo.html?sref=fb>