

The Japanese Mission Territory

The Marist Brothers were introduced into Japan as a result of the violent Communist persecutions on the China mainland in 1950. European brothers who had spent many years in China sought refuge that year in the city of Kobe, Japan. To maintain community life and to extend Marist influence to the foreign colony in that city, they opened an English-speaking school there.

The major Marist superiors in Europe considered this development an investment in the opening of a mission territory in Japan.

The Superior General requested the Provincial Council of the United States Province to furnish the personnel and finances for this mission. It was only in 1957 that the American Province accepted the new challenge and sent three brothers to study at the Franciscan University in Tokyo, Japan. Since then a fifth American brother, and three Spanish brothers who obtained their bachelor's degree at Marist College have joined the Marist contingent there.

When the United States Province was divided in 1959, the Japanese mission territory was entrusted to the Poughkeepsie Province. Four months later, in June 1959, the European brothers in Japan were transferred to that Province.

The success the brothers at Kobe during the past ten years is evidenced by the application of two Japanese to enter the Marist life. One is presently attending the University in Tokyo, and the other is a novice at St. Joseph Novitiate in Tyngsboro, Massachusetts. The hope of opening a Japanese-speaking school is nearing reality. It is expected that a \$300,000 investment in a high school in Kumamoto., on the Island of Kyushu, will draw a large Japanese student body. Requests for brothers to teach in Tokyo and other places in Japan give evidence that the Marist future in that country is very encouraging.

Marist Brothers School, Kobe

Marist Brothers School was organized by European brothers in the city of Kobe in 1951. Brother Louis Charles, Director, and his small Marist community started the school with sixteen foreign students. The enrollment grew slowly in the years that followed. In 1957 at the end of Brother Louis' six year tenure, there were 142 students. The program of studies which he introduced was the same used in the English colonies, that is, the program to prepare students for the coveted Cambridge (English) diploma. At present there are ten brothers on the faculty teaching 240 students. An annex is under construction at this time to accommodate more students.

Kumamoto Maristo High School, Kumamoto, Japan

The Marist Brothers arrived at Kumamoto in 1959 at the invitation of the Columban Fathers in the city of Kumamoto on the Island of Kyushu. Since this city is the commercial center of the Ken (state) and the population of 350,000 has at least 1,700 Catholics, the Fathers recommended that the Marist Brothers open their first Japanese-speaking school here.(134.)

Brother Patrick Francis, one of the three American brothers who arrived in Tokyo in 1957, was appointed as the director of a two year building project involving two three-story buildings. On May 15, 1960 Bishop Dominic Fukohari and Brother Paul Ambrose# Assistant General, participated in the laying of the cornerstone ceremonies. On April 12, 1961 the brothers opened Marist High School for the first Japanese student body of 73 boys in this slowly expanding Marist mission territory. Lay teachers were employed to teach most of the subjects, while brothers serve as administrators, and as teachers of English and Religion. Later when native vocations will be available, these will replace the lay teachers.

It is expected that the development of the Japanese mission territory by the Poughkeepsie Province will follow a similar pattern at Kumamoto. The future of the Mission lies in the success of t is school, and in the number of native vocations it will attract.(135.)