

From the Co-Leader

Dear Marists

This edition of the Marist Laity Newsletter has many articles within. This shows the depth and the broad scope that we are called by



Father John Thornhill visits lay Marists.

God. As I write this my young son Noah of 6 months crawls around in front of me at 7 am discovering new things like Lego blocks which I hope he does not swallow. Yet already this morning much has happened like feeding, praying and watering some of the small plants we have outside. Being a lay Marist calls us to recognise all parts of our life as God moments. We are called to choose to simplify our lives so that we might become more in tune with the will-of-God. The dangers of our modern day of busyness may distract us from our call to be Marist. We as Marists must recognise ourselves as pilgrims on a pilgrimage. As the late Pope John Paul II wrote about. Not seeing life as a destination to be sought but rather a journey to be live. Marists strive to be Mary's presence here on earth. In the practical application of our day we attempt to mirror the person of Mary and Jesus Christ.

In November this year Marist Laity Australia had our second reflection day at St Patrick's Church, at the Rocks in Sydney. Domenic Arcamone presenting a very Marist theme "Our Life as Story". We have some recent news from Marist Laity USA which we wish to share. Lay Marist Jeanette Bolster and her husband have recently been on pilgrimage to New Zealand visiting many Marist places and we have had the sad passing of Marist Sister Doreen McOscar and Marist Missionary Sister Clare O'Brien.

From all of Marist Laity Australia I wish to pass on my Christmas Greetings to you and hope that God blesses you, you're families and communities with Christ's Joy. May we seek Christ more in 2015.

Merry Christmas,

Andrew Dumas

Reflection

What is the role of Mary and Joseph for the spiritual development of Jesus?

The role of the Joseph and Mary's influence in the spiritual development of Jesus is largely unseen. We can presume his parents played a critical role as Jesus the fragile little child and also as he developed into the adult we know.. Today, when thinking about Jesus the Christ and Son of God we can get caught up in theology, which can distance us from the persons and circumstance involved. From baby, child, teenager and young adult. We can ignore the building blocks which are essential for Jesus' own spiritual development. Joseph and Mary play an important part, yet, the Gospels speak little about this role as parents of Jesus Joseph and Mary.

As young parents, Mary would have taken an early role as mother, provider of food, and nurturer. Possibly teaching Jesus the most important Jewish prayer. The Shema prayer:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut 6:4-9).

But as Jesus grew Joseph would have stepped in taking Jesus to his first synagogue service. Taking Jesus into the world of the carpenter. Showing Jesus what he knew of the world, and thus Joseph becomes an increasing role model. The Gospels speak nothing of this. The intimacy between a father and a son remain hidden from the readers view. We have the presentation in the temple and the visit to Jerusalem in the temple in the Gospels. This hiddenness reflects the intimacy and dynamic of family life.

Whilst in the temple Jesus is lost for 3 days. His parents come looking for him. This reminds us of a story Jesus would have told later in life during his ministry. The story of the Prodigal Son. A son who leaves his father to find a better life. Is the prodigal son Jesus? Does Jesus leave Joseph? Jesus must have known his travelling caravan from Nazareth had left Jerusalem. Is Jesus the rebellious son? But in Jesus story, the father and mother go looking for Jesus. Searching. This is what good parents do. Search for their child. Yet at the same time give them enough freedom to make choices and mistakes by moving away from the protective environment of parents.

Jesus does not follow the life of Joseph the carpenter. At least not in the last 3 years of his life. Maybe up until the age of 30 Jesus continues in Joseph's trade. However, something happens. Jesus has an encounter. He meets John the Baptist in the desert. Some sources say that Jesus was a follower of John. But the first word that Jesus uses in his ministry is "Metanoia" which means "change" – Mark Chapter 1. Could it be that Jesus himself has changed?

Jesus does not take a wife like Joseph, but rather has a group of disciples that wander through remote places like his cousin John the Baptist. Jesus' own parents thus have not simply formed Jesus. There are other influences forming the child of Jesus.

Despite Jesus' movement away from his parents, it is Jewish law that Jesus cares for his parents. The fourth Jewish commandments say, "honour your father and mother". In Matthews Gospel Chapter 6 the disciples come up to Jesus and say "your mother and brothers have come to visit you". Jesus responds "who is my mother and my brother?" Looking at Mary continues "It is the one who does the will of my Father". Jesus does not disown Mary here. Rather, he responds by knowing that Mary has actually already done the will of the father and continues to do so. Jesus makes a critical point here. He does not claim his parents in a biological sense, rather, bases the importance of parents on faith and trust in God the Father. Thus, Jesus' spiritual development has moved beyond a physical connection and possession to one which is an all embracing view of the love of God. This love is not some theory, rather, it is something to be lived in the day to day moments of life. Jesus honours his parents not by claiming them as his own. Rather giving them to the world as he hangs on the cross (John 19). This freedom allows his parents to grow as well, spiritually, by enabling them to respond in freedom and seek the will of God in their own journey.

Various stages are evident in the spiritual development of Jesus. Joseph and Mary lay the foundation and building blocks in Jesus' early development through nurturing, playing, praying, caring, teaching, working and travelling. As Jesus grows older as a child and teenager we see Jesus rebel, search, change, discover, and follow. Finally as an adult, Jesus broadens his view on parenting, which extends well beyond himself to that and all embracing love of God. This allows both himself and his parents to continue growing. Jesus is deeply human and fragile in his spiritual development because Jesus is born into the context of a relationship with his family which teaches him ultimately to love his father as – *Abba* – *Daddy*.

By Andrew Dumas

The Story

Of Our Life

On the 8th November, MLA attracted a group of some 25 people to St Patrick's Crypt in the heart of Sydney. Once again, Domenic Arcamone led the day, looking at "Our Life as Story". Domenic presented to us three kinds of stories that ground out lives: Escape stories, Quest stories and Love/Encounter stories.

The Escape stories are essentially about escaping from the FALSE to the TRUE: from the false self, false systems, false questions and false images of God to the true in each of the above.

The Quest stories are our life journey searching for God.

Our Love/Encounter stories are just that and are, in fact, the most important stories of our lives.

As in previous years, Domenic offered us intellectual challenge, emotional depth and spiritual awakening. He draws inspiration from writings dating back to St Augustine, to 20th century

Thomas Merton, to a video-clip from the recent movie, "The Railway Man". Underpinning all is the Story of Jesus from the Gospels. He is the way from falsity to truth; His quest story begins and ends with oneness with the Divine; His whole being was centred on love/encounter.

"Our Life as Story" day ended with the Eucharist led by Fr Ray Chapman SM.

We thank you Domenic for the time, effort and generosity you give to us in preparing these thought-provoking and heart-moving days of reflection for Marist Laity Australia.

By Maria Baden

Marist Encounter Program – 2015

At St Patricks Church in Church Hill Sydney A program to build community, to offer hospitality, to develop wisdom in the Marist spirituality and to encounter God. Each week you are invited to join a small group of lay people to share a light dinner, watch a 20 minute DVD on themes taken from Magnificat, share discussion and pray. Some of the speakers in the DVD include Marist father Kevin Bates, father John Thornhill, sister Marie Berise and lay Marist Barbara Ashwell. This program will run for 8 weeks leading to Easter. On Thursday 6 pm to 8.00 pm February 5, 12, 19, 26 and March 5, 12, 19, 26.



Marist Laity from the USA

October 5, 2014

Dear Marist Family & Friends,

Enjoy some pics of several new South Florida Marists... consecration to the Blessed Trinity through Mary Commitment Ceremony & Blessing of Children, St. Andrew Catholic Church, Coral Springs, Florida, USA September 20, 2014 and thanksgiving picnic which followed at Mary's Grotto...

"Striving to live our baptism in the Spirit of Mary of Nazareth and her Holy Family."



Marist

Pilgrimage to

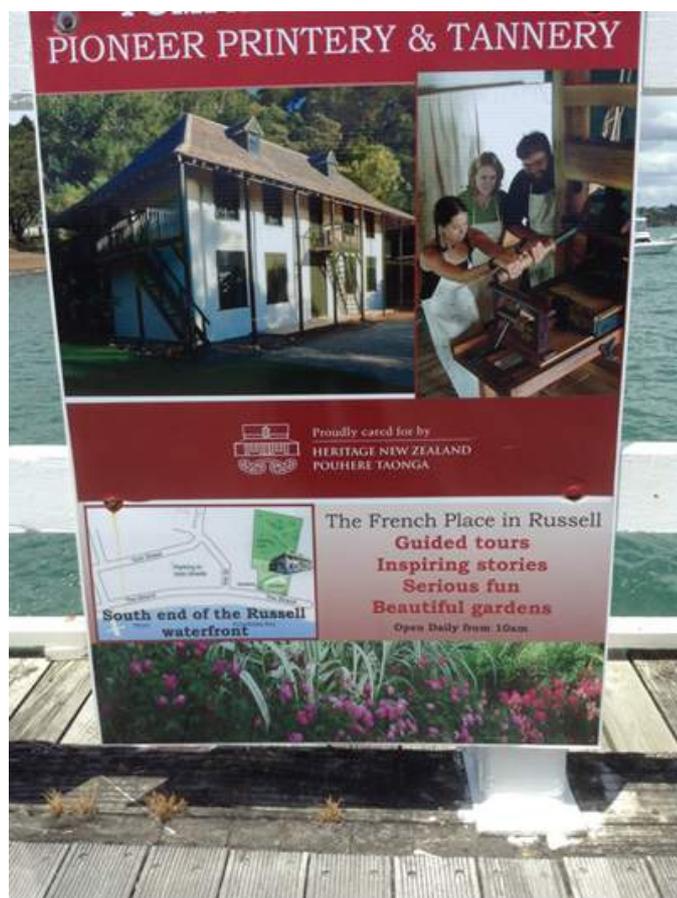
New Zealand



In April of this year, my husband Allan and I made the Marist Laity pilgrimage to France and Rome and were blessed with spiritual experiences to be treasured, camaraderie with our fellow pilgrims to be always fondly remembered and moments that still raise a chuckle and demonstrate that God has a sense of humour. Well, in late November, Allan and I went on a cruise to New Zealand, typical tourists until the last port of call, The Bay of Islands where unexpectedly we were to again pick up the Marist story and be inspired by the Marist charism- doing God's work Mary's way. The pilgrimage had resumed and we didn't even know it- demonstrating that God's sense of humour hadn't finished with us yet!

The Bay of Islands is an area known as the Northlands, and comprises 154 islands. Upon arrival, we boarded the ship's tender which took us to the Island of Waitangi, then the shuttle bus to the Island of Paihia where after seeing the local sights and being disappointed in connecting with sightseeing cruises, we decided to take pot-luck and take the local ferry which would at least give us the sightseeing on the way. The local ferry turned out to be to the Island of Russell, the inducement being 'Come see the Town "The Hell Hole of the Pacific"'. An unlikely start to a pilgrimage!

Once the ferry was underway, we were given a tourist map which had a small notation "Mission Museum" outside the township which sounded interesting. We set off, hurrying, hoping to see signs to help us find the way. The township behind us, the only signs to be seen were to Pompallier House, a name familiar but at this stage neither the word Catholic nor Marist had yet to make any appearance. When we finally arrived at "Mission Museum" it turned out to be the Catholic Marist Mission established by Bishop Pompallier in 1839 as the Catholic Mission headquarters to New Zealand and the Western Pacific, set up at the request of the Pope, to evangelise an area which covered one-sixth of the world's surface. We couldn't believe it- this treasure trove of Marist faith and history had found us more than we had found it!

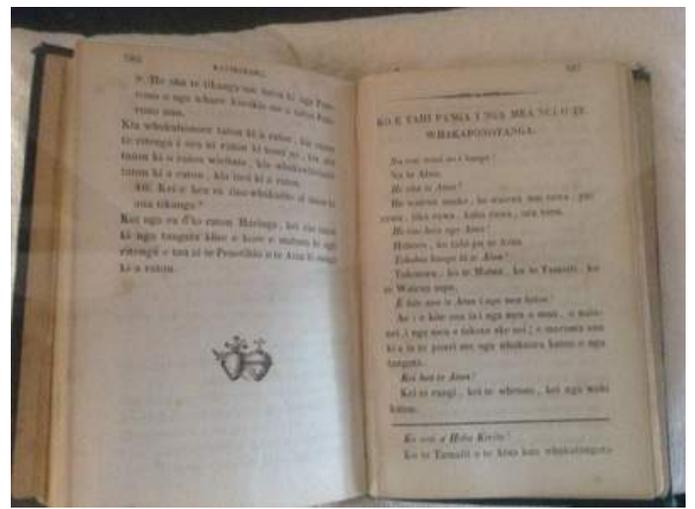


When the Marists arrived, the British Missionaries had the Maoris greeting Bishop Pompallier as "The Anti-Christ", so the early Marists realised they were at a bit of a disadvantage in the evangelising stakes. Bishop Pompallier befriended the Maoris, learnt the language and then started translating religious texts into the Maori language. He sent to Lyon for a printing press and for someone to come and teach them how to use it. Upon its arrival, the printing press was operated from dawn until dusk. Over the next 11 years until the Mission was

moved in 1850, 40,000 publications were printed including a 6,000 run of a 685 page book. All the composing and binding was done by hand and the books bound with the leather produced in the on-site tannery.



Bishop Pompallier came to be trusted by the Maoris and when the North Maori War broke out, was instrumental in advising the chiefs on the Treaty of Waitangi and ensured that Clause 4 was added to the Treaty that guaranteed them religious and cultural freedom. He came to be greatly loved by the Maoris and even though he ultimately returned to France where he died and was buried, the people of New Zealand were successful in 1962 of having his body returned to New Zealand for re-burial there, as according to the Museum Guide, "He means so much to us" as does St. Peter Chanel, who accompanied Bishop Pompallier in 1839 as his second-in-command, was martyred on the Island of Fortuna and was declared the Patron Saint of New Zealand and the Pacific.



The display at the Museum recalled to mind so much of what we had seen on display in Belley, La Hermitage and La Neyliere- unremitting toil, dauntless spirit, commitment to God's work and devotion to Our Lady, unchanged despite the distance of "7,000 leagues from the mound of Fourviere" (as stated in a letter written from the Mission to Father Colin in France, dated 20th May, 1842).

So, how do you let go of such an intense spiritual experience?

Like true pilgrims trained by Father Ray Chapman- at a run: the ferry/bus/tender trip awaited.

As the ferry pulled away and all that could be seen of the Mission was the French flag becoming and more like the needle in the haystack that it was, and Russell, Paihia and Waitangi blended in with the other 151 islands in the Bay of Islands, we were grateful for the blessing of having witnessed the pioneering work of the early Marists and the well deserved esteem and affection with which they are regarded by the people of New Zealand and the effectiveness and success of their evangelising efforts throughout the Pacific.

As "God's fools" we had been given the unsought and unexpected blessing of this resumption of our pilgrimage, the only question remaining whether God's sense of humour has finished with yet.

By Jeanette Bolster

Sister Doreen McOscar sm

Doreen died peacefully at St Anne's on Saturday afternoon, 29th November. She took us by surprise, surrendering to our loving God quite unexpectedly on the eve of Advent, the beginning of the year dedicated to Consecrated Life. Earlier this year, on 25th May, Doreen celebrated her 100th birthday, thoroughly enjoying the parties organised in her honour. She delighted in the occasion and the opportunity it provided to bring people together. Doreen lived life to the full, and her love for others and interest in their welfare never wavered. We have no doubt that she is now enjoying the company of all who have gone before her, resting in the embrace of God, to whom she had given herself so completely.



Doreen Mary McOscar was born in Sydney of Irish parents – Ellen and Hugh - on 25th May, 1914. She was the second of two children and grew up in a close-knit family with her much-loved older brother, Vincent. The family settled in Daceyville where Doreen attended St Michaels Primary School for most of her early years before enrolling in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington, for her secondary education. Doreen's home suburb of Daceyville was very dear to her, and she always expressed deep appreciation for the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, who fostered her love of learning. Over the years, Doreen remained close to her extended family, enjoying the visits of cousins from different generations and discovering more about her family tree.

In 1935, Doreen entered the Marist Sisters at Woolwich, where she had attended a number of retreats for young women. She was professed on 25th January 1937, and was known for many years as Sr. Felician before returning to her Baptismal name of Doreen.

Throughout her long life, Doreen's commitment to the Work of Mary never waned. She lived the Gospel in the manner of Mary, drawing others to experience the love and mercy of God. Doreen touched the lives of many through her ministry in fields such as education and pastoral work, spiritual renewal and faith formation, Congregational leadership and Marist Laity animation.

Doreen began her Marist ministry as a Primary and Secondary teacher. In 1940 she started her studies at Sydney University and was the first Australian Marist Sister to graduate from there as a Master of Arts Honours Degree. Her thesis on John Henry Newman was received with acclaim. Doreen had a great love for English Literature, which she shared with her pupils. Her high regard for the poetry of Gerard Manly Hopkins was well known. She took delight in savouring the rich expressions of his verse. I well remember her introducing my class to poems such as *The Windhover*, *Pied Beauty* and *God's Grandeur*. "The world is charged with the grandeur of God..." Her enthusiasm for poetry was infectious, but it was the depth of Doreen's faith and spirituality that made the most lasting impression upon us.

Doreen was the founding Principal of Loreto Secondary School in Levuka, Fiji, and Cerdon College Merrylands. She was also Principal of Marist Sisters' College, Woolwich. Doreen's students held her in high esteem and her interest in them remained life-long. Ex-students of Loreto, Cerdon and Woolwich would often visit Doreen and many turned to her often to seek wisdom, encouragement, advice and spiritual guidance. In 1972, Doreen began theological studies at the Marist Fathers' Seminary Toongabbie, followed by a course at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila, the Philippines, and a period of study at Corpus Christi College in London. Shortly afterwards she lectured part-time at the Marist Fathers' Seminary in Toongabbie and assisted with the teaching of catechetics. In the mid-70's Doreen was elected General Councillor and moved to Rome to serve the congregation in this leadership role. On her return from Rome some years later, Doreen joined the team at the Marist Spirituality Centre, Marcellin Hall, Auckland, New Zealand. Here Doreen worked closely with other members of the Marist Family- priests, brothers, SMSM sisters and laity – with whom she formed lasting bonds. In 1984, Doreen returned to Australia engaging in

pastoral work in Torquay (Victoria), Blacktown (western Sydney) and Gladstone (Queensland). As in her previous ministries, Doreen's ready ability to relate with people across all faiths and cultures, and her genuine interest in young and old alike, endeared her to all whom she met. She had a breadth of vision that enabled her to dialogue with openness about issues facing the Congregation, the Church and the world. She was committed to ecumenism and all that would bring people of faith together. Her animation of Marist Laity continued throughout her years at Marian House and she never ceased to remain vitally interested in all things Marist.

Doreen moved to St. Anne's on 25th October, 2011 and continued to reflect the presence of Mary to those around her – residents, staff and visitors too. Doreen was a most gracious lady, attentive to others and appreciative of the loving care she received. She always joined in activities at St Anne's and encouraged others to do the same. Indeed, Doreen was always encouraging and affirming – helping others to believe in themselves and to have confidence in their abilities. Through her warmth and freedom of spirit, she exuded joy that enlivened others, and many felt uplifted when they received a letter or phone call from Doreen. She was determined and tenacious – and very particular! We all knew how difficult it was for her to make a decision about buying a new blouse, or pair of shoes. She was so petite and finding just the right fit would often prove impossible. Doreen made us smile, she made us think, she brought light to our lives and we will miss her greatly. Pope Francis said recently that the effectiveness of consecrated life depends upon the eloquence of lives which radiate the joy and beauty of living the Gospel and following Christ to the full. We thank you, Doreen, for the eloquence of your life and the inspiration you have been to us. You have followed Christ in the spirit of Mary, loving as God loves us. May you enjoy the rewards of eternal life. Rest in peace, Doreen.

Eulogy given by Sr Julie Brand SM Regional leader of the Asia-Pacific Region– 5th December 2014

Aboriginal Children's Picnic

On Saturday December 6th Marist Sister's College Students and Staff attended the Aboriginal children's Picnic at Nurragingy Reserve, Doonside. These Aboriginal children come from low socioeconomic areas. They will be doing it tough this Christmas where their families spent most of their money on essentials like electricity and food with little money left over for Christmas presents.



The students volunteered were absolutely FANTASTIC! As soon as we got to the reserve they were busy setting up all the equipment and the BBQ facilities. The girls helped to prepare the food (cutting up vegetables, fruit etc...) and served the people there during the day. They had also organised games to play with the Indigenous children. There were approximately 80 children there with their families.

Side story to tell..... on our way to the Reserve we decided we would stop off at Bunnings to pick up some last minute supplies. There was a lady working in Bunnings who happened to be an ex Marist Sisters student from 1981. We told her what we were doing that day and so she spoke to her manager. They came back to us and donated skipping ropes, basketballs, footballs, Frisbees, 5

Bunnings hats and a Bunnings truck (toy) :) It was so lovely and we were extremely grateful!

At the picnic the students were able to speak to the Indigenous children and their families and play games with them. At the end of the day we helped to hand out the Christmas presents.

By Laura Musolino

Christmas

2014 - A ray of light encircling the gloom.



An early morning photo (JC) of "Sculpture by the sea" at Bondi 2014 By Koichi Ishino "Wind stone threshold of consciousness"

I spent Easter this year on Christmas Island. The Memorials overlooking Flying Fish Cove silent reminders of desperate lives lost seeking safe haven from danger, violence and extreme fundamentalism; the survivors faced with hostile rejection and cruelty. What hope for those who do survive?

People, like Dorothy Hoddinott Principal of Holroyd High School, who was awarded the 2014 Human Rights medal for her selfless work with the children of refugees and asylum-seekers, shows us the way- a modern prophet for our time.

She wrote recently in the SMH (December 11 2014): " We have children in our school who have seen their parents murdered; we have children who have been

raped; we have children who have been forced to live in poverty and fear in refugee camps; we have children who have fled for their lives and have come by boat to Australia, seeking safety and have instead been locked up in detention centres watching the adult world around them disintegrate into despair and madness."

"Our task at Holroyd High as teachers is to normalise their lives, caring about them and showing respect for what they have endured and what they can achieve. The core values of respect and responsibility are deeply embedded in everything that happens in the school".

"Seeing formerly disempowered and illiterate students enjoy success in their schooling inspires me to continue my work in education."

"I am awed by Faduma from Somalia who has just finished her HSC, and who hopes to go to university next year. She could not read or write four years ago."

"Then there is Bashir from Afghanistan, our Vice-Captain in 2014, who was orphaned when he was 12 and came to us from detention in Darwin. Bashir was illiterate, but taught himself to read and write. He has been to Geneva to talk about the plight of child refugees. Bashir hopes to become an accountant."

These are just two of the many who have passed through Holroyd High and whose dreams and hopes are being realised.

Finally Dorothy wrote: " More than anything, I remain energised by the continuing need to advocate for young refugees. The past and present treatment of children in immigration detention, and the cruel limitations placed on young asylum seekers in the community are in breach of common decency and of the law, both in terms of our international obligations and domestic law aimed at the protection of children."

After the Christmas Island depressing experience of witnessing the horrible impact on the lives of the children in detention, I thought I might escape and spend Christmas on Easter Island in solitude and reflective sadness communing with the mute stone monoliths that dot the island- who knows this island may well be the next destination chosen for our asylum seekers, after all its is further away than Cambodia and boasts a population of just over 5000.

However I have cancelled this plan having found renewed hope in the indefatigable commitment of Dorothy and so many like her who offer so much to so many in desperate need; and also renewed hope in the One who came among us to dispel the gloom.

Father Jim Carty SM
December 2014

Marist Asylum-seeker Refugee Service
227 Longueville Rd
Lane Cove NSW 2066
Email: jascarty@hotmail.com

On Facebook



Above - Marist Father Long Mechavez, Belinda Figueira, Siobhan Reader and Andrew Dumas visit the Marist Brothers farming property in Mittagong.



Above – Marist Father Willy Melteras baptises Noah Dumas and cousin Nathan Goulding at St Agatha's church – December 21.



Above - The boys from the Marist Fathers Orphanage from Davao the Philippines receive a Christmas present from Couples for Christ Australia.

Please pray FOR:

Marist Sister Doreen McOscar
Marist Missionary Sister Clare O'Brien
Barbara Dumas