

Marist Fathers Australian Province

Provincial Circular

No 1 - Feb 2021



From the Provincial

Confreres,

First, I wish to pay tribute to our dear brother, Bob Barber. Although we were aware that Bob's health was not at all perfect, his death was a shock to all, so unexpected: in his passing, for someone who never wanted to cause a fuss, Bob came up trumps!

The many tributes that have been received from Australia, New Zealand and beyond, are evidence of the high regard in which Bob was held. Messages from both our own confreres and the Marist Brothers who worked with Bob in Africa witness to the significant contribution he made in Kenya and Cameroon.

Bob was very much committed to the ministry of education. He had served at St Paul's, Bellambi, from 1977 to '79, at Woodlawn from 1980 to '87. He was keen to commence his chaplaincy work at Woodlawn and Trinity College, Lismore, both with their strong Marist links.

Throughout his life's work, Bob showed a sympathy and practical concern for those on the peripheries of society. This was particularly expressed in his work with the Lismore Diocese Aboriginal Ministry, Macksville, from 2002-'04, and more recently his regular support of the St. Pat's Saturday morning breakfast for street people.

Twelve years of Bob's life were spent in provincial administration, as Vicar Provincial to Paul Cooney from 2007 to '13 and then as Provincial himself from 2013 to '18. The ministry of leadership was not what Bob would

have chosen himself, but he served us humbly with dedication, showing concern for each member of our community, especially the aged and infirm. He was much respected and valued by the General Administrations and the international leadership of the Society.

I cannot do better than to use Chris Ganzon's words for Bob: "He was a very good Marist, friendly, approachable, simple, humble and most especially a man with a big heart."

May he rest in peace.

Provincial Chapter

The twice postponed Provincial Chapter came to, what was generally agreed, a successful conclusion on Thursday, February 25. A significant date for, if its decision on change in governance structures are approved by the Superior General, it marks the last provincial chapter for Australia.

It fulfilled the mandate given to it by the 2018 Chapter. That mandate was to review and finalise a transition to a new form of governance and leadership structures to meet our present circumstances of diminishment, ageing and leadership potential.

The final decision taking by the sixteen confreres of the Chapter was the culmination of a process which involved all members of the province in community meetings leading to the two assemblies.

The work of the Chapter was carried out in faith and trust in each other, a continuation of the spirit of synodality of the assemblies. The process was

assisted extraordinarily well by Paul Bullen.

Significant, far-reaching decisions have been made, to take us with our realities, through the next decade. Some of the decisions were difficult. Yet they were made with serenity and hope as we faced full-on the realities of our situation.

For the most part, the proposal for a change in the governance structures and the associated statutes, that we had become familiar with through our discussions, were accepted by the Chapter. Directions were set for our prioritised ministries and the Villa Maria property. A policy on vocations was established and the setting up of a Health and Aged Care Committee was adopted.

The interim period between the final voting of a chapter and the approval of the decisions by the Superior General is difficult for all of us of the province as we wait for their publication. Hopefully it will not take long. Let us hope that the directions for the coming decade we have set will to some extent free us from uncertainties and enable us to get on with the mission, doing Mary's Work. The mission which the last General Chapter gave focus to for today: being bridge-builders, instruments of reconciliation and bearers of the Good News. And help us to care for each other.

Tony.

Provincial Diary

March 16: Provincial Council

March 20: Ritual of Lament, Burnie

April 20: Provincial Council

April 21: CLOC Meeting

April 28-30: Visitation of northern confreres.

CLOC

The February meeting of CLOC paid particular attention to developing safeguarding environments throughout the Society and the postponement of the Council of the Society, which will have the election of Assistants General on its agenda.

Provincial Council

At its February meeting the council discussed among other things:

- Aquinas Academy
- MMC Report
- Chapter preparations
- Professional standards matters, including the coming Ritual of Lament
- Managing the province's cash flow
- Currumbin
- Provincial retreats for 2021
- MAP

Calendar

Provincial Visitation: The provincial intends to conduct visitations after Easter, COVID-19 permitting.

Provincial Retreats 2021:

- Sep 12 – 17, at Ormiston, Qld
- Sep 19 – 24, at Hunters Hill.

Because of the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, with Brian Cummings we have cancelled his participation and are seeking a replacement retreat director. *Bookings will be called once we have some clarity.*

Jubilarians' Celebration: Fri, 24 September.

Information

Ritual of Lament: The Provincial, Kathleen Fleming, Paul Pidcock, Garry Reynolds and Michael Whelan will be representing the province at the

Ritual of Lament in Burnie on Saturday, March 20.

Please keep all involved, survivors and their families, Marist Regional College staff and students, and our confreres in your prayers.

Aquinas Academy: While the institution will come to a close at the end of the year, it is now intended to extend the work of the Academy's adult faith formation by keeping the website in action.

The hope is to provide a resource of online material, such as a series of recorded presentations by our Marist scholars and others who have contributed to the Academy's programs over the years.

Once the presentations are set up there would not be any further personal interaction required.

Personnel

Ray Chapman continues to be confined in Australia until he is able to safely return to France and to take up his work with the Marist community at La Neyliere. Their ministry there has been shut down because of the pandemic.

Pio Fong continues to meet with bureaucratic difficulties with his moving to Auckland. He has found relief for his arthritis in Brisbane without having to travel down to Sydney.

Kevin Redmond is hoping to leave Thailand on Thursday 25 March and then to Sydney, via Singapore. He will arrive in Sydney and enter quarantine for two weeks. Apart from a visit to family in Tasmania, Kevin will be working at St Patrick's until the Marayong community is ready to begin.

Our Elders

Colin Campbell (98), following a couple of falls, is in constant pain from two fractured vertebrae. He has taken up residence in St Anne's Aged Facility, Gladesville Road, Hunters Hill.

Lou Molloy (91) is being provided with a good pain management plan for his incurable cancer, the growth of which is increasing pressure on his lower body.



Deaths

- **Fr Daniel Villaseñor** (Mexico) who died on 17 December 2020.
- **Fr Gaston Duchesne** (Canada) who died on 18 January 2021
- **Fr Yves Gouget** (Europe/France) who died on 30 January 2021
- **Fr Bob Barber** (Australia) who died on 13 February 2021.



- **Fr Maurice Valette** (Europe, France) who died on 13 February 2021
- **Fr Soane Patita Hautafa'o** (Oceania, Wallis) who died on 16 February 2021
- **Fr Francis Kigina Takaku** (Oceania, Bougainville) who died on 19 February 2021



Currumbin Bookings

The self-contained flat at **Currumbin** is available for bookings for Marists and their families. Bookings are made through the provincial office. Current bookings are:

- **Jun 20—Jul 3**
Gavin Foster
- **Oct 1-31**
Peter McMurrich

Please ensure if you stay at Currumbin you leave the place neat and tidy. It is the responsibility of those that use the facility to take care of it.

On a number of occasions, the property has had to be cleaned by the people entering rather than those that have enjoyed the facilities. This is particularly the case with the flat – if you use it, before you go you should vacuum it, clean the bathrooms, clean benches, mop down tiled areas, and

dispose of garbage and perishables.

The upstairs section of Currumbin is for the exclusive use of professed Marists. The exception is for approved group use eg. Marist Charism Group planning meeting, where the usage is notified to confreres well in advance.

JPICC Corner

Provincial Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation



Marist *Laudato Si* webinar

Members of the Province's JPIC Committee were amongst Marists from all over the world for a Feb 11 webinar on *Laudato Si*'s 7-year planning with **Fr Joshtrom Kureethadam** (pictured, right). Fr Joshtrom is Coordinator of the Sector of "Ecology and Creation" at the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The webinar was attended by all branches of the Marist Family and facilitated by **Ben McKenna** who provided its ninety-one participants with opportunities for questions and comments to Fr Joshtrom.

Bridge Program

Due to COVID-19 Australian Catholic University has cancelled its Thai-Myanmar border program for 2021. At the same time the Bridge Program, established to help young refugees access ACU and supported by our JPIC Committee, has closed. The program has assisted over one hundred young Burmese towards further education and employment over ten years.



