



MARIST FATHERS AUSTRALIA DISTRICT CIRCULAR

FEB
2023

From the District Superior

Confreres,

Traditionally, on Ash Wednesday the pope participates in a procession in Rome from the Basilica of St. Anselm to the Basilica of Santa Sabina on the Aventine hill. Part of the prayer is the Litany of the Saints. The Church invites the saints to accompany us on our Lenten journey as our inspiration, our exemplars and our intercessors.

I find I am always moved by the Litany of the Saints and am reminded of the passage from the Letter to the Hebrews: *since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith* (12:1-2).

Pope Francis refers to the same passage at the beginning of his apostolic exhortation on the call to holiness in today's world: *Gaudete et Exsultate*. As we enter into Lent, I wish to draw your attention to the exhortation and to some sections in particular for your reflection.

The Saints Who Encourage and Accompany Us

"The Letter to the Hebrews presents a number of testimonies that encourage us to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (12:1). It speaks of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Gideon and others (cf. 11:1-12:3). Above all, it invites us to realize that "a great cloud of witnesses" (12:1) impels us to advance constantly towards the goal. These witnesses may include our own mothers, grandmothers or other loved ones (cf. 2 Tim 1:5). Their lives may not always have been perfect, yet even amid their faults and failings they kept moving forward and proved pleasing to the Lord." (GE, 3)

The Saints Next Door

"Nor need we think only of those already beatified and canonized. The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God's holy and faithful people, for "it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather as a people who might acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness".

"In salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual.

Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people." (GE, 6)

The Lord Calls Each of Us To Be Holy

"The Second Vatican Council stated this clearly:

"Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord – each in his or her own way – to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect". "Each in his or her own way" the Council says.

"We should not grow discouraged before examples of holiness that appear unattainable. There are some testimonies that may prove helpful and inspiring, but that we are not meant to copy, for that could even lead us astray from the one specific path that the Lord has in mind for us.

"The important thing is that each believer discern his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts (cf. 1 Cor 12:7), rather than hopelessly trying to imitate something not meant for them. We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness. (GE, 10-11)

Signs of Holiness: In Community

"Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others. Each community is called to create a "God-enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the risen Lord".

"Sharing the word and celebrating the Eucharist together fosters fraternity and makes us a holy and missionary community. It also gives rise to authentic and shared mystical experiences." (GE, 141-2)

"Such experiences, however, are neither the most frequent nor the most important. The common life, whether in the family, the parish, the religious community or any other, is made up of small everyday things.

"A community that cherishes the little details of love, whose members care for one another and create an open and evangelizing environment, is a place where the risen Lord is present, sanctifying it in accordance with the Father's plan." (GE, 143,145)

"Contrary to the growing consumerist individualism that

tends to isolate us in a quest for well-being apart from others, our path to holiness can only make us identify all the more with Jesus' prayer "that all may be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you" (Jn 17:21). (GE, 146)

Signs of Holiness: In Constant Prayer

"Finally, though it may seem obvious, we should remember that holiness consists in a habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration. The saints are distinguished by a spirit of prayer and a need for communion with God. They find an exclusive concern with this world to be narrow and stifling, and, amid their own concerns and commitments, they long for God, losing themselves in praise and contemplation of the Lord. I do not believe in holiness without prayer, even though that prayer need not be lengthy or involve intense emotions." (GE, 147)

"Trust-filled prayer is a response of a heart open to encountering God face to face, where all is peaceful and the quiet voice of the Lord can be heard in the midst of silence. In that silence, we can discern, in the light of the Spirit, the paths of holiness to which the Lord is calling us. Otherwise, any decisions we make may only be window-dressing that, rather than exalting the Gospel in our lives, will mask or submerge it. For each disciple, it is essential to spend time with the Master, to listen to his words, and to learn from him always. Unless we listen, all our words will be nothing but useless chatter." (GE, 150)

"We need to remember that "contemplation of the face of Jesus, died and risen, restores our humanity, even when it has been broken by the troubles of this life or marred by sin. We must not domesticate the power of the face of Christ". (GE, 151)

"Prayer, because it is nourished by the gift of God present and at work in our lives, must always be marked by remembrance. The memory of God's works is central to the experience of the covenant between God and his people. God wished to enter history, and so our prayer is interwoven with memories. We think back not only on his revealed Word, but also on our own lives, the lives of others, and all that the Lord has done in his Church. Think of your own history when you pray, and there you will find much mercy. This will also increase your awareness that the Lord is ever mindful of you; he never forgets you. So it makes sense to ask him to shed light on the smallest details of your life, for he sees them all." (GE, 153)

May the Holy Spirit in this Lenten time reinvigorate our covenant with the Lord,

Tony.

District Superior's Diary

Mar 21

District Council

Mar 23

Professional Standards and Safeguarding Panel

Apr 18

District Council

Apr 27-30

Brisbane visit

District Council

At its December meeting the Council treated the following:

- Report on the Council of the Society
- Herston Leadership change
- Aged Care
- Villa Maria Complex
- Professional Standards matters
- Marist Culture and Charism Committee membership changes
- Superior General's Visitation
- Planning for 2023-4

In February the Superior General and Ben McKenna met with the Council. Also on the agenda were the following:

- Report from the Marist Mission Centre
- Retreats for 2023
- Community and personal contributions to District costs

Superior General's visitation of the District

Fr John Larsen accompanied by **Fr Ben McKenna** carried out his visitation of the District from Feb 1 to 14.

The visitation began in Brisbane, where they enjoyed the warmth of both the weather and the hospitality of the confreres of the North for 3 days: Feb 01-02-03. Moving on to Sydney John and Ben first met with the community of Maryvale/Montbel, including a visit to the confreres in the Marsfield nursing facility.

On Thursday, Feb 9, they met with the Professional Standards and Safeguarding personnel, visited the Haberfield community and interviewed a number of Sydney confreres. An enjoyable reception for the visitors was hosted by the Villa Maria community in the evening.

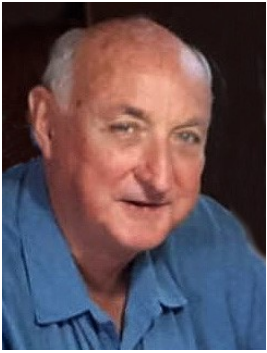
The next day was spent visiting the District Office, conferring with the Finance Office and the Marist Mission Centre. Meetings with individual confreres continued. On Monday, Feb 13, the visitation continued at St Patrick's.

The final day was spent with the District Council and a final briefing with the District Superior.

We certainly kept our Roman visitors busy.

John Larsen intends to send us a report on his visitation in the near future.

Thanks to you all for your contribution in making John and Ben welcome and the visitation successful.



Superior
General's
visit



Above and left:

- ◇ With Brisbane Marists at Herston
- ◇ Maryvale/ Montbel
- ◇ Social gathering at Villa Maria
- ◇ Haberfield community



Right and below, clockwise:

- ◇ With St Patrick's community
- ◇ Marayong 'Omnes Gentes' team
- ◇ District Council meeting



Deaths

Br Sairusi Nabuli (Oceania / Fiji)
who died on Dec 01, 2022

Fr Epokifo'ou Manu (Oceania / Tonga)
Dec 06, 2022

Fr Jan Giesselink (Europe / Netherlands)
Dec 20, 2022

Fr John Crispin (Oceania)
Dec 27, 2022

Fr Joop Reurs (Europe / Netherlands)
Jan 10, 2023

Fr Gerard Kuypers (Europe / Netherlands)
Jan 15, 2023

Personnel

Jubilees of Priesthood 2023

- **Paul Glynn**
70 years on Jul 19
- **John Begg**
60 years on Jul 6
- **Jim Carty**
60 years on Jul 6
- **James Collins**
50 years on May 26

Honour for Gerald Arbuckle

Congratulations to Fr Gerry Arbuckle who will receive an honorary doctorate (Honoris Causa) by Australian Catholic University in May. He will be honored in 'recognition of his contribution to the academic tradition of the Church and for bringing the interplay between faith and reason to bear on complex religious and social policy issues for the betterment of society.'

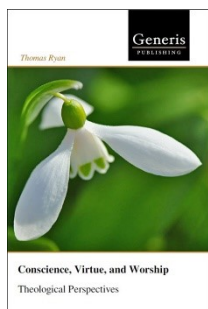
Information

Villa Maria Complex Committee.

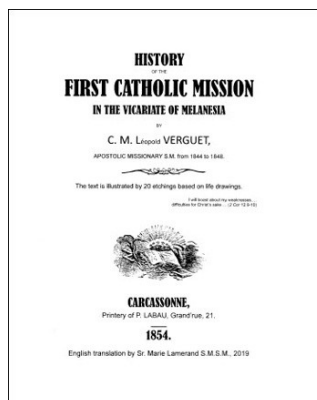
The Committee is awaiting the report from GAT & Associates who have been engaged in a review of relevant planning controls for the site, including broader strategic plans and statutory controls and meeting with HH Council authorities. The Committee hopes to meet to receive the report in early March. As was reported previously, with the information received, the next step will be to engage with various interested parties as we seek out the best way to move forward and who best to walk with us on the journey.

New work by Tom Ryan

Tom Ryan: *Conscience, Virtue, and Worship: Theological Perspectives*. Generis Publications. The book's central concern is that conscience does not stand alone: it needs to be nourished and guided by virtues and strengthened by prayer together with worship in a faith community.



History of the Oceanian Mission



The process of publishing the History of the first Melanesian mission by **Leopold Verguet**, translated by **Sr Marie Lamerand SMSM** and laid out by **Fr Merv Duffy SM**.

It is a publication of Marist Fathers Australian District under the curation of **Andrew Murray**. Thanks to Andrew for this significant project which can be found

at <https://andrewmurraysm.wordpress.com/library/>.

Easter

As the next circular will be come out after our Easter celebrations, all at the District Office wish you tranquil and prayerful Lent and a joyous Eastertide.

The District Office will be **closed** for the Easter period **from Holy Thursday, Apr 6, to Easter Monday, Apr 10.**

JPICC Corner

District Committee for Justice, Peace
and Integrity of Creation



During his Brisbane visit, **Ben McKenna** took the opportunity to meet with the JPIC Blog site consultant, **Justin Lynch**. An initiative of our JPIC Committee, the weekly Blog has been maintained by Ben since 2017 and

attracts visits and comments from all parts of the world.

Ben and Justin discussed how the 'comments' section of the site could be made more simple and user-friendly.

Justin is also the consultant for our District website and the Colin website.



Clockwise from top: Montbel New Year's gathering for Marist Family. | **Floyd Gatana** with fish 'n chips at Manly. | **Ben McKenna** with Marist Laity co-leaders, **Andrew Dumas** and **Cathy Larkin**. | Christmas footwear at Montbel. | **John Larsen's** Christmas dinner in Covid isolation at Villa Maria. | Marist Laity with Marist Family members meeting at Villa Maria. | **Gerard Hall** with **Sr Marie Lamerand SMSM**. | **Paul Glynn** signing books for an admiring reader.

International



Clockwise from top left: **Tony Kennedy** in Rome at Jan 07 diaconate ordination of **Christian Ngoura**. | **Ben McKenna** with Asia District Chapter group, Davao. | Profession of six new Marists in Tuscany, Jan 06. | **Michael Carroll** beginning Colinian Renewal Program in the snow at La Neylière. | New triptych icon of **St Peter Chanel** with **St Marcellin Champagnat** and **Ven Jean-Claude Colin** at Marist seminary, Auckland.

