

Marist Fathers Australia District Circular

February 2025

From the District Superior

Confreres,

This is the first time I have lived in Sydney as a Marist priest. All my previous appointments have been to other parts of Australia: in parishes where we are no longer, or overseas: working in initial formation. Sydney and Australia have certainly changed a lot since I was a seminarian.

It was a privilege to work in initial formation in Auckland, Suva and Rome in recent years. Getting to know the younger Marists and living in the formation communities was at times demanding and enjoyable and hope filled.

I have had the privilege to meet and work with most of the Marists who have been professed in the last 20 years throughout the Society. I can still recall sitting in the chapel in Bomana in Port Moresby in 2012 giving a retreat to the Marist seminarians when I realised that I was the senior Marist present. That had never happened to me before. I felt a certain sense of responsibility for passing on our Marist stories and spirit to the next generation. Now back in Sydney I am amongst the youngest in the district.

One of my tasks this year is to get to spend time with you and get to know you better and vice versa. I have already spent a few days in Brisbane earlier this month and hope to get around to see everyone soon. I am going to Japan next week.

Another task is to follow up the work from the 2024 District Assembly particularly with regard to the Villa Maria complex. It is important to build on what has already happened.

The 30th General Chapter of the Society of Mary later this year is another important gathering for us. Much has changed since the last chapter in 2017. Our world, our Church and our congregation continue to face many challenges. Coming together to reflect on the past and plan for the future is essential work. The Pre-Capitular Committee met recently in Rome and proposed a theme for the 2025 Chapter - "With Mary at Pentecost."

Tony

We are all invited to be involved in preparing for the Chapter. Soon our local delegates will invite us to consider the results of the Society-wide survey recently conducted and to work together to deepen our on-going discernment towards the future. We are also invited to pray daily that the Spirit will direct and guide the work of the Chapter. By our intense interest in the whole Society, by our shared discussion and by our prayer, we all participate in discerning how the Spirit is directing the Society of Mary now and into the future.

John Larsen sm,
Reflection 28.2.2025



District Superior's Diary

8-14 March Japan

18 March District Council meeting

15 April District Council meeting

22-24 April Herston

District Council

At its January and February meetings the Council treated the following:

- MMC Quarterly Report
- Professional Standards matters
- Villa Maria Complex update

Piquet House (Formerly known as RPD)

What was the RPD building has been cleaned and sorted and is now to return to what it was in the early years of Villa Maria – a place for people to live. We will refer to it as Piquet House.

The federal government in partnership with Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) has established a program to assist refugees to settle into the Australian community - Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot scheme.

The pilot scheme involves local community groups sponsoring and supporting newly arrived refugees. Parishioners from Hunters Hill and neighbouring Drummoyne are involved and have approached the Marist Fathers to assist in providing accommodation. We are very pleased to be able to do so.



The vacated RPD office will provide an ideal home for one or two newcomers for an expected period of one year at the most. The local team are fully responsible for their guests. The Marists are only providing the house and hoping to be good neighbours.

Initially, one man sponsored by the Drummoyne Parish will spend a short time in Piquet House for a few weeks from mid-March. In early April we are expecting two men, sponsored by the Hunters Hill parishioners, one from Cambodia and one from Vietnam, to take up residence.

Appointments

Fr Ray Chapman as Local Leader of Maryvale/Montbel for three years from 1 February 2025.

Fr Pius Jones as Local Leader of Herston for 3 years from 1 February 2025.

Nomination of **Fr Michael Carroll** as Parish Priest of Hunters Hill – appointed by the Archbishop from 1 February 2025. In accordance with Marist procedures the appointment will be for three years.

Fr Michael Jacques was appointed to the Maryvale/Montbel community from 1 February 2025.

JPICC Corner

District Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

The Committee has met twice so far this year. Firstly, as a part of the Marist Family JPIC group and then as our District Committee.

The first meeting reviewed the unsuccessful effort in 2024 to hold an event addressing domestic violence, and resolved to focus more on advocacy issues in the coming year.

The District Committee acknowledged the role we have had in establishing the wider body and the value of our ongoing support.

Other matters included review of local agencies worthy of financial and moral support, funding guidelines, etc.

We have yet to fill the vacancy left by the loss of Kevin Bates.



Above: The **Marist Family JPIC Committee** at its 8 February meeting at Maryvale: **Paul Mahony** and **Jim Carty**, **Sr Grace Ellul SM** (chair), **Andrew Dumas** (Marist Laity Australia), **Lawrence McCane FMS**, **Margaret Tisch SMSM** and **Cathy Larkin** (Marist Laity Australia). (Not pictured: **Ron Nissen** and **Kevin Stewart**.)

Deaths

- **Fr Gerard Bruns** (Oceania / Solomon Islands) 27 December 2024.
- **Fr Xavier Bechetoille** (Europe / France) 6 January 2025.
- **Fr Iowani Petero** Waqairapoa (Oceania / Fiji) 7 January 2025.



Above: 60th jubilee celebrations for **Charlie Randle** at Herston... with sisters **Anne** and **Carmel**, and **Harry Moore** and **John Gillen**.
Below: **Charlie** with **Ray Chapman**, **Gerard Hall** and **Michael Jacques** | **Aidan Carvill** and **'Alatini Kolofo'ou**. Not pictured, **Pius Jones**.



District leadership handover ceremony at Montbel, Jan 31.
Above: Confreres join in the prayer of blessing for **Tony Kennedy**. Right: Symbolic handing over from **Tony Corcoran** to **Tony Kennedy**. Below: Celebrations in Montbel's dining room.





Above: New Year's recital at Montbel by **Mate Ma'a Tonga Brass Band**. Below: Marayong team's planning day at Villa Maria... **Kevin Redmond, Lauro Arcede and Floyd Gatana**. | Bangladeshi visitors to St Peter Chanel's chapel... **Deacon Jerome D'Rozario** (Parramatta diocese) and **Fr Peter Chanel Gomes** (Dhaka). | 100th birthday balloons at **Jim Harding's** grave.



International



Above: **Ben McKenna** with **Pope Francis** during an audience marking the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si*. | Rome-based Anzacs gather at the General House on Australia Day. Below: General Chapter's **Pre-Capitular Committee** at the General House for its first meeting. | **Ben McKenna** with *Laudato Si* group at the Vatican.





Above: Community of Casa di Maria, International Theologate, Rome.

Back row: **Pascal Ndikumana, Lachie Bartlett, Hansford Mane, Peter Matakawa, Leonard Amora.**

Third row: **Deacon Godlove Ngwese, Manu Botabua, David Romero, Deacon Clovis Nformenteng, Marc-Fidele Tay, Robert Badjeck, Lesley Kinani, Deacon Hemi Ropata, Alban Hinnoumabou, Fr Larry Duffy, Jean-Paul Dieme.**

Second row: **Zulu Serop, Deacon Charlie Sangul, Deacon Joseph Adjokpa, Fr Albert Kabala, Lewis Kum, Deacon Joel Eyango.**

Front row: **Joseph Mijares, Eduardo Limon, Joseph Ondoua, Fr Roque Rebito.**

Below: St Peter Chanel formation community, Davao. | **John Larsen's nephew, Patrick**, volunteering at Ranong.



Above: Novices in Davao during an online session with **Alois Greiler**. | Renewal of vows, Rome



Above: **John Hopkinson** celebrating his years at *Palma Flor and Beyond*. | Autobiographic memories of *Misioneros Maristas*.
Below: Ordination of **Cameron Mota** in Our Lady of the Assumption cathedral, Hahela, Bougainville, by **Bishop Dariuz Kaluz**.

