

Marist Fathers Australian Province Provincial Circular



No 2
Apr 2022

From the Provincial

Confreres,

On revealing himself to the disciples the Risen Lord gives them the gift of Peace and the Spirit, signs of the new creation, and commissions them to continue the work first entrusted to him by the Father.

In Matthew and Luke the mission is on a grand scale. For Matthew, Jesus, who has risen and been established at the right hand of the Father, thus receiving all authority in heaven and on earth, returns to encounter his disciples on a mountain, a meeting place between heaven and earth, and from there sends them out to make disciples of all nations, by baptising and teaching them.

In Luke's accounts in the gospel and in Acts Jesus sends the apostles to witness "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth".

When we come to John's gospel, it can seem that the grand schemes of Matthew and Luke have given away to something narrower in scope.

Is the focus now on Jesus giving to the eleven, and those who came after them, the power to forgive and retain sins in confession?

Yet in the *forgiveness of sins* we are brought to the very core of the cross's mystery (of which the sacrament is but one expression).

In John's gospel, the apostles are sent out into the world with the power of the Spirit to witness to and so bring about a new reality that came to birth in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and its name is "forgiveness".

With the Spirit at loose in the world, a new mode of existence, a new way of being human, a way that begins with the forgiveness from God and continues with the forgiveness offered by Jesus' followers to all who have wronged them.

Forgiveness is a significant element in the Lord's prayer. This is what it looks like, sounds, feels like when heaven comes down to earth, when God's kingdom comes and his will is done.

Having asked the Father to bring about his reign on earth as it is in heaven, the

foundation on which community life is built.

Forgiveness is expressed in various ways: in not holding grudges, not nurturing grievances, holding onto prejudices. Forgiveness liberates, harmonises endeavours, enables renewal and growth in relationships.

"Those who learn to forgive discover that they are not only offering healing to others.

They are receiving it in themselves.

Resurrection is happening inside them.

The wrong done to them is not permitted to twist their lives out of shape.

Forgiveness isn't weakness. It was and is a great strength. Resurrection and forgiveness together are vital for understanding the extraordinary and large scale result of the victory won on the cross." (N.T. Wright)

Tony

Resurrection and Forgiveness

disciples of the Son plead for assistance and the means required for them to cooperate in God's work.

To carry out our mission we need food (food to be shared and thus *community*).

As well, we need the strength and protection not to succumb to the temptations and evil that will assail us in our kingdom-calling.

And we need reconciliation, to be at rights with God and each other.

Reconciliation, forgiveness, is essential for the Church to carry out its task.

A group of disciples, riven by division and discord cannot be the means by which the Father's name can be hallowed nor his kingdom come.

Forgiveness, as a characteristic of the new creation, is an atmosphere that can permeate the air we breathe, a

A reflection for
Easter & Corpus Christi
drawn from Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'*.

The Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life.

Through our worship of God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane.

Water, oil, fire and colours are taken up in all their symbolic power and incorporated in our act of praise. . . Encountering God does not mean fleeing from this world or turning our back on nature. . . For Christians, all creatures of the material universe find their true meaning in the Incarnate Word, for the Son of God has incorporated in his person part of the material world, planting in it a seed of definitive transformation . . .

It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation.

Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures.

The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter.

He comes not from above, but from within, he comes that we might find him in this world of ours.

In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living centre of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life. Joined to the Incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist itself is an act of cosmic love . . . The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation.

The world that came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration: in the bread of the Eucharist, "creation is projected towards divinisation, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself." (Benedict XVI!).

Provincial Diary

May 1-2

Visitation of Brisbane confreres

May 6

Third meeting of the Villa Maria Complex Committee

May 17

Provincial Council

May 25

CLOC: Zoom meeting of the GA with leaders of MAP

Jun 21

Provincial Council

Jun 23

Professional Standards and Safeguarding Panel

Jun 28

Provincial Finance Committee

CLOC: February

The Zoom meeting discussed a possible Colnian Renewal at La Neylière in 2023, Marist education, regional CLOC meetings for April.

Provincial Council

At its March and April meetings the Council treated the following:

- Marist Mission Centre
- The recommendations from CICALSAL to the Superior General on our governance proposals
- Agreements with “donor” provinces on confreres on loan
- Current Professional Standards matters.
- Patrimony matters.
- Villa Maria Complex Committee
- Vocations policy of the Chapter

Appointments

MMC

Ms Geraldine Rastall has been appointed Donations Officer for the Marist Mission Centre she will be starting in May.

Information

Status of the decisions of the 2021 Chapter on governance

CICALSAL has sent its recommendations on the governance

proposals from the 2021 Chapter to the Superior General. Before the Superior General and Council treat of the proposals in the light of the CICALSAL response at their coming plenary meetings in May, the Superior General has sought the Provincial and Council’s reactions to those responses; specifically how might they gel with the intentions of the Chapter.

Hopefully by the end of May we should have a decision from the GA. The Council has discussed what process might then be engaged in in order for the province to “receive” the decisions of the chapter, as they are approved by the Superior General.

The transition will require need to be ritualized in some way also.

Villa Maria Complex Committee

The first two meetings, facilitated by Paul Bullen, have taken us well forward from the decision of the Chapter in clarifying the province’s aims and in planning our strategies. The next meeting is expected to consider who might be interested parties and to set up a working party to proceed with more specific matters.

Health and Aged Care Committee

The second meeting of the committee was by Zoom. Significant directions for its attention were : a developing an holistic approach to health-aged care, addressing appropriate ongoing formation for carers, reviewing the operational structures of Maryvale/ Montbel.

Sesquicentenary of the arrival of the Marist Brothers in Australia

April 8 marked the anniversary of the Marist Brothers establishing their first school St Patrick’s, at Church Hill.

The Sesquicentenary was celebrated first with the unveiling and blessing in the St Pat’s courtyard of a bust of Brother Ludovico Einaudi, the superior of the first team of brothers. Peter McMurrich, Administrator of St Pat’s welcome the visitors and performed the blessing.

The Provincial was present to receive



the thanks of Br Peter Carroll for the support of the Marist Fathers at the beginning of their venture and throughout the ensuing years.

Later a large congregations of Marist Brothers, members of the various Marist bodies, and representatives of Marist schools from around Australia, joined the Archbishop of Sydney and bishop and priest past students, including Michael Mullins and Andrew Murray, in a Mass of Thanksgiving in St Mary’s Cathedral. The Provincial and Peter McMurrich also concelebrated.

Year of Vocations



The reflection for May “Living Marist Vocation with Passion” by Justin Ratsi can be found at bit.ly/mvy5en.

A second webinar was held on 29 Apr in which sixty Marists heard a presentation from Fr Stephen Wang, rector of the English College, Rome.



Deaths

Fr John Worthington SM, died on 1 April 2022.

Fr Jean Vienne SM, died on 23 April 2022.

Fr Egidio Buccelletti SM, died on 29 April 2022.

From the eulogy of Peter Worthington, brother of John:

For us, as a family, John had an essential and attractive “human-ness”: a great empathy for other people and their strengths, frailties, and tease points, which he also recognised in himself. There was a great joyfulness in life’s pleasures and miseries, which he managed always to convert into an amusing story. Factual accuracy was a constant casualty.

He seemed to us as an “all-rounder” and ‘can-do’ leader in the game of life. He liked to get things done, and to get on with things: like the Clint Eastwood characters he enjoyed so much, patience was a more conceptual strength!

He had a capacity to work and play with others in broad communities, and to get things done, often against the tide: his experiences in Lismore at Woodlawn and in Africa in Cameroon, and his time in the Ekibin parish in Brisbane and the close relationships he built there, are particular testament to that capacity and skill.

As a priest, we in his family and, I suspect many of you, saw him firmly in the Pope Francis mould: loving the sinner and hating the sin.

In all of this he was a Marist – a Marist



like so many of you here who was in the world and of the world – and he seemed completely at home in your family and its very wide and diverse communities, in Australia and elsewhere.

So many of you Marists, like him, have a gentle and nuanced approach to people that accommodates great strengths and inevitable weaknesses, making the most of the former and helping with the latter.

John has been lucky to have had so much of his life’s journey with all of you, and especially lucky to have been in your care and embraced by your community in the last few years of his life.

From the homily of Michael Whelan:

We hear the words of Jesus in the Gospel: “I am the way, the truth and the life”. It is ultimately not *answers* that our hearts seek. All human beings in fact seek a *way*. A way to live at peace with the mystery of it all.

For the disciples of Jesus Christ, it is by living through him, with him and in him that we find ourselves on the Way – the Way to peace with the uncontrollable and the incomprehensible. I have no doubts at all that John discovered the Way. I think of his life as a human being, as a Marist confrere and as a friend, as a journey from the generous, idealistic and naïve teenager (entering the seminary) to an adult of great and increasing generosity, with an idealism tempered – but not destroyed – in the crucible of existence and a kind of rough wisdom generally wrapped in John’s own quirky humour.

We rejoice in his life. We are grateful for his time with us and especially his contribution over more than fifty seven years to our life and work as Marists.



Synodal Journey

The Synodal Journey in preparation for the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 2023, is proceeding. CICLSAL, the “Congregation for Consecrated Life etc.”, has issued an invitation for religious to involve themselves in the synodal process. In response to CICLSAL’s request for religious involvement, CRA had devised a simple, flexible process for inviting religious in Australia, individuals and communities, to participate in the synodal journey. Although the deadline for submissions to be sent to dioceses has passed, they may still be sent directly to CICLSAL (by 30 June).

Plenary Council

The Second General Assembly will take place in Sydney from July 4 to 9.

During May the draft propositions will be distributed to all members of the Assembly. In June members and community will engage with the final propositions to be taken to the Second Assembly.



Tony Corcoran will join in the General Assembly, filling a vacancy in the number of representatives from the leaders of religious congregations.

Personnel

Golden Jubilees of Priesthood

Coming up in the next two months three confreres will celebrate their 50th anniversaries of ordination: Michael Whelan on May 18, Kevin Bates on May 20, and Brian Wilson on June 18. The province will celebrate the jubilees on Friday, September 23.

More news of the Australian Province and the wider Society may be found on the provincial website <https://maristfathers.org.au>

JPIC Corner

Provincial Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Two members of the JPIC Committee were involved with the 2022 *Walk for Wilai*, raising funds to address statelessness not only for 14 yr old orphan, Wilai, but other children denied identity and freedom.

Jim Carty (walker) and **Ron Nissen** (driver) participated in the 200 Km trek from Portland, Vic, to Penola, S.A. An account of the *Walk* has been published on the province website and the international JPIC Blog.



Clockwise from top left: **Paddy O'Hare** leading the Easter liturgy at the Marist International Novitiate, Tuscany. | ... with the novitiate community. | Six Australian Marist Sisters at their General Chapter at Nemi: **Kate McPhee**, **Vivienne Goldstein**, **Noelene Simmons**, **Gail Reneker**, **Judith Lythall** and **Grace Ellul**.





Clockwise from top: Parish farewell to **Kevin Bates** and welcome to **Brian Wilson**. | Requiem and final committal for **John Worthington**. | Rescue of temporarily disabled trekker on *Walk for Wilai*. | Walkers' accommodation at the Old Mt Gambier Gaol: celibate cells. | Non-walker, **Ron Nissen**, on the *Walk*. | **Paul Glynn** and staple spread. | Marayong team, **Kevin Redmond**, **Kevin Medilo** and **Floyd Gatana**. | Bust of **Br Ludovic** at St Patrick's.

