



From the District Superior

Confreres,

By the time this circular reaches you I will be in Rome joining the leaders of the other nine units of the Society and the members of the General Administration for a meeting of ARC (Annual Review and Consultation).

It will be our first face-to-face gathering since Covid, the last was in 2019. (We then held some further meetings by Zoom up until the Council of the Society in 2022.)

Since 2019 the profile of the Marist Fathers of Australia has changed somewhat: thanks to the Chapter of 2022, we are now a District, we are preparing to leave one of our remaining two parishes, our numbers have declined from 68 to 50, and we all have aged a little.

ARC normally starts off with each major superior giving a short introduction on the status of his unit. This year the organisers have asked us to respond in 15 minutes to the question: *What are the signs of the working of the Spirit among us that indicate the direction we are called to follow as a Unit within the wider SM?*

Here is the outline of what will be my *viva voce* response:

Present status:

- Strengths:
 - ◇ Realism re. our decline and our future – we have been proactive in decision making and planning
 - ◇ Gifts and experience of members and our associates
- Challenges:
 - ◇ Financial management
 - ◇ Rapidly ageing population, resulting particularly in a limited source of leaders
 - ◇ Negative repercussions of some past policies that did not support or sustain solidarity

The signs from the Spirit in our midst:

- Diminishment – the vinedresser is pruning his vine:
 - ◇ Age and capacities
 - ◇ Diminishing income from fewer ministries and declining numbers may invite us to live more frugally, respecting the resources of creation

- ◇ Fruit of the Spirit – I have experienced amongst our community a burgeoning of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness

Although constrained we continue to contribute to the International SM:

- ◇ Personnel – formation, “omnes gentes”
- ◇ Finances – mission contribution, sharing resources
- ◇ Mission support – Marist Mission Centre
- ◇ Discourse – contributions to theological dialogue from our wise men
- ◇ Support of Marist initiatives – Colin Cause, MCC, Marist Laity Australia
- ◇ Intercession of our aged confreres for the SM

What is the direction I believe is the one the District of Australia is being called to follow?

I expect a few of us have imagined ourselves strolling along the beach with the Risen Lord like Peter. When the matter of our personal diminishment arises we hear his words, *Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.* Could he also be speaking to our District?

Like Peter, we might be tempted to turn our attention to other groups who seem to be flourishing, what about them? And Jesus might tell us not to be concerned about them, saying to us as he said to Peter, *‘You just get on with following me.’*

That remains our call – to follow Jesus within the restraints of our lives, to continue to serve the people of God and his world in whatever capacity we can, and above all to love, respect and support our brother Marists and all those who support us.

May you be filled with an abundance of the Spirit’s gifts this Pentecost.

Pray for me,

Tony.

District Superior's Diary

Apr 29

Departs Sydney for ARC meeting, Rome

May 5-11

ARC Meeting, Rome

May 12-27

Holiday

Jun 4

District Finance Committee

Jun 18

District Council

Jun 27

Professional Standards and Safeguarding Panel

District Council

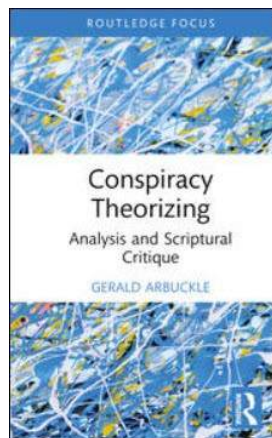
At its March and April meetings the Council treated the following:

- Financial Risk Management Planning
- Ongoing development of Villa Maria Complex Strategic Plan
- Professional Standards matters, Professional Indemnity Insurance
- New Constitution for MMC as a company limited by guarantee
- District Assembly 2024
- Aged Care

Publications

Gerald Arbuckle: *Conspiracy Theorising: Analysis and Scriptural Critique* (Routledge: London/New York).

Allan Figueroa Deck, SJ, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, writes: 'Once again Gerald Arbuckle provides a timely, perceptive and original analysis and interpretation of one of the more salient features of today's world. He brings to bare on the subject wide-ranging knowledge and sheds light on one of the most critical socio-psychological challenges of our time.' The book answers to questions like: What are conspiracy theories? Why do they flourish in chaotic times such as the present?



Deaths

Please pray for ...

Fr Bernard Jeunink SM

who died on Mar 11 at Hulst, Nederland.

Fr William Hansell SM

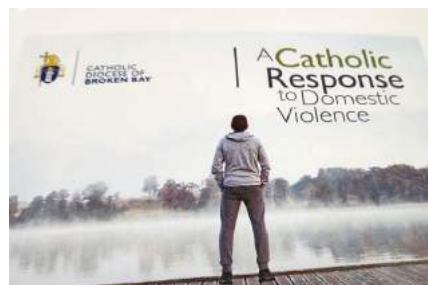
who died on Apr 20 in Auckland, NZ.

JPICC Corner

District Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

At its Apr 06 meeting the **Marist Family JPIC Committee** continued planning for a gathering later this year to address issues of domestic violence.

At the event, scheduled for Sep 08 at the parish hall, Hunters Hill, it is hoped to distribute a simple resource with key information inspired by that of Broken Bay diocese.



Calendar

Oct 1-4

District Assembly

Oct 4

Jubilarians' Mass and Luncheon



Hunters Hill village: Paul Glynn with Josephine Quinn.



Parish dinner, Hunters Hill: 'Aliko Langi and Brian Wilson.



Geelong: Kevin Bates' memorial Mass, Jim Carty. | Herston: Charlie Randle, 'Alatini Kolofo'ou, Aidan Carvill, Friday evening.



Montbel: repairing edges at parking area.



The finished product.



Villa Maria: new-born resident. | Gavin Foster, blessed and leaving on pilgrimage with Marist Brothers' group. | Sunrise.



Montbel: Garry Reynolds and birthday guests. | Farewell to Buma. | Master Phung visits with Magdalena Lai and Kevin Stewart



Terry Garrett's latest idea for Mothers' Day. | Paul Pidcock's 93rd. | Gerry Arbuckle: next book? | Good Friday, Jim Carty.



St Peter Chanel's, Woolwich: Marist Fathers and Sisters at Requiem of Sr Marie Pat Toomey SM.



St Patrick's: Michael Carroll presides on Holy Thursday. | Re-tiling. | District Office: Oceania Province Finance Committee.

International



Davao, Philippines: International Novitiate commencing, Mar 25. | Bolivia: John Hopkinson and prize pumpkin. | Marhles, France: Gavin Foster, at place of St Marcellin's baptism.



General House, Rome: First Aid training for community and staff. | Lavalla, France: Gavin Foster and pilgrim group.



St Peter's, Vatican: Marist deacon, Clinton Kube, assists Pope Francis on Easter Sunday. | Suva: Marist College community.