

MARIST FATHERS AUSTRALIA DISTRICT CIRCULAR

JUN
2023

From the District Superior

Confreres,

From May 22 to 24 the major superiors and vicars of the Asia-Pacific Region gathered in Hunters Hill for our first MAP meeting since the onslaught of Covid in 2020: Chris Ganzon from Asia, Tim Duckworth and Kevin Conroy from New Zealand, Kiade Rayalu and Lote Raiwalui from Oceania and myself.

It was good to meet up for what was a very fruitful exchange of experiences and mutual concerns.

For your information I have drawn up a resumé of our discussions. The next meeting of MAP will be hosted by the Province of New Zealand from Oct 21 to 23, 2024.

Tony

MAP, May 22-24, 2023

1. Unit reports

We began with each reporting on significant developments in our units. Significant challenges shared by all units of MAP were evident:

- Personnel: the natural increase in the average age of members, the decrease in the number of active members and fewer entering ministry.
- Leadership: Decrease in the number of those willing and competent to take on leadership roles.
- While Australia has had no vocations for many years, there has been a depletion in the number of vocations in all the other units.



2. Formation

a. Initial Formation:

- Openness to exploring some degree of shared pre-novitiate formation, especially when the numbers in each unit are decreasing and the sharing of formation personnel.
- There is evidence that in attracting vocations the witness of local formation communities is significant; the presence of a group of seminarians is a powerful sign to young men that Marist life is an option to consider.
- International Formation: It may be the time for a serious evaluation involving major superiors, formation personnel, those who have been formed in international communities.

b. Ongoing formation: the importance of supervision/accompaniment by competent supervisors for those ordained in their first five years, yet it is easily omitted.



3. Mission

a. Community for Mission – possibilities within MAP:

- The sharing of personnel between our units continues.
- Our units have ministries at the local level which could benefit from the participation of other units of the Society.
- Leadership at various levels is always an area of concern. There is an ongoing need for Marists to develop their skills and knowledge, periods of renewal and further studies continue to be encouraged.

b. Omnes Gentes projects: concerns have been expressed by Marists on a lack of clarity on the purpose of the Omnes Gentes communities and the processes employed in the selection of ministries and personnel.



4. Professional Standards and Safeguarding

All units now have appointed someone responsible for Safeguarding. Australia and New Zealand are available to help in the sharing of knowledge and developing of good practice.

5. Unit Inter-relations

a. *Members present in another Unit.*

- The demands of proper safeguarding underline the necessity of major superiors being informed of the presence in their localities of confreres from other units and the superiors issuing for their members a SM Affidavit of Good Standing.
- There is a procedure of notification of Marists arriving in a unit within the MAP region, this needs to be followed for everyone.
- It is necessary that every cleric/religious exercising any kind of public ministry be answerable to a Church Agency where he is acting.
- The status of Marist from another units engaged in a ministry unconnected with the "host unit", must be established by the major superiors involved.

b. Implementation of Laudato 'Si initiatives: Oceania reported on the establishment of ecological projects in Dawasamu, Suva, and St Martin's Estate, Tenaru, Solomons. They require much planning and hard work, with the involvement of lay helpers.

c. Interfaith Dialogue: Asia reported on the interfaith engagement in both Ranong and Davao with the establishing of a "Harmony Centre".

6. International events

a. ARC: For the Annual Review and Consultation in May 2024, the meeting proposed a number of matters for review.

b. General Chapter: The members expressed the hope that preparation for the General Chapter of 2025 is already underway, especially the engagement of a facilitator and proposed some items for the agenda.

District Superior's Diary

Jul 10: Meeting with Hunters Hill Council re Villa Maria Property

Jul 18: District Council meeting

Jul 21: Villa Maria Complex Committee

Jul 23: Fourviere Day

Aug 15: District Council meeting

District Council

At its May and June meetings the Council treated the following:

- Superior General's Visitation Report & Letter re. a new venture in Brisbane
- MAP meeting report
- Villa Maria Strategic Plan
- Professional Standards matters
- MMC Report
- Revision of MMC structure
- District Assembly 2024

Information

Marist Asia-Pacific (MAP)

The annual meeting of the leadership of the District of Asia, the District of Australia, the Province of Oceania and the Province of New Zealand took place at Hunters Hill from May 22 to 24.

Holy Spirit College, Bellambi

The College community has been celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the college's foundation at the amalgamation of St Paul's College and Holy Cross College. The District Superior represented the Marist Fathers at the Anniversary Mass on May 31 held in the Casey-Ryder Centre. Sr Maria Casey represented the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

Honorary Doctorate for Gerald Arbuckle

On May 18, Gerard received an honorary degree of Doctor of the University (honoris causa) from the Australian Catholic University.

The citation states this is 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."

Congratulations Gerry!



Calendar

Jul 23: Fourviere Day – Marist Family celebrations

Sep 24-29: District Retreat, Hunters Hill

Sep 29: Jubilarians' Mass and Dinner

Deaths

Fr John Burke who died on May 24



Extract from the homily of the District Superior at the Funeral Mass for John.

"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I shall not turn him away." (Jn 6.37)

Like each one of us, John Burke is a gift from the Father to Jesus.

Jesus has not, will not, refuse the gift of John – the gift of his dedication, his work, himself, his ups and downs.

John's life was one of dedication, tenaciousness, availability (sometimes at a cost to himself), particularly expressed in his 30 years involvement in secondary education. John was a very accomplished teacher, particularly in the area of mathematics. The precision of mathematics was characteristic of John - expressed in his love of Bach (whose music features in our liturgy this morning), his interest in detective stories, military matters and in motor cars.

The assurance of Jesus's promise is our assurance of ultimate security. We seek security from many source – knowledge, possessions, work, accomplishments positions and prestige, even in our religious observances – all expressions of the deep-down desire in all of us.

Yet the only true source of security is our union with the Father sealed in the blood of the Lamb.

"Yes, it is my father's will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and that I shall raise him up on the last day." (Jn 6.40)



Fr Tony King

Jun 27

From the testimony of Fr Ben McKenna, Assistant General:

Tony had a very positive impact on me and many others in my early years in formation at Hunters Hill: his kindness and fraternal affection, his prayerfulness, his wisdom, and his witness of life. Many times in life,

when I have been facing difficult times, he is a confrere I have been able to call to mind – giving me the peace and courage to continue with purpose and hope. May he rest in peace, and I'm sure he'll be praying for all of us to complete our journey well, as he has done.

Fr Willy Weemaes (Europe / Netherlands) who died on May 14

Fr Kieran Butler (Europe / Ireland) May 16

Fr Maurice Audibert (Europe / France) May 17

Fr Dieter Sievers (Europe / Germany) Jun 03

Fr Hubert Sibille (Europe / France) Jun 09

JPICC Corner

District Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Marist Family JPICC planning

On Jun 17 the Marist Family JPIC Committee met for the first time in a *hybrid* session of in-person and Zoom in which newer members were updated on the history and development of the group.

Future planning included a forum for Marists and others on both sides of the 'Voice' debate and practical ways of addressing child labour and poverty in the mining of Congo's foreign-owned cobalt deposits, a key ingredient in the manufacture many electronic devices.

Laity representatives outlined planning for this year's Sydney Fourvière celebrations.





Clockwise from top left: Paul Mahony with Gerry Arbuckle at ACU's award function. | Gerry with the Honorary Doctorate certificates... | ... and with former student, Tony O'Connor. | MAP participants, Villa Maria chapel. | MAP dinner, Montbel. | Walk with Christ procession leaving St Patrick's. | Br Michael Green FMS welcoming visiting Marists to Champagnat Day celebrations. | John Hopkinson with the Herston community... | ... and red wine in Sydney.



Clockwise from top left: Tony Corcoran and 80th birthday cake... | ... with partying confreres at Villa Maria. | Ron Nissen and party preps, VM kitchen. | Gerry Hall and Herston retreatants. | Michael Rego and a recent gift: St Francis Xavier. | Marist Laity meeting, Villa Maria.



Clockwise from top left: **Ray Chapman, Michael Carroll and John Larsen** with CRP group in Bugey church of Ordonnaz... | ... at *Le Clos de Condamines*, Cerdon | ... **Ray and John** with **Mme Piperini** of *Le Clos*. | **Tony Kennedy** and confreres at Minor Orders event, Rome. | ... and hosting inter-seminary footballers at *Casa di Maria*. | In Davao, new postulants, **Angelo and Jun**, with **Kevin Medilo, Roque Rebito, Chris Ganzon and Gil Casio**. | **Chris Ganzon** leaving after MAP. | Philippines mission veterans at MAP dinner, **Chris Ganzon, Kevin Conroy, Kevin Stewart, Gavin Foster and Alik Langi**. | **Ben McKenna** with Indigenous Australian elder, **Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM** in Rome.

