



From the District Superior

Confreres,

Report on ARC 2024

The following are some of my reflections on the 2024 ARC meeting in Rome from May 5 to 11.

- ARC stands for Annual Review of Marist life and works around the world and Consultation between the GA and the major superiors and significant matters of mutual concern. This was the first face-to-face meeting since 2019, after which Covid struck. It was attended by the members of the General Administration and the Major Superiors of nine units of the Society (the Provincial of Canada was unable to attend because of sickness).
- On the eve of the meeting the Superior General published his letter to the Society "Like Mary, Bearers of Hope", April 2024. This proved a significant background and reference for the meeting.
- The initial part of the meeting was taken up with reports from each of the major superiors on their respective units. The Provincial of Canada was not present due to illness. The overall picture from the "western" units was one of a dramatically ageing population with no or very few younger men in ministry and no or very few men in formation. The units drawn from developing countries share the fragility: one with a small but promising group of young men is burdened by the heavy weight of older uncompromising confreres, another with hope for a small but steady flow of vocations is at the same time having to face a growing cohort of older, frailer men. Where numbers are increasing, there may be a tendency to multiply works in haste. Overall, there were evident signs of both death and hope, reflecting the experience of the world-wide Church. There was an honest facing up from every unit to our various limitations.
- **Reports** were given on the finances of the Society, the various Commissions (Ecology, Inter-religious Dialogue, Migrants), the outcomes of the Vocation Year 21-22, the Colnian Renewal Program.
- The meeting set priority areas for its consideration: Governance, Formation, Omnes Gentes communities, General Chapter.

Governance

- ◇ The change in the profile of the Society requires a change in governance structures, roles and regional formations. It was evident that a variety

of types of administrative structures are required to address the different needs of units.

- ◇ Concerns were raised re the diminishment in the number of confreres available for leadership roles.

Formation

- ◇ The conversation continues as to the relative value of international formation and local formation
- ◇ A particular concern was raised at the absence of contact/example of young Marists within their own home communities – the example of young men of similar age is important for the fostering of vocations.
- ◇ We continue to experience the lack of formators (those prepared for formation are often "side-tracked" into other leadership roles).
- ◇ A group to evaluate present formation has been set up by the GA.

Omnes Gentes

- ◇ The Superior General in his recent letter offered further clarity on the nature and purpose of these communities in Marayong (Australia), Ranong (Thailand) and Samsun (Türkiye). The meeting sought further clarification of purpose, of the relationship between the communities and provinces/districts. Two proposals for further communities were presented for consultation.

General Chapter

- ◇ The necessity to address administrative structures to meet the changing profile of the SM was discussed together with related legislation on structures and procedures. Included here was the changing role of the GA in a smaller, more international and integrated SM.

Some take-aways

- * The growing sense of the internationality of the SM
- * An acceptance that the SM will remain a very small congregation within the Church
- * A vision of the SM being made up of small communities (no more mention of required numbers), together with an expectation that the leadership of the SM will become more centralised.
- * A broad definition of what is "Marist mission" is reflected in the April Letter of John Larsen.

Change of Leadership

The Superior General and his Council have agreed to my request to retire as district leader around the end of 2024, one year earlier than the three years set at my DS appointment in December 2022.

By the end of this year I would have been the major superior for six years, the usual time allotted for superiors, and by then I will be half way through my 82nd year.

It is expected that the General Administration will soon initiate the process of consultation for the new District Superior (cf. Statute 87).

I have advised that it would be helpful for the District to know who my replacement will be before October 4, when the District Chapter has to elect delegates for the General Chapter and the substitutes.

Until then I still have a few things on my plate!

Pray for me,

Tony

District Superior's Diary

Jul 2

Blessing of the *Colin Learning Centre*, Holy Spirit College, Bellambi

Jul 16

District Council Meeting

Jul 21

Fourvière celebrations

Aug 4-9

Marist Charism & Culture Immersion, Hunters Hill

Aug 20

District Council Meeting

Aug 26-28

CRA Assembly, Brisbane

District Council

At its June meeting the Council treated the following:

- Annual General Meeting of Marist Fathers International and Australian Marist Centre for Overseas Aid
- Received the District Superior's Report on ARC 2024, the Letter of Convocation of the 2025 General Chapter, the Letter from the Superior General - April 2024
- Report of the DS on the visitation of Brisbane confreres.
- Preparations for the General Chapter
- Professional Standards matters
- Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Proposed Constitution for MMC Ltd
- District Assembly 2024
- Aged Care

Calendar

Jul 21: Sydney Fourvière celebrations

Sep 21: Marist Laity Australia Conference

Oct 1-4: District Assembly & Chapter

Oct 4: Jubilarians' Mass and Luncheon

Deaths

Please pray for ...

Fr Austin Magara (Oceania / Bougainville)
who died on May 08

Fr Andrew Albert (USA)
who died on May 19

Ms Mary Roddy (former SMSM)
who died on May 25

Br Leonard Haley (USA)
who died on Jun 04

Fr Conrad Bryant (New Zealand)
who died on Jun 05

Br Henry Aragalia (Oceania, Solomon Islands)
who died on Jun 13

Fr Joseph Wilhelm (USA)
who died Jun 12

Publications

John Thornhill: *The Church, The Gospel, and Culture* (ATF)

In his books and many articles, our esteemed confrere John Thornhill (+2019) had a special interest in the Church, Christology, the faith/culture relationship, all within an overall pastoral framework. Tom Ryan and ATF Press have gathered together a number of his articles in this collection.

'This collection reveals the heart of John's theological vocation: to bring thought and scholarship to the service of believers, to enable the Gospel to come alive in their midst. John's Marist charism emphasises a quiet, receptive presence to God: in these articles we are given some of the fruits of his own attentive presence, for the sake of serving and accompanying the pilgrim Church.' – Robert Gascoigne, Emeritus Professor, School of Theology, ACU. *The Church, The Gospel, and Culture* - ATF Press

Tom Ryan: 'Ageing and Shame: Mutual Transformation and the Virtues' in E. Vanderheiden and C-H. Mayer (Eds.): *Shame and Ageing in a Transforming World* (Springer 2024).

The Church, The Gospel, and Culture



John Thornhill SM

Elisabeth Vanderheiden
Claude-Hélène Mayer
Editors

Shame and Ageing in a Transforming World

Springer

Professional Standards and Safeguarding

A reminder to all those active in public ministry, either full or part-time.

The Marist Fathers are committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for everyone, especially children and adults at risk. Accordingly, we actively support the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), developed by Australian Catholic Safeguarding

We would particularly like to remind those in public ministry of Standard 5.5.2:

'All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.'

Professional/pastoral supervision can a valuable process of reflection on our ministry experiences, providing us with the opportunity to unpack concerns, celebrate highlights, discuss self-care and reflect on goals.

If you would like to obtain CRA's list of supervision providers, please contact Kathleen Fleming.

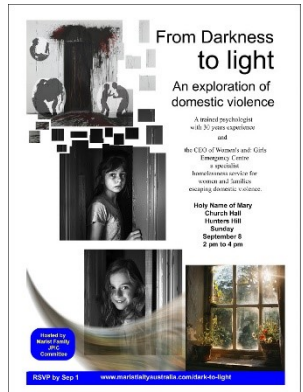
JPICC Corner

District Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

At its Jun 22 meeting the **Marist Family JPIC Committee**

continued planning for the event on Sep 08 addressing issues of domestic violence, *'From Darkness to Light: an exploration of domestic violence'*.

Andrew Dumas has prepared a draft flyer. Details to be confirmed before long.



Above: 'King of the Dance', 'Aliko Langi with fellow Tongans. | Pentecost Eucharist at Montbel.



Above: Marist Family JPIC Committee in session. Below: Local Marist Brothers visiting Villa Maria community





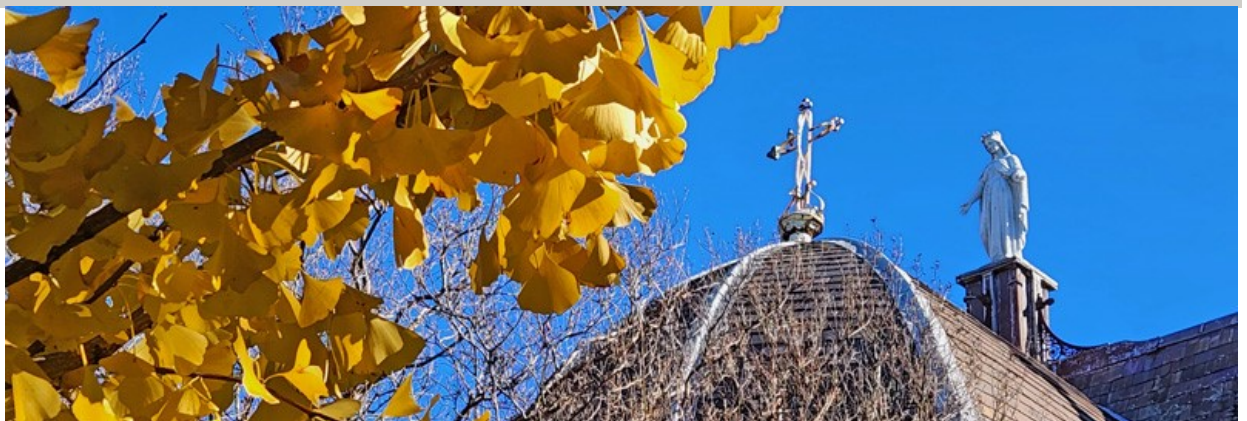
Above, from left: Solomons missionaries, **David Wilson** with **Kerry Prendeville**, visiting from NZ. | Montbel's **Chef Peter**. | **David Wilson** and **Ron Nissen** celebrating fifty-three years of priesthood. | **Gerry Arbuckle** receives a birthday gift: a book!



Above: **Larry Greco** (NZ) visiting with **Gavin Foster**. | **Marist Sisters** at Woolwich with the new sculpture of their Foundress.



Above: **Chris Agnew** (Principal) and **Sandra Iverson** (Director of Mission) receive a portrait of **Jean-Claude Colin** for the *Colin Learning Centre* soon to be opened at Holy Spirit College, Bellambi. | Leaflets and prayer cards for the Jul 02 opening.
Below: Our Lady overlooks Villa Maria's Gingko.



International



Above: Marist seminarians and staff, Casa di Maria, Rome.



Above: **Ben McKenna** on visitation of the Africa District. | Ben visited Our Lady of Fatima church, Bambili, built in 1999 by Bob Barber with MMC help. Below: Africa District Chapter in session.



Below: In Davao, 35th celebrations for **Balay Pasilungan**, streets kids centre. | Graduates from Loreto House program, Dublin: **Roque Rebito** and **Sipiliano Faka'osi**.

