

# Marist Fathers Australia District Circular

June 2025

## From the District Leader

Confreres,

During the last two months I have spent some time in Fiji and the Philippines. I was in Fiji to give a retreat to the Marist seminarians in Suva. It was good to revisit Marist College where I lived and worked for three years. I even stayed in the same room! I was there when 6 new seminarians arrived to begin their propaedeutic period before commencing their formal studies next year. They have joined the other 10 Marist students currently studying at the Pacific Regional Seminary.

I attended the Marist Asia Pacific (MAP) meeting in Davao. This was my first visit to the Philippines. It was good to visit the novitiate, Balay Pasilungan and the formation house for the District of Asia. By coincidence I was there when they welcomed some new students: their academic year is just beginning. There are 19 seminarians, including one from Vietnam and two from Myanmar. We had a meal with the novitiate community who had just finished a week of retreat.

At the MAP meeting we received reports from each of the units. I spoke about the impending closure of St Patrick's at the end of this year, the ongoing impact of Professional Standards matters and the continuing diminishment due to ageing happening in the district. We also spoke about the upcoming General Chapter and ways we can continue to support each other.

Being in those two places and talking and listening to those younger Marists was a privilege. It reminded me that much of the upcoming work and focus for the 2025 General Chapter is about them.

Last week many seminarians and formators gathered in Rome at St Peter's as part of the Jubilee Year. As part of his message Pope Leo said:

*Today, you are not only pilgrims, but also witnesses of hope. You are witnesses to me and to everyone, because you wish*

*to share in the exciting adventure of priesthood in these challenging times. You have accepted the Lord's call to become gentle and strong preachers of his saving word and servants of a Church that is open and pressing ahead with missionary zeal.*

In our regional gatherings as part of the preparation for the chapter a number of Marists commented on the need for us in Australia to support and encourage younger Marists in other places. We have done this in many ways in the past and I hope we can continue to do so.

From the very beginning Fr Colin encouraged Marists to pray for one another in our different ministries. All have our part to play in the overall mission of the Society from the youngest to the oldest. We can add our prayers for those who are more physically active.

The 2017 General Chapter spoke of the important role senior Marists continue to exercise in the Society.

*Marists do not retire from religious life, but continue a spiritual journey that culminates in the surrender of death. The mission of Marists does not cease when their pastoral and sacramental ministries cease. N.57*

*Older Marists are a valuable gift to the Society: the elderly and infirm witness to Christian hope; their prayer, suffering and wisdom are a precious resource, making a unique contribution to community life and ministry. The presence of older confreres in our formation houses can be a source of inspiration and good example. N.58*

2017 General Chapter Statements and Decisions

Please keep all those in our formation houses and the upcoming General Chapter in your prayers.

Tony Kennedy sm



With Mary at Pentecost

Con María en Pentecostés

con Maria a Pentecoste

mit Maria an Pfingsten

com Maria em pentecostes

Met Maria op het Pinksterfeest

Avec Marie à Pentecôte

CG 2025

## District Leader's Diary

- **5-11 Jul**  
Visitation Perth
- **15 Jul**  
Council meeting
- **3-8 Aug**  
Marist Charism and Culture Immersion (Villa Maria)
- **18-20 Aug**  
CRA National Assembly (Parramatta)

## District Council

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

- Professional Standards matters
- Report on visitation of Brisbane
- Preparation for the 2025 General Chapter
- Cemetery: plaques and wording

## Marist Mission Centre

The audited report for 2024 was tabled at the May meeting of the District Council.

The new Constitution for the Marist Mission Centre has been approved and the company: Marist Mission Centre Limited, has been officially registered. The directors of the company are the members of the District Council. Registration as a charity with the ACNC (Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission) is now being finalised.

This fulfils one of the decisions of the 2021 Provincial Chapter n.8

*That the Marist Mission Centre governance and structures be such that the Marist Mission Centre is a fully independent trust/organisation in perpetuity to achieve the MMC purposes (and so may continue to exist even if the Province or the Society were to cease to exist).*

Thank you to those who have worked on these matters.

## Deaths

- **Fr Richard McKenna**, United States  
30 Apr
- **Fr Jim Hargrave**, Australia  
2 May
- **Fr Brian Wysocki**, New Zealand  
16 Jun
- **Fr Walter Gaudreau**, United States  
29 Jun

**Jim Hargrave**



In the homily at Jim's funeral mass at the Chapel of Our Lady and Saint Marcellin, Marist College, Ashgrove on 13 May, Fr Tony Corcoran remarked on how the readings chosen by Jim himself eloquently expressed his character and life. The gospel reading from Luke (17:10), "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty," reflected so well his whole life and ministry of devoted, dedicated and constant service to God's people, in two fields in particular: to those preparing for marriage – during his time at Marist Chapel, Circular Quay (1963–68) ministering often to those inquiring about the Church and couples preparing for marriage; and to his work as chaplain in Marist Brothers schools at Hunters Hill and Ashgrove which extended for well on 50 years.

From a tribute by the Marist College Ashgrove Old Boys' Association: "Except for the short period from 2011 to 2013 when he first 'retired', Fr Jim served as our devoted Chaplain from 1988 until the middle of 2016. . . Fr Jim holds a particularly special place in our hearts as the College's longest-serving Chaplain. His dedication reached far beyond the chapel walls—Fr Jim was a constant and reassuring presence within the Marist Brothers Community and our College right up until his passing. . . In more recent years, many will remember seeing him on his long walks around Ashgrove—a quiet and familiar figure whose gentle presence reflected a lifetime of service. Over the decades, Fr Jim generously guided and supported countless students and families in their faith journeys. . .

*We were truly blessed to have Fr Jim as an integral part of our College community for an extraordinary 38 years. His kindness, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to others left a lasting imprint on all who knew him. Fr Jim embodied the very essence of service, humility, and compassion—a wonderful man whose exemplary life will continue to inspire generations to come."*

## JPICC Corner

### District Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

At its Jun 14 meeting at Hunters Hill the **Marist Family JPIC committee** discussion included planning for the following events in 2025:

- Fourvière celebration, Jul 27
- *Season of Creation* gathering, Sep 14
- Bishops' Social Justice statement discussion, Nov 08
- Development of proposed Marist Family JPIC website, [www.maristjustice.org](http://www.maristjustice.org)



Above and right: Fr Jim Hargrave's farewell, Ashgrove and Nudgee.



Above: 190th celebrations at St Brigid's, Millers Point, with Peter McMurrich, Garry Reynolds and Sydney Mayor, Clover Moore.



Above and left: Champagnat House, Hunters Hill, Jun 06, Tony Kennedy presiding at St Marcellin feast day Mass, followed by dinner with the Marist Brothers and Villa Maria community.



Above: **David Wilson**, at Marsfield, with a link to the District website on his phone! | Oceania finance meeting, Hunters Hill.



Above: Recent visit of Thai Redemptorist, **Fr Puwanai (Olé) Tantikun CSsR**, to the parish ukulele group with **'Aliko Langi**.  
Left: Scaffolding, Holy Name of Mary church.

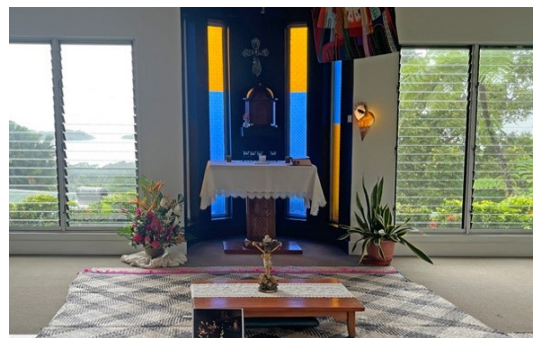
## International



Above: **MAP** members in Davao. | **Tony Kennedy** at *Balay Pasilungan*, Davao. Below: At St Peter Chanel formation community, Davao, Vietnamese candidate, **Joseph Vu**, making his commitment to begin the postulancy program.



Left: **Novices** at the International Novitiate, 'Eden', Davao. Above: **Bishop Miguel Contreras SM** with Marist aspirants, Davao.



Above: **Tony Kennedy** with Marist College retreatants and Nazareth Prayer Centre staff, Lami, Fiji. Right: **Oceania Council of the Province** meeting, Suva.





Left: **John Hopkinson** celebrating his 80th birthday in Bolivia with co-founders of *Misioneros Maristas*.  
Below: In Rome, **Marist Family General Councils'** thanksgiving gathering at the SMSM General House.

