



Marist Fathers Australian Province Provincial Circular

No 4– Aug 2019

Brothers

By the end of this year the Society of Mary will have departed from the parish of Gladstone, bringing to an end our ministry to the Church there for over 100 years. Another indication of our province's diminution.

We will then have only two parishes remaining and our time for adequately providing service at both St Patrick's and Hunters Hill, is limited. Within a few years hence, we will have no corporate works and the individual ministries Marists are presently involved in will last for only as long as the individuals engaged have the age and the energy to continue.

That we retire from a work, a place, a community, need not necessarily be seen as defeat, a failure. That the many members of the Province of Australia have contributed to the life and mission of the Church in Australia and beyond with generosity and compassion is the one thing necessary.

It is the Lord's work in which we are participants and the outcome is in his hands. Temporarily, the success of our labours may be measured by the size of our congregations, the conversions made, the academic success of our students, the buildings built. The lasting effects are less measurable for they are most often hidden and unknown to us.

The Society of Mary in Australia has experienced the results of diminution for some time now; the speed of that diminution has become more rapid. Yet that does not mean that it is time for us who still have a spark of life

(the Spirit of the Risen One!) to throw in the towel.

As disciples, we are always invited to serve until the Lord himself is ready to sit us down and serve us himself (Luke 12:37). Each of us can still contribute to the work of evangelisation, each in his own way according to his capabilities, with the encouragement, support, cooperation and prayers of our confreres.

Pope Francis in his homily for the Mass of the Chrism last year suggests a ministry that everyone of us can engage in: a call to be witnesses to the divine "closeness", the nearness of God to every person, witnessing to the God who Saint John of the Cross says is *pressing in to give himself* in compassionate mercy and forgiveness.

Closeness, says Francis, "is an attitude that engages the whole person, our way of relating, our way of being attentive both to ourselves and to others. Closeness is crucial for an evangeliser because it is a key attitude in the Gospel.

We can be certain that closeness is the key to mercy, for mercy would not be mercy unless, like a Good Samaritan, it finds ways to shorten distances."

This means giving my full attention to the one engaging with me at the present moment, without continual self-reference, and this applies first of all to my relations with those of my own household.

Francis invites: "If you feel far from people, approach the Lord and his word: in the Gospel, Jesus will teach

you his way of looking at people, and how precious in his eyes is every individual for whom he shed his blood on the cross. In closeness to God, the Word will become flesh in you and you will become a priest close to all flesh."

We may be diminishing in numbers, resources and our combined physical energy, but that does not mean that the Marist Fathers cannot be a power for good in Australia, that we cannot excel in making Jesus present in the life of our world.

Again, Pope Francis: "Dear brothers, let us ask Mary, "Our Lady of Closeness" to bring us closer to one another, and, when we need to tell our people to "do everything Jesus tells them", to speak with one tone of voice, so that in the diversity of our opinions, her maternal closeness may become present. For she is the one who, by her "yes", has brought us close to Jesus forever."

Tony Corcoran

Provincial Diary

27 Aug-26 Sep

Vicar Provincial on leave

3 Sep

Provincial Finance Committee

4-5 Sep

CPSL training for Provincial

17 Sep

Provincial Council Meeting

22-27 Sep

Provincial Retreat – Maryvale/
Montbel

27 Sep

Jubilarians' Mass & Dinner

29 Sep-31 Oct

Provincial Overseas (ARC meeting
12-26 Oct)

Provincial Council

At its last meeting the
Provincial Council discussed:

- Aged Care
- Professional Standards Role
- Administrative Assistant Role
- Provincial Retreat 2020
- Future planning: Villa Maria

Appointments

Kevin Bates: reappointed parish priest of Hunters Hill for a further period of three years as from 1/1/2020.

The announcement of the appointment in the archbishop's newsletter said that the appointment was "*nunc pro tunc*" (literally "now for then", with the meaning that an action is taken in the present which will take effect at an appropriate time in the future. So there!).

Kevin Bates: elected Provincial Councillor to succeed Garry Reynolds as from 1/11/2019; appointed Vicar Provincial (non-administrative) as from 1/1/2020.

Paul Sullivan: Tony Corcoran has asked Paul Sullivan to extend his term on the Provincial Council for a further 12 months, and Paul will serve during 2020 as Tony's chosen Councillor

under N.57 of our Legislation.

Personnel

Tony Kennedy was back in Australia in August, and spent time in Gunnedah, Currumbin, and Hunters Hill.

Tony stubbornly retains an affiliation with the Manly Sea Eagles, and was pleased to see them enjoy several wins during his time in Australia.

Andrew Murray is due to fly out to Bougainville on August 30 to give the annual retreat to local Marists.

Ray Chapman: Ray left Herston last week and is spending a few days at St Patrick's prior to leaving Australia at the end of the month to take up his 3 year appointment in France.

Sick

Garry Reynolds is now making a good recovery following complications associated with his surgery on 28 May. He is staying with the Maryvale/Montbel community.

News

Paul Cooney Headstone: On Sunday 4 August **Tony Corcoran**, together with **Michael Mullins** and **Paul Sullivan**, travelled to Wollongong to bless the headstone for Paul Cooney's grave at Scarborough Cemetery where his parents are buried. The headstone was arranged by members of Paul's family in consultation with the Provincial Office.



Gerard Moore, former Marist confrere, was recently appointed Chief Executive Officer and Principal of the Broken Bay Institute.

Audit by CPSL: As a follow-up to the Royal Commission the Australian Bishops and Catholic Religious Australia have established Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, which is funded by the bishops and the religious orders, but operates under its own independent board.

Its role is to establish and monitor rigorous safeguarding standards for child-protection in the Australian Church. It will progressively audit all dioceses and religious orders to ensure that they are compliant with best-practice standards.

Our Province will be one of the first to be audited, with our audit scheduled for mid-late November this year.

The auditors will spend time at the Provincial Office, in our parishes at Hunters Hill and Church Hill, and will aim to speak directly with 25% of Province members, either by phone or through a face to face interview.

The focus of the audit will be the extent we are measuring up to the 10 National Safeguarding Standards which CPSL published earlier this year.

Following the audit we will receive a draft report before Christmas with the opportunity to provide further input.

The final report will be issued early in the New Year, and will be published on CPSL's website.

Recently the first audit report was published on the CPSL website, covering the Wagga Presentation Sisters. Audits have recently been conducted for the diocese of Ballarat and the archdiocese of Brisbane.

Gladstone Parish Presbytery: Kevin Redmond has moved from the Gladstone presbytery building, (adjacent to Star of the Sea church),

Deaths

Fr Ed Keel sm

d.1.7.2019, Atlanta, USA



Fr Robert Lee sm

d.24.7.2019, Heretaunga NZ.

Fr John Mori sm

d.24.7.2019, Hawkes Bay NZ

Fr Milio Vakasirovoka sm

d.27.7.2019, Suva, Fiji

+Bp. Stuart O'Connell sm

d.2.8.2019, Auckland, NZ



John Thornhill died on 28 July at Southern Cross Aged Care at Marsfield after a long period of illness. He was buried at Macquarie Park Lawn Cemetery on 2 August following a Mass of Christian Burial at Holy Name of Mary Church, Hunters Hill.

Tom Ryan and Gerard Hall have prepared a tribute to John as Marist confrere and theologian, a sort of [mini-Festschrift](#) which is attached with this Provincial Circular.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge, on behalf of the Episcopal Conference, sent his condolences, observing: *"John combined high intelligence with deep faith, a theologian's mind with a pastor's heart, an ability to listen with a readiness to stand his ground. May he rest in peace and rise in glory."* Similarly, Greg Craven,

Vice-Chancellor of Australian Catholic University noted John's: *"... unique capacity to link theology to the life of the Church. Fr Thornhill has been admired for his gentleness, wisdom, profound scholarship and willingness to engage in genuine conversation with people from all walks of life"*.



Sr Margaret Purcell sm, a former Superior General of the Marist Sisters, died in Sydney on 22 July. Her Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by **Paul Mahony** in Holy Name of Mary church on July 27 with burial at Macquarie Park Lawn Cemetery.

which has now been taken over by CatholicCare.

The presbytery and parish centre was built in the early 1980s at a time when there were 6 priests on the Gladstone parish staff.

Kevin's new address is: **24**

Shearwater Drive, Glen Eden, though the parish telephone number and postal address will remain the same.

The diocese has taken a 12 month lease on the property; the idea is that with the Marist withdrawal from the parish imminent, the new priest(s) will have a place to stay for 6 months, and in that time decide where they would like to buy a property into the future.

Burnie Marian Centre Opening: Peter McMurrich travelled to Burnie recently for the opening of the new Marian Centre building at Marist Regional College on August 2.

The Marian Centre is a complete rebuild of the original 1959 college building; it looks like, and effectively is, a brand new building. The Centre includes a small chapel on the site of the original College chapel, and using the original altar. The chapel was blessed and opening with a Mass at 10am celebrated by the archbishop of Hobart, **Julian Porteous**, with parish priest, **John Girdauskas**, and Peter McMurrich as concelebrants.

At 11am there was a ceremony of blessing and opening for the entire building. College Principal, **Adrian Drane**, who is on permanent leave with a serious illness, courageously wrangled a two-hour leave pass from hospital to be present, and gifted the occasion with words which were profoundly human, honest, warm, and faith-filled. The local member, **Gavin Pearce**, spoke movingly of Adrian and his qualities, and the contribution which Adrian has made to the school.

After the ceremony Peter McMurrich caught up briefly with **Tom Dorey**, who some confreres will remember from Toongabbie seminary days. Tom is a committed Tasmanian by adoption, and is currently working with the Catholic Education Office in Hobart.

PS: The position of principal at Marist Regional College, Burnie, is currently being advertised in CathNews.

Publications

Tom Ryan has had the following article published: 'Declaration on Religious Freedom: Three Developmental Aspects', *Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Thought and Secular Ethics*: 8 :2 (2018).

Advertising

Jubilarians' Mass & Dinner: this year our date is Friday, 27 September, with Mass commencing in Holy Name of Mary church at 5.15pm, followed by drinks at Montbel at 6pm with the meal beginning around 6.30pm. Our jubilarians this year are:

Profession - 60 years: Terry Garrett
5.2.1959 & **Kevin Jackson** 5.2.1959
Ordination – 60 Years: Tom Fulcher
18.7.1959; **40 Years: Ray Chapman**
24.3.1979

Paul Mahony will be MC for the dinner, with Michael Whelan proposing the toast to the jubilarians, and particularly to Terry and Kevin, who will both be with us. Bob Barber will respond on behalf of Terry and Kevin.

So far the following have signed on for the night: Arbuckle; Barber; Byrne; Campbell; Corcoran; Garrett; Harding; Jackson; Jones; McMurrich; Mahony; Moore, H; Murray; Nissen; Nugent; Pearce; Pidcock; Ryan; Stewart; Whelan (20).

If your name's not there and should be there or is there and shouldn't be there, please notify the Vicar prior to 27 August, and after that date, notify Tony Corcoran.

Provincial Retreat - Maryvale/ Montbel 20-27 September:
The following are currently listed as participants: Gerry Arbuckle; Kevin Bates; Neville Byrne; Colin Campbell; Greg Ferguson (accommodation); Gavin Foster; Terry Garrett; Paul Glynn; Jim Harding; Kevin Jackson; Harry Moore; Syd Nugent; Paul Pidcock; Kevin Redmond (accommodation); Brian Wilson; John Worthington (17).

Provincial Directory



Paul Mahony: with Paul completing his 6 years as Superior of Maryvale/ Montbel at the end of this year, a new email address has been established: superiormontbel@maristfathers.org.au.

Please use this address for all matters relating to Paul until the end of this year, and then use it when Brian Wilson takes over in 2020.

Michael Rego: Michael's address is – Catholic Presbytery, 11-13 Frances St, Tweed Heads, 2485. Postal address – PO Box 25, Tweed Heads, 2485. Phone number for the parish is: 07 5536 7522.

Enclosures

- John Thornhill: mini-*Festschrift*

Currumbin Bookings



The self-contained flat at Currumbin is available for bookings for Marists and their families. Bookings are made through the provincial office. Current bookings:

Aug 1-31
Garry Reynolds
Sep 12-26
Peter McMurrich
October 1-12
Paul Mahony
Oct 13-20
Jim Hargrave
Nov 2-17
Bob Barber (family)
Dec 7-13
John Thornhill (Family)
Dec 26 – Jan 14
Michael Carroll
Jan 15-31
Peter McMurrich (family)
Feb 7-29
Peter McMurrich

Please ensure if you stay at Currumbin you leave the place neat and tidy. It is the responsibility of those that use the facility to take care of it. On a number of occasions, the property has had to be cleaned by the people entering rather than those that have enjoyed the facilities. This is particularly the case with the flat – if you use it, before you go you should vacuum it, clean the bathrooms, clean benches, mop down tiled areas, and dispose of garbage and perishables.

The upstairs section of Currumbin is for the exclusive use of professed Marists. The exception is for approved group use eg. Marist Charism Group planning meeting, where the usage is notified to confreres well in advance.



New Colin Website: a new website has been launched to continue promotion of the beatification Cause of the Founder. The website's address remains www.jeanclaudecolin.org and features simplified access to the life of Fr Colin and resources to assist in promoting the Cause.

JPICC Corner

Provincial Committee for
Justice, Peace
and Integrity of Creation

Right: William Aung Win Shwe (at left)
with Bridge Program-ACU applicants at
Mae La refugee camp in 2012. See
Province website report following...

*Below: Donato Kivi with Jim Carty at St
Patrick's. En route to the Formators'
meeting in Rome, Donato took time out to
discuss environmental issues of concern to
our JPIC committee.*



Loss for Karen people

Marists in Asia-Pacific and members of the Marist Mission Centre's Burmese refugee programs mourn the passing on Aug 18 of Karen leader, **William Aung Win Shwe**, aged 52, from brain cancer.

In 1998 William became the link between MMC and the plight of refugees on the Thai-Burma border, instigating projects for Karen youth education and development. He had been the Karen National Union's Foreign Affairs representative and at the time of his passing in Maesot, Thailand, he was a member of KNU's Central Standing Committee.

William was the inspiration for MMC's Asia-Pacific Youth Development Program and well as being instrumental in the establishment of Australian Catholic University's border online program, later replicated at the Marist Mission in Ranong, southern Thailand.

And also...

Clockwise from top right: Fourvière celebration snacks at Villa Maria | JPIC members, **Jim Carty**, **Kevin Stewart** and **Margaret Tisch SMSM**, celebrating **Kevin Bates'** birthday | 'Dublin sighting' - **Ben McKenna** with **John Hannan** and **Joe Rooney** | Montbel vigil for **John Thornhill** | **Dylan Hatobu** with **Paul Mahony** | **Tony Corcoran** farewells **Tony Kennedy** returning to Rome

