

Marist Fathers Australia District Circular

October 2025

The General Chapter

This was a very synodal experience. There were periods of silence and prayer and reflection. We shared at tables and in the larger plenary. We tried to create a space in which all voices were heard.

We were at Centro Ad Gentes Nemi, a house of the Divine Word missionaries in the hills outside Rome, not far from Castel Gandolfo. It was a good venue, with plenty of space and being a few degrees cooler than Rome.

In the chapter hall there were seven tables of delegates and observers. English was not the primary language for many people. We had one French speaking table and one Spanish. Some of our seminarians provided translation services. This was important so that everyone could speak freely and be heard by all.

The first week of the general chapter involved a lot of listening and taking in information from the reports of the different units and on a number of other issues. We then tried to discern what were the pressing issues that needed our attention. From that five commissions were formed to work on those issues. The fruit of the work of the commissions is seen in the Chapter Statements and Decisions.



Jean Paul (Senegal), Lesley (Bougainville), Lewis and Joseph (Cameroon), Peter (Fiji), Leonard (Bougainville)

In the final week we celebrated the perpetual profession of six of our seminarians who are very well known to me: Jean Paul, Lewis and Joseph from the District of Africa and Lesley, Leonard and Peter from the province of Oceania. They will be ordained deacons at Santa Francesca Cabrini church in Rome on 15th November.

General Chapter 2025

Statements and Decisions



After the joyful celebrations of the profession we moved into election mode. We spent time reflecting on the qualities we felt were needed in the superior general. There was a lot of silence and prayer and silence. After Declan was elected on 2nd October we moved into the election of the team of councillors. Once again there were table discussions and reflection

and suggested combinations of people.

Our final session focussed on how we can transmit the information and the mind of the chapter throughout the Society. All units have been asked to have post chapter gatherings where capitulants are present to share something of the experience at Nemi and to discuss the implications for our district, our communities and individual Marists. I encourage everyone to take some time to read the 2025 General Chapter Statements and Decisions.

By the time you read this the gathering at Herston will have taken place. There is one planned for Hunters Hill on Thursday 13th November from 4 pm. That will also be the chance to farewell Aisake and myself before we depart for Rome.

It doesn't seem that long ago that I departed Casa di Maria and Rome. Now, less than a year later I am returning to Rome, to the General House, in a different role, as a general councillor.

Thank you to Peter, Ray, Kevin and Paul who have served on the District Council. Thank you to Andrew, Anne and Kathleen for your generous service and attention to detail. Thank you to Tony, our emeritus district Superior, for putting me in the picture on so many issues.

Thank you to all the members of the district for the welcome you gave to me and your service and example as a Marist.

Tony Kennedy sm
Former District Leader

District Council

At its October meeting the Council considered the following:

- Implications of the General Chapter
- Professional Standards matters
- Process for election of the new District Superior

Aged Care Changes

The aged care system in Australia is facing several long-term changes coming into effect from 1 November with the implementation of the new Aged Care Act.

Over the years, we have been fortunate to access concessional places for our men. To continue to qualify for concessional places, the balance in your MFAP bank account must remain below \$63,000.

If you hold other accounts outside the MFAP account and your total balance exceeds this threshold, you will be caught in the Government means-tested daily care fee. In some cases, depending on your total assets, you may also be required to contribute to accommodation costs.

These changes may have serious implications for some individuals.

If you would like to have an initial discussion regarding these matters, please contact Andrew Biddle.

Marist Brothers General Chapter

Gavin Foster reports:

I had the privilege of being invited to be the Chaplain to the Marist Brothers General Chapter, simultaneously as the Marist Fathers General Chapter in Nemi, Rome.



The Chapter ran for four weeks, electing a new Superior General and General Council towards the end of the Chapter. Br Peter Carroll, the Provincial of Australia, was elected Superior General.

I was impressed by the diversity of language and culture present among the Brothers at the Chapter. It struck me strongly the bond and connectedness that these Brothers had for

each other, from all corners of the world.

The processes and decision making involved ran smoothly, with individuals conscious of the complexities of language, background and culture.

I found it a truly rich experience.

Deaths

Fr Antonio Sanz, Spain

Aug 30

Br Gerard Hogg, New Zealand

Sep 16

Fr Francis J Kissel, United States

Sep 17

Fr Graham Connolly, New Zealand

Oct 04

Fr Giovanni Morlini, Europe / Oceania

Oct 13

Fr John Loft, New Zealand

Oct 15

Somerset 125th anniversary

Tony Kennedy reports:

I was able to represent the Marists in Tasmania recently for the 125th anniversary of the Sacred Heart church in Somerset.

I was welcomed by Fr Jesse Banez, the parish administrator and saw many familiar faces. Fred Kado and I formed the last Marist community to serve the parish and we finished there at the end of 2013.



Above: Somerset gathering at Sacred Heart church.

Below: **Tony Kennedy, Jesse Banez, Archbishop Anthony Ireland and John Girdauskas.... | Brian Scott, Brian Maguire and Tony Kennedy.**

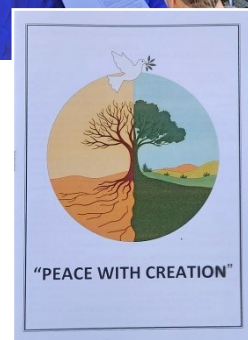
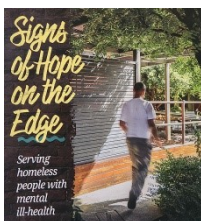


JPICC Corner

District Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

At its Oct 11 meeting at Hunters Hill the **Marist Family JPIC** committee discussion included:

- further discussion on the JPIC website, www.maristjustice.org
- evaluation of the *Peace with Creation* gathering on Sep 14 (pictured at right)
- planning for a Nov 08 gathering at Hunters Hill to reflect on the Australian Bishops' Social Justice statement, '*Signs of Hope on the Edge: serving homeless people with mental ill-health*'



Above: Jubilarians' Mass at Montbel, **Patrick Kervin, Tom Ryan, Charlie Randle, Neville Byrne and Peter McMurrich**. Below, from left: Birthdays at Montbel: **Terry Garrett** | ... and **Paul Pearce**. | **Kevin Redmond** with **Sr Anne Suman Lata SMSM** and **Sr Judith Lythall SM** at Parramatta Diocese's 'Glimmers of Grace' event, Quakers Hill.



Above: **Michael Carroll** and Holy Name of Mary feast day Mass in the grounds of Villa Maria monastery.



Above: Holy Name of Mary celebrations at Marayong. Right: Feast day cake with Lauro Arcede and Floyd Gatana.



Above: Terry Garrett in his workshop | ... with Br Julian Quinlan FMS at the Men's Shed for a testimonial morning tea for Terry. | Br Michael Green FMS after Honorary Doctorate ceremony at Australian Catholic University. Below: Sr Clare Francis SM who died on Sep 23 aged 103. | Tony Kennedy returning from the General Chapter. | Gavin Foster meeting John Larsen at Sydney airport.



International



Superior-General, **Declan Marmion**, | New General Council, from left, **Tony Kennedy**, **Albert Kabala**, **Declan Marmion**, **Juan Carlos Pina** and **'Aisake Vaisima**. | Three Superiors-General.



Above: **John Larsen** presenting a copy of the **Colin** biography to **Pope Leo**. | Chapter delegates at the Papal audience. Below: Final professions at Nemi during the General Chapter.



Below: Retiring General Council, farewelled at Monteverde.





Above and right: **Gavin Foster** and Mascot staffer welcomed to the Philippines by Superior-General, **Br Ernesto Sanchez FMS**. | Gavin during one of the Chapter liturgies. | New Superior-General, **Br Peter Carroll**, with predecessors, **Brs Ernesto and Emili Turu**.



Above: **Ben McKenna** and Pacific friends at canonisation of St Peter To Rot. | **John Hopkinson**, Bolivia. | **Pat Muckian** and **Roque Rebato**, Davao. Below: Zoom sessions of the Colin Cause Network.

