

Welcome to the first edition of a simpler 'District Newsletter'. Its focus will be the more personal private in-house items and breaking news formerly covered by 'letter-head emails'. We are a much smaller band of brothers with almost half of us in residence on Mary St. so change is a reality. Ray Chapman's Montbel Notes on the comings and goings affecting Montbel and Ron Nissen's District Website with its excellent coverage of more general Marist news fulfil a real need. Hopefully, with this in-house District Letter, no one will be overlooked or feel forgotten.

On a personal level, I am grateful for your patient support while I come to grips with the responsibilities of leadership in a very different era within our District. Today's reality is that we are a small band of Brothers. 40 of us in total with 27 in NSW, 7 in QLD, 2 in WA and 4 outside the District. Our youngest is 52 with 29 confreres ranging between 70-95. It is a very different from when I was previously on the Provincial Council. For that reason I'm grateful to the District Council, Ray, Peter and Kevin, to our Admin Staff and also those at Joey's for their wise counsel and guidance in my early months in this new ministry.

Since returning from my recent visit to Rome, one priority has been District visitation. Sydney visitation is almost complete. I am now planning to visit Queensland in the near future to discover Confreres State of Origin secrets.

So far the privilege of getting to know each of you on a deeper level has revealed to me the wonderful mystery of grace at the heart of our being Marists together. Our Marist heritage brings joy to all of us as we age. Thank you for sharing your stories and insights born from long ministry experience. I encourage you to share some of those treasured moments with each other, rather than wait for a Eulogy to learn of those lighter important moments that won't be found in Peter Mac's Archives.

I would also like to offer a special thanks to Peter McMurrich who recently announced his retirement from Public Ministry. He has wisely guided previous Provincials and District Leaders. The District owes him a tremendous debt of

gratitude for the onerous roles he has generously handled in years gone by. Thank you Peter.

In this issue, I invited Michael Whelan to share an insight from his recent “pilgrimage” along the roads to the successful Lismore retreat he preached. One lesson from his reflection that struck a chord with me is the enriching value of keeping in touch with families and friends, that our Marist Mission is not yet complete. Thank you Michael. Others have volunteered to share.

On another level, are our District and Marist Family JPIC Teams. Our JPIC team has been active since 2009. The Marist Family JPIC network has done excellent advocacy work on our behalf. More recently it focused on Domestic Violence, Homelessness and the Cost of Living. The Annual JPIC Reports are on the District Website. Our SM Constitutions and more recently the 2025 General Chapter stress the need for all to become involved to the extent we are able.

*Finally a warm welcome to our Superior General, Declan Marmion, passing through Oz en route to the MAP Meeting in Fiji, June 23-25. Thank you Declan for making time to include **us** however briefly. Warmly appreciated. **Blessings to all and prayers for your good health, Gavin***

Community Calendar

MAP Meeting in Fiji June 23-25 Ray Chapman and myself will represent us.

Enduring Power of Attorney & Appointment of Enduring Guardian Please prioritize this important session with our Solicitors. Details are: **July 22, 10am** Sydney-based confreres @ Montbel, Sydney **July 29**. Zoom Mtg. WA @ noon, QLD @ 2pm.

Annual Fourviere Celebration July 26, 10am Mass HNOM followed by Lunch

More details on each event will be shared in subsequent newsletters.

Spotlights



North Coast Pilgrim's insight... by Michael Whelan.

When I was invited to give the retreat to the clergy in Lismore, I decided to combine it with a "pilgrimage." I took nineteen days to visit family and friends between Sydney and Warwick.

A special feature of the "pilgrimage" were conversations I had. On two occasions I had conversations about funerals. What struck me was the complete rejection of Catholic funeral rites. I was never more conscious of the fact that the Catholic culture I grew up with is only present in traces. It has substantially disappeared.

It prompted me to go back to an excellent book: Paul Crowley SJ, The Unmoored God, Orbis Books, 2017. "The premise of this book is



Marist Family JPIC In 2009, the General Chapter voted that each province/district would establish a mechanism, such as a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission.

Our Marist Constitutions on JPIC 'Their call is to attend especially to the most neglected, the poor, and those who suffer injustice.' **Constitutions, no 12**

'Marists share the Church's duty to denounce injustice and to show solidarity with the oppressed.'

Constitutions, no 20

'They should be attentive to the cry of the poor... and acknowledge action for justice is an integral part of the Gospel.'

Constitutions, no 111

that believing can be creatively rediscovered through the experience of dislocation —our own and God's.

Further, this rediscovery will coincide with reimagining God in relation to ourselves, not as easily located, the way he once was in the 'childhood' of modernity, but precisely as dislocated, unmoored" (Page 12).

And our 2025 General Chapter Gen
Chapt. 2025, no 2 *The Marist mission of mercy and hope is expressed through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the building up of a Marian Church. In our ministries, Marists seek to ... promote peace, justice, and care for creation.'*

Gen Chapt. 2025, no 3 *'Particular priority is to be given to the areas of youth, vocations, migrants, refugees, and the poor.*

Important Announcement

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