



Marist Fathers Australian Province

Provincial Circular

No 6– Dec 2019

Brothers

In the English office books most of Australian clergy and religious have been using for almost fifty years (before laying them aside to take up our e-readers) there is offered a poem by St Robert Southwell SJ, martyr (+1595) as an alternative to the hymn for the morning or evening prayer of Advent and Christmastide.

In the Nativity of Christ he wrote: Gift better than himself God doth not know; Gift better than his God no man can see. This gift doth here the giver given bestow; Gift to this gift let each receiver be.

We are approaching the season of gift giving and gift receiving; a time for “counting our blessings” and blessing in return. As we send and receive greetings and prayers, as we select and accept gifts, we intend, implicitly – hopefully explicitly to express the gift of ourselves and rejoice in the gift of the other.

Let us broaden our horizons, let us contemplate the great gifts, the grace in which we are immersed, in which we live and move and have our being – the gift of life, of existence itself, our own being and that of everything that exists – breathed forth and sustained by the creative Word and Spirit of Love.

We know that the love of God is manifested, made flesh in our flesh, for we are made the images of God to continue to immerse God’s whole creation in life giving and sustaining love.

We in the family of Mary, may send

greetings to each other, but are not generally in the habit of exchanging gifts (well, I haven’t been!). But our religious commitment, our vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, should prove to be our perennial gifts to one another (as is beautifully expressed in a number of our Constitutions).

While the packaging may not be too great, the gifts can be beautiful: our talents, our witness, our support and love.

We are the beneficiaries of those who have gone before us. In great, significant things, but also in the small, daily things, the “hidden and unknown” things.

Recently, in the farewell to the Marists by the Parish of Gladstone, their representatives spoke of the significant things attributable to the Marists in our 118 year of service, so evident in the example of the churches, the fine schools, the parish centre, of the institutions and works initiated.

But above all the speakers and many others spoke affectionately of the dedication, the commitment, the fidelity, the “hard slog” of many of the 75 confreres who ministered in Gladstone and its environs.

We, each one of us, are recipients of the gifts received from our confreres today. It can help now and again, in times of cynicism and hyper-criticism, to imagine what a state we would be in if we all downed tools and went bush.

Sometimes the difficult part in

exchanging gifts is to be gracious in receiving, to accept the other in gratitude, respect and with joy.

So, at this time of giving and thanksgiving, I wish to give thanks to all of you who continue to contribute to the life and mission of the Society of Mary according to your realities, through your work for the People of God - for the poor and the marginalized especially, through your prayers and through your faithful witness to the gospel by your religious commitment.

Personally, as I come to the end of my first year in office, I wish to gratefully express my appreciation of the welcome and support I have received from you.

I wish to thank in a very special way my Vicar, Peter McMurrich, for staying on and carrying on the superb contribution he has made to the provincial leadership and the province in these challenging times.

A blessed Christmas to you all.

Tony

Provincial Diary

17 December

Provincial Council Meeting

23 December

Provincial Office closes at midday

6 January

Provincial Office Re-opens

17 January

Marist Charism and Culture
Executive Meeting

24 January

Testimonial Dinner for Peter
McMurrich

11 February

Provincial Finance Committee
Meeting

13 February

Professional Standards Panel

18 February

Provincial Council Meeting

Appointments

Gerard Hall: elected to the Provincial Council for a 4 year term as from 1/1/2020.

Paul Sullivan: appointed Provincial Bursar as from 1/1/2020; reappointed executive director of the Marist Mission Centre for a further period of three years as from 1/1/2020

Alatini Kolofo'ou: appointed a member of the Herston community as from 1/1/2020. Alatini is a member of the Oceania Province and will be commencing as fulltime chaplain at Marist College, Ashgrove. He has previously been chaplain to the Tongan community in Sydney.



Kathleen Fleming

Michael Whelan: appointed principal of the Aquinas Academy for a further period of three years as from 1/1/2020.

Professional Standards and Administrative Secretary

Now that the role of fulltime Vicar Provincial is due to cease at the end of this year, the tasks previously handled by Peter McMurrich will be divided between **Kathleen Fleming** (Professional Standards) and **Anne Martinus** (Administrative Secretary).

Professional Standards Officer: The Provincial recently announced the appointment of **Ms. Kathleen Fleming** to the role of Professional Standards Officer for the Province, and **Mrs Anne Martinus** to the role of Administrative Secretary.

Kathleen has been working for a number of years in the Professional Standards area with the Marist brothers.

She will have an office at the Provincial Administration building, and will work three days a week.

Historically this area has been looked after by successive Provincials, and in more recent years by the Vicar Provincial.

Administrative Secretary: Anne Martinus currently works part-time as Financial Manager at the Marist Mission Centre, and will continue in that role while taking on a role of part-time Administrative Secretary for the Province.



Anne Martinus

Personnel

Paul Mahony will conclude his 6 year appointment as Superior of the Maryvale/Montbel community on 31 December this year, and will be on a sabbatical/renewal year during 2020.

Brian Wilson has been appointed Superior of the community for 12 months as from 1/1/2020.

Peter McMurrich steps down after 7 years as full-time Vicar Provincial on 31 December this year.

An appointment for 2020 is still pending, however he will be having some time off in the first three months of next year.

Ben McKenna is currently in Australia on annual leave, and will be returning to Rome early in the New Year.

He spent some time at Villa Maria before heading down to Tasmania, and was able to travel with the Provincial to attend the Farewell events in Gladstone.

News

Vacancy on the Provincial Council: Gavin Foster is due to complete his term on the Provincial Council at the end of February next year.

With the Christmas holiday break looming, we have asked Gav to extend his term by one month so that we can postpone the first phase of the election until late January.

This would see the election process completed by the end of March and would see the new Councillor taking up his appointment as from the April meeting.

Draught Horse on Evacuation: Paul Sullivan was shocked on Tuesday 12 November, a Catastrophic Fire Level day, to encounter a draught horse and its handler as he was driving into Hunters Hill parish car park.

Seems the horse had been evacuated from a fire-prone area on the fringes of Sydney, and was putting in a few

Deaths

Fr Benedicto Vicario sm
d.17.11.2019, Seon, Spain.

Doreen Quinn, sister of Sid Mitchell, died in Sydney 10.11.2019, aged 96 years.

leisurely hours shuffling around Hunters Hill.

Even sceptics in the Provincial office became believers when they saw an oversize horse-float parked outside the gates of Villa Maria, at 1 Mary Street.



Christmas Card for the Ages: On 13 November we received our first Christmas card at the Provincial Office. No patriarchal stereotypes depicted here! Joseph appears as the embodiment of a sensitive new age guy: you see him in the foreground cradling and quieting the infant Jesus, while Mary sleeps blissfully in bed in the background.

Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) Audit: The day before our audit was to commence on October 29, Tania Stegeman from CPSL, who was preparing to conduct the audit, contacted us with the news that her sister had just died in Brisbane after a battle with cancer.

The audit has been cancelled and will be rescheduled for another time.

The auditors will visit the Provincial Office, Hunters Hill parish, and St Patrick's parish, and will also seek to interview a representative sample of the Province, speaking with 16 randomly selected confreres. We will then receive a draft report, with the opportunity for comment before the final version is published on the CPSL website sometime in 2020.

Gladstone Parish Farewell: The weekend of 23-24 November saw a trio of special events to mark the Marist withdrawal from Gladstone parish at the end of the year.

On the Friday before the weekend there was a Mass and luncheon for local clergy and for religious who have been involved in the parish in previous years.

On Saturday evening there was a dinner at the Gladstone Mercure Hotel.

Finally, Sunday morning saw a Mass with around 500 attending, in the Chanel College auditorium.

All three events were a great credit to Kevin Redmond and his organising teams, and the prevailing mood was of thanksgiving and gratitude, celebrating both the Marist presence in the parish and the way the parishioners have responded to and supported Marist ministry in the parish over the years.

Bishop Michael McCarthy was there for all the celebrations, and there was a good roll up of confreres: Tony Corcoran, Ben McKenna, John Begg, Robert Hollow, Seamus McMahon, Michael Carroll, Aliko Langi, Andrew Murray, and Peter McMurrich. Paul Mahony was planning to go but had to withdraw at the last moment. Well done to everyone involved.

Farewell to Chris Comerford: Chris, who is currently principal at St John's College, Woodlawn, is retiring at the end of the year. On Friday evening, 22 November, there was a Mass at the College, followed by a meal at a venue at Alstonville, to thank Chris and mark his retirement. Chris is only the second principal of the school following the transfer of the College to the diocese of Lismore at the end of 2000. Gerard Hall and Peter McMurrich represented the Province. Paul Pidcock was also intending to be present, but became unwell the day before he was due to travel.

Burnie Memorial & Ritual Committee: a committee has been meeting during this year at Marist Regional College, Burnie, to plan a public ritual and permanent memorial as a response to the history of sexual abuse at the college.

The Vicar Provincial has represented

the Marist Fathers on the committee.

A date has now been set for the public ritual: it will take place on Saturday 21 March, commencing 11am at the Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens at Burnie.

The archbishop of Hobart and the Marist Fathers' Provincial will both deliver an apology during the ceremony.

As a follow up, there will be an open day at the College soon after March 21, when a permanent plaque will be placed at the College.

If there are any confreres who would be available to attend on March 21 your presence would be greatly appreciated and you might let the Provincial know.

Ultimate Questions: A rare and valued gift possessed by only a few mortals is the capacity to ask ultimate questions.

One such was "Screaming" Lord Sutch, who led a colourful life as a 1970s rock star, before toning down and taking a seat in the House of Lords. He once posed the question as to why there was only one Monopolies Commission.

A similar capacity is possessed by our own Harry Moore, who asked some years back why the dish called Chili con Carne was not actually called Carne con Chili. Good question.

Advertising

Provincial Office Closure: "What about us?...Give us a break", chant the elves in the Provincial Office. "We want a slice of the festive action too". Just so little friends, and your pleas have been heard.

Therefore, we announce the **Closure of the Provincial Office from 12noon on Monday 23 December until Sunday 5 January, 2020 inclusive;** the elves will be back refreshed on January 6 to reopen the office.

If need arises: **Provincial: 0448 986**



963; Vicar Provincial: 0419 271 831
(until 31/12/2019).

If phones are not switched on, they will nevertheless be checked regularly for messages.

2020 Province Assembly and Chapter: The Provincial recently announced dates for a Provincial Assembly next year, to take place at Hunters Hill from **23-25 June**; and for the Provincial Chapter, which will also be at Hunters Hill, from **1-4 September**.

Paul Sullivan, Luke Holohan, and Bob Barber have been appointed to the Assembly/Chapter preparatory Committee.

Some important reminders from Andrew Biddle:

Financial reports from Communities and Individuals: At the 2016 June Provincial Chapter one of the financial declarations and decisions was to "remind communities and individuals to submit annual financial reports".

So I can complete the Consolidated Accounts, can communities and individuals in ministry please submit their financials by the end of March? Budgets for 2020 would be appreciated.

For those men engaged in individual ministries, and who manage the related finances apart from the community, a reminder that you are required to give an annual financial report on your ministry.

Such ministries are expected to be self-supportive and cover your running costs.

If you need to discuss your financials or require assistance in completing the task then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Provincial Charges: The Provincial Charges for 2020 which cover each person's Catholic Church Insurance, BUPA Health Insurance and the General House tax will be sent to individuals and communities in February.

Travel: If you are going overseas you need to give details to Andrew Biddle. This ensures you are covered for travel insurance.

The Marist Fathers Australian Province policy covers those of us under 101 years of age (!). Depending on the distance you are going to travel and your general health you may be required to get a letter from your GP giving you clearance to travel.

Provincial Contributions: Currently, our professional standards costs are extremely high.

All confreres with the financial capacity to assist us now or during the year with ongoing support, via contributions, are urged to do so. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Other Provinces

New Zealand: David Kennerley completes his term as Provincial of New Zealand at the end of January next year. **Tim Duckworth** is the Provincial-elect.



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:

Dec 26 – Jan 14

Michael Carroll

Jan 15-31

Peter McMurrich (family)

Feb 7-29

Peter McMurrich

Mar 15-21

Jim Hargarve

April 13-27

Gavin Foster

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.

Bridge Program

Established in 2011 to assist young Burmese refugees prepare for tertiary education, the program has more than seventy graduates, many of whom have moved on to further studies including Australian Catholic University's online project on the Thai-Myanmar border.

Led by a team of former BP-ers, the program continues under the auspices of the Province's JPIC Committee.

Pictured, right, 'party time' as BP-ers celebrate the end of another program: black-shirted coordinating team members join two graduates in Maesot, Thailand, while two Karenni graduates have a private celebration in Mae Hong Son.

Marist JPIC Blog

Thanks to Ben McKenna's dedication, the Blog has appeared regularly on Mondays throughout 2019 with over forty postings.

Blog topics include social justice issues, ecology and environment, migrants and refugees, prison ministry and others.

Links to each Blog are included weekly on the Province's website and on Facebook.

JPICC Corner

Provincial Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation



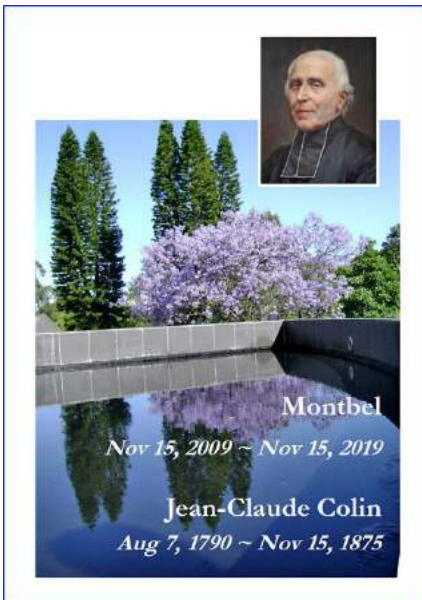
**Marist JPIC
Blog**

And also...



Clockwise from top right: Parish crib on the Mary St corner | Montbel community with Marist Sisters and Brothers, entertained by **Anthony Field** and fellow Wiggle and friend, with rollicking shanties and soulful melodies | Vigil Mass with **Kevin Bates** and 'Camp Runamuck' families near St Joseph's chapel | November visits: **Charlie Randle, Dylan Hatobu** and **Gerry Hall** at Nudgee cemetery | **Ben McKenna** with 'MICs' at **Philip Callaghan's** grave in Davao.





Clockwise from top left: Montbel's 10th anniversary leaflet | Nov 15 guests on Montbel's rear deck | Paul Glynn reviving lawn near Villa Maria's toolshed. The patch of grass had died under the influence of spilt oils, etc. | Paul with Nara and Tomigaoka visitors in Sydney to mark the 25th anniversary of Tony Glynn's death.

