



From the

COORDINATOR

Dear Marists

We are living in times, which are rapidly changing. Fifty years ago Pope John 23rd said "listen to the signs of the times". As we listen, we must realise we are part of this changing too. This change reveals the mystery of life, which God has set in motion for us. As Marists we choose to mirror Mary as she follows Christ as the first disciple. In a very practical way through our body, mind and spirit. Not us but God living in us. As people look to us we hope that they actually see Mary alive in this world. We respond with simplicity, inclusiveness and flexibility. This way provides a hope for a world which at times has forgotten God. Yet there is a wisdom which comes from an experience of our encounter of our life. Not something you gain by reading a book or surfing the web. This is deeply at the heart of the Christ story. This story is born in us as we open and trust in a relationship with God. In this process God calls us to open and trust in other people as well. With strangers. At times this can be frightening, yet, Christ says "I am with you".

In April 2014, nine lay Marists set off on a pilgrimage to the Marist Holy Places in France. MLA Co-Leader Margaret Woods, and Marist Father Ray Chapman took part. It was a vibrant experience of encounter. They visited many places such as La Valla, Cerdon, and Le Puy. Much energy has flowed out of the pilgrims since their return. In the May Marist Laity reflection day they were able to share many exciting stories. Thank you to Father Ray Chapman for leading this pilgrimage. It was a mountain top experience. Marist Laity Australia is hoping to go again in the next 2 years. Please let us know, via email, if you are interested in taking part.

On a personal note my wife Bo and I have recently had a baby. Noah was born on June 30 weighing 3.24 kg. Presently, Noah likes to get up every 2 to 3 hours at night time. He brings much joy yet he reminds us how precious and fragile life is. Thank you for the many prayers and blessings.



Finally, I would like to leave you with a thought. Recently I received an email from a lay Marist in Sydney who raised an interesting question – "What will Marist Laity look like in 20 years time?". In response I thought of this question "What are we doing now to bring it to birth 'Marist Laity 2034'?" It seems far off. Yet I realise the seeds of today become the plants of tomorrow. This is a deeply individual question, yet it requires a communal response. We must be willing to have faith, trust and follow God where he is calling. This will require us to change.

With Mary and Christ,

Andrew Dumas

Pilgrimage to France

the inner journey.

The reflection day in May at St Patricks Church Hill provided a wonderful opportunity for the 2014 MLA Pilgrims from Sydney to gather and share the highlights of the pilgrimage with those who attended the day.

The Pilgrims, Jenny, Cathy and Nick assisted me in sharing in brief the wonderful places and spiritual opportunities that we experienced together.



The enthusiasm and joy that the pilgrims presented to the group that day was infectious and as one leading the presentation I couldn't help but think how blessed we really were to journey together through the places of Marist origin.



One of the hidden yet richest blessings throughout the pilgrimage was the ability for a group of nine strangers to live together in harmony for the best part of 3

weeks. Coming from diverse professional backgrounds and differing age groups it was fascinating getting to know each other, our similar interests, various differences and personality quirks. It kept the group vibrant and in a sense 'grounded' in its humanity with lots of opportunity for humour and goodwill.

Inner growth was a characteristic of the pilgrimage as interactions led us to know and understand each other more fully.



Just as in any family, the ability to better know and understand the other was reflected in the wonderful acceptance that flowed across the pilgrims within the group and at times the deep support experienced by members of the group.

Differences were acknowledged and embraced in and by the group. This growth enriched the group as a whole and created a group identity which impacted the lives of us all. That bond continued throughout the pilgrimage and was so evident at the reflection day in May.

So thank you to Nick, Cathy and Jenny who came to the day and helped to make my presentation come to life with your warmth, enthusiasm and deep love for the Marist Spirit that was so evident in your sharing. I hope that people drawn to the Marist spirit will one day have an opportunity to receive the rich experiences that we shared on the pilgrimage and deepen their knowledge of and love for the Marist Charism that ultimately strives to bring Mary's spirit into the world.

In Mary
Margaret Woods
2014 Pilgrim.



Marist Laity

Pilgrimage

2014

On the 21st April, 2014, at 5.00 a.m. Sydney Airport was the scene of a first time meeting of a motley group of nine bleary-eyed people - four men and five women - diverse in age, background and experience, but united in a common undertaking - or as Cathy Gallo one of the group had prophetically termed it "adventure"- that of PILGRIMAGE - specifically, The Marist Laity Pilgrimage of 2014.



The four men were Father Ray Chapman, The Leader aka Mon Capitan (needs to be pronounced with a French accent), with his intrepid offside Patrick Cooper, luggage packer par excellence, Allan Bolster who tried to keep everyone on the straight and narrow and Nick, the youngest of the group, the lucky (and gracious) recipient of wisdom and advice from his co-pilgrims, and a famed international linguist.



The five women were the aforesaid Cathy Gallo, famous for her good nature and ready laugh and not so famous for her punctuality; Margaret Woods renowned for her good cheer and positivity even in the throes of debilitating migraine; Andrea Pisano whose smile and light-weight iron endeared her to everyone and Gabrielle Streat whose angelic

voice led us in many a hymn and some endless senseless song about blessed leftovers. You had to be there. And me - Jenny Bolster - mainly famous for being married to Allan Bolster - still- and having the lightest luggage.

After a brief "How do you do" followed by a more heartfelt and sincere call for caffeine, the group enjoyed the first of the many comfort stops to come and were shepherded onto the plane by Father Ray. When we arrived at Dubai, we were escorted by the appropriately named Christian to our Hotel - marble walls and floor, gold trim everywhere - and that was just the driveway! Our



first taste of pilgrimage didn't seem too austere. Our stay was brief, and we had to leave shortly after midnight. But not without each of us receiving a copiously filled "Big (and I mean BIG) Breakfast Box", which we struggled to balance as we were trying to

propel our luggage. This was such a signature moment for the group that to this day, we call ourselves The Big Breakfast Box Group.

The overfed members of the group waddled out at Paris Airport, and were conveyed in a full-sized air-conditioned tourist bus to our luxurious hotel near The Bastille. We were given an escorted tour of Notre Dame Cathedral, taken to Rue de Barc where we visited the Church and saw the incorrupt body of St Catherine Labore and bought Miraculous Medals, and also shown iconic Parisian sights, including the Eiffel Tower.



The Pilgrimage began in earnest when we attended The Provincial House of the Marist Fathers in

Europe where we were presented with our Pilgrimage Medal in a moving paraliturgy.

We were due to have an early start the following day for the long trip to Belley, in a hired mini-bus but, perhaps to heighten the pilgrimage experience, the Hire Company kept Father Ray waiting four hours for the vehicle and then when it arrived, it was apparent that it



was going to be a struggle to get nine people and their luggage into the van more akin to a Tarago than the 9 seater bus that had been ordered. Pat got the luggage in then directed us in and from that moment the group became even more bonded- the hard part was getting unbonded quickly when the bus stopped for comfort stops! The giggling and laughs could only be stopped when Father Ray called on us to pray the rosary. The others generously attributed this to Fr. Ray's piety, but I believe he just wanted some peace and quiet. The novelty of the experience soon wore out, but the bonding remained.

We finally arrived at the Marie Chavoine Centre in Belley and the unforgettable Sister Terry. Her hospitality is legendary - she produced dinners and lunches on par with the loaves and fishes at Bon Repo and again over the next few days when we visited Cerdon and Coutouve. She escorted us to Jarnosse and La Balme as well as La Martine and La Capuciniere.



We then went to La Hermitage, Lavalla Le Puy and Fourviere, which for many were the highlights of the pilgrimage. The masses said by Father Ray, with all of us standing around the altar, at Cerdon, le Puy, and Fourviere were moments to be treasured.

When we arrived at La Neyliere, we were grateful for the five days rest and reflection. The group was made most welcome by the Fathers Ad, Bernard and Victor. There we enjoyed their great company and hospitality and we prevailed on Father Ray to let us join their community mass for our farewell.



We next went to Taize, at the International Refuge for Peace where we joined 1,500 mostly young people in a moving prayer meeting followed by visiting the church where Brother Roger, who set up the refuge, is buried.

We then returned to Lyon and then onto Rome, where we were to again enjoy the inexhaustible Marist hospitality of the Marist Fathers, Marist Brothers, Marist Sisters and Marist Missionary Sisters at each of their respective houses. We took part in thought provoking discussions with senior members of each of the branches of the Marist family - ranging from discussions about falling vocations to their perceived future areas of growth.

We also managed to squeeze in Angelus with the Pope and a somewhat delayed Tour of the Vatican (waiting for our tour guide for an hour and a half in the rain alleviated by song and dance routines, including of course "Singing in the Rain" with appropriate dance routine - well performed even if I say so myself).



But this tour group must go down in history as being the only catholic Pilgrim Group to turn their back on Sunday Mass celebrated by the Pope in the local Church not even four doors from their hotel to hurry across Rome, cross the Tiber to the Vatican State, hike about 2 k uphill, to attend Mass elsewhere - at the Marist Chapel in the Marist Fathers House.

A tough call.

Pilgrimage wasn't meant to be easy!

We finished our pilgrimage with some delightful time in Rome and laughed as the bus that came to take us to the airport (that final trip) was the perfect size for 9 people. If only we had been able to use it in France!

Who said God doesn't have a sense of humour!!

Jenny Bolster on behalf of the Pilgrim Group



MLA Mailing List Update

Marist Laity Australia is currently updating our contact database. To ensure you are on our contact list, **could you please complete the following form?**

www.maristlaityaustralia.com/contactlist

Thank you
Andrew Dumas

Reflection Day - MARIST Pilgrims

the inner and outer
journey.

By Maria Baden

"A pilgrimage is a journey, especially a long one, made to some sacred place, as an act of devotion." (Macquarie Dictionary)

Thus began our Marist Laity Australia reflection day held on 31st May, a fitting feast day of the Visitation, to engage with the theme of Pilgrimage as an inner and outer journey.

In session 1, led by Andrew Dumas, we were asked the question:

How is life a pilgrimage?

To answer this, we went back to the scriptures, looking at Mary's own pilgrimage. We listened to the Annunciation and Visitation stories from Luke's Gospel and, in quiet space, were asked to reflect on questions related to Mary's situation and indeed, our own.

The idea of pilgrimage as a struggle, as prayer and as evidence of love was presented to us. How does God break through to us? Through our human condition of great suffering, great love and deep prayer. This was Mary's own experience and as Marists, is ours as well.

Andrew also asked us to consider those times in our lives called liminal moments. These liminal spaces are times when the comfort zones we have built around ourselves are challenged. Decisions, commitments and a change of heart are required of us. It is not easy but a necessary part of each person's growth. We looked at the Transfiguration as a biblical example of liminal space.

Richard Rohr, a Franciscan monk says: Liminal space is when you are between your old comfort zone and any possible new answer. If you are not trained in how to hold anxiety, how to live with ambiguity, how to trust and wait, you will run...anything to flee this terrible cloud of unknowing".

True pilgrimage takes us to these difficult places.

We ended session 1 with silent meditation. The repetition of a sacred prayer word is like the repetitive movement of a pilgrim – one foot in front of the other.

"Meditation is a way of simplicity which soon becomes a pilgrimage. But we're not alone on this pilgrimage. We have both the community of the faithful in persevering and the guidance of the Spirit in our heart." John Main OSB.

Session 2 was led by 4 religious – Br. Ray Arthur FMS, Sr Marie-Berise Nash SM, Sr Janice Ruff SMSM, and Fr Paul Mahony SM

Each of the religious gave a talk on their founder – St Marcellin Champagnat, Jeanne- Marie Chavoïn, Françoise Perroton and Jean-Clause Colin. Each speaker sought to present their founder in the light of their individual pilgrimages, with their struggles, joys and liminal moments. The richness of our Marist family with the 4 religious branches and our own Marist Laity branch, was appreciated by all.

Events

November 8 – Marist Reflection Day –
At St Patricks Church. Church Hill. Sydney.
Put this in your diary!

Prayers

Please pray for the following :

Sister Barbara Pedley SMSM
Father John O'Ryan SM
Father Jim Bishop SM
John Morrissey
Pat Boland