

# MARIST SM AUSTRALIA

Australian Marist Centre Overseas Aid (AMCOA)

Marist Fathers International Mission (MFIM)

Marist Mission Centre (MMC)

MARIST MISSION NEWSLETTER

Christmas, December 2014 Vol. 65, 3



**"Christmas speaks of tenderness and hope." (Pope Francis writes...)**

*When God meets us he tells us two things. The first thing he says is: have hope. God always opens doors, he never closes them. He is the father who opens doors for us. The second thing he says is:*

*Christians forget about hope Church, that loses its sense of and worldly attitudes, where-forward, I am a Father who Christians lose hope and the ability to embrace and extend a loving caress to others. Maybe this is why, looking towards the future, I often speak about children and elderly, about the most defenceless that is. Throughout my life as a priest, going to the parish, I have always sought to transmit this tenderness, particularly to children and the elderly. It does me good and it makes me think of the tenderness God has towards us."*



*don't be afraid of tenderness. When and tenderness they become a cold direction and is held back by ideologies as God's simplicity tells you: go caresses you. I become fearful when*

*- Pope Francis*

*Emmanuel - God is with us'*

*Marist Mission Centre*

**MMC AMCOA Partnerships prioritise Women and Children in small Communities within Asia-Pacific affected by Social, Mental and Physical Disadvantage, Poverty and Natural Disaster**

**THE HIDDEN DISPOSABLE ONES.... The lost, the last, the little and the least**

Dear Friends and Marist Benefactors,

A very happy and blessed Christmas. In early November, I wobbled across planks (photo below) 10' above putrid water and plastic trash with two Marist novices. At 70, I was happy to have them with me extending a steadying hand. Pointed words of Pope Francis echoed in my ears: **"You can't speak of poverty in the abstract: that doesn't exist. Poverty is the flesh of the poor Jesus, in that child who is hungry, in the one who is sick, in unjust social structures"**.



Christmas celebrates that hidden presence of 'Emmanuel'. The 'lost, the last, the little, the least' with whom the babe of Bethlehem identifies are given hope by the dedication of Marist Sisters, Brothers, Laity and Priests supported by your prayer and your wonderful warm generosity. On behalf of all our Marists on the front lines of Mission, "Thanks".

One of the Novices remarked that he had not seen such poverty in Africa. Most people living within a kilometre of this appalling dump for the 'disposable ones' from last year's fire, would also have never seen this poverty. The birth of Jesus gently invites us to open our eyes wider, to recognise him in those around us, especially in the lonely and least.

I am inspired by you, our benefactors, and the difference your support has made in 2014.

*Every blessing on your families at Christmas and in 2015. Kevin Stewart SM*







REALITY CHECK MARIST RANONG (MMR)



EDUCATION

**Pre-school Program** - 75 Burmese Children in a safe environment while parents work. Students are poor - struggle to pay fees.

**Child Protection Program.** ( 15 children) 90% of Burmese Migrant worker children leave education by 12 years of age. At this crucial turning point, CCP encouraged 15 students who had left education to return to school rather than the vulnerability and despair of the streets and a bleak future.

Priority is for those with greatest needs from poorest families committed to the programs.

**Secondary Education & Training** (95 children) With only 20% of Burmese Migrant Children at a learning Centre and 90% of these leave age 12, Marist Burmese Secondary Education responds to a crucial need to give a chance for education leading to a brighter future.

**ACU Online Learning Program** (24 students) MMR Partnership with Australian Catholic University talented young Burmese have the chance to begin the journey to be teachers, health and community leaders in their places.

**HIC/Aids Health Project**

70 of the most abandoned HIV patients and their families - lives are lifted up.

Two Questions challenge MMR given that all programs are basically all overseas-funded.

Succession/future financial sustainability ? Sustaining the Marist ethos in programs ?

**The bottom line:** MMC would like to renew its support until 2016. This will assist our Marists counter the danger that vulnerable children become once again disposable victims *'in a system pressured to be efficient at all costs'*. Cost is a reality check but only one of them.

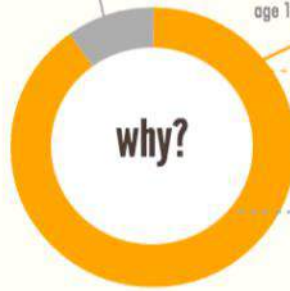
MMC would like to commit \$75,000 for both 2015 & again for 2016. Can we help ?

Pope Francis again: "we must embrace with tenderness the poorest, the weakest and the least important". Migrant Children and their families truly qualify!

Children in Ranong

only 10% of Burmese migrant children able to receive further education

90% of Burmese migrant children leave education age 11



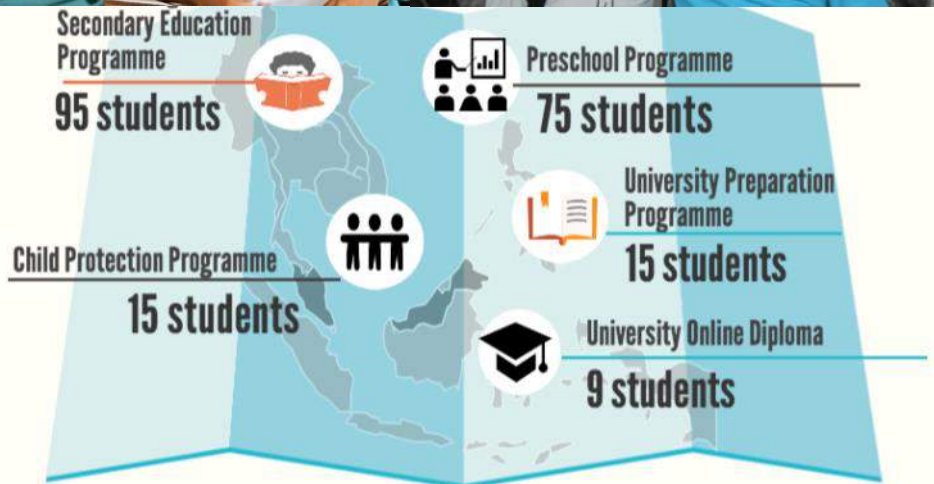
marist mission ranong is the only provider of a secondary education programme for Burmese students in Ranong

significant factors

- parents earn only \$10 per day and cannot afford school fees
- parents need their children to start work to support their family

we make a difference by

- providing a positive early education experience
- support children with parents who wish to make a commitment to education
- Train teachers to benefit the migrant community for a better future



Ranong is a significant Border crossing town connecting Myanmar and South Thailand

most families leave Burma because of poverty and oppression

big challenges big solutions

- THE THAI / BURMA BORDER IS ONE OF THE MOST FORGOTTEN PLACES IN ASIA
- WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OVER 200 CHILDREN GET AN EDUCATION
- CONTINUE A POSITIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING PROGRAMME
- CONTINUE THE ONLY SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME AVAILABLE
- CONTINUE THE ONLINE UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP GROWING FUTURE LEADERS



Education - investing in their future





'Body-guards' Sisters Josephine & Margaret escort Fr Kevin to the Burmese side to visit an RNDM Anti-trafficking Project. Margaret was refused re-entry to Thailand and turned back to Burma for 24 more hours!

**RNDM (OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS) SISTERS WHERE HUMAN NEEDS ARE GREAT**

Our Lady of the Mission Sisters (RNDM) work in partnership with the Marist Asia Team in Ranong, Thailand, on the Thai-Burma border. The RNDM Sisters also trace their origins to the Chapel of Fourviere in Lyons, the same spot where 12 young French seminarians made a promise to found the Marists 198 years ago. RNDM's are akin to cousins in our religious family - our founders knew each other.

Today, Sisters Margaret & Josephine work closely with the Marists in Ranong in Education and HIV/Aids Programs. As one Father observed, "Being Burmese, their love, smiles, joy and care for their own people in such difficult circumstances on the Thai-side of the border makes an incredible difference." RNDM Sisters also run a low-key anti-trafficking project (livelihood skills) for Burmese girls who could be lured into prostitution in Thailand. →



**DENTISTS DELIGHT** at Marist Street Boys Centre, Davao City) From plastic chairs & room lamps to a real dental surgery at the Marist street boys centre, Davao. This is incorporated into part of new extensions sponsored by MMC.

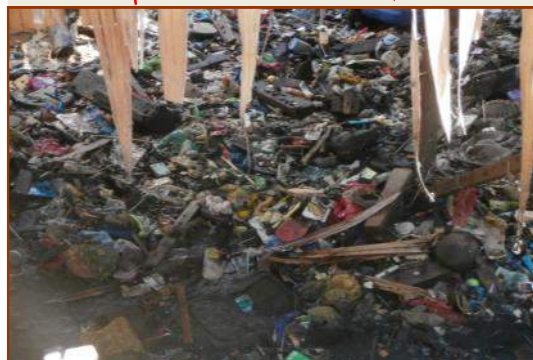
Donated equipment enables Marist Sister Sheila (a dentist) to offer free clinics for urban poor kids and mothers. The poor rarely visit dentists or doctor negatively affecting their health. Offers of dental instruments/equipment gratefully welcomed!

Fr Lionel Mechavez SM sees out-reach programs onto the streets as an important development and medical and dental clinics are part of this initiative of getting their feet dirty.

MMC will sponsor Sister's stipend and some medical overheads.



↑ Above & 10' Below ↓



**DISPOSABLE VICTIMS**

Marist Sister Monica SM, accompanied by Marist Novices from the International Novitiate in Davao, Philippines, (Guy from Africa and Soane Oceania) at a relocated evacuation site for poor Badjao families. →

Their previous site, where the Sisters had a small centre for children to prepare them for school, was terrible and the fire that dislocated several thousand was a blessing (no one died). This latest effort relocating them is inhumane, appalling.

As of last month, no 'space' is available for Sister to re-establish a simple centre which MMC will assist. A young family generously share their little space with the Sisters and around 20 children. →

MMC will support for Sr Monica and team to retain a presence in this terrible place, journeying with these disposable people (certainly the little and the least!).

**Stipend to support a Sister p.a. \$3,000**



MMC (AMCOA & MFIM) is registered with The **Australian Charities Commission** and a member of The **Australian Council for International Development**





**ABOUT TO BEGIN ... renovation of fire-damaged teachers dormitory - Vanuatu**



Bishop Bosco & Engineers

Funds for renovation were totally consumed in undertaking the first restoration destroyed by fire a few months later. 18 months on, Marist Bishop Bosco desperately needs accommodation for teachers from the many islands of Vanuatu. All materials are imported so costs are high. Plans are finished to typhoon-proof standards. **MMC will co-fund this vital project . \$100,000**



**SOON TO FINISH ... Extension of safe haven for street boys - Davao, Philippines**



The Balay Pasilungan Street Boys Program saw the need for a quasi half-way house for kids still on the streets and not yet ready to either go home, if there is one, nor to return to school. The new extension attached to the main centre meets a new need as part of its new child-protection outreach from the main program. **MMC sponsored construction \$80,000**

**FINISHED ... and operating successfully**



MMC's Annie & Jane



**Sister Teresia SMSG** from Fiji, now missioned in Jamaica, inspired MMC Advisory members, Geoff Henry and Richard Dynon with the stark challenges facing Sisters working with women and girls.

Drugs, guns, prostitution, domestic violence are endemic. Sister is part of a very practical project, training women to work in protected environments of the tourist resorts and co-sponsored financially by the resorts. **Cost \$20,000**

**THE 2014 MMC BOTTOM LINE ...**

was always about people with tenderness and hope, time, talent, treasure. Together, you made the MMC difference - benefactors and donors with your prayer and support; the young-in-heart Tuesday volunteers and our advisory teams and auditors, always available for whatever needs to be done; Marist partners at the end of cement roads in Asia/Pacific and our MMC team of Annie, Jane and Veronica who quietly and in hidden ways gently keep the wheels of loving concern turning...together you are MMC, the Marist Mission Centre, keeping the flame of hope burning brightly!



MMC Tuesday Volunteers

***Our Beloved Dead***

As another year closes, Marists remember with gratitude and prayer our benefactors who went home to the Lord in 2014. You will miss them at Christmas. We pray also for Sr Doreen SM (100 yrs old), Fr Giris SM (40 yrs old) and Fr Qualovi SM (54yrs old) all of whom died this December. RIP

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To make a donation to MMC  
**MARIST SM AUSTRALIA**

*With our sincere thanks, Fr Kevin SM*



*Happy Christmas  
and a peaceful  
New Year from a  
grateful MMC  
Team and the  
Marist Family.*



**CHILDREN AT RISK**

- More than 110 million primary school age children worldwide are not enrolled in school.
- 11 million children die each year from preventable diseases causes: bad water and inadequate health care.
- The majority are girls or disabled. Many are refugees.
- An estimated 250 million children, aged 5 to 14 around the world are forced to work.
- Close to 2 million children have been killed in armed conflicts in the past decade.



**Sustaining Hope**



**Compassion and caring keeps their flame of hope alight!**



My details are: (please print clearly—thanks)

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred greeting e.g. Bill / Peggy \_\_\_\_\_

Family name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Suburb/Town \_\_\_\_\_

State / Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Australian Marist Centre Overseas Aid (AMCOA)**  
(donations are tax-deductible)

**Marist Fathers International Mission (MFIM)**  
(non tax-deductible - e.g. Religious purposes)

Please send me information on Estate Planning

**My donation:**

\$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  \$500 Other \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose cheque  money order  cash

**I would like to make a direct debit from my credit card:**

Monthly  Quarterly  Half-yearly  Once only

Visa Card  Master Card

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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Pls. Post: Marist Missions, Locked Bag 5002, Gladesville, NSW 1675

Or Fax to (02) 9816 1737 or donate on line at

**WWW.MARISTMISSIONS.COM**