



## Provincial Circular No. 6 Dec 2015

### From the provincial

Dear confreres

This is the last Provincial Circular for 2015. It has been a year with its share of highs and lows.

Individually and as a group we have certainly been the recipient of many graces straight out of the hands of God, and we have also experienced some disappointments.

We are all getting a little older and daily some seem to be confirmed in a view that their lives are no longer productive in God's eyes. Thank God, God does not see as man does (1 Sam 16:7) and, given our reality and the opportunities available to us, God certainly is able to be very pleased with our lives. We should be too.

Next year I believe we have a couple of blessed opportunities that will help us to be positive about our ministry and our personal lives.

#### Year of Mercy

On the 8<sup>th</sup> December, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Church began an extraordinary Jubilee Year, the Holy Year of Mercy.

This jubilee year of Mercy, centered on the mercy of God, concludes on the Feast of Christ the King 2016.

On the occasion Pope Francis announced the Year of Mercy he said, *"I have often thought about how the church might make clear its mission of being a witness to mercy. It is a journey that begins with a spiritual conversion. . . We want to live this year in the light*

*of the Lord's words: 'Be merciful, just as your father is merciful. (cf Lk 6:36)"*

This Holy Year, which Pope Francis entrusted to Mary, Mother of Mercy, will surely be a great blessing for the whole Church but we Marists must make sure we pull out all stops and ensure this is a very special year for us, for "mercy" is an integral part of the Marist DNA.

The more we enter into celebrating this Year of Mercy the more clearly we will see that we are living deeply the inspiration and insight given to us by Jean Claude Colin and the early Marists.

Cardinal Walter Kasper wrote a book that apparently Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio was reading at the time of the conclave when he was elected as our present Pope and of it he says, "This book has done me so much good".

From what we have seen of Francis'



papacy we can see that mercy is a key part of his ministry and personal life.

As a scholarly work Kasper's, Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life (Paulist Press, 2014), it is not a light read but even for the plodder if taken slowly and reflectively it is surprisingly quite a manageable and enjoyable read.

I give it the strongest recommendation to men who want to make "mercy" a key and dominant part of their lives.

If looking ahead over the coming year you find focussing on "living mercy" is not going to be enough to occupy you we have a number of other big events to grab our attention.

We have a Chapter, where restructuring and our prioritized ministries will be given much attention; we have too the celebration of a very important Marist anniversary that will provide us with a lot to ponder over.

#### Fourvière pledge

2016 is the bi-centenary year commemorating the beginning of our Marist enterprise.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2016 we will celebrate, with the 3 other religious branches and our lay Marists, the pledge made at Fourvière.

In the 200 years since twelve seminarians and newly ordained priests trekked the 800 stone steps leading up to Our Lady's chapel and made their pledge to found the Society of Mari-ists so much has happened.

The young men in 1816 who made the

pledge on behalf of all who followed them did not know how history would unfold.

They did not know how our Marist name would evolve; how our spirituality and imitation of Mary in each branch would develop in similar but unique ways; the extent to which each of our five branches would grow and reach into many corners of the earth; how Mary was giving to us a charism tailor made to fit today's world.

The founding Marists are examples for us of people who lived by hope. Four of the original group were positive and got others to join them and from them the Marist dream developed.

We have to be the same. We have to let God develop the Marist enterprise as God wishes and we have to support it.

In our 2016 Provincial Chapter, to be held in June, "restructuring" possibilities will be a key matter discussed. As we will all be involved in discussion around this issue at meetings in late January 2016, I will not mention it or report on it here.

#### **Prioritized works**

The other big issue that will come up in the Chapter will be looking at what has happened in the prioritized works that were selected at our last Chapter.

In each prioritized work we will be challenged to see what we have done since the last Chapter.

We will have to ask if we have done enough; if we have been heading in the right direction; and where we need to head in the future.

A brief update on important things happening in each of these prioritised ministries.

1<sup>st</sup> Jan, 2016, will see a changeover of parish priests at St Patrick's. Ray Chapman has done an outstanding job leading St Patrick's over the last 6 years.

One only has to visit the parish to see signs of Ray's gifts. Many innovations introduced over coming months and years will be able to be traced directly

back to ideas that come from Ray.

By the time of the Chapter the new St Patrick's team, headed by Michael Whelan, will be firmly established and we should have an indication of what the future holds for St Pat's over the coming years.

St Pat's is becoming recognised in our international Marist world as an important site and place where the Marist gift to the Church will develop.

Kevin Stewart has done a wonderful job during his nine years in charge of the Marist Mission Centre.

The MMC ministry has continued to grow under his leadership with an increase in both funds from donors and satisfaction from recipients throughout the Asia-Pacific world.

Kevin has done tremendous ground-work in preparing for MMC's future and as he begins a well-earned break he will know that his work on planning MMC's future will be of immense value to those who eventually take over from him the direction of MMC.

A number of things are going on in the third of our prioritized ministries, the Hunters Hill Precinct.

Kevin Bates continues to work with the group whose representatives gave the report at our Assembly envisaging how the Villa precinct might develop.

This committee, however, has been asked to take a temporary pause in their work while the Provincial Administration engages the work of professionals to develop a Master Plan for the Villa precinct on behalf of the Marists.

Anticipating that Kevin Bates will remain as the parish priest of Hunters Hill for a number of years, he has agreed to take a three month sabbatical break in the first half of 2016.

Kev is well overdue for a break now and to expect him to wait another four years before he could take it would be a cruel demand.

The Province is most grateful to Kev, for

agreeing to this strategy, and to Willy Melteras, who will be the Acting PP during Kev's time of R & R.

Details have still to be settled but Australia and Oceania Provinces have agreed to go into a joint venture over what will happen in development plans involving part of the Marist Villa property and the Oceania House block on Rocher Avenue.

Well over my word limit, for which I apologize, on behalf of Peter Mac, Andrew Biddle, and myself, who make up the Prov Administration, and of the Provincial Council, Ho Ho Ho, and a Happy Christmas to all.

Faternally

**Bob Barber sm**



## **Provincial Diary**

### **January 15**

Marist Charism Committee Planning Day, Hunters Hill

### **January 19**

Provincial Council Meeting

### **January 20**

Regional Meeting, St Patrick's

### **January 20**

Regional Meeting, Herston

### **January 21**

Regional Meeting, Villa Maria

### **January 27**

Regional Meeting, Maryvale

### **February 3**

Aged Care Committee Meeting

### **February 11**

Professional Standards Panel Meeting

### **February 16**

Provincial Council Meeting

### **March 2-3**

Combined NZ-Aus Provincial Councils Meeting, Wellington



## Appointments

**Hunters Hill Parish:** During the absence of Kevin Bates from 1 April – 30 June, Willy Melteras will be acting parish priest

**Paul Sullivan:** appointed a member of the Province Professional Standards Panel for two years as from 1/1/2016.

**Kevin Stewart:** appointed a member of the Province Aged Care Committee for two years as from 1/1/2016

## Personnel

**Gerard Hall** has been invited to lead the annual retreat of the Province of Europe to be held at La Neylière, France, 24-30 July.

The retreat will be themed as “Promises of yesterday, today and tomorrow”.

The organisers hope to provide simultaneous translation services in as many languages as possible.

**John Hopkinson:** enclosed with this Provincial Circular is a transmission from John Hopkinson marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Misioneros Maristas, Bolivia”, a missionary community with the Marist charism and spirit for the promotion, formation, and accompaniment of base Christian communities.

Congratulations to John on 25 years of commitment and dedication to this unique and practical mission to the Church in Bolivia.

**Kevin Bates** will be taking a “mini-sabbatical” in the early months of 2016 as he commences his 8<sup>th</sup> year as parish priest at Hunters Hill.

**Paul Cooney:** Paul arrived back in Australia on December 6, and we welcome him home.

Paul was originally due to arrive on 13 December, but brought his return forward by a week to take up some health issues.



## Deaths

**Fred Limeburner:** died in Concord Hospital, Sydney, on 11 November, 2015.

Fred's Mass of Christian Burial took place at Holy Name of Mary church, Hunters Hill on 16 November, followed by burial at Macquarie Park.

Bob Barber was presider, and also the homilist. The homily is enclosed with this Provincial Circular.



**Br Lawrence Hampton sm,** d.29.10.2015, Christchurch, NZ. Br Lawrence lived at Oceania House at Hunters Hill for a number of years in the 1990s.

**Jim Wicks,** brother of Terry Wicks, died on 25 November, 2015, and was buried from St Michael the Archangel church, Booragul, (Hunter region of NSW) on 1 December.

**Fr Joseph McKenna sm,** d. 5.11.2015, Dundalk, Ireland.

**Fr Jan Kouijzer sm,** d. 6.11.2015, Vleuten, Holland.

## Sick

**Kevin Redmond** had day surgery for a hernia on 8 December, in the Mater Hospital in Gladstone.

**Bernie McFadyen** had surgery at Prince of Wales hospital in Sydney on 17 November to improve conditions in his fingers and legs.

He has been recuperating at Maryvale/Montbel and has been wearing a neck brace.

Unfortunately for Bernie an episode of the British cop show, "Lewis", went to air in late November where one of the characters was wearing a neck brace, and was stabbed in the neck by a villain, with a poisonous syringe.

Fortunately the character was unharmed, since the syringe penetrated no further than the neck brace, but Bernie was subsequently pestered by confreres sneaking up on him and pretending to stab him in the neck.

**Paul Sullivan:** Paul spent 24 hours in hospital recently following an episode of feeling faint and generally unwell; he is following up the episode with his doctor.



## News

**Noel Rowe:** Vagabond Press has sponsored the establishment of a "Noel Rowe Poetry Award" at the University of Sydney in memory of Noel; it was awarded for the first time this year.

The recipient must be an unpublished but promising young poet. Some of Noel's family members travelled to Sydney in October for the first presentation of the award.

**Historic photo:** In the last Provincial Circular we published a photograph and offered a prize to the first person to correctly identify the occasion and location, and name the two clerics in soutanes.

In fact, we have joint winners. Syd Nugent was first off the mark, verbally identifying the two clerics as Fr Paul Simms and Fr John Butz, and speculating that the location was St Joseph's College.

Jim Esler was a day or two later, but provided a more complete and comprehensively documented response, indicating that Fr Paul Simms was from Maitland and that Fr John Gerard Butz was from

Canberra-Goulburn; and identifying the place and occasion as St Joseph's College in either 1951 or 1952, when the seminarians from Toongabbie were invited to a Mass celebrated by the newly-ordained Frs Simms and Butz.

Congratulations to the winners. Your prizes are in the mail.

**Chris Comerford**, principal of St John's College, Lismore has been seconded to the Catholic Education Office of the Lismore Diocese for 12 months.

The deputy principal at St John's, Cathie Byrnes, will stand in for Chris during 2016.

**Happy Birthday, Joe:** Gerard Hall's dad, Joe, celebrated his 99<sup>th</sup> birthday on 21 November with a cake and a gathering of friends and relatives at Crowley Village, Ballina.

Joe was presented with a beer mug inscribed "Joe Hall 99 Not Out".

Notable guests at the party in addition to Gerry were Paul Pidcock; John & Eileen Molloy; and Marie (McCosker) and her husband, Mick.

**Provincial Assembly & Jubilarians' Mass and Dinner:** the last Provincial Circular was sent out on the weekend prior to the Assembly (October 27 & 28), and the Jubilarians' Mass and Dinner (October 28).







Above: **Geraldine Doogue** and **Caroline Jones** during the Assembly's opening sessions. Right: Jubilarians' Mass in Villa Maria church, **Neville Byrne** presiding | Dinner in Montbel dining room | Aspirant, **Hayden Kennedy** | Post-prandial entertainment with **Willy Melteras**, **Alik Langi**, **Chris Ketsore** and **Kevin Bates**.

Around 45 confreres gathered for the Assembly, which was facilitated by John Honner, and which was judged by most of the participants to be an outstanding success.

33 evaluations were returned, with 12 rating the gathering as "Outstanding", and a further 17 opting for "Very Good".

There will be follow-up regional meetings throughout the Province during January.

The presider for the Jubilarians' Mass in Holy Name of Mary church was Neville Byrne, who was in fine form.

Michael Mullins and Peter McMurrich concelebrated, and Peter preached.

The dinner was held at Maryvale, with 48 attendees. It proved to be an inspired choice of venue, and the

night was a roaring success.

Kevin Bates proposed the toast to the jubilarians with words that were warm, thoughtful, humorous, and insightful.

Copies of the homily and Kev's speech are included with this Circular.

**Proposal from Paul Sullivan at the Assembly:** Paul suggested at the Assembly that there might be scope for using some of the facilities at Villa Maria as a place of healing for survivors of sexual abuse, and received a positive response.

The Provincial Council has commissioned Paul to spend some time investigating the possibility, which he will do over the next 12 months.

**Staff Changes at Maryvale/Montbel:** Our house manager at

Maryvale/Montbel, **Margaret Ploskodniak**, will be finishing at the end of this year after 2 years of dedicated and ground-breaking service.

Margaret is taking up a position at Hunters Hill Lodge, adjacent to the Hunters Hill village shopping precinct.

Our part-time registered nurse, **Judy Walker**, is also leaving us at the end of the year.

We wish both Margaret and Judy all the best in the years ahead, and we thank them for all they have done for the confreres at Maryvale/Montbel.



**New SM Index:** A new edition of the SM Index will hit the presses early in 2016. In the meantime there's some work to do for the gnomes and elves in the Provincial Office, who need to check all the entries.

If anyone is aware of entries in the 2014 Index that need to be corrected, please contact the Vicar Provincial straight away.

**"Give us a Break":** Santa's elves in the Provincial Office have been shouting this mantra for the last couple of weeks.

Their voices have been heard, and the **Provincial Office will close at midday on Wednesday, 23 December, and re-open on Monday, 4 January.**

For any emergencies, please ring 0419 271 831 (Vicar Provincial's phone) or 0418 260 686 (Provincial's phone).

The Vicar Provincial's greeting discourages you from leaving a

message; ignore that, wait for the beep, and leave your message.

### Professional Standards

**Declarations:** The system which has developed around providing clearances for priests when they minister in other dioceses is universally recognised to be cumbersome and time-consuming.

A few months ago the archdiocese of Sydney started to put in place a system whereby priests in the dioceses of Sydney, Parramatta, Broken Bay, and Wollongong would be issued with a photo-card which could be used when they ministered in those four dioceses.

However, there were technical problems with creating the cards, and that project has lapsed.

There is some light at the end of the tunnel in that the Episcopal Conference and Catholic Religious Australia have agreed to a system whereby priests in good standing with be issued with a letter from their bishop or religious superior which they can use anytime they minister in another diocese.

A bit like the old celebret. This will obviate the need for chanceries and Provincial offices to issue documentation each time an individual wants to perform an act of ministry in another diocese.

Further down the track, the National Professional Standards Office is working on an electronic data base which can be accessed through a mobile phone application, so that the *bona fides* of visiting priests can be checked on the spot, electronically.



### Demise of the White Rabbit:

Around Easter last year, a white rabbit appeared in the grounds of Villa Maria, and for the next 18 months made our property its home.

It developed strong bonds with several confreres in particular, who conversed with it, fed it from community stores, and occasionally sought its advice.

Alas, in mid-November the rabbit was finally tracked down by one of the foxes which inhabit the property, and is no longer with us.

The rabbit will be missed.

**Provincial Council Election:** voting papers for the election to fill the vacancy on the Provincial Council which will occur after 28 February were mailed last weekend.

Voters have until 29 January to return their vote.

## Publications

**Tom Ryan** has two publications in the oven which will see the light of day during 2016: an article in the *Irish Theological Quarterly* to appear in the first half of the year on Dag Hammarskold's *Markings*; and a chapter in a book entitled *The Value of Shame – Exploring a health resource across cultures*.

He has recently had the following periodical articles accepted and published: "Our Pathway to God: 'Scent'", *Compass: A Review of Topical Theology* 49:3, Spring, 2015, 25-30; Commentaries for Sunday and Feasts June – July 5, *Pastoral Liturgy* 45: 3, 2015; Commentaries for Sundays of Advent and Christmas





Day, *Pastoral Liturgy* 46: 1, Nov. 2015 – Feb. 2016; “Our Pathway to God: ‘Taste’”, *Compass: A Review of Topical Theology* 49:4, Summer, 2015, 37-41.

## Advertising

**Passwords.** One particularly insidious aspect of modern life is the need to remember passwords and pin numbers.

So, wishing to be ever helpful, from time to time we publish the user names/passwords for access to the members-only sections of the General Administration and Australian Province websites:

**General Admin:**  
sm & colin

**Australian Province:**  
newsletter & colin or  
circular & colin  
(either combination works)



## Currumbin

The self-contained flat is available for bookings for Marists and their families. Bookings are made through the provincial office.

Current bookings:

**6-20 December**  
Jim Hargrave

**2016**

**1-31 January**  
Ray Chapman  
**1-29 February**

Tom Ryan  
**1-18 March**  
Tom Fulcher  
**23-29 March**  
Gavin Foster  
**30 March – 9 April**  
Jim Hargrave  
**2-16 July**  
Bob Barber

## Enclosures

- SM Kalendarium 2016
- Newsletter from John Hopkinson
- Homily: Jubilarians' Mass, 2015: Peter McMurrich
- Toast to the Jubilarians: Kevin Bates
- Memorial card for Fred Limeburner
- Homily for Fred Limeburner: Bob Barber
- Office for Clergy Life & Ministry: Information Bulletin No.104

## JPICC Corner

*Provincial Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation*



*Above:* **Paul Mahony, Jim Carty, Br Paul Hough FMS and Sr Noelene Simmons SM** (members of the combined Marist Family Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation group) review the ‘*Both Ends of the Gun*’ August seminar. *Below, right:* Some of the Burmese youth who attended the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Adelaide in early December. Most come from refugee families. *Left:* Two of the young adults were elected to the leadership team of the Australian Myanmar Catholic community.





And also...



*Clockwise from top left:* Evening Prayer for the Holy Souls, Villa Maria cemetery, Nov 02 | Pollution of Villa Maria bird bath | Ray Chapman farewell at St Patrick's, Nov 27 | Provincial Assembly moment | Chapter Hall plaque for the 'Holy Rabbit' | Religious of Hunters Hill mark the end of the Year of Consecrated Life and start of Year of Mercy, Dec 08.

