

Marist Fathers Australian Province



Provincial Circular Aug 2017

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From the Provincial

Dear confreres,

The General Chapter is almost upon us. This one, the 29th of the Society, will be much more than an event that rolls around every eight years. This General Chapter seriously demands our attention, participation and prayers.

Feedback and contributions

A recent Circuit Message encouraged us to read, reflect on and discuss the Superior General's Report to the General Chapter and to feedback any community and individual contributions by 8th September so that your views can be passed on to the delegates.

The title to Fr Hannan's report, *To lead our Society in rediscovering our deepest identity as Marists*, provides us with an excellent indication of the focus we need to have as we prepare for our future and for this General Chapter. Taking up the invitation to submit our reflections

to the delegates is one way we can all be a part of the Chapter. And please, don't let up on the prayers!

Transition

Because of the aging and rapid diminishment in the established provinces of the developed (Western) world of the Society, the Society of Mary will be radically different, when the General Chapter of 2025 comes around, from the one we have today. Over the next half dozen years, it is imperative that the Society transition from being a European entity into a body that is primarily coming out of the 'developing' world.

Our next leaders

By 2025 the SM presence in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, North America will be miniscule but, we have good reason to hope, will be still quite strong in Africa and Oceania. For proof of this we just have to look at the age profiles of our provinces and districts.

Oceania and Africa is where our next

lot of SM leaders must come from. These men won't be European and won't think in European constructs.

Features of our charism

If one great challenge of this General Chapter is for the Society to break out of the dominance of our Eurocentric world and allow a developing world entity to emerge, the other great challenge will be to keep our eyes on our Marist-ness.

What are the distinctive features of our charism, gifted by Fr Colin and the early confreres, that we must make sure are preserved and promoted in our future?

More collegial

At our General Chapter, we can do no better than follow the courageous example and lead of the Marist Sisters. At their last General Chapter, they recognized a huge change was being called for by them and they responded. Their brave change was primarily attitudinal rather than structural.

From a 'Regional Model' of organization, painstakingly adopted in the early 2000's, the Sisters' 2015 Chapter opted for a more collegial way of life at all levels within the congregation. This is a model for us to follow both in being daring and in addressing our local needs.

Marist Brothers' Bicentenary

Celebrating the Bicentenary of the Marist Brothers this year has been grace for all Marists, religious and lay. It is a treasure for the whole



Church and world to know the charism and spirit identified first by those young men at St Irenaeus' Seminary, Lyons, and then formally expressed in their pledge at Fourvière on 23rd July 1816, has been blessed by God.

Inspiring messages

During the Brothers' Bicentenary celebration held at Parramatta on 12th August, around a Mass in the Cathedral followed by a luncheon in St Patrick's courtyard, we heard two inspiring messages, from Br Peter Carroll, FMS and Bishop Vincent Long, OFM Conv.

Peter Carroll's Provincial's Address, including a statement of forgiveness, was magnificent. A copy is included as an annexure to this Circular. Please be sure to read it.

Bishop Long's homily, based on the gospel reading of the wedding feast at Cana, noted that trials always accompanied the amazing graces received over the last 200 years of Marist history. And even though great challenges face us today, epitomised by the increasingly secular world we live in, we can still see graces coming and find in this situation grounds for optimism.

Behind Bishop Long's words were an acknowledgement that the Marist Brothers in Australia, through the nascent group of the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat, are showing us that Marist life is not over but is evolving and finding a new, rich shape.

Outside the square

The Marist Brothers, Bishop Long observed, were *"busy getting on with the mission God has given them . . . reinventing themselves and re-birthing their charism in ways beyond traditional structures of religious life . . . thinking outside the square with charismatic audacity"*.

In our crisis today, Bishop Long continued, *"we can react with fear despair or denial"*. Or we can imitate Mary's example in the crisis they were experiencing at Cana, reacting

with absolute trust. *"This trust tells us that we are not indispensable and even our institution is not indispensable."*

A further observation from Bishop Long: *"We don't know the fate of our congregation. We don't even know how the Church will fare with its problems. . . . Religious are never about immortality, quantity and numbers. The purpose of our existence lies not so much in our works but the sign value that we are. As catalysts for its renewal, we often occupy a liminal space rather than a centre stage. There on the margins, we explore new frontiers and possibilities. Our job is to inspire and keep the fire of the Gospel burning for the sake of the Church and the world."*

Bishop Long's comments to the Marist Brothers and the example of the Marist Sisters can be **pointers for us**. Our Province is at a threshold and over the next few months will be forced to make crucial decisions.

Extraordinary Provincial Chapter

The Provincial Council anticipates that an Extraordinary Provincial Chapter needs to be held in early 2018 to give us direction for the future. The decisions setting out the roadmap for our future will be made at an Extraordinary Provincial Chapter but the pondering and searching for the right direction must ferment in dialogue that goes on throughout the Province before then. We hope to provide opportunity for this by regional gatherings and community meetings are focused on matters of the Extraordinary Chapter.

Our Extraordinary Chapter will be very focused in its mandate. It will look at governance and leadership, our prioritized ministries, and our response to the Royal Commission. These are the issues that will define our future at this time.

The leadership/governance predicament of the Province is obvious to us all. As a Province we would like to go forward

determining our own future but do we have available the men we need to lead us? We are not the group we were 30 years ago and the situation we live in is not as it was 30 years ago. Do we need to change our structures and legislation to fit better our present-day circumstances?

Prioritized ministries

As for our prioritized ministries, does the commitment made in the 2012 and 2016 Provincial Chapters, to St Pat's, Hunters Hill and the Mission Centre remain today? For example, does St Pat's, with its very special reconciliation ministry, remain of high priority for us today given that we struggle to get the team we want to be there? Are we simply paying lip-service to our prioritized ministries commitment?

Please keep up your prayers for the General Chapter of the Society and for our own Province that we may continue to go forward in hope, under the mantle and patronage of our Blessed Mother.

Faternally

Bob Barber sm
Provincial



Provincial Diary

5th Sept

Prov Finance Cttee Meeting

12th Sept

Provincial Council

14 -15th Sept

Kyoto, Japan (visitation, Ichiba Osama)

17th Sept – 11th Oct

General Chapter, Rome

12- 24 Oct

Holidays

17th Oct

Provincial Council

Personnel

Gerry Arbuckle

An article of Gerry Arbuckle's entitled Fundamentalism as an Enemy of the Common Good in Health Progress, Journal of the US Catholic Health Association, Nov-Dec 2016, has received the top article award for 2017 by the American Catholic Press Association. A significant accolade and mark of recognition.

Deaths

Fr Patrick Souza sm, d.23.7.2017, San Francisco, USA.

Fr Peter Walsh sm, d.26.7.2017, Whangarei, New Zealand

Fr Kevin O'Donoghue sm, d.31.7.2017, Upper Hutt, NZ

Fr Valentín García sm d.3.8.17, Madrid, Spain

Fr Robert Tanique sm, d.12.8.17, Port Vila, Vanuatu

Fr Joseph Chasse sm, d.20.8.17, Framingham, USA

Harold Taylor, Woodlawn bandmaster & house painter, who looked after the College band from 1964-88, died in Lismore on 21 July, aged 95. He was buried on 31 July after a service in the Lismore Salvation Army citadel.

Sr Celestine Pooly RSM died in Sydney on 13 July. Celestine worked for a number of years at the CTU in administrative and library roles.

Fr Rom Barry CM, who taught scripture at Toongabbie in the early 1970s and later at Hunters Hill, died in Sydney on 17 July.

Fr Kevin O'Donoghue, recently deceased, and listed above, was on loan to the Australian province between 1966-74, working as a member of the home missions band based at Ashgrove and then based at Malvern. He was an accomplished pianist.

Sr Agnes Guiren, OSU, sister of the late Peter Guiren sm, passed away on 17th August. Garry Reynolds, a cousin, was principal celebrant at

her Requiem Mass at St Francis Xavier's Ashbury, on 25th August. The burial was at Rookwood.

Sick

Chris Austin had a couple of visits to Royal North Shore hospital during July with respiratory issues.

News

St Patrick's Anniversaries

Next year St Patrick's, Church Hill, celebrates two significant anniversaries.

It will be the bicentenary of Fr Jeremiah O'Flynn leaving the consecrated host with lay-Catholics in Sydney when he was arrested and deported in May 1818; and 2018 will also be the sesquicentenary of the entrusting of St Patrick's church and parish to the Marist Fathers.

With bishops from around Australia, the archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher, will celebrate the noon Mass at St Patrick's on 6 May (date of the leaving of the host by Fr O'Flynn), and on 16 Sept, marking the Marist sesquicentenary.

Mr Melteras! Mr Melteras!

Willy was minding his own business in the Vanuatu airport, awaiting a plane back to Australia, when a lady came rushing through the terminal calling out his name.

When Willy put his hand up, he was escorted to the basement area of the airport, and was confronted by half a dozen very nervous gendarmes, armed with assault rifles.

They told him to look through a window, where he spotted his opened suitcase, containing a mysterious black box and emitting a mysterious buzzing sound.

The police obviously thought there was going to be an explosion any minute. Willy quickly worked out that the buzzing was coming from his electric razor, which had somehow been turned on when the

suitcase was being moved.

He offered to enter the room behind the glass and switch it off, but the gendarmes weren't falling for that one, and instead sent a female operative in to assess the situation.

Willy told her to press the red button to de-activate the razor, which she eventually did. To everyone's relief the buzzing stopped, but there was still the matter of the mysterious black box.

Having gained by this stage a certain degree of credibility, Willy was allowed to open the box to reveal the contents of his Mass kit.

Captors and captive all breathed a collective sigh of relief, and Willy was back in the departure lounge in time to board his plane to Sydney.

Meeting with Parish Priests of St Patrick's & Hunters Hill.

On 28 June, the Provincial Council met with Kevin Bates and Michael Whelan to look at staffing for both parishes for 2018.

A number of possibilities were explored, but the bottom line is that we should be able to adequately staff both parishes into 2018.

Catholic Health Care, Sydney & Brisbane

Catholic Health Care has recently been engaged by the Province to meet with retired confreres in Sydney and Brisbane, assess the situation of each confrere, and tailor packages to facilitate continuing to live at home rather than needing to enter an aged care facility.

Services which can be accessed and provided include showering, laundry, cleaning, and transport.

AMCOA Annual report

Enclosed with this Provincial Circular is a copy of the Australian Marist Centre for Overseas Aid (AMCOA) annual report for 2016.

Confreres will know that the Marist Mission Centre has two arms: AMCOA, and Marist Fathers'



International Mission (MIFM).

The first fund supports development projects in overseas countries; the second provides funding for Marist missionary work.

So, the AMCOA report is only half the picture, not a complete report on the Marist Mission Centre during 2016.

Anyone wanting further information about AMCOA's activities can find the financial report on the Mission Centre website.

MMC Advisory Committee

Sr Gail Reneker SM accepted the nomination of the MMCAC and been appointed by the Provincial Council as the **Chair** of the MMCAC.

The Province thanks Sr Gail for accepting this important role in MMC.

Actuarial Study

On the advice of the Province Finance committee, and following on from discussions at regional meetings and at last year's Provincial Chapter, the Provincial Council decided recently to engage the Canberra-based Custodian Financial Group to conduct a detailed actuarial study in regard to the Province's financial position and its current management and investment practices.

Through a process of detailed modelling, Custodian was able to produce a report which outlined the projected long-term financial position of the Province and the implications of various scenarios and assumptions.

Custodian concluded that prudent financial management in the past has resulted in the Province being in a position where, with continued wise investments and management, we should have sufficient funds available for our needs in the years ahead.

The report supported the Province's current strategies and practices with regard to investments and property management, and endorsed the practice of annual community and individual budgets and reports, to ensure effective management of our financial resources.

Marist Charism and Culture

A second immersion experience for 2017 took place at Villa Maria from 30 July - 4 August, coordinated by old stagers, Kim Evans and Glen Roff.

There were 18 participants, representing Marist Regional College, Burnie, Holy Spirit College, Bellambi, Marist Sisters, Woolwich, and St John's College, Lismore.

Speakers included Gerard Hall, Ron Nissen, Gerry Arbuckle, Brs Neville

Solomon FMS and David Hall FMS and Peter McMurrich, augmented by other imported luminaries.

Behind the scenes, Patrick Kevin & Paul Pearce supported the feeding of the inner man and generally made sure that things ran smoothly.

The experience concluded with a meal at Il Bolognese at Boronia Park on the Thursday evening.

General Chapter preparations, Rome: Sept 20 - October 11, 2017

Our last Provincial Council meeting asked that we reaffirm the appeal made to the Province through a circuit message on 19th July, asking communities and individuals to respond to the Superior General's report to the General Chapter.

These responses are encouraged as the suggestions coming from them is a way of formulating Province concerns and hopes for the future of the Society of Mary.

Please forward community/individual responses to the Vicar Provincial by 8th September who will forward these to the Australian Chapter delegates.

Mistaken Identity!

Some of the staunch faithful of St Pat's were discussing the presence of a Bishop from NZ who was recently staying in the presbytery.

A short time later our 'hidden and unknown' brother, Michael Jacques, down from Japan on a short leave, appeared in the courtyard and a lady was overheard asking Mick, "And what part of New Zealand are you from, my lord?"



Peter McMurrich and Glenn Roff with the MCC group

Did anybody see where Mick evaporated to? (It is understood the real bishop was Emeritus Bishop Peter Cullinane).

F Bernie Ryan Memorial Writing Competition

An event to inspire young, indigenous kids from the Nambucca Valley attending St Mary's Primary, Bowraville, a place and people very dear to the late Bernie, to develop their literary skills, was an annual Writing Competition for students in Yr. 2, Yr. 4 and Yr. 6.

This year the students' essays on *the importance of language* were of a particularly high standard.

Walking for Wilai

Jim Carty left on 29 August for France and a 740 km footslog over the mountains towards Spain.

Jim is raising funds for the Wilai Foundation, assisting stateless children in Asia.

Advertising

Holy Name of Mary church sesquicentenary

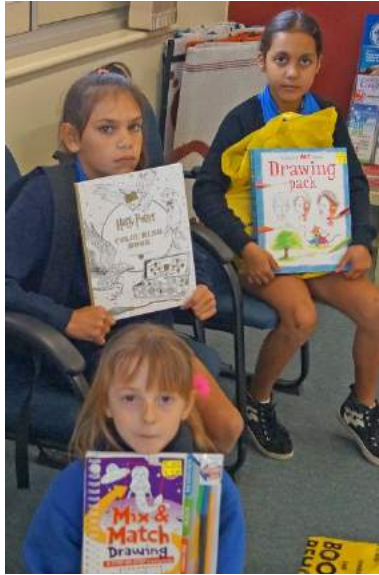
Holy Name of Mary parish is preparing for the sesquicentenary of the laying of the (now lost) foundation stone of Villa Maria church.

A celebratory Eucharist will be celebrated on 10 Sept (close to the HNM feast day and anniversary date of 15 Sept) in the Villa Maria grounds.

If you were around in 1967, you may recall the centenary events including blessing of the memorial plaque and grove of crosses from St Charles, with John Glynn and Carl Heesh in period gear.

Breaking the Silence

... is a DVD from Maitland-Newcastle diocese, covering the impact of child sexual abuse perpetrated by Church personnel, and covering: Initial Impact-The Crimes-The Court Process-Community Attitudes-Grooming-Dividing a Community-



Long Term Effects.

The producers envisage that the DVD be used with groups rather than be viewed by individuals. The DVD comes with a facilitator

manual, for use as part of a group process.

Michael Whelan has donated a copy of the DVD to the Province. We are considering possibilities for how it might be used.

Child Protection Week

... is from 4th – 10th September with special emphasis given to Sunday 10th. In marking this time please make use of materials sent out with the Circuit Message on 1st August.

Provincial Directory



New number for Oceania Provincial Administration: The Oceania Provincial Centre has a new phone number - +679 7730377.

Marist Family

Sydney Fourvière Mass

... was the responsibility this year of Marist Laity. The Mass was held in Holy Name of Mary church on Sunday, 23 July, with Willy Melteras as the principal celebrant.

There was a very good attendance representing each branch of the Marist family, and participants gathered afterwards in the Villa Maria community dining room.

FMS Bicentenary

The Marist Brothers marked the 200th anniversary of St Marcellin inviting two young men to form a community in La Valla on 2nd January 1817, the beginning of a wonderful spiritual, human and educational experience for God under the banner of Mary.

What a tremendous gift the Little Brothers of Mary have been to the church all over the world for two hundred years.

The Australian celebrations were marked with a Thanksgiving Mass and luncheon in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne on 12th August to enable as many Marists, religious and lay, members of the Association of St Marcellin Champagnat and all friends to be included.

The address delivered by Br Peter Carroll, Provincial of the Brothers was most inspiring. A highly recommended read, we may use parts of it as background in some of our coming regional meetings.

The text of Peter's address is an enclosure with this Circular.

Congratulations due

A "well done" to Tony Kennedy, who recently concluded the 5-month long Colnian Period of Renewal at La Neylière, and to Andrew Murray, who in August facilitated a successful workshop, in Fiji, of Marists involved in the secondary education apostolate in Oceania Province.



From top: 1 Fourvière participants, Villa Maria. 2 Marist Brothers' Bicentenary Mass, Parramatta. 3 Tony Kennedy with CPR group, La Neylière. 4. Andrew Murray and Oceania educators, Fiji.

From all reports both programs went very well. The Province is certainly grateful to our men like Andy and Tony who are willing to offer their talents for the good of the Society outside our own group.





Currumbin

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

- Aug 25-Sep 9**
Peter McMurrich
- Sep 10-19**
Jim Hargrave
- Sep 20-Oct 12**
Tom Fulcher

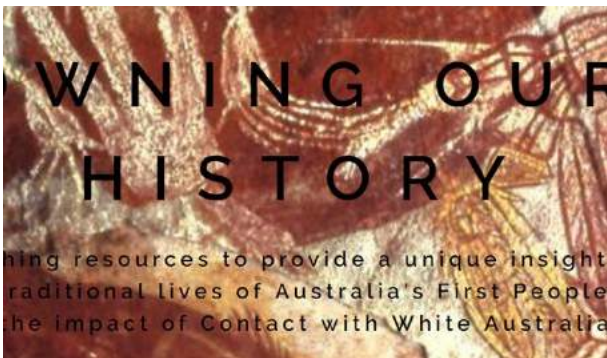
- Jan 1-14**
Michael Carroll
- Apr 1-20**
John Begg
- Oct 15 – Nov 4**
Bob Barber

Enclosures

- NSW stipend rate 2017-18
- AMCOA Annual Report
- Br Peter Carroll's address

JPICC Corner

Provincial Committee for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation



Owning our history

The 2015 seminar initiative of the combined Marist Family JPICC ('Both Ends of the Gun') promises to bear good fruit in Australia's growing awareness of its history.

Inspired by the writing of Professor Henry Reynolds, the conference set up the 'First Contact' committee, engaging researcher, **Louise Smyth**, to prepare teaching resources for Aboriginal studies in Australian schools. Her expert work is accessed through the 'Owning our History' web site.

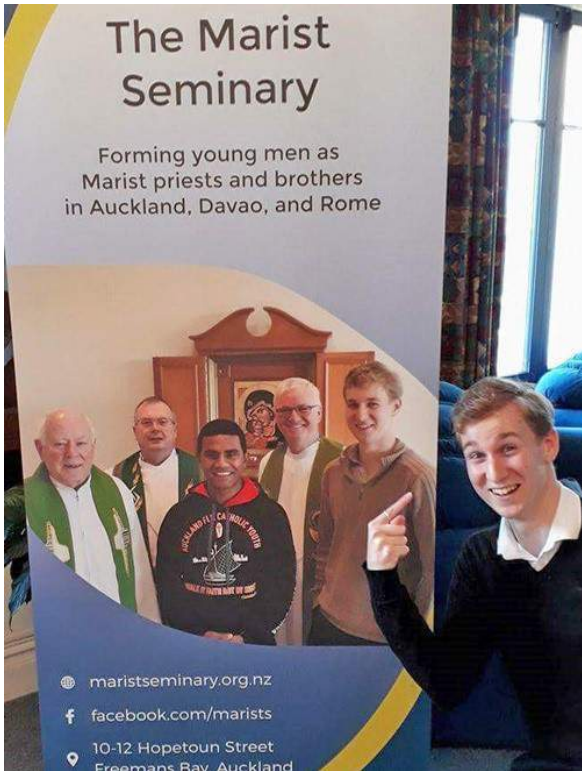


Muriel visits ACU

Aug 25 saw a visit to Australian Catholic University's North Sydney campus by Muriel Valles as the guest of **Prof Michael Ondaatje** (Head of the National School of Arts) and ACU Fellow, **Maya Cranitch**, former head of the Thai-Burma online program.

Muriel is a graduate of both the Marist-sponsored 'Bridge Program' and Thai-Burma border course. She is currently on exchange studies from the Hong Kong Institute of Education at Wollongong University.

And also...



Clockwise from top: 1 **Kev Bates** and Montbel's new baby | 2 **John Jago** celebrating 50 years of priesthood. | 3 Lay Marists, **Kevin & Trish McGrory**, spring cleaning the Villa Maria memorial. | 4* Chronology of the Colin Cause for the General Chapter. | 5* 2018 Colin Calendar. (* check with Ron Nissen if you'd like one of these) | 6 **Hayden Kennedy** in Auckland .

