

Marist Laity Australia



Simplicity

Flexibility

Inclusiveness

Bulletin

March, 2016

LENT 2016 **In the year of Mercy**

"When Colin asks Marists to be 'Instruments of Divine Mercy', he is asking them to portray the feminine features of God and to help build a church which is not perceived in terms of power, planning, control, administration and competitiveness, but rather in terms of community, compassion, simplicity, mercy and fellowship."

Some of Pope Francis' practical suggestions in this Year of Mercy:

"The Divine Mercy message is a very specific life plan because it involves action. One of the most obvious works of mercy, and perhaps the most difficult to put into practice, is to forgive those who have offended us, who have done us wrong or whom we consider to be enemies. At times, how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence and revenge, are necessary conditions to living joyfully." (Misericordiae Vultus, 9)

Please remember in your prayer:-

Fr Paul Cooney
The People of Fiji
All the sick Lay Marists & their Carers
Archbishop Anthony Fisher
Pope Francis



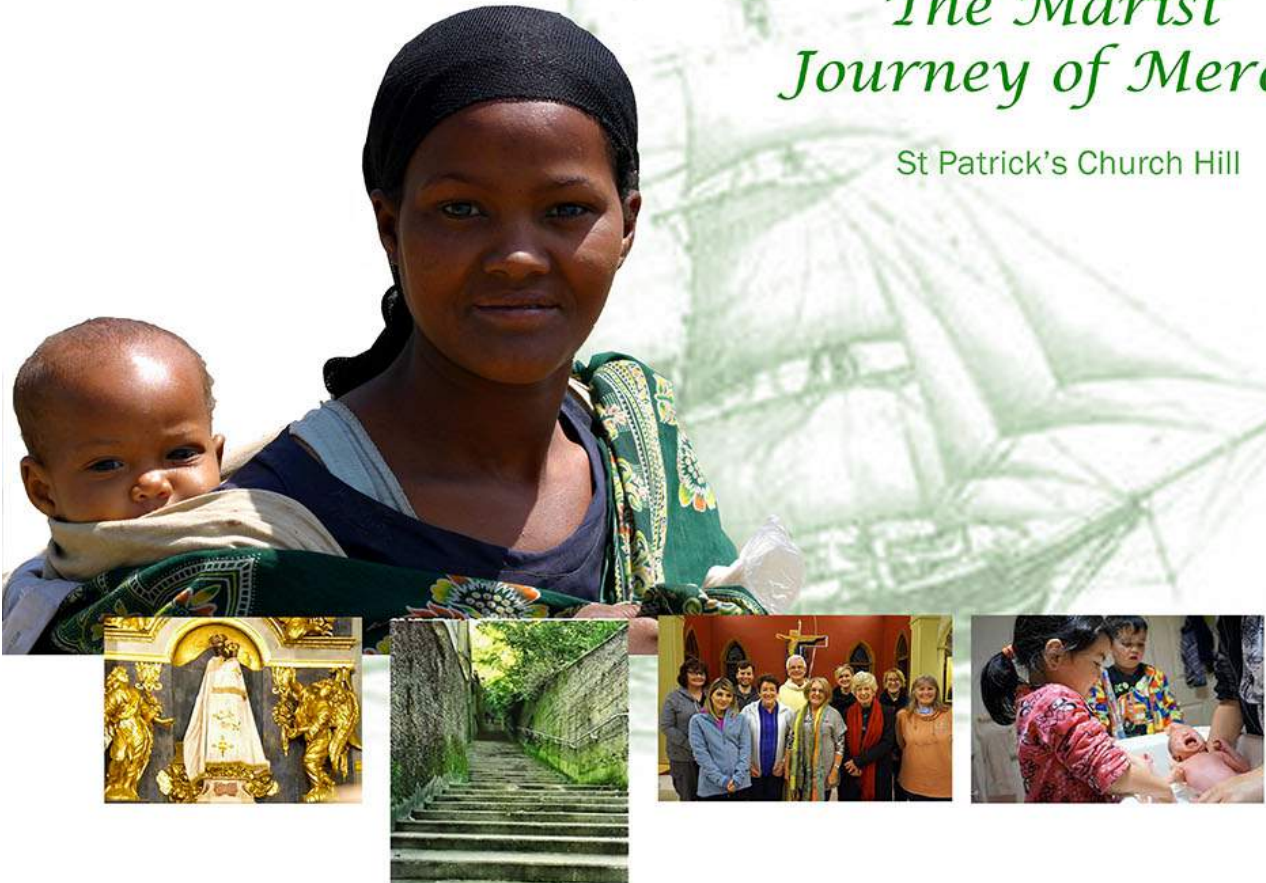
Marist Seminar

800 STEPS
7000 LEAGUES
200 YEARS

May 28 - 29

*The Marist
Journey of Mercy.*

St Patrick's Church Hill



A 2 day seminar exploring mercy in a Marian Church. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Fourviere pledge for all Marists. Key note speaker Marist Father Michael Whelan will present on the theme of Mercy from a Marian perspective in this year of Mercy,

Day 1 - Seminar and Day 2 Pilgrimage to important Marist sites.

Contact www.maristlaityaustralia.com for registration.

Call 0417 682 822 for more information.

Early Bird registration by April 22 (\$40 per day, thereafter \$50 per day).



Wow!...what an experience!!

WITH MARY WE ADVANCE: MARIST MISSION IN A CHURCH THAT RENEWS!

It was with great delight that Maria Baden and I took to Spain last August to join with over 120 Marist Laity from around the globe.

I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.....More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door, people are starving, and Jesus does not tire of saying to us, "Give them something to eat."

This, the third European Marist Laity Meeting, was held in Madrid with representatives from Spain, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, UK, Ireland, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, USA, Canada, Philippines, New Caledonia, NZ, Australia.

The theme exhorted on the opening day by Lordes Azorin: *The Mercy of God According to Evangelii Gaudium* focused on: **How can I live the JOY OF THE GOSPEL?** Lordes expanded the theme stating the new church had to be marked by JOY. This Joy attracts people to each other, creating an opportunity for a personal encounter with Jesus. The document written by Pope Francis is not for the faint hearted but 'charges' people to take up the *MISSIONARY NATURE OF THE CHURCH*. GO OUT..REACH OUT.. NO PASSIVE WAITING.

This requires courage and creativity built out of a contemplative spiritual attitude and disposition that can bring forth a "Revolution of Tenderness."

The 120 gathered were encouraged to take up the following: **MERCY IS LOVE IN MOTION**, as action without mercy is not mercy at all. As the Good Samaritan acts mercifully in his actions toward the man beaten, broken and stripped naked, so we too are called to be a Church for the Poor. Lordes stated **THE CHURCH IS A PLACE OF FREE MERCY**. In this year of Mercy the local Church has the greatest potential to impact and add value to the lives of people. Decentralising of church structures can only add to the responsiveness and effective actions of the local church, as it seeks to meet the needs of the people.

Finally Lordes spoke about trust by the formal church for the pastoral discernment of the laity and the need to trust laity and believe in their power to discern in a responsible manner the central message of Christ. The language of law and structure needed to be replaced by the language of Mercy and Love!

The conference was honoured with the presence of Jan Hulshof sm, as he spoke of **MARIST MISSION AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT**. Jan's insightful and clear linking of the Church's Social Doctrine and our own Marist tradition found in the words of Fr Colin prepared the way into the next session of **PERSONAL TESTIMONIES** given by lay Marists from **Italy, Norway and England**. Another Keynote Speaker was Corinne Fenet: **"LAY MARISTS: MISSIONARIES OF GOD"**, who provided a rich and meaningful address highlighting that Mission belongs first to Christ. It is then confided to the church which is missionary by nature and that we are God's Missionaries and indeed that **MARIST LAITY** are Missionaries of God with Mary as model and inspiration!

The conference progressed over the days providing opportunities to break into groups to discuss and present back to the larger group the challenges and opportunities experienced within each country at the local level based on the **Family at Nazareth**

European Marist Laity Committee (EMLC)

We were also informed about the activities of the EMLC covered by delegates from each European country who helped organise the conference and links made with the Champagnat movement. A Formation Program for European Marists was developed, a copy of which we were lucky to bring back to Australia!!

The EMLC spoke of Autonomy & Responsibility. Their main communication tool is a monthly circular published by Jan Hulshof SM and this led to our local Oceanic Teams discussing the possibility of a circular published within our own region.

A Draft Constitution – simple, collegial model of organisation - was provided for reflection and comment and a newly elected EMLC coordinator, David from Spain, highlighted the need for financial independence. Economic support has been given by the Religious branches. Each European country would contribute financially to EMLC.

The conference was very rich and difficult to capture within a few pages but when it ended, off 22 of us went to ...

LA NEYLIERE

..... France. The green pastoral countryside of France was a beautiful change to the heat of Spain. We journeyed together visiting the places of Marist Heritage, a pilgrimage I would encourage ALL Lay Marists to undertake if possible.

As international representatives we gathered to further discuss building Marist Laity for the future. The possibility of a WORLD MARIST LAITY COMMITTEE (WMLA) was discerned. The countries from the Oceanic areas and Sth America were filled with enthusiasm to find a way to stay linked and build strong communication pathways with the European Lay Marists, with discussion resulting in the following initial plans:

COMMUNICATION:

Key person Bev Macdonald NZ, after being sent articles from around the world, twice a year in April and August, would published to each country in English, at which time they would translate, or not, into their own languages for distribution.

We would explore a variety of communication methods to increase opportunities to build links using – newsletter, Smartphone app, You-tube, Facebook. Kenneth from Philippines, Jorge from Mexico and Christine from USA put their hands up to work on new technology!!

ORGANISATION:

We talked about seeing goals for the next 2 years – WMLC to propose projects at the next Marist Fathers General Chapter, September 2017. The question then aroseHow do we do this?

STRUCTURE:

Defining the structure in relation to: Roles, tasks, statutes, regulations etc was an important discussion as the structure would then support the roll out of the WML

MISSIONARY INVOLVEMENT:

The importance of Pope Francis' paper and the inspirational address by Lordes underpinned the discussion about Lay initiatives in a missionary capacity and how it can be linked with other Marist branches. We discerned it was best to *Keep it local!*

Some pictures below reflect the places where we travelled on our pilgrimage:-

SPAIN: Valle de los Caídos, Madrid, Avila and Toledo



FRANCE: Lyons – Fourviere Le Puy en Valle, L'Hermitage, Belley, La Balme and Cerdon





From Bexley Marist Laity 2016

Gabbies Sewing Angels – Love in Action

by Barbara Ashwell and Patricia Will

Sixteen years ago, four ladies began sewing garments after seeing a friend, who was home on leave from volunteer work in Africa, making baby clothes and ladies dresses. She explained that the newborn babies usually went home from hospital wrapped in newspaper.



Patricia Will (centre) with husband & wife Peter and Beverley

Today, Gabbies Sewing Angels group has expanded to



May & Nene

30 people of all ages, abilities, nationalities and religions or no religion. Four in the group are part of our Bexley Marist Laity Group. Many came originally from Italy, Malta, China, Ireland, New Zealand, Malaysia, India, South America and the Philippines. The fellowship they enjoy with Australian born members is a delight to observe. Exchange of stories, cares, worries, customs and recipes as well as lots of



Rosa & Carmen

laughter over morning tea and lunch cement our friendships, while achieving something very worthwhile together.



Betty

Our members gather, every Tuesday and Thursday, in the hall at St Gabriel's Parish Bexley, to work together to make a difference in the lives of others, under the guidance of Patricia Will and Betty Scott.

Pat and Betty are the co-ordinators of the group and are an inspiration to all for the hours of work they put in not only on Tuesdays and Thursdays



Josephine

but also throughout the week collecting materials so generously donated by individuals, shops and companies to enable this work to continue. In 2011 Pat and Betty spent a three weeks teaching the ladies at Mary MacKillop Centre, in Timor Leste how to make garments to enable them to develop a business to support themselves.



Bill

The majority of the people in the group are women who love to put their sewing talents to use or learn new skills. Maxine is developing new talents, maintaining our 21 sewing machines and 11 overlockers. Four men bring their skills and expertise to the group. One gentleman is a former tailor, another who was in the rag trade

for many years cuts out patterns and solves many of our sewing problems, another keeps our scissors sharpened and makes his utility available for various transporting chores, the fourth sews articles. Our youngest member, Aiden, is 8 months old and comes with his Mum each week.



Peter & Chris

Some years ago we made application to the Sisters of Charity for a small grant so that we could purchase more sewing machines to increase our production. Last year we produced 8,328 garments which were sent off with those travelling to Timor, Fiji and the Philippines. We have sent garments to Western Australia, far north Queensland, some islands north of Darwin, India, Cambodia, Thailand and New Guinea. It takes money to purchase our sewing needs i.e cotton, elastic, bias binding and material to produce so many garments so we welcome any donations to support our work.

Also garments, beanies and carry bags are included in 300 Samaritan Purse Christmas Boxes which to pack every year to be distributed to children in South East Asia and the Pacific Islands. This year we have taken on two new projects producing kits called "Days for Girls" to enable these needy young women to feel fresh and to continue at school or work on those days in the month when they would otherwise have had to stay



Rory

at home. Plus "Baby" kits for new born babies on New Ireland. We are in the process of producing hundreds of these kits to be available to send to young women in Asia, the Pacific and developing countries.



Patricia & Reg

In addition, we have a little band of workers, who work in their own homes producing clothing, beanies, knitted toys and rugs for "Wrap with Love".



Maxine & Gabbies Angels

Gabbies Angels warmly welcome all who wish to drop in on a Tuesday or Thursday to experience *Love In Action* and maybe to stay while.....

For more information contact Patricia Will on 95022471 or Betty Scott on 95676652.



SAVE THE DATE



Fourviere Bicentenary Celebrations

On the 23rd July of this year, it will have been 200 years since a small group of young men in Lyon, France climbed the 800 steps to the Chapel of Our Lady of Fourviere and pledged to found a religious congregation of “Marists”. Their dream became a reality in the foundation of the “Marist” family of religious and lay men and women.

[The Famous Steps leading to the Mount of Fourviere](#)

Preparations to celebrate the Bicentenary of the Fourviere Pledge are underway, and preliminary details have been released, though they may be subject to change.

Members of all branches of the Marist Family have been invited to this year's celebrations, marking the 200th anniversary of the 1816 pledge to form the Society of Mary at the shrine of Our Lady of Fourvière, on Saturday, 23rd July 2016, beginning at 10.30 am with Mass at Holy Name of Mary Church, Hunters Hill.

Following the Mass, drinks and lunch shall be available at St Joseph’s College from 12.00 followed by presentations by representatives of each branch of the Marist Family. Those interested in attending the lunch (cost \$100.00) contact Margaret Woods on 0417 682 872

[The ancient Chapel of the Black Madonna at Fourvière, Lyon, France.](#)





St Patrick's Church Hill – Foundations in Marist Spirituality

Every Thursday night at 6 pm a small group of lay Marists gather to explore "Foundations in Marist Spirituality". Marist Father Ray Chapman, Marist Sister Gail Reneker, Marist Brother Tony Butler and Marist Missionary Sister Marilyn Farley present via video key information around the four founders: Jean Claude Colin, Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn, Marcellin Champagnat and Françoise Perroton. In total there are 12 sessions exploring key questions like

- Session 1 – "Childhood - What shaped their childhood, which influenced them towards the Marist call?"
- Session 2 – "Call – What was their call?"
- Session 6 – "Model – How did they model Mary's life? How did they model Jesus' life?"

The schedule for the gathering includes some food and drink, a 20 minute video consisting of all four speakers, discussion and prayer. Participants have found the video and discussion rich and insightful commenting that the video provides an in depth insight into the spirituality which moves far beyond the theoretical.

For more information click on the [Course Introduction Sheet](#) . Marist Laity Australia would like to extend an invitation to Marist Groups across the world who may like to use this resource. Please contact maristlaityaustralia@gmail.com if you are interested.

Andrew Dumas

