



Fr Bill Ryder SM

24.11.1936 ~ 15.4.2023

Bill Ryder, the fourth of five sons on Susan and George, was born on Nov 24, 1936 in Murwillumbah, NSW, and grew up on a dairy farm at the nearby rural village of Burringbar. Here he received his primary schooling at the convent school conducted by the Brown Josephite sisters. From this school he won a diocesan bursary for his secondary education as a boarder at St John's College, Woodlawn, Lismore, NSW, from 1950–54.

The possibility of going to the seminary had been raised with him in this first year at Woodlawn and was kept by him as an option thought little discussed until fourth or fifth year. The dedication, friendliness and apparent happiness of the Marists at Woodlawn made it an option worth considering. The canonisation of St Peter Chanel was celebrated over a weekend during 1954. At that time, after advice from some Marists and a powerfully persuasive conversation with a Josephite still at Burringbar, he decided to apply to join the Marists.

Marist formation took him to Armidale and Toongabbie with ordination in Lismore in July 1961. His first appointment was to Armidale where he was able to complete a full-time degree in Science at the University of New England (1962–64). From 1965 till 1985 Fr Bill was on the staff of colleges at Lismore (1965–77) and Bellambi (1978–85). He was appointed principal of St Paul's Bellambi in 1980. In 1981 St Paul's amalgamated with the adjacent girls college to become a coeducational college. Fr Bill completed his term as principal of the new Holy Spirit College from 1983–85 and in 1986-87 pursued a Master of Religious Education at Catholic University of America, providing an opportunity to renew and upgrade theology incorporating what had happened at Vatican II and subsequently.

Fr Bill was principal at St John's College, Woodlawn (1988-93) and Marist Regional College, Burnie (1994-2000) and became Provincial of the Province of Australia in 2001 until 2006. Then followed sabbatical/convalescent periods at Haberfield and Maryvale and as assistant priest, West Sunshine, Vic.

In 2010 Fr Bill retired and joined the community of Montbel, Hunters Hill, before moving to Southern Cross Aged Care in 2018, where he died peacefully on Apr 15, 2023, a Marist for 67 and a priest for 61 years. May he rest in well-deserved peace.