

# Reflection Day

## The Marian Face of the Church

**Presenters:** Marist Laity Australia – Margret Woods; Marist Brother – Neville Solomon; Marist Father – Gerard Hall

**Where:** LaValla Centre, 58 Fernberg Rd, Paddington QLD 4064

**When:** Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 1-5pm [Afternoon Tea Provided]

**Following Day:** Eucharist @ Sacred Heart Church, Rosalie, 2pm Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June, to include the public commitment of Jeremy, Hayden and Paulo as Lay-Marists (followed by mid-afternoon refreshments @ Marist House of Welcome, opposite Rosalie Church & LaValla Centre)

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**Description:** Mary's way of living the Gospel is not an added dimension of Christian faith. In the words of Pope Francis: "If we want to be Christian, we must be Marian". He also states that the Church must adopt a "Marian Style of evangelisation". All this follows the teaching of Vatican II on Mary as Mother, Model and/or Archetype of the Church. Likewise, it highlights St Luke's portrayal of Mary as "true believer and first disciple" captured by Pope Paul VI's description of Mary as "truly our sister" who as "a poor and humble woman fully shared our lot". He also looked to Mary as inspiration for Christian mission today calling her "the Mother of Evangelisation".

All this was pre-empted two centuries ago by the first Marists – brothers, sisters, priests and laity – who faced a Church in ruin following the French Revolution. They understood the need to "build a new Church" in the image of Mary. They also found in Mary's "hidden presence" in the early Church a model for Christian evangelisation that did not impose unnecessary burdens on people's lives, but met them with the message of God's unlimited mercy and compassion. Since "Mary is the Mother of Mercy", they said, "Marists are (called to be) Instruments of Divine Mercy".

Given the challenges facing today's Church and world, our danger is to turn inward. However, Pope Francis calls us to do the opposite, namely, to become "missionary disciples" in the "way of Mary". With her we learn to open ourselves to experience the Divine Mystery as the centre-point of our lives and to communicate that experience to others – and, like Mary, to bring Christ to birth in our own lives and those of others.

Our recollection day focuses on Mary with the resources of Vatican II and subsequent Papal documents along with Marist materials to aid us in our Christian calling to be Marian disciples of God's Mercy.

