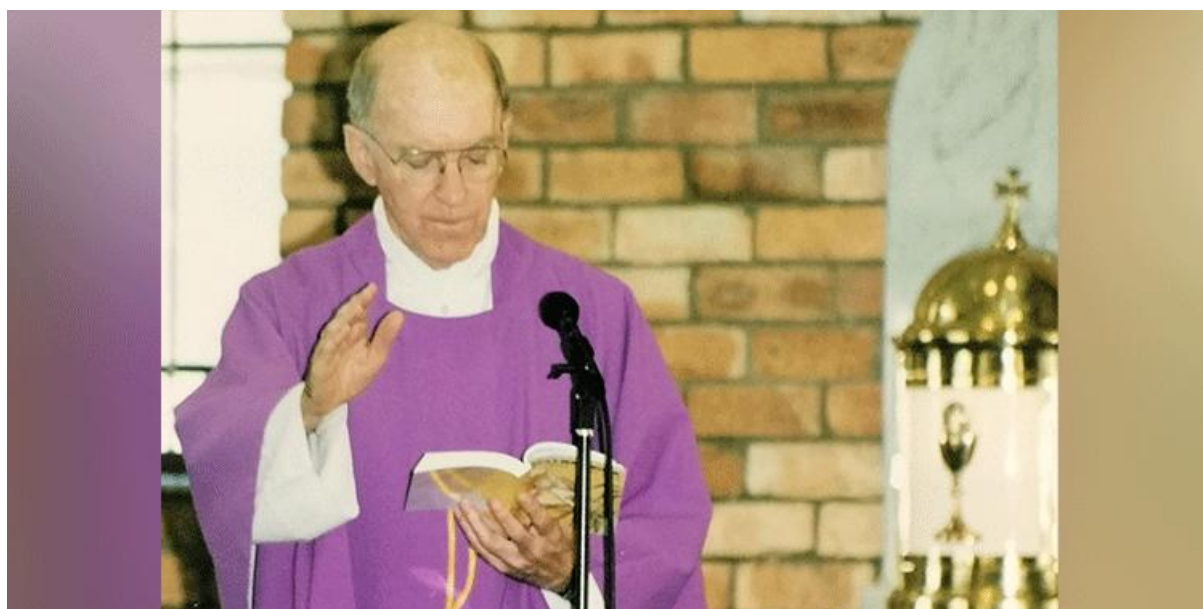


CATHOLIC LEADER

Marist Father Jim Hargrave helped shape countless lives with gentle wisdom and steadfast kindness

by [Guest Contributor](#)

[14 May 2025](#)



[Rest in peace: Fr Jim Hargrave.](#)

By Will Redmond

ON Tuesday, May 13, the Marist Fathers, Marist Brothers, Old Boys of Ashgrove and Rosalie, along with staff and students from Marist College Ashgrove, bid farewell to Fr Jim Hargrave. A Marist man to his core, Fr Jim joined the Society of Mary in 1955, before being ordained in 1962.

He served communities across Tasmania, New South Wales, and Victoria, before returning to Queensland in 1987, where he served as the chaplain at Marist College Ashgrove for 22 years. When Fr Jim died on May 2, the world did not just lose a priest – it lost a quiet shepherd who shaped the lives of many with gentle wisdom, steadfast kindness, and unwavering presence.

For those fortunate enough to know him, Fr Jim didn't just serve the Church; he walked alongside us, guiding with deep conviction and humility.

Fr Jim's influence on the boys who walked through the gates at Marist was profound.

His quiet generosity and thoughtful actions left a lasting impact on everyone he encountered.

He was known for noticing the small things that others might overlook and acting without seeking credit.

Fr Jim had an open-door policy – literally and spiritually. His small residence beneath the chapel became a sanctuary for countless boys who needed someone to listen.

Whether it was a clash with a teacher, a boarder experiencing homesickness, or just the simple growing pains of teenage life, he offered a listening ear and counsel that was clear, honest and delivered without judgment.

After more than 40 years working with young men, Fr Jim clearly knew a trick or two about how to handle boys.

Fr Jim's approach to guidance was unique.

He didn't try to shut down or put anyone in their place.

Instead, he engaged in conversations that helped young men figure out who they wanted to be.

He spoke about patience, humility, and how respect isn't something you demand; it's something you give and earn in return.

His words often stayed with those he counselled, becoming a quiet compass, they would return to over the years.

One of Fr Jim's remarkable qualities was his ability to offer support during difficult times.

He was there to listen and provide comfort without judgment, helping many navigate their challenges with grace.

His presence was a source of strength and reassurance, and his counsel was always delivered with clarity and kindness.

I wasn't an easy student to deal with.

I wasn't disruptive in class, but I was argumentative. I liked to be right, and I just enjoyed a debate.

A memory of Fr Jim I'll carry forever occurred in my final year.

After failing a crucial English assignment on the topic of "my male role model," I spiralled. It was the same week my grandfather died.

In my grief, I submitted a copy of Rudyard Kipling's *If* and wrote, "This is all too hard right now." I was handed a D-, told I had no opportunity to resubmit, and faced the prospect of failing Year 12.

I remember sitting in the grandstand at the oval alone, overwhelmed, thinking no one knew where I was.

Then I saw Fr Jim, walking down to the grandstand with his camping chair — the same one he brought to every First XV game.

He sat beside me and just listened.

He didn't judge, scold or fill the silence.

When I finished explaining, he then gently held up a mirror.

"You've spent years arguing about things that don't matter," he told me.

"But when it's time to make an argument for something that does, you're sitting here letting someone else decide your future."

A listening ear, followed by clear and honest counsel – that was Fr Jim.

I did graduate the following month, and I owe much of that to Fr Jim.

There are a few people in life who leave a permanent imprint, Fr Jim left many.

He was a man of humility and faith; someone who listened first and then spoke with rare clarity.

He helped boys become men, not through lectures but through presence, patience, and kindness.

His legacy is one of quiet strength and unwavering dedication to the wellbeing of others.

Fr Jim was a good, decent man.

His impact on the lives he touched will continue to echo quietly through countless acts of kindness, patience, and humility by those he guided.

While he may no longer walk the grounds at Ashgrove, the quiet, steady light he shared with generations of old boys will remain, illuminating the paths of all who were fortunate enough to have known him.

Will Redmond is the Policy and Submissions Manager within the Government Relations Directorate at the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Will is an old boy of Marist College Ashgrove having graduated in 2011.