

Marist Way Australia



Cathy's Report

Dear friends in the spirit of Mary,

Earlier this year, the committee of Marist Laity Australia made the decision to change our name to ***The Marist Way Australia***. *The Marist Way* is a term that is popularly used to describe various Marist movements throughout the world. *The Marist Way* captures our particular way of living the gospel, through identifying with Mary. Being Marist, living the Marist Way, means thinking, feeling, judging, acting and praying as Mary did.

For more information on The Marist Way, refer to this link: <https://www.maristway.org/>

Fourviere celebrations

Each year throughout the world, Marists gather on or around July 23 to celebrate the origins of the Marist Family in France when 12 young men, imbued with the spirit of Mary, pledged to begin a Society in her name.

Many Marists gathered in Hunters Hill on July 27 to celebrate and commemorate this occasion. This began with a celebration of the Eucharist at Holy Name of Mary church, followed by a walking tour around the grounds of Villa Maria. We then enjoyed lunch in the parish hall accompanied by a presentation on the Marist Sisters and concluded our day with a tour of St Joseph's College.

The day was a genuine family affair, with all five branches involved.

Some of the comments included, *it was a spiritually fulfilling day; a celebration of 'why' we do what we do; there was a great sense of community with no-one left behind.*

We are very grateful to all who made our celebrations possible, especially Tony Kennedy SM, Ron Nissen SM, Vicki Wilson SMSM, Viv Goldstein SM and Richard Quinn.

Movement at St Patrick's Church Hill!

With the departure of the Marist Fathers from the administration of St Patrick's at the end of the year, Marist Way Australia has been coordinating monthly gatherings for the St Pat's community, and any others who are interested. The intention of these gatherings is to assure the community that the Marist spirit will be sustained into the future, led by them, with the support of Marist Way Australia. The remaining events are on September 28, October 26 and November 23. For more information, check the parish website: <https://stpatschurchhill.org/>

Marist events

There are many events under the Marist banner you may wish to pursue, for example, those organised by:

Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat
<https://www.maristassociation.org.au/>

Catalyst for Renewal,
<https://catalystforrenewal.org.au/>

and Marist Family Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee (website currently under construction!). The committee is

organising a Seasons of Creation gathering on Sunday, September 14, from 2.00 pm – 3.30 pm in Hunters Hill, on the theme of Peace and Hope. If you wish to attend, please RSVP by September 1 to info@maristjustice.org.

Prayer: Mary, Mother of Peace

This is an extract from a prayer, *Mary Mother of Peace* sourced from the Marist JPIC blog, Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Ministries throughout the Marist World. It seems very timely:

Entrusting ourselves to the intercession of **Mary, Mother of Peace**, we pray that all peoples may rediscover hope, justice, and the gift of reconciliation, in communion with many around the world who long for peace.



*Mary, Mother of Peace
In this time wounded by war,
we entrust to you all people torn apart by hatred,
all families divided, all hearts broken by violence.
You who held sorrow in silence,
teach us how to keep watch,
not to look away,
to remain close to those who suffer,
to pray even when words are no longer enough.*

Source: <https://jpiblog.maristsm.org/marie-reine-de-la-paix>

Peace and blessings,

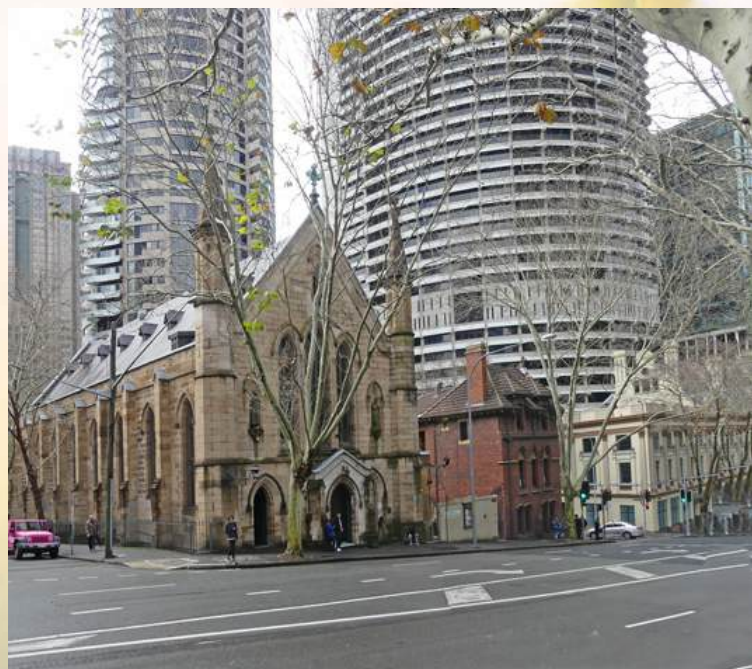
Cathy Larkin

National Convenor
The Marist Way Australia

Farewell To the Marist Father's St Patrick's Church Hill.

By Margaret Woods

"We are but travellers here."



These words of Mary MacKillop were shared by Father Michael Whelan in his address to the hundreds gathered to farewell the Marist Fathers from St Patrick's Parish after 157 years of dedicated service. How rich and true are the sentiments reflected in this phrase — not only in the time of Mary MacKillop's service in The Rocks area, but also now, as the religious order she once knew and engaged with departs from this place.



Attending this celebration on Sunday, 10 August 2025, I was deeply aware that I was part of a historical moment — a once-in-a-lifetime event that would alter the course of history for so many people, especially for those gathered. A “changing of the guard” is about to occur in just a few months, as the Marist Fathers prepare to leave St Patrick’s Church in December.



Bishop Danny Meagher, reflecting on the compassionate and dedicated service of the Marist Fathers, acknowledged how their ministry enriched his life as a young man visiting Sydney from the country. He spoke with heartfelt warmth and genuine appreciation for the many Marist Fathers who, over the years, brought a sacramental presence and a spirit of inclusiveness to the parish of St Patrick’s. He honoured their work and presence with deep gratitude.

Mrs Kerrie Hannan delivered the address on behalf of the parishioners. She described St Patrick’s as a sanctuary, a haven, a place of worship, mercy, invitation, and welcome. Her experience of connection, community, and a deep sense of kindness and compassion — all underpinned by humility — so beautifully reflected the spirit of Mary. Working with Fr Michael Whelan enriched her life, she said, as she encountered the Marist ethos: “one that acknowledges a longing for the ‘more than,’ a privileging of the mystical over the moral, people over rules, and an unfailing

willingness to meet people where they are — treating people as Mary would, as Jesus would.” Kerrie’s words captured the essence of so many who have experienced the spiritual life of St Patrick’s and the dynamic faith community built there over 157 years.

Fr Michael, speaking on behalf of the Fathers, highlighted that they too had been travellers on this journey over many years, walking alongside pilgrims seeking God, searching for strength, light, peace, gratitude, and adoration. He noted that their founder, Jean-Claude Colin, said Marists should be “instruments of mercy.” Many people who sought an alternative to their local parish often found solace and a non-judgemental welcome at St Patrick’s, where they received sacramental support and nourishment. Kerrie’s reflections truly echoed the experience of countless others who found a spiritual home in the parish.

Personally, I have felt privileged to work within the parish and am grateful to the Marist Fathers for their long-standing support of The Marist Way Australia (formerly Marist Laity Australia). Over many years, we have collaborated through retreat days, Fourvière events, prayer sessions, and formation programs. The gatherings of people have always been powerful moments — conduits through which the Spirit could speak and move within us. Like Mary herself, the Fathers have offered hospitality, warmth, and grace, allowing us as lay people to fashion our own expression of the Marist Spirit. Together — Lay, Fathers, Brothers, Sisters SM, and SMSM — we continue to enrich the branches of the Marist Family.

May the seeds of the Marist Spirit, sown over these past 157 years, continue to bear fruit as the parishioners of St Patrick’s embrace the invitation to live the Spirit of Mary into the future life of the parish.

To those Marist Fathers leaving St Patrick’s: blessings upon your work as this change leads you to new places, new people, and

new opportunities to continue Mary's mission among God's people.

Thank you, Marist Fathers.

Blessings in the Spirit of Mary,
Margaret Woods

Christian Meditation and the Congolese Family

I met my Congolese friend, Pasca, and her 3 young sons seven years ago through a Cultural Exchange Weekend. This innovative program brought some 30 refugee/migrant women from the Western Suburbs of Sydney to the rural town of Gerringong.

Here at the farm where I live, Pasca and I became close friends. It was her love of Mary and her unwavering trust in God which deepened my own Marist spirituality. Last year, Pasca managed to secure visas to Australia for her sister, Chantal, brother-in-law Jean Pierre and their 8 children.

When I shared this story with my Christian Meditation group in Gerringong, I was overwhelmed with their response. Clothing, furniture, white goods etc as well as donations of money were quickly secured. On 19th July this year, the fourteen Congolese and 10 meditators finally met each other for the first time for a wonderful day at the farm. The feelings of joy, gratitude and genuine connection were palpable.



It has been a difficult year for our refugee family and there is still a long way to go in getting used to the complexity of life in Australia and its very different culture. However, I would like to share the beautiful words written by the older children in the Thank You card given to us.

"We want to express our deepest gratitude for the incredible support you've given to our family since we arrived in Australia. Your generosity has made a world of difference in helping us settle into our new life. From the very beginning, you've been a source of strength and kindness and we truly wouldn't be where we are today without you. Thank you for opening your hearts to us and for being such a beautiful example of compassion and community. Australia became a home to us because of you and your kind hearts."

By Maria Baden

An invitation to a Men's Rite of Passage Retreat

By Andrew Dumas

Have you noticed something about our culture and how it affects male formation? Our culture provides easy access to information but promotes shallowness rather than giving time to distil wisdom. It offers quick access to large sums of money through credit and debt, yet ignores that true earning requires effort. It provides pleasures to the senses through internet pornography but forgets that real relationships require sacrifice and a willingness to step into another's shoes. It offers fast sports cars but neglects the damage their big engines cause to the environment. We have disconnected from authenticity, preferring what seems good over what appears hard. Life, by its very design, is hard, yet our culture pretends that struggle can be overcome or even avoided.

This pattern of living does not work later in life. When a relationship breaks down, when we lose a job, fail at school, or when someone we love becomes terminally ill, we are quick to label these moments as bad. But in doing so, we fail to discover the deeper meaning of how life is speaking to us.

Men and women are designed differently. Women's suffering is embodied; every fourteen to twenty-eight days their bodies remind them of built-in suffering, they bleed. Men do not share this cycle. Instead, men often interpret pain not as a source of new life but as something to be avoided or dulled through things that release dopamine. Male spirituality often begins externally, as men's bodies are designed for action and outward engagement. They need to be shown the meaning of things beyond their immediate knowledge. Yet, instead of seeking wise elders, men bottle up emotions and presume to know the answers, leading to lower life expectancy. The male ego takes control, believing it is in the driver's seat, forgetting that life itself is the great teacher. Too often, our own agendas paint the picture of who we are, while we ignore the vastness of the universe and the billions of stars above.



Recently, I completed a Men's Rite of Passage retreat through the Centre for Men and Families in Queensland in August 2025. Men from their forties to seventies took part, each for different reasons, both good and bad. Yet each recognised that to become a more integrated man requires initiation into the bigger picture we call life. Wiser men helped bring a deeper understanding of experience, guiding us on a journey of initiation into key areas such as suffering, human relationships, and the roles men play in their families.

The retreat was held at the base of a mountain, surrounded by forest and next to a large lake, away from the busyness of life. It was a place to pause, where time seemed to stand still. We were able to disconnect from business as usual and reconnect with a wider reality that often remains hidden. The mountain, forest, and water seemed to come alive, reminding us of ancient cultures across the world, such as Aboriginal Australians and Native American peoples, who initiated their young into the bigger picture of life.

I have attended many Christian and Catholic retreats, but this Men's Rite of Passage seemed to draw on wisdom that went beyond any single tradition. It wove together insights from psychology, Christianity, and our wider culture into a deeply moving and life-changing experience. Years of thought and planning have shaped this program, giving it a very modern and engaging feel.

In 2026, I would recommend that you, or a significant man in your life, undertake this Men's Rite of Passage through The Centre for Men and Families. It will change your or their life. While words cannot fully express the impact, it will provide a roadmap for navigating the second half of life when hardships, suffering, and new opportunities arise. The Younger Men's Rites of Passage (18 to 30), called "Forged", will take place in May 2026, while the Midlife to Senior Men's Rites of Passage will occur in August 2026. Don't worry about the expense of travel or the logistics of booking, just register as soon

as it becomes available. This is not a quick fix with easy answers. Rather, it is a framework for becoming a man truly initiated into a well-lived life. Sometimes you need to step out in faith.



For more information

<https://www.centreformenaustralia.org.au/events/mens-rights-of-passage/>

Join us

Bradfield Park
To
St Patricks
Church Hill

September 28
10.00 am
to
1.00 pm

10.00 am - Meet at Bradfield Park
Pilgrimage across the Harbour Bridge
11.00 am - Drink and Food @ St Patrick's
11.45 am - Reflection @ St Patricks
Finish by 1 pm

RSVP by September 26

Anna and Alana Return to Davao Philippines

By Alana Leahy

Anna and I returned to Davao because we were so inspired by our trip there in December 2024. That first visit opened my eyes to true poverty and reminded me how fortunate I am. It fundamentally changed my worldview, and I am overjoyed that I was able to connect with and meet such inspiring people. On this recent trip, we came to know each child by name, by story, and by the time we shared together. They have truly captured my heart, and I never want to stop going back! Their laughter, smiles, and love show me the importance of connection and help me to keep the right priorities in life. I miss them deeply and love them so much. Everyone in Davao has left a lasting mark on my life.

