

## 25 YEARS OF SERVICE IN NOTRE DAME REFUGEE CENTRE



Notre Dame Refugee Centre (NDRC) in London, founded in 1996, celebrated an important anniversary on 21 June: 25 years of service of Brian Mitchell, who is currently the senior immigration advisor. During his time in this post, personnel, both Marist religious and lay, have revolved around him! He is an exceptional example of dedication to this vulnerable community, and he has been instrumental in shaping the Centre into the service it is today.

Brian writes, "I am genuinely appreciative of the experience NDRC has offered me. I came to the centre in 1999 with very little work experience of immigration legal work but I had a strong sense that migrants/refugees were being unfairly treated and facing increasing hostilities from government policy, media, and the public alike. It was apparent that good quality advocacy could make a difference and produce life changing results for our service users. This spurred me on to gain the legal qualifications required for legal representation and so on. As treatment of the migrant issue became more and more toxic, I felt the Centre had an increasingly important role in responding to this. Of course, the working environment also played a huge part. I've worked with many great colleagues, past and present, both within NDRC, the Trustees and of course our colleagues over at Notre Dame de France (NDF). In fact, NDF has been a bit like our mothership supporting and encouraging the Centre along its trajectory."



*We say, congratulations and thanks to you Brian!*

*Martin McAnaney, sm*

## IRELAND: NEW CEO FOR THE EDUCATION TRUST BODY (MEAS)



The new chief executive officer of the Marist Education Authority Schools (the Irish schools trust body) is Mr. Kenneth Byrne. Ken is a native of Dublin, a past pupil of Chanel College Dublin, and has long associations with Marist life and activities. He comes to the position of MEAS CEO from a distinguished career in banking. In a career with AIB Bank spanning over 40 years, he has worked in areas including branch banking, commercial lending, Group Policy and compliance. Ken has the experience of being a director of the Marist Education Authority for the past five years. This combined with his professional expertise gives him a formidable insight into the issues and challenges faced by Catholic education in Ireland today.

We warmly **welcome Ken** to the Education Commission and wish him well in his new role for this important mission for the province.

*Frank Dowling  
Provincial Delegate for Education*

## DEAR MARIST FRIENDS

I've just returned from rural France. A few months ago I received an invitation from Bishop Didier Noblot of the diocese of Saint-Flour. This is a country area four hours from Paris by train and two hours from Lyon. There are no Marist houses in that area. A family in the small village of Jabrun were organising a Mass and a celebration. They had discovered a stock of letters and journal and a collection of Oceanian artefacts sent by one of their ancestors, Fr Jean-Baptiste Gilibert SM, from New Caledonia where he spent the second part of his life before his death in 1891. What a good decision it was to follow the advice of confreres at table in Paris and accept the invitation. This was a great experience of hospitality, faith, traditional family values, and ... traditional cooking!

*Kevin Duffy, sm*

## PRAYER INTENTION

for peace and justice in the country of New Caledonia

# MARIST PASTORAL GATHERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE, LA NEYLIÈRE JUNE 12 TO 14, 2024

*"Have the courage to live the gospel and the audacity to proclaim it."*

This motto from Benedict XVI marked the gathering of a group of about 60 high school students from the 7 Marist institutions in France and the Marist school in Fürstenzell, Germany.



After a shared snack – with each school bringing typical desserts from their region – we gathered to listen to the presentations from the different schools. The students answered the question: "How is the gospel proclaimed in our school?" *It was truly interesting to see the differences, but also the parallels in pastoral care and religious life in France and Germany.* To get to know each other better, we organized a "speed dating" session in the evening, where the students talked in pairs. This very entertaining activity

allowed everyone to get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

The next day, Sister Teri inspired us with a captivating teaching session, followed by very personal testimonies from Sister Aubierge SSM and Joe Elias, a teacher from Bury-Rosaire. In a group reflection, we talked about baptism – the baptism of Jesus and our own baptism – to answer the question: "Where am I in my faith?" I was surprised by the deep thoughts of the students, who all dared to speak about their faith, doubts, and hopes.



In the afternoon, the students participated in an Escape Game based on the Marist comic "Around the World." They searched for clues in a prepared room and solved riddles, eventually finding the key. Afterwards, we all gathered in the chapel. The young people then had the opportunity to spend an hour and a half alone, praying, reflecting, or talking to one of the Marist Fathers present. As the weather was nice and the sun was shining, many took advantage of the beautiful weather to walk outside and lie on the grass.

The talent evening allowed the young people performed mini-plays, riddles, dances, and to encourage other students and adults to dance with them. It was a wonderful – if exhausting – evening. In a final group reflection, we looked to the future and tried to find a new commitment for ourselves personally or for our group for the coming year. Our stay at La Neylière ended with a festive mass where we sang and prayed together in French and German.

You may be wondering who I am. My name is Andrea Wieland, I am a teacher at the Marist school in Fürstenzell, and I accompanied three German girls to this pastoral gathering of young Marists. My students, Father Alois Greiler, and I were very happy to participate in this gathering. We thank all the leaders and the organizing team for their work. Thank you very much!



*Andrea Wieland*

