



MARIST MISSION NEWSLETTER  
SUMMER 2023 VOL. 74 NO. 4

# MARIST MISSION CENTRE (MMC)

Managing both:

**The Marist Fathers International Mission (MFIM)**

ABN 91 030 510 250

**The Australian Marist Centre for Overseas Aid (AMCOA)**

ABN 87 382 823 140

## THE GIFT OF GOD'S LOVE

The birth of Jesus in a stable in Bethlehem is a time to celebrate the gift of God's love. At Christmas we especially celebrate the gift of God's love for every person and for our world.

The gift of love opens our hearts to listen, to ponder and to treasure. We can listen to the Spirit calling us to something new, we can ponder the challenges facing us and our world, and we can treasure the people we love. This was the way of Mary who opened her heart to the Spirit and gave birth to Jesus.

The mission of MMC with the support of our friends and supporters is to share the gift of God's love in practical ways. MMC supports programs for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged as well as supporting the on-going training and formation of people engaged in our Marist ministries.

In Cambodia at Marist Asia Solidarity, MMC is enabling young people and children with disabilities to experience the gift of education and a new life without discrimination and exclusion.

In Lisbon, Portugal at World Youth Day 2023 and Marist Youth Day, some SMSM Sisters together with young women involved in their ministries in Oceania, Africa and Latin America were able to experience the joy of being together with thousands of other young people.

In the Philippines at Balay Pasilungun, MMC is enabling young boys, who have been living on the streets due to poverty and family problems, to find a safe place to live and learn.

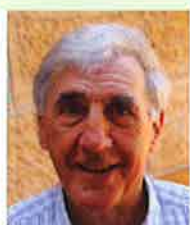
I travelled to the Solomon Islands recently in order to visit a number of projects funded by MMC. The local people were most grateful for the education and religious facilities and resources funded by MMC.

Your support and kindness enables the Marist Mission Centre to share the gift of God's love to the most vulnerable and needy.

With our Christmas blessings and prayers to you and your family.

With my thanks for your generous support.

Fr Paul Sullivan sm



Fr Paul Sullivan sm  
MMC Executive Officer

To Donate visit MMC Website:  
[www.maristmissions.com](http://www.maristmissions.com)



## CAMBODIA : LA VALLA SCHOOL

There are an estimated 360,000 children and young people under the age of 20 living with a disability in Cambodia. The challenges faced by those with a disability are numerous including discrimination and stigma, as many Cambodians believe that disability is a result of bad karma for misdeeds in that person's previous life.

The students of La Valla mainly come from poor, rural areas and because of their disability are unable to attend their local school. Disability and distance can exclude a child from education.

The School has around 90 students with a range of disabilities including cerebral palsy, polio, amputations as a result of accidents or congenital conditions.

La Valla enables the students to gain independence, self confidence and to break down social barriers.



**Above: Students at Play**



As well as education the students have access to health and rehabilitation.

There are 10 qualified teachers on staff, all of whom have a physical disability themselves, who act as role models and mentors for the students.

**Left: Students Learning New Skills**

Two students, Mithuna and Sienghay, represented Cambodia at the Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities and travelled to Abu Dhabi to participate in the finals in October this year.

This was a unique experience and opportunity for these young men and an inspiration to all the other students at the school.



**Above: Mithuna and Sienghay in Training**

## CELEBRATING LIFE AND FAITH

A new model of World Youth Day (WYD) was developed for Lisbon, Portugal. The young people were challenged by Pope Francis to be missionary while in Portugal. They visited more than 600 institutions for the most vulnerable, such as homes for the elderly, drug addiction centres, hospitals, prisons and centres for disabilities.

The SMSM Sisters have missions for disadvantaged communities in various parts of the world and they decided to send some young people from these communities to Lisbon. They were accompanied by some SMSM Sisters.

WYD was a life changing experience for these young people.



**Above: Nina from Madagascar and Edith from Senegal enjoying the experience of WYD**

San Isidro in the Solomon Islands is a Centre for young people with hearing disabilities. They sent several students and staff to Lisbon.

Louisa, a teacher at the Centre, was registered as an official WYD Translator for participants with Hearing Impairment.

The students were delighted to gather and celebrate with young people from so many different countries.

**Right: San Isidro Participants**



These young women will become leaders in their home communities.

As part of WYD Celebrations, the SMSM Sisters and young women visited Fatima.

They came from the Solomons, Samoa, Philippines, Madagascar, Senegal, USA, Peru and Sri Lanka.



**Left: WYD Visit to Fatima**

## PHILIPPINES: BALAY PASILUNGAN

Balay Pasilungan is a Centre conducted by the Marist Fathers in Davao City to provide a safe place for street boys to live and learn. These young boys who for various reason such as poverty, family problems including mental health, alcohol or domestic violence issues are living on the streets. Living on the Streets leaves the boys at further risk of abuse and exploitation.

Caring for Creation is a priority issue for our world today especially in countries such as the Philippines that experience the impact from cyclones and damage to the environment due to the exploitation of forests. The boys enjoy practical activities in the garden at the Centre as well as art programs.

The role of Teachers and Volunteers is at the heart of living and learning at the Centre. Fr. Gil Casio sm, Director of the Centre, is much indebted to the Teachers and Volunteers for their special role in providing new hope and living skills for these boys.

**Right: Fr Gil Celebrating Teachers Day with Teachers and Volunteers**



**Above: Celebrating Creation**



## SOLOMON ISLANDS: SAN ISIDRO

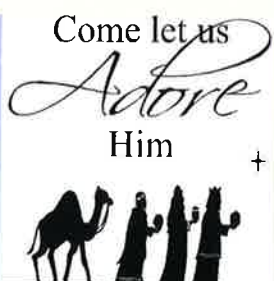
San Isidro is a centre for young people with hearing impairment. Fr. Paul recently visited San Isidro together with Ms Luci Sitanggang, AMS International Project Co-ordinator and Ms Milika Nation a local Project Representative.

They are welcomed by Louisa, a Sign Language Teacher and Student representatives.

The Centre is located in a rural area and the students learn sign language, social, agricultural and living skills to enable them to take an active place in their own communities.



**Above: Visiting San Isidro**



**A Christmas Gift  
Supporting the  
Mission Centre**

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