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THE LAY
MARIST
VOCATION

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CONTEMPLATING THE WORLD WITH THE HEART OF GOD

The Holy Spirit continues to inspire men and women, Brothers and Lay to be beacons of hope in the lives of young people in the many diverse nations and cultures which span across the region of Oceania. In December 2022, the region of Oceania will become the Star of the Sea Province and much preparation, discernment and forging of new ways for Brothers and Lay Marists to associate is taking place, both virtually and in-person.

As we contemplate structures to support and nurture Marist life and mission in Oceania, we take Mary as our model and guide. She calls us to find new ways to listen to the voices of those who are often silenced. Her listening is marked by inclusiveness, action and accompaniment and resembles the synodal process of walking together.

Hugh Mackay, a leading Australian researcher, social commentator and author recently gave the keynote address at the Australian Marist Faith Formators' Colloquium. He asked the Marist educators to "imagine their communities becoming

known as loving schools... becoming famous for the culture of listening that's fostered in their school communities". Perhaps listening is the first and most important step towards a spirit of communion and association as Marists. On the 56th World Day of Social Communications, Pope Francis stated: "Communion, in fact, is not the result of strategies and programmes, but is built in mutual listening between brothers and sisters. As in a choir, unity does not require uniformity, monotony, but the plurality and variety of voices, polyphony. At the same time, each voice in the choir sings while listening to the other voices and in relation to the harmony of the whole. This harmony is conceived by the composer, but its realization depends on the symphony of

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON
**THE LAY MARIST
VOCATION**



The Region of Oceania
Building Bridges and Links



Each issue of the Bulletin is prepared by one of the six regions of the Institute under the coordination of the Secretariat for the Laity. This month's issue has been prepared by the Region of Oceania.

each and every voice. With the awareness that we participate in a communion that precedes and includes us, we can rediscover a symphonic Church, in which each person is able to sing with his or her own voice, welcoming the voices of others as a gift to manifest the harmony of the whole that the Holy Spirit composes.”

As we engage with the enormous diversity of Marists across the region of Oceania in a spirit of respectful mutual listening, we are becoming aware of the harmony of our voices in the new space of an emerging new Province. We are recognising how critical being in communion will be for the vitality of Marist life into the future. Carole Wark, one of the Trustees of the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat in Australia, describes this moment as a time to discover a new edge to the way we associate. She believes that as-



sociating formally as Marists “offers us a way of being more than simply collaborators as lay people and for women this is a new edge; we can be co-responsible in so many ways – active participants in the process of evangelisation, in the structures that grow faith in Australia, that make a difference for young people, that act as a voice in the Church here and elsewhere.”

As we prepare to set out into the deep, this moment calls us to open the windows and to let the fresh air in. It’s an opportunity to take a second loving look, with the compassionate eyes of Mary who watches over us and finds joy in our passion for God. Like Marcel- lin, we offer our thanks to Mary, because her “testimony inspires us to contemplate the world with the heart of God” (Prayer of Champagnat Movement of the Marist family).

GATHERING AROUND THE SAME TABLE

I am a teacher in a Marist Secondary School and a committed member of the Marist Spiritual Family through the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat, I feel a sense of responsibility to ensure that Marcel- lin’s vision and mission remain strong in my local area. I am a part of a network of local Marists who meet regularly for prayer, dialogue, and a meal ‘gathered around the same table’. We are engaged in local community service activities and extend an invitation to colleagues and our students to assist and support those living on the margins or encounter- ing challenges. Through my classroom practice, I use the example of St Marcellin to demonstrate the power of prayer and the invitation to a relationship with Jesus through Mary. The opportunity to visit Marist locations interstate and overseas reminds me of my connection to the wider Marist family.



James Mazzolini (Australia)

A Marian way of Associating

Anthony Clarke, National Director of Marist and Life Formation in the Province of Australia, recently addressed Marist Formators at the International Marist Animators Course, noting the interesting period of history we are living in for the Marist Vocation, “it’s a time of great change”. He reminded participants of Br Emili Turú’s observations of the Institute’s structure, ‘we have changed more and more profoundly in the last 50 years than in all the 140 previous ones!’

Mary’s life was also marked with great change. In 2001, Pope John Paul II encouraged the Marist family to draw their inspiration and reference points from her, “It is up to you today to manifest in an original and specific way the presence of Mary in the life of the Church and of humankind, developing for this purpose a Marian attitude, characterised by a joyful disposability to the calls of the Holy Spirit” (Pope John Paul II to the General Chapters of the Marist Family 2001).

Discussing Marist leadership, Anthony Clarke explained that we are called to ‘build the Marian face of the Church’ to offer a “Marian style of leading that is both servant and prophetic, characterised by Father Champagnat’s style of leadership” and “this was the dream of the first Marists: A Church renewed in the way of Mary... the Marists understood their Project to be a sharing in Mary’s work of bringing Christ-life to birth and being with the new Church as it came to be born (Water from the Rock, 11).”

Anthony identified three characteristics of a Church with a Marian face:

1. The Marian face of Service: who gives attention to the most needy. Our Church needs prophets of human dignity, present among the most vulnerable and forgotten children and young people (Br Ernesto Sánchez)
2. The Marian face of Mother: who creates family in which we all have equal dignity and a place.



The Church needs a Marian face of leading that always welcomes, invites and accompanies.

3. The Marian face of Sister in Faith: with openness to the Holy Spirit. The Church needs those who govern or guide others, to let themselves be guided by the spirit of the Handmaid of the Lord. Like her, they listen, ponder and act.

How might these three Marian faces challenge our institutional ways of Associating?



A MIXED BUNCH

My expression of Marist life is very much part of my day to day, in my relationships and my actions... as mother to two toddlers, as wife, as an educator, a Marist Association (MASMC) member and in my work in a community of people very much on the margins. My current job is real Gospel in action stuff: advocating on behalf of those experiencing powerlessness, injustice and institutional abuse. Primarily, it is providing opportunities for education and volunteering amongst the marginalised and those experiencing powerlessness. Our local MASMC Melbourne group spans generations, is a real mixed bunch and I wouldn't have it any other way! Each with their own unique experience of what it means to be Marist, we come together when we can to share a meal, prayer and a deeper level of discussion as Christians than we would find elsewhere. 'There is listening and dialogue. Challenge and confrontation are done with honesty and openness' WFR 114. At both a local and national level our challenge continues to be ensuring we have younger voices represented, involved and invited to be part of Marist life. Having been accompanied, challenged and nurtured by so many Brothers over the years, it is now my role to do this for those younger coming through and I would challenge our wider family to make this a priority also. The most powerful way to grow our family is through relationship, through accompaniment and through walking with people on the margins.



Liz Wake (Australia)

The institutional dimension of Associating

The Marist Lexicon defines the term ‘Association’ as “a group of people who come together to the same aim and, when applicable, the legal personality they create. Therefore, the term association indicates the union of individuals with a specific purpose, an entity formed by a group of associates or partners for the stable pursuit of a common goal.” It is an expansive description that understands association as more than a mere legal entity and describes the way Marists gather for a common goal, with a sense of purpose and as a spiritual family.

Topic four of the International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation reminds us that “the moment has arrived to encourage new structures that will allow the deepening of that institutional relationship even more” (Gathered Around the Same Table 134). It acknowledges that whilst some “seek recognition from their Marist province or diocese of their vocation, others do not believe this recognition is necessary” and that “we should discern together, Brothers and Lay people, the best ways to channel the vitality that is growing”.

The Secretariat of the Laity proposes that people who belong to an associative structure commit to “develop the charism (mission, spirituality, shared life), in creative fidelity, as a lay person, within the Church and in communion with other Marists – lay and consecrated Brothers. There would be a stronger sense of being disciples and missionaries, sent out to bear fruit. And this implies a certain interior freedom to assume possible leadership or other services, develop formation possibilities, accept co-responsibility, live in community, promote communion, be open to the international dimension of a global charismatic family and contribute to fidelity and creativity in mission.” With a view to looking beyond the present, “an associative structure could assure stability and allow a future-focus. It could encourage initiatives to live and share Champagnat’s charism and pass it on to future generations.”

Far more than civil or canonical recognition, an Association is about belonging to a spiritual family with a commitment to develop the vitality of the



Marist charism. It's upon these foundations of rock that we must build our way of Associating (Matthew 7:24-25) and we are not alone in building these structures.

Religious congregations such as the Lasallians, Piarists and Salesians have also been seeking ways to guarantee charismatic vitality and stability of shared mission through their Associates. The Lasallians are described as having a “pluralism of form and struc-

ture”, whilst other Associations have a clear and consistent pathway, managed at a provincial level. Each recognise the existing tension between those who vocationally identify (bond/belong) with the charism and those who are associated with an educational ministry.

How can a Marist Associates make room at the table for the diverse range of commitment, formation and experience of the entire spiritual family?

AN EXCITING NEW MOMENT

My experience of connecting with Marists has changed rapidly in the past two years. In 2020, I moved from Australia to the small island nation of Timor Leste, just 800 kms north, where the Marist Brothers have been ministering since 2000.

Timor Leste offers much hope for spreading the charism of

Champagnat and growing our Marist family. Our graduates from the Catholic Teacher's College are imbued with the Marist spirit and enthusiastically forming the hearts and minds of Timorese children. The college has a strong PJM group which provides extraordinary ministry among poor families. We are also receiving good vocations to the Marist religious life.

Despite our remoteness, due largely to the pandemic, I believe we are at an exciting new moment of growing our family spirit, especially with the building of our first Marist school. This will bring Marists; brothers, lay collaborators and parents together in stronger partnership and mission.

Br Greg McDonald
(Timor Leste)



Associating alongside

Three Marists from Oceania reflect on the role of community, prayer and service in nurturing Marist Vocations at the Oceania Gatherings held in February 2022:

Sheena Penjueli – Fiji

“I experience Marist life through community service



which is family outreach, doing something for the community. In the end it turned out really nice, where the youth couldn't understand why we were going to clean old people's homes and different places and offer our service somewhere else

when we could start in our own backyard – in the Marist Brothers' community. We thought, ok it's what they wanted, so let's give it a try and what better way to lose them than in the Brothers' home, working alongside them. It became something they enjoyed, the experience changed the old perception of the religious people and seeing them up on a pedestal and there is no way you can be in their presence but having the youth go in and just be a part of them and talk with them, clean and wipe whatever it was they had the youth doing, the working alongside them built that friendship and relationship. For the youth their feedback was that they treasured those moments the most. Getting the Brothers to connect with the music, playing their music in the Brothers home and having a talanoa session (a conversation). During the height of the pandemic we had to keep in our own bubble, so the youth said, why don't we share a meal with the cleaners and during the month your family shares a meal. The highlight was having a quote of St Marcellin's attached to the meal and it was a happy note that we hoped someone might Google who was

this great man of God. The highlight for the youth was less about sharing the meal and more about decorating and sharing the quotation of St Marcellin!”

Zack Pizzingrilli – Australia

“A key experience I had that really shaped my inner sense of being a Marist was an immersion experience where I got to go to Santa Teresa which is in central Australia and it's this remote Indigenous community. It's a beautiful place where you can see the impact of the Brothers being there and the Lay volunteers. Marist Volunteering is not like an impact where you are going to go change and fix everything. Nothing needs to be fixed there and nothing needs to be changed. The Brothers at Santa Teresa and when we were there just lived life and walked alongside the community and we were welcomed with open arms which was beautiful. It was a learning experience and I was like a sponge. The biggest learning I took away was to slow down and take time to centre, focus, breathe and take time for contemplation. The way that we've now embraced being Marist and connecting online through events and being able to meet people from around Oceania. We had a Marist Youth Ministry event with the Philippines and I enjoyed the opportunity to have a chat, get to know each other and build that connection. It was quite eye opening, fun and unique.”



Brother Doug Dawick – New Zealand

“The most energizing community I’ve been in was with young adults, just sharing Marist spirituality was terrific. I’ve been a teacher all my life and working in formation for many years but just living with them and trying to share the charism was marvelous. Men and women, Brothers and Lay, strengthening the charism. I think for me, prayer is a relationship with Jesus. I related better to Jesus than I do with God because I can see Jesus, I know what he looks like. Prayer sustains me. I have on my bed a piece of paper that has the word ‘Jesus’ on it and that reminds me each day to think of Jesus and to try and be with Him in what I’m doing. If I don’t pray, I go sterile and I need that input through prayer. I see service as the *raison d’être* for me. People might see me as a workaholic, I don’t know. I’ve slowed down over the

years. I think we as Marists are created for service. I’m not a contemplative I’m there for service in the spirit of Marcellin. The things that Marcellin did in his time are sort of relevant today, but we have other things today as well, like the poor, the needy, prisoners. Those are strong elements in a Marist’s life. The role of Mary, my mother and Jesus, my brother. It’s a dynamic life, even at my advanced years.”



INVITATION

Being a Champagnat Marist is a way of expressing my spirituality and faith through knowledge of Marcellin, his Charism and the role that Mary, Our Blessed Mother has that leads us to her Son. It is practical, logical and allows for personal development. I like the fact that every time I sit and reflect, I find a new way, a new journey, a new focus for my life. I don’t necessary like the fact that the Charism continually calls me to get involved, but I know there is an exciting experience awaiting.

As I wait to hear the new direction of our District, I think about the constant invitation to be part of a wider commu-

nity. In this Covid time, it is very easy to put so much to the side and become insular. Now I am a relieving teacher at my old school, I see the importance of keeping the story and Charism



alive in the next generation. I try to bring the Marist message with me to every class I teach, encouraging the students to own the history and make the future. They are so busy gaining credits that I sometimes think the reason we are ... gets lost in all the other “important” matters.

Being connected to other Marist communities is essential for those of us who are isolated. We need to be nourished as well as encouraging others to build on their experience of being Marist. We must continue to issue the invitation.

**Janet Webster
(New Zealand)**

Australia, dreaming of New Ways to Associate

Marist association of st Marcellin Champagnat

As members move towards their third National Assembly, the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat (MASMC) contemplates St Paul's words to the Philippians, "How can we shine among them like the stars in the sky?" (Philippians 2:15). The process of the National Assembly will invite members to reflect on where they find life and energy in their Local Groups, Marist Ministries and the broader Association. They will also consider the particular contribution Marist makes to the evangelising mission of the Church in Australia and Oceania and how they are being true to their call to bring a truly Marial dimension to their lives.

It will also be a time of dreaming for the future of the Association and how to continue being the disruptive edge; those who change the game for young people and create spaces for belonging and commitment in a diverse and evolving Church. Ultimately, the Assembly seeks to discern how the Marist Association will take responsibility for Marist life and mission in Australia into the future.

Marists are familiar with dreaming new ways to head into the 'hill country' of people's lives. Brother Tony Leon has been accompanying Simon Martino and his Local Group of Marists in Perth, Western Australia. They've been searching for where to go, what they can do and who they can become. The theme of 'longing and belonging' was borne from

their discernment. Using a range of resource documents including *Dignitatis Humanae*, letters from John Henry Newman and from Marcellin Champagnat, a discernment process was designed to explore longing and belonging from the personal and communal perspective, the difference between being wilful and being willing, and the nuances of self will – good will and God's will.

The concept of 'Marist Dreaming' is a conversation which requires time and deep listening, and in this way, it mirrors and respects the First Nations sense of Dreaming. It occurs in the realm of 'everywhen', the multi-dimensional and contemplative space of God's time.

Two MASMC Councillors and one Trustee were asked to reflect on their dreams for new ways to associate as Marists. For Madeline Forde, associating as a Marist means "placing the people we love, care and support at the forefront of everything we do. With people at the centre, as a Marist I am in the background – gently and quietly walking with people, advocating, and loving them every step of the way."

Br David Hall fms sees all too frequently "a widening chasm between the Church and the world. And yet I see a world yearning ever more earnestly for meaning and hope. For me, being Marist is a way of narrowing that gap. A way of living and work-



ing that gives me meaning and vitality and speaks the language of hope to those with whom I associate. There is something grounded about being Marist, and at the same time something that calls us into greater purpose, something that binds us to the love of a creator whom Mary brought to life in the world. A task to which I too am called.”

Gail Coates is a committed Marist and her faith is formed, nourished and supported by her interactions with both her local and global Marist Family. She believes our task as Members of MASMC, Brothers and Lay Marists together, is to “generate apt and enriching ways of being Marist. We do this when we gather in prayer, friendship and shared formation. Ours is a Marian way of living



the Gospel. Like Mary, a woman and mother, our goal is to do God’s work in Mary’s way. We do this in a spirit of ‘humility, simplicity and modesty’, compassion and hospitality for all – after all this is the heart of what it means to a Marist- Mary-ists for others! Perhaps being a Marist is not a noun but a verb, it is effective only when it is lived out in actions: doing for others, being present to and for others, gestures, reaching out/helping and feeling, showing compassion, love, joy, sharing sorrow and grief.”

How can we continue to be an Easter Community of Marists, an association of Jesus’s faithful who find themselves somewhere on the road between Jerusalem and Emmaus?

I see you: Marists associating in Oceania Making connections through a digital medium

‘I See You: Marists in Oceania, Sharing Our Vocation’ is an ongoing project, which aims to build dialogue and bridges between our island homes. It’s simply a recorded video conversation between a member of the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat and another Marist from Oceania. The dialogue covers home life, what sparks joy, how they first connected with Marists, understanding of the ‘Lay Marist Vocation’, their formation and accompaniment and experience of community and belonging.

We discuss canoes, Bethlehem, the Pikorua, bamboo panpipes, catching the Marist bug, rosary beads, pilgrimage, sunglasses, heart-shaped cookie cutters and how we as Marists, need eyes to see, especially marginalised young people.

- Meet Ruth Hirihu (Melanesia) and Dan Dungey (New Zealand)
<https://youtu.be/Z-guFaS9rmw>
- Meet Br Tabunga Katua (Kiribati) and Christine Meharg (Australia)
<https://youtu.be/UjEbzEOYWus>
- Meet Leigh Southwell (Australia) and Abraham Lamusi Haiuasi (Solomon Islands)
<https://youtu.be/UjEbzEOYWus>
- Meet Br Clement Pekubei (Mabiri, Bougainville) and Mena McLean (Brisbane, Australia)
<https://youtu.be/hFzF28ZzhTs>



Associating through Ministry:

Marist Learning Zone and Lavalla200> Br Lawrie McCane (Mount Druitt Lavalla200> community, Australia)

Let's reach out, mix it up, be diverse! Jesus associated with Samaritans, lepers, and fishermen but also Tax Collectors, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Following Jesus, Marists today are called to be open to relationships of all kinds and to minister to all non-judgmentally. My own experience of our Lavalla200> community, diverse in age, culture, gender and life choice, invites me into a new way of Marist Association. Our work leads us into the complex world of indigenous families with their significant issues yet formidable strengths. Our mission to young school refusers brings us face to face with teenagers, damaged by their life situation, yet often displaying hope and resilience in spite of it all. Our parish and our suburb bring us into daily contact with cultures from all over the world, predominantly Aboriginal, Islander, Asian and Middle Eastern. Our lifestyle is a daily challenge to heed Marcellin's call ... "Our plan embraces all the world!" As we launch our new Star of the Sea Province, across multiple nations, languages and cultures, we will find ourselves "associating" in new ways, where our lay Marists will play an increasingly prominent role.

Marist Youth Ministry & Immersions Jenifer Miller (Marist Youth Ministry, Australia)

I love to meet new people, and enjoy adventures through travel and believe I 'grow' so much from these encounters! As the Sydney Regional Coordinator for Marist Youth Ministry, I am passionate about connecting young Australian Marists with other Marists from around the world so they too may have the opportunity to 'grow' and broaden their own horizons. Taking young adults to the Philippines in 2018 and 2019 was a huge eye opener for myself and the young Australian Marists. Being with the poor and connecting with the very faithful Filipino people led to lifelong friendships as well a change of heart and minds.

With the pandemic in 2020, and travel overseas for immersions no longer being an option, I was determined connections with Marists would not be lost. Over two years of lock downs, and thanks to Zoom, I connected our young Australian Marists with young Marists from Fiji, The Philippines, South Africa, Columbia, Germany, United States of America, Nairobi and East Timor. I believe these online sessions made the world feel smaller and I hope the young Marists believe that no matter where we are from or how far we from others geographically, we are more alike than different.

LOOKING BEYOND

I am grateful for my life as a Marist Brother which evolves endlessly. Giving life to the full as a Marist is one aspect of a deep pondering either through silence or vibrance in all I do. Being a Marist nowadays is never static. Its complexity and changes portray a kind of life that needs re-adjusting, re-imagining and reflecting. To understand what the world reveals in today's context of covid, war and a new province is challenging. On the other hand, my generation is also needs to look beyond what used to be or what we call the 'New Normal'. This is where we share and keep what Marcellin and the early brothers were expecting from us. We generate new life and plant the love of Christ into the hearts of the marginalized Youth.



Br Tabunga (Kiribati)

SOCIAL NETWORK MARIST LAYTY

We invite you to share your experience as a Marist lay person on social media by posting texts, photos and videos using the hashtag #MaristLayVocation.

It will help us to develop an internet identity for Marist life worldwide.

At the same time, the Secretariat of Laity has created a public group in FaceBook: [“Laicos Maristas / Marist Laity - Global group”](#). It is a place to build an online community of Marist Laypeople and to share our emotions and experiences. You are invited to subscribe to the group and to start posting and gathering online with other members of our global family.

www.champagnat.org

- [Innovation is the theme of the 13th message of the International Commission for Marist Mission](#)
- [Meeting of the Marists of the District of Canada](#)
- [Lay Marist Community of Marikina gathered for share vocation](#)
- [Marist Youth Ministry of Brasil Sul-Amazônia holds a meeting with animators](#)
- [Young people are actively participating in the International forum on the lay Marist vocation](#)
- [Water and Sanitation - United Nations Sustainable Development](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation](#)
- [The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue](#)
- [April 22 – Earth Day: Invest in Our Planet](#)
- [Meeting of the team for the revision of the Marist Education](#)
- [Building a Network: Meeting of Vocation Animators](#)
- [International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation in US Province](#)

#LayMaristVocation

The newsletter, an initiative of the Secretariat of Laity, is issued monthly. The next number will be sent on May 30th. You can [subscribe here](#) to receive Marist News and SHARING.



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