Greetings,

“Peace be with you!” What extraordinary words of reassurance that the Risen Jesus speaks to us across the ages. An earlier phrase in the Gospel of John makes the words even more personal “My own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid” (Jn 14:27).

Whatever anxiety, fear or grief we may be carrying, we can take heart from Jesus, our constant companion on the Way. Love did triumph and love will triumph though we do not always see how this is possible. This belief sustains us.

The words also call each of us to be agents of God’s peace in our families, workplaces and nations. St Paul talks about us being “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor 5:20).

His work and so ours is one of reconciliation. It is tough work! In a competitive society such as ours it can be very tough. We can be so slow to offer a handshake or receive such an offer. For all kinds of reasons there is mistrust and hurt. Yet Jesus’ words are clear in the Sermon on the Mount, “Love your enemies!” (Mt 5:44). In this Easter time, who will I start with?

In the past week, many of you would have received the letter of Br Emili on Mission, a joint letter of the Superior Generals of the Marist and De la Salle Brothers on a new initiative in the Middle East, and a letter for Association members on recent developments. These contain enough inspiration for a month!

In our own case, the Province is actively seeking international participation in the Lavalla Community Project in Western Sydney. We are in discussion with the General Administration to see if this project fits with the proposal in Br Emili’s letter.

Let the peace of Christ secure you at your centre and free you to walk to the very edge, so as to reach out to those who Christ most seeks to be with.
our links with the District of Asia. If you are interested in registering your name for an international community or for the Middle East project, please contact me or Ashley Bulgarelli, the person responsible for Australian Marist Volunteers (MVA), ashley.bulgarelli@marists.org.au.

Many Easter blessings,

Br Jeff

---

2014 | 2015
Montagne

---

- Br Emili’s letter on Mission - [here](#)
- Br Jeff Crowe’s Easter letter - [here](#)
- article by Br Mark O’Connor - [here](#)
- information on the Marist Association Regional Gatherings - [here](#)
In Easter week 120 Brothers gathered at Hunters Hill. Our main purpose was to review our present Constitutions (prepared in 1985) and to review our own lives in the light of the Constitutions. There were five broad headings used: Our Identity in Today’s World; Consecrated in Mission; Fraternity and Belonging; Spirituality; New Wine in New Wineskins. A number of Brothers gave their reflections on these themes publicly. The sharing was of high quality, reflecting the great spirit of fraternity that we enjoyed.

Our 2015 pilgrims left on Sunday 12 April. First stop was Jordan, then Israel, Rome and the Hermitage. May it be a time of wonderful personal renewal for each of the 34 participants, including Fr Gary Perrit CP as chaplain, Brs Michael Green and Michael Akers, and Ryan Gato from the MLF team.

In March we announced that the community of Brothers will finish in Canberra at the end of the second term. This brings to an end nearly half a century of the Brothers’ presence in Canberra. We are so grateful to the generations of families, colleagues and students, and pastors who have welcomed us and worked alongside us to build up the wonderful college that Marist is today, and of which we are all justly proud. There will be a formal farewell at the College Champagnat Mass on June 4 and an “Open House” at the monastery on Sunday 21st June.

Some of you would be aware that the placement of the John Berne School at Lewisham was being examined in the past year because of developments in the parish and a project of the CEO Sydney. It has now been decided by Church authorities that the school will continue where it is with some adjustment of spaces occupied. This is a considerable relief to Br Mark Paul and his staff.

The Provincial Council recently visited the Gregory Hills housing development for an on-site meeting with our partners in the project and a drive around the extensive site. Around 1000 blocks have already been sold. The developers have worked hard to develop a strong community spirit in this new ‘suburb’. Gregory Hills Drive already exists from Camden Valley Way to the water race, i.e. the north-western edge of the school precinct. It is due to continue through to join Badgally Road. A new entrance to the College will be constructed near where the road intersects the water race.

The bottom playing fields are to be relocated to the north of the school precinct this year. A lot of this work will happen this year.

Nimul Ouch has decided not to renew his contract in June as Executive Director of Marist Solidarity Cambodia, which includes Lavalla School and Villa Maria, a centre for services to post-primary young people with disabilities. Nimul has been part of our Marist project since 1997 and accepted the role of Director in 2010 when we set up a new structure for Marist works in Cambodia. He has been a great gift to the young people and to us in his positive spirit, his integrity, his enterprise and his faith. We thank him sincerely and wish him and his family well in the future. Br Terry Heinrich will be acting in the Director’s role while a search continues for a suitable replacement.
Dear Brothers and Partners of the De La Salle and Marist Congregations,

Greetings. Towards the end of 2014 both our congregations discussed how we might best respond to the increasing crises among displaced people in cross border situations in different parts of the world today. The discussions were within the context of calls from both of our last General Chapters exhorting us to go to “…..new lands” (FMS) and “…..beyond the borders” (FSC). We know that this language is not just a geographical reference but also challenges us to go to the peripheries of personal, cultural, congregational and structural constraints.

Like many of you, we have been inspired by the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis to all Consecrated People (November, 2014) urging us to consider the prophetic witness of congregations working together. As two collaborating families of Brothers we have the opportunity to “…..find ways to create ‘alternate spaces’, where the Gospel approach to self-giving fraternity, embracing differences, and love of one another can thrive.” Following a fact-finding visit to the borders of Lebanon and Syria carried out by Brothers from our two Congregations, and discussions with Brothers on the ground there, and inspired by our Brothers and Partners in Aleppo, Beirut and Amman, we write to inform you of a joint educational mission venture to that area approved by our two General Councils.

This joint venture proposes two lines of action: First, following suggestions from our local Brothers we will initiate a project that creates spaces to cater for displaced children. This pilot project can guide us to design viable future works both in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Second, we will establish an international coordination office in Lebanon. This is necessary in order to coordinate ready response activities. This office will rely on the direct assistance of local administrative units acting as our Principal Local Partners. Their expertise in the local language, culture, civil and legal matters is essential.

Following the initiation of these two activities, we will be in a better position to decide on an expansion of operations to respond to the needs of alienated youth. The target group, children and youth, is in accordance with both charisms and is within the framework of our core competencies – education and youth ministry. We are calling this joint venture, The Fratelli Project.

We will make known the Fratelli project in all the administrative units of both congregations as a new international and inter-congregational collaboration open to Brothers and Partners. It will operate under the direction of the two General Councils who will establish a board to assist, in the first instance, on the partnership of the local administrative units and, more widely, on the regional units or conferences to which they belong.

Ultimately the vision of our two General Councils concerns the global reality of displaced persons, especially children and young people, and not simply the immediate refugee crisis in the Middle East. For example children and young people living on the edges of society such as the US-Mexican border and regions of Central Africa are also in our purview.

In all of this we also are open to the possibility of other Brother Congregations joining us.

Let us put this initiative on behalf of vulnerable children and young people in the hands of our Blessed Mother.

Fraternally,

[Signatures]

Brother Robert Schieder, FSC
Superior General

Brother Emil Turú, FMS
Superior General
MLF TEAM 2016

Expressions of Interest Invited

Would you be interested in working on the Mission and Life Formation Team for a year or more? If so, you are warmly invited to contact Tony Clarke (anthony.clarke@marists.org.au). Each year, around this time, we make such an invitation. If you are currently in a school, usually it is possible to arrange a secondment from your current position, which keeps your employment and entitlements secure, and allows you the possibility of returning after a time on the team. Marist Principals have been very cooperative in allowing this to happen, and they see the benefits that such an experience can return to their own schools.

The great paradox of life is that those who lose their lives will gain them. This paradox becomes visible in very ordinary situations. If we cling to our friends, we may lose them, but when we are nonpossessive in our relationships, we will make many friends. When fame is what we seek and desire, it often vanishes as soon as we acquire it, but when we have no need to be known, we might be remembered long after our deaths. When we want to be in the center, we easily end up on the margins, but when we are free enough to be wherever we must be, we find ourselves often in the center.

Giving away our lives for others is the greatest of all human arts. This will gain us our lives.

Henri Nouwen

You can see a great little video clip here showing the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service with Syrian refugees in an education project similar to that being preposed in the Fratelli project. Though the Marist style and approach might be different, the video gives a great insight to the issue and the direction of the response.
The Primary Schools Solidarity Kit
This is new from this office this year. This was done with help from experienced primary school teachers from the MSA network.

The new Australian Marist Solidarity (AMS) website
Developed by Michael Coleman and the company iCreate (The official Launch will be announced this week via an email post to supporters, subscribers and MSA Principals and APRE’s etc.
http://www.australianmaristsolidarity.net.au

The latest edition of Solidarity Matters can be found at: