

# Star MESSENGER

Dear Brothers and Champagnat Marists

I'm pleased to present to you the **Logo** for the *Star of the Sea Province*.

The evaluation and appreciation of art, design, poetry and the like is always, to a large degree, subjective. Some people will like the logo, others will dislike it and still others will be quite neutral!

In reviewing it, the New Province Executive appreciated the efforts made by the designers to incorporate a number of relevant symbols; some may not be immediately obvious. I invite you to examine it closely.

**The Star:** is subtle and formed from the apex of the cross, to the left and right extremities and to the bottom of the waves.

**The Sea:** the wave shape, with the multiples and different sizes representing the diversity of the *Star of the Sea Province*, composed of quite different nations.

**Marist:** the M is obvious in the centre of the design and acknowledges the centrality of Mary to our lives as Marists of Champagnat. It also draws on the traditional Ave Maria, which is as the Province of Australia's current logo.

**The Boat:** upon the waves, is a traditional image for the Church, the barque of Christ, referring as it does to the Apostles in the boat with Jesus. The boat is also the central image used in the District of the Pacific's current logo. We are navigating and travelling together as a community and family.



There are two versions of the logo. One uses the words '*Marist Brothers*' which will feature on letterhead that's used for official purposes when the Province is required to act or respond in its 'official' civil identity. This is appropriate for the work of the Marist Brothers' Trust Boards of New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, and the Trustees of the Marist Brothers in Australia. The other one, *Marists of Champagnat*, is the name the Institute is now using more generally. It's more our 'family' name.

Irrespective of immediate reactions, I'm sure we'll all become accustomed to our new logo over time.

**Br Peter Carroll FMS**  
Provincial Designate

# This week's *'Star Feature'* is: Cambodia



All photos above are of the students from the LaValla School in Takhmao with Brothers Tony Burrows, Brian Kinsella and Michael Herry.

# Cambodia



## Background

Cambodia is a country on the Indochinese mainland of Southeast Asia. Cambodia is largely a land of plains and great rivers and lies amid important overland and river trade routes linking China to India and Southeast Asia. The influences of many Asian cultures, alongside those of France and the United States, can be seen in the capital, Phnom Penh, one of a handful of urban centres in the largely rural country.

Between 1975 and 1979 the country was devastated by the reign of the Khmer Rouge, a rural communist guerrilla movement. During the Khmer Rouge's period of power, at least 1.5 million Cambodians were killed or died, a monumental tragedy from which the country still suffers.

During the period following the Khmer rouge and some clashes between rival groups, Cambodia began the process of recovery under the Vietnam-backed regime of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-89), and in the 1990s it regained political autonomy, moved to re-establish a constitutional government, and elections.

While the Cambodian economy has steadily improved, Cambodia remains on the list of developing countries. Although Cambodia is undergoing significant urbanisation, most of its citizens continue to live in rural areas and experience poverty. With some improvement in the economy the country seems to be living by the words of the Cambodian proverb, *"Fear not the future, weep not for the past."*

## Marist Links

Cambodia's recent history cried out for support from the international community. Volunteers came from around the world to work in refugee camps on the Thai border during the period of the Khmer Rouge and the civil war that continued afterwards. This included Marist Brothers like Terry Heinrich, Brian Etherington and others. After the Paris agreement and Cambodians began to return to their homes, there was need for this support to continue and Marists came to Cambodia to see how to best serve these

<b>National Identity</b>	Kingdom of Cambodia
<b>Capital</b>	Phnom Penh
<b>Languages</b>	Khmer
<b>Population</b>	16.95 million (2021)
<b>Time Zone</b>	UTC+07:00 (ICT)
<b>Main Religions</b>	Buddhism
<b>Motto</b>	Nation, Religion, King
<b>Arrival of Marists</b>	1998
<b>Number of Marist Brothers</b>	2
<b>Number of Marist Brothers Communities and location</b>	1 - LaValla School
<b>Number of Marist Schools and location</b>	1 - LaValla School, Takhmao

traumatised people. After a period of discernment searching for those in greatest need, Terry Heinrich and other brothers (Claudius, Badior, Paul etc) began the LaValla school for physically disabled children and youth in 1998 in Phnom Penh. The school moved to its current location in 2000. Next year it celebrates 25 years of care for these children from poor, mostly rural families throughout Cambodia.

## Community

Two Brothers comprise the current community at the LaValla School in Takhmao. The Brothers here are involved in Administration, especially in support of the finances of the projects and also with the Board of Marist Solidarity Cambodia. The brother's house is situated on the campus of the LaValla School.

## Marist Life and Mission Groups

Marist life here is intrinsic to the LaValla Project. The staff are predominantly Buddhist and are Khmer speakers. There is some English spoken, but not fluently. So, Marist life here does not follow the same pattern as in locations with a larger Catholic population. That said, the staff and students join with the Brothers in celebrating Marist feasts and local celebrations with a Christian/Buddhist prayer service.

## School Ministry

LaValla School is an accelerated primary school program to provide an opportunity for students to complete a primary education in a shorter period than the government schools. Primary students in government schools only attend for half a day. At LaValla School the students have classes from 8.00am to 4.00pm. When the students have finished grade 6 at LaValla School, they have the opportunity to go to the government high school in Takhmao and live in the LaValla Village Hostel adjacent to the LaValla School. The project also supports around 70 disabled young people living with their families and attending their local rural school.

