

Star MESSENGER

Dear Brothers and Champagnat Marists

Advent!

A dictionary will define it as “a coming into place, view or being” and “an arrival”.

At this stage of this year, we are experiencing two ‘advents’. The coming of the *Star of the Sea Province* and the coming of the *Christ child at Christmas*. Both have been anticipated for some time: the new Province for over two years, and Christmas, in an eschatological sense, through the ages. Both are events for which we prepare carefully, with recognised markers along the way: the four Sundays of Advent, and for the new Province: work groups, sondage, election of delegates and so on. Both give the ‘star’ a special place; the star of Bethlehem, and the Star which is our guide, Mary. Both are joyful events, which bring people together. Delegates will arrive next week from all the nations of the Province for the Inauguration and Chapter. I’m sure a strong sense of brotherhood will be experienced during those days.

However, there is another ‘advent’ that we pray for regularly. By “we” I don’t refer to Marists alone, or even Catholics; but all Christians. “*Thy Kingdom come*”.

The ‘Kingdom’ of God. To be more inclusive, some refer to it as “*the kin-dom of God*”, but the generally accepted term is now “*reign of God*”. Christians long for, pray for, work for this advent. Jesus came to us to proclaim and witness to God’s reign. His birth was the first step. As disciples of Jesus, we Marists labour for the coming of this reign. The purpose of *Star of the Sea*.

In the Introduction to a recently published book, Pope Francis writes:

“The heart of the Gospel is the proclamation of the Reign of God, in the person of Jesus himself, the Emmanuel, God-Is-With-Us. In him, God brings his project of love for humanity to fulfillment, establishing his lordship over creatures and sowing the seed of divine life in human history, transforming it from within... It is what Jesus, forever joined with our flesh, is accomplishing here and now, opening us up to God the Father, bringing about an ongoing liberation in our lives, for in him the Reign of God has already drawn near (Mark 1:12–15)...For as long as we exist in this flesh, God’s reign remains a promise, a deep yearning that we carry within us, a cry that arises from a creation still marred by evil, one that suffers and groans until the day of its full liberation (Romans 8:19–24).Therefore the Reign announced by Jesus is a living and dynamic reality. It invites us to conversion, asking our faith to emerge from the stasis of an individual religiosity or from its reduction to legalism. It wants our faith to become instead a continuous and restless searching for the Lord and his Word, one that calls us each to cooperate with the work of God in different situations of life and society”.

Some might say ‘this is all very good, but I’m old, retired, unwell. It’s for the younger ones’. This is partly true. There comes a time when not one of us can do what we could when we were fitter, younger, healthier. However, the work of continual conversion that Pope Francis mentions never stops. The witness of religious brotherhood, to which we are committed, doesn’t cease. Later in the same Introduction, Pope Francis asserts that everyone can contribute to realising the work of the reign of God by:



- opening up spaces of salvation and liberation in their own hearts,
- sowing hope,
- challenging the deadly logic of egoism with the brotherly and sisterly spirit of the Gospel,
- dedicating ourselves in tenderness and solidarity for the benefit of our neighbours, especially the poorest.

This work for the Reign of God is the mission of the Star of the Sea Province. It's to this that our Founder dedicated his life. It's for this that Marists exist.

Reminders: Inauguration and Chapter

Seven Days to go! Details of the Livestream of the Inauguration Mass will be provided in coming days. It will start at 6.00pm Australian Eastern Daylight time.

After the Mass and refreshment, all the Chapter Delegates will travel to Mittagong (about 75 minutes south west of Sydney) where the Chapter is being held at *The Hermitage*. It will officially commence at 9.00am on the 9th and conclude on the afternoon of the 14th. The new Provincial Council will have its first meeting on the 15th.

The Steering Committee met yesterday to review arrangements. It plans for daily updates during the Chapter, providing a brief summary of major discussions and decisions.

Transition

The Province may begin on 8 December, but management won't change overnight. We will carry on as pre-December 8 until any changes have been formally notified. Br John and the District Team have agreed to continue until new arrangements are in place, possibly until the end of January 2023. Thank you John.

Please continue your prayers for this new Champagnat venture and adventure!



Br Peter Carroll FMS
Provincial Designate