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THE LAY
MARIST
VOCATION

N. 20 | 6 MARCH 2023

CALLED TO LOOK BEYOND IN OCEANIA

Nathan Ahearne - Extended Secretariat of the Laity

The first Chapter of the Star of the Sea Province took place at the Hermitage in Mittagong 9-14 December 2022. On Day 5 of the Chapter, a session was held to discuss 'Shared Marist Life (Brothers and Lay Together)'. The session included a panel made up of Champagnat Marists who have been at meetings and gatherings working in this area. They were Nathan Ahearne and Elizabeth Falconer from the Marist and Life Formation Team in Sydney, Br Siasio Ioane (Samoa) and Br Barry Burns (Aotearoa NZ). Much is happening in this space in the Marist world. In some countries the model for belonging is clear, along with the stages and pathways that need to be followed. What best suits us in the Star of the Sea Province?

The Panel spoke to the following findings:

- Formation as a priority
- Stewardship – of our Spirituality
- Belonging
- Language and Understanding

From these emerged their recommendations that dealt with the following areas:

- Inclusion
- Interculturality
- Solidarity and Subsidiarity
- Resourcing
- Structural Models to be implemented – in Australia there is the Marist Association and in Kiribati there is the Stewardship Team to name just two and each is different in structure
- Leadership
- A Commission for Formation to carry this forward
- An Assembly in due course

It was suggested to the delegates that there needed to be a coordinated team approach to the development



and delivery of quality formation opportunities and resources for all Marists of Champagnat across the Province, to support the growth and vitality of Marist Life and Mission into the future. Respectful listening is essential for discerning what is emerging in order to find the best way to nurture Marist life and Mission in the new Province. At present, there are a variety of approaches for connection and belonging and we hope to find those models which best suit the needs of our Marist people at the local level.

In his address to the delegates of the Chapter, Br Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General of the Marist Brothers said: The Word of God asks us to look further, to look beyond, but beyond what? Beyond the worldly mentality, beyond short term interests, beyond a partial perspective, in order to open up the horizon of a universal fraternity. St Marcellin Champagnat knew how to look beyond, but interestingly, he also knew how to teach young people to look beyond, to open themselves to God and to the horizons to love according to the Gospel.

How can we each open ourselves (and others) more fully to God and to those on our horizon, as we grow the Marist family in each of our regions?

Seeing beyond the paradigm of a religious institute

Br. Michael Green - Sydney, Australia

One of the great blessings of our time is the exponential growth of our global family of Marists. This is a veritable flowering of Vatican II in our midst, a grace of the Spirit that we are invited to embrace with both gratitude and creativity. It has called us to fresh and imaginative thinking for how people can belong and minister as Marists, to new paradigms. New Marist wine-skins for all this plentiful new Marist wine.

For thousands upon thousands of people – women and men, young and old, single and married, consecrated and ordained, from many cultures and social contexts – to be a Marist is one of the significant ways through which they are choosing to live out their fundamental Baptismal vocation as disciples of Jesus. For most of these people, there are also other ways that they do this, for example within their families, as members of a parish, or supporting the work of other Christian or humanitarian projects. For some, their Marist association is for life, but for most it plays out as a part of their life's journey, for example while they are associated with other Marists in a Marist school or social work. All of this is typical of most movements of the Church, and indeed of wider society.

Within this bountiful growth of Marists, the number of the Marist Brothers has shrunk, ironically enough, in most countries. This development is challenging the Brothers to reconsider and to reposition themselves within the wider Marist spiritual family. Their role among today's Marists can become more authentically that to which consecrated men and women are called in the Church more generally – not so much to be the ones who are in charge, but to be a leaven of spirituality and communion, to be the abiding memory of Jesus in the heart of the community.



More and more, the existing Brothers' associative and administrative structures are finding a place within larger associations of Marists. Not the reverse. It is not a matter of trying to squeeze new associations into the existing Brothers' structures – neither administratively nor conceptually. The call, rather, is for a new space into which all Marists can come.

Various models are being explored around the Marist world. One example is the promising development in Australia of the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat. This is a new associative structure for Marists that now counts about 1,000 members – the great majority of them Marist lay people, who are joined by brothers, sisters and priests. Its threefold purpose is to provide a community for people to develop their faith life as Marists, to be associated with one another as a Marist family, and to share responsibility for the governance of Marist life and mission. The relationship of the Association to the Brothers' Province is an interdependent one, rather than a dependent one. This is key. The Association is not an appendage or auxiliary arm of the Brothers' Province. It is a new and inclusive paradigm of communion and co-responsibility, a creative response to the blessings of our time.

Seeing Beyond in Co-Responsibility

Julia Lederwasch - Newcastle, Australia

During the first 7 years of what was to become 30 years in a Marist school, I didn't, really know what the Marist charism was. I enter retirement now with a deep commitment to our global Marist family. Understanding and constantly reflecting on the vision of Marcellin enabled me to ground my practice as to how I interacted with students as a teacher, a Student Coordinator and for the last 17 years as Assistant Principal. Since the students were only with us for their last 2 years of schooling being committed to the Marist characteristics kept me mindful of what our students left with in the heads - that they felt valued, listened to, loved and nurtured. To me, this was living out the Gospel message in the way of Mary.

During that time I worked with over 15 Marist Brothers- 4 as Principals. Now there are none. I learned from the Brothers - the important of presence, simplicity, patience and spiritual reflection. In particularly challenging times I would find myself thinking "what would Jesus do, say - how would Mary do it?"

The Brothers have left, I have left but the school remains committed to being Marist.

I am a Lay Marist, a member of a local group in the Hunter region of NSW. The Marists values extend to my everyday life and how I interact with others. I am grateful to belong to a global spiritual family which shares these same values.



Looking Beyond Education with a Marist Lay Vocation

Benedito Qumi - Coach and Athletics Mentor Br Samuel Eathorne - Suva, Fiji

The experience of being a Coach in a Marist School and how the Charism of Champagnat complements a Holistic advantage to Moulding a Marist Athlete. When I received an email from Nathan to share on the topic 'Looking beyond education with a Marist Lay Vocation' I could not help feel a sense of gratitude and privilege to share my journey as a Coach of 24 years for Athletics at Marist Brothers High School here in Suva, Fiji. The role of a Marist Lay Vocation automatically attaches to the role. And am glad to share some aspects in that view.

Athletics or track & field is a very competitive sport renown and participated the world over at various levels of competition and tiers. This is a sport that is one of the cornerstones for Character Building in Marist Brothers High School. The Brothers and pioneer teachers saw Track & Field as one that would be a great vehicle to advocate the life of St Marcellin Champagnat and their everyday life as a scholar.

Athletics in MBHS in Fiji holds a very prominent and affectionate place in the hearts of the Marist Brother the Old Scholars and Friends of the school for the unique feature that every Marist Athletes displays during competition. That feature is of course the Charism of Champagnat projected in a Marist Athlete.

I would like to share a few examples of such characters of what makes a great Marist Athletes

1. Embrace your competitors with the upmost respect. – You give him your best effort as he is worthy of your very best. If he is ahead of you, never give up. You Must fight to the end.
2. You must be Modest in all your victories, turn

as the victor and acknowledge your competitors for without him you would not have achieved a great performance

3. You must be Gracious in the face of defeat, accept you place and acknowledge the victor for pushing you to your limit. A lesson learnt that one day with better preparation you will also give him another fair go.
4. Always begin with the Team at heart, your love for the members of your family the sacrifices of your personal preparation, your subject teachers, classmates, siblings, your coaches and managers and most importantly for yourself and

God. You are a representative of them all and you must make them proud and show them that you care.

5. You are the image of the school, you are presentable, respectful, positive, motivating, happy and always willing to show that you are a leader.

6. You must be aware of the rules of competition make every use of its content advance the name of your school and always strive for Victory.

I would also like to share on my personal Philosophy as a Coach and its relation with the Marist Lay Vocation.

'To effectively coach individuals or teams to realise their best potential through Holistic developments, and true acceptance as a key to strive of excellence'. My role as a coach and leader has always encompassed by philosophy to ensure that every season my effort to mould, teach and coach student athletes with the same effect. With the changes in scientific



breakthrough, I have found my philosophy open to further learning and research to ensure the holistic development of the athletes that come to my stable will eventually part with a fuller understanding of ones self, life and a tool that can be used beyond the education realm to be champions of life. This culture of winning is in fact the residue of the Advocacy of the Marist Lay beyond the Education boundaries.

The Marist Charisms and how it compliments the development of a Champion Athlete and peak performances in my humble experience and knowledge has a key factor to many success stories beyond the perimeters of track and field and has forged into great servicemen of society taking with them the teachings of being a Marist of Champagnat in whatever endeavour their life chooses.

Looking Beyond in Solidarity

Rebecca Bromhead - CEO Australian Marist Solidarity

As I reflect about what the phrase 'solidarity' means for my lay Marist vocation there are many familiar definitions and phrases, but this is my favourite: Solidarity arises when we remember that we belong to each other. What a beautiful, rich sentiment. It makes me feel warm and connected. But, importantly, it is also a deep challenge. For when we belong to one another we are responsible for one another.

I'm an Australian woman from Ngunawal country, currently living in Brisbane. I'm a member of the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat in Australia and the new Province of the Star of the Sea. I also have the great privilege of leading Australian Marist Solidarity and sitting on the Board of FMSI. In each of these settings, solidarity is integral to our Marist identity and mission and requires us to go beyond our personal experiences and our comfort zones to seek and build a more just world for one another.

In the Association, we walk together as Marists in a local community, close enough in proximity to gather regularly, share our daily lives and form one another through the presence of our Marist relationships. In our new Province we journey together, from our homes across 11 countries and many more language and cultural groups, towards a world that can access and experience the diverse but unified Marian face of our church. As Marist international development agencies we believe in solidarity as the primary motivator for our work and efforts, to



ensure that resources are shared more equitably and to build communities that can share with and learn from each other for a more peaceful and just world. A recent online collaboration by Marists in the Asia Pacific region has used the papal encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, as a vehicle for exploring how Marists from diverse experiences and backgrounds understand and build solidarity in our local and regional communities. We meet new Marist friends, pray together and share how these themes play out in our own lives and communities. It has been a rich and blessed experience of both walking in solidarity together and looking beyond to how and what we are called to be in our world. My Marist vocation is all the richer for the opportunity to hear and learn from more of my Marist neighbours.

It is God who seeks us first – Looking Beyond: Formation

Anthony Clarke - Director Mission and Life Formation

During an interview last year Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ, President of the European Bishops Conference, spoke about the challenges facing the Church: the increasing secularisation of Europe, the declining numbers of believers, fewer churchgoers, and of the diminishing influence of the Church in society. At this time of crisis in the Church, he said, “What should I do? I was faced with a choice. Either renounce my faith because I could not find the ways that I knew, or start an inner journey. I chose the second option.” He went on to say that he came to the powerful realisation that “before I could proclaim God, I had to become a seeker of God.” It arises from the fundamental belief that we are all seekers. Its importance is also captured poignantly by the question of Jesus in his very first words spoken in the Gospel of John: “What is it you seek?”. Recently I was speaking with a 17-year-old Marist student about the current context of the world and he identified the challenges we are facing, including, concern for the environment, issues of inequality and the devastating effects of war. He said, “It’s true, that’s the reality of the world. But I believe we are all created for something, something more. You know, to be something more.” I think that formation at its best will be about how we accompany the seekers, how we walk with those whose innate desire invites and opens them to explore the ‘something more’.

Our Marist spirituality document, *Water from the Rock*, says, “Life is a mystery that is revealed as it unfolds. Even after many years, much

still remains hidden to us. This continual unravelling of our inner depths is dynamic, provoking and challenging – an ongoing invitation to keep on searching.”(n.44) In looking beyond, our challenge is to continue to explore and find pathways or itineraries that provide opportunities and experiences that will support the seekers in their search. I’m sure it will invite something new, bringing a freshness, a richer experience of life, even amidst the complexity of our time: “These vast and rapid changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness’ (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 41). It is also encouraging to remember that in our seeking, seeking ‘to be more’, seeking to be a new way of being Church, seeking ways as Marists to bring Christ-life to birth, it is God who seeks us first. God is utterly and hopelessly in love with us, walking with us, loving us into something more that cannot be contained. St Catherine of Siena captured the essence of this beautifully, saying, “Be who God created you to be and you will set the world on fire”.



Looking Beyond Lavalla 200>

Silvia Martinez Garcia - Sydney, Australia

From the first year I started working in a Marist school in Palencia (Spain), I felt part of this global family. The values they promoted - such as simplicity, presence, closeness - and their charism made me consider myself a Marist.

After a few years, together with my partner, I did my first international volunteering followed by three others. I felt that these experiences were part of my life project, trying to do my bit on the peripheries, and I was very lucky that he, Rubén Galego, also felt this way.

About 3 years ago we got to know the international communities LaValla200> which tried to reach out and help young people in areas or situations in need, but which went a little further by being mixed intercultural communities. The LaValla200> communities include brothers and lay Marists from different parts of the world live together under the same roof with the important premise that we are equally sharing life and mission. After some formation and discernment, we decided to get involved in this great experi-

ence and we are now part of the LaValla200> community in Mount Druitt, considered to be one of the most socially deprived suburbs of Australia. I am very grateful to this Marist project for several reasons: for giving me the opportunity to get to know closely the reality and culture of the other members of my community, as well as that of the country itself, especially the Aboriginal culture by collaborating in their community centre, and also for being able to support the students in MLZ to re-engage in their learning.



Looking Beyond with Marist180 Compassion

Patrick O'Reilly - Director Mission and Identity, Sydney Australia

Exploring the roots of words, and the way they translate from one language to another, highlights the limits and challenges this presents.

Tracing 'compassion' back to the Ancient Greek, one rich element of the term emerges-it is a verb in the language of 'middle voice'. Our English is largely limited to either 'passive' or 'active' voice.

The 'middle' offers us something plentiful: middle, in that compassion engages our gut, our heart. And middle in the sense that it sits between passive and active-ideally it captures us, moves us, from passive to active.

In 1896, a group of St Vincent De Paul society members, and Marist Brothers, responded to or with a 'middle' voice, and jointly founded St Vincent Boys Home, Westmead, for orphaned or marginalised boys. The beginnings of

Marist180 are found, are traced to St Vincents.

Today Marist180 serves marginalised children and young people in Out of Home Care, or who are homeless or Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (Refugee Orphans), or who are First Nations and/or at risk, seeking care, support, training, skills, employment, a new or fresh start, in Sydney, Regional NSW (Orange and Newcastle), and Brisbane.

Marist180 has five values-one of which is compassion. Attending a Marist school, and having served in two Marist schools, something in my 'middle' drew or lead me to Marist180. I am privileged to serve in the role of Director Mission and Identity. Our impressive, committed Marist180 staff look daily both within and beyond with compassion, as St Marcellin did. Long may that be so.



Living Beyond with a Marist Heart

Australians, from our First Nations communities to today's multicultural kaleidoscope, are a traveling people. This makes us all natural ambassadors. And for the Australian lay Marist community, a sense of adventure and urge for dynamism mean we can be beacons of St Marcellin's teachings and Mary's role model wherever our journeys take us.

As an Australian diplomat posted outside Oceania to India, I have been called to the challenge of bringing the Marist Heart beyond. Without straying into missionary service, India's pluralistic DNA creates much space for lay service; this is where my Marist laity has thrived. The Marist charism abounds here even if not in the forms familiar to us.

From joint families in rural townships to nuclear units in metropolitan centres, I observe Presence, Family Spirit and Love of Work. And when living away from home, these experiences are the ones that bring nostalgia and comfort.

Within a community that is challenging its own secular assumptions and trying to build social cohesion, laity has taken on a new face. There is scope to find analogies between themes of St Marcellin's own writing and indigenous literature of this region: the ubiquitous symbolism of Strength and Gentleness is one such example. What remains abundantly clear though is that there is still a need to share these messages, though there must be care given to language and tone.

So from my perspective as a lay Marist from Oceania living out a vocation beyond, I see our purpose and I see the challenge and opportunities that came with it. And with all the complexities that increased global connectivity give us, lay faith

Paroksh Prasad - Australian Diplomat, India

seems a commendable way to give clarity amid the chaos. As we continue along our respective national, community and individual journeys, our collective Marist charism will set us in good stead.



This photo is of a design made of rice flour in front of a person's home as decoration. It all starts from a series of dots, beginning with one right at the centre. It then becomes such an intricate piece of artistic design. But it also has a life. By the next morning, it'll have been washed away and recreated.

There's something to be said about laity in India's spiritual pluralism. All communities around the world are ultimately groups of individuals who each have interpersonal relationships i.e. dots and lines connecting them. Our vocation as lay Marists is to try bring the relationships together in such a way as to form an artistic web of love and kindness. The lotus; an unblemished specimen. Despite only growing in the mud, its petals are left untouched by impurity. Amid the chaos and cacophony of today's society, lay Marist charism and faith can still bring forth Marian purity and grace.

Looking Beyond in the Breath of the Spirit

Br Graham Neist - Sydney, Australia



One of things that is clear about the Spirit from the scriptures is that the Spirit is dynamic, always moving Life beyond. If we consider 'vocation' from the perspective of the Spirit... vocation is an ongoing dialogue with Spirit about how I will express 'my goodness' into Life.

If we think of this through the image of 'breathing' we can get a new understanding: the intention of each breath is to lead to the next breath, and this present breath is a direct gift of the last breath. No dysfunctional separating of the past, present and future (beyond). This is how it is with Spirit.

Rather than 'looking beyond' which implies I am

static in the now trying to stretch my look to the future, the Spirit is continuously 'leaning beyond' – now is always leaning into the future (the beyond!

If we choose, we can live in this 'breath of the Spirit', always leaning into the beyond, propelled by the now and supported by a past. In truth if we are stuck in the past or clinging to the now – we have stopped breathing!

One of the joys of my life as a Marist Brother has been to observe lay Marists as parents – their 'becoming' children continuously drawing them into the beyond and the parents, 'victims of their love', choosing 'Yes'. Sounds a bit like Mary.

Many regions, one mission

Mark O'Farrell - Assistant Director Secretariat of the Laity, Sydney Australia

A few years ago Pope Francis used the term 'We' in relation to the common journey we are all on as humans towards building a world grounded in justice and peace, with no one excluded, to ensure that the "We" is stronger than the single individual. This was a theme at the recent International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation in Rome I attended representing my home province of Australia. The forum opened my eyes to a much bigger 'We' in our Marist world. Marists from all over the globe coming together for a week to build bridges, share stories and

unite in our common experiences of bringing the Marist mission to birth in our different places. It was huge!

One of the Marists I met was Bao Nguyen, a young Marist Brother from the Marist District of Asia (MDA) living in Vietnam. He spoke of the joys and challenges of being Marist in a non-Christian country and we shared many stories of the diversity and similarities about our two regions and got to know each other well walking, eating good food and of course that essential ingredient, coffee!

I remember meeting him on the first day and his boundless energy struck me when a group of volunteers were being collected to do some jobs, a typical Marist 'invitation'. Before I knew it, Bao was climbing onto the roof to hang our Forum banner. I remember laughing and thinking this is different to Australia, no work safety practices here. In that moment Bao reminded me of a young Marcellin, he simply rolled up his sleeves and got into the work. Before long the banner was blowing in the wind ready to greet our new arrivals; Global Marists of Champagnat, Welcome to Roma!

In lots of ways the photo and story is a good example of 'the work' we were engaged in during the forum and the work that continues through each of us beyond the forum. What remains for me are these bonds of friendship and two overriding mes-



sages I believe that connects all Marists, our sense of mission and family spirit. These were on show throughout the Forum in the many symbols we experienced. What started as a group of two from Vietnam and Australia with our banner task had others helping and joining from Africa, Brasil, and Spain and PNG. It was the Marist family in action at a moment's notice calling on others to help us. Many hands get the job done.

Our closing mass in the General House chapel was full of colour displaying maps of our Marist world on the altar with a simple candle attached to each. It's a beautiful image of our work as an offering to God that Mary and Marcellin watches over. What connects Bao and I, and all other Marists around the 80 countries is 'the work', the mission we are all engaged in. Part of this work is how we support and collaborate with each other across regions. This is vital. The candle represents the light that Christ brings and reminds us our work is ultimately in God's hands. Like the first Marists, Bao spoke of a dream, a project, to connect our two regions in this work. I too trust in the providence of God, like Mary did at the Annunciation, and this project will unfold this year as we work together to bring it to life.

'We Marists' are a large, rich and vibrant global family with many strengths and talents that united is

a powerful force for good in our world. When the Marist family collaborates and connects our simple aim is to share and support each other across and within regions in our combined mission to bring the light of the gospel to those to whom we minister. I hope this year brings much of this connection and sharing that enlivens each of us that proudly calls themselves a Champagnat Marist and walks in the footsteps of our founder to work across regions and borders to 'look beyond'.

Extra (if you wish to include Star of the Sea)

Meanwhile since November the Marist fami-

ly has expanded in my region through the new Star of the Sea Province, a province largely of eleven island nations with much geography and distance north to south and east to west. Like Asia, it is a large province of many isolated areas where Marists minister. Star of the Sea has connections already to Bo's region of Asia through work in Cambodia in a school for victims of land mines and opening educational opportunities for children in rural villages in Pailin. As well many Australian brothers have been involved in supporting Formation ministry in Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Marist District of Asia (MDA), who are we?

Br Bao Nguyen - Vietnam

I am Br. Bao Nguyen, a young Vietnamese Brother who have been with the Marist Brothers since September 10th, 2010. I still remember vividly how I came to know the missionary Marists who came and lived in my little parish in hometown for a good period of time. Their simplicity and trust in the Providence is inspiring not only to the young people like me, but also to many lay people who happens come to know them. Fourteen years have passed, many missionary Brothers have concluded their contracts and returned to their home Provinces, and a few have deceased, leaving their hope and dream behind.

They also inspired a good number of young men who have now professed as Marist Brothers and begun their search for Marcelin's spirit in their own lands. MDA is present in seven countries where the Catholic faith is in the minority, although we have worked with many good-hearted people who are from other faiths, however, they all come to witness Marist's spirit in various ways and are captivated to share Marcelin's dream with us. Nevertheless, there are still significant challenges to get anywhere close to what we would like, insufficient knowledge about Marist, and a growing distance between the Catholic faith and the faith of other religions. As a result, the future groundwork of a lay movement has proved to



be quite different from that of other regions with a longer Marist presence. We must admit that cannot do what other Marists in other countries with a long and rich history of Marist presence do; we cannot afford to do what other countries with Marist school systems where laypeople work full-time do. However, looking beyond regions and the richness in diversity that we uphold in different cultures and faiths, there is great hope that Marists from MDA and other Marists from other provinces can work more closely in pursuing what Marcelin was able to see when he stood on that mountain looking over the valley in which the foundation of Marists around the world are presence.

Looking beyond with care

Dave Moore - Marist College Canberra

It was a significant challenge for me to see our monastery come crashing down a few years ago. It was the heart of the school and ultimately left a hollowness for me as a Marist, who had many lasting memories of the work of the Brothers in Canberra. These men were part of my life from when I was in primary school with my mum and family adopting a few brothers into our life. Mum was a member of staff and we'd often have brothers come over for a meal or family celebration. The Brothers taught me many things but the most valuable lesson I learnt was their love of work for the betterment of others. Yes, they started and finished their day in prayer, but a larger portion of that day was spent working. Like the words from the book of James they lived the passage "You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and

his faith was made complete by what he did." In 2018 Marist College Canberra began Marist Community Meals, making meals for the vulnerable in our community. Meals made by staff and students after school are portioned, frozen and then sent out to the St Vincent de Paul Society and our local parish for distribution. Over the past 5 years thousands of meals have been made by close to 100 students. One of the great successes of this program is not just nutritious food making its way into the community, but also the time staff spend working with the young men to 'roll up the sleeves' and work for the good of others. The monastery might no longer be on campus, but our students carry on the work of the Brothers by working to nourish those less fortunate in our community.



Looking Beyond from another Spirituality

Michael McVeigh - Head of Publishing and Digital Content Jesuit Communications, Melbourne Australia



You could say that I'm the product of three Catholic charisms. I was educated at a Christian Brothers school in Melbourne. I became involved in youth ministry with the Marists after attending a young adult retreat, met my wife through that community, and still have many good relationships with Marist brothers and lay people. Finally, I have worked for the Australian Jesuits as a journalist and editor for the last 17 years.

Given my role, I've spent the most time learning about the Ignatian Spirituality of the Jesuits. It's a way of engaging with God that involves prayerful reflection in order to discern what God is asking of me at any particular time. The risk of the Ignatian approach is that it becomes too 'heady', too caught

up in thought rather than action.

When I was a young adult, I took part in a Marist youth ministry program called 'Being There', where we spent a week immersed in the daily life of a Catholic ministry. During that week, I volunteered at a home for alcoholic men. The experience helped me see what we mean when we talk about living out our faith.

That phrase, 'being there', sums up my appreciation of the Marist charism. The Marists I know best - including my wife and the brothers who have mentored me - have the gift of being able to just be present with people. That presence witnesses to me of a faith beyond words, beyond the 'head', where all of us are in companionship with others and with God.

Looking Beyond as Marist Bridge Builders

Chris Wills - Australia



All Marist Administrative Units of the Oceania Region became the new Star of the Sea province on 8th December 2022. Twelve countries Cambodia, Timor Leste, Australia, PNG, Solomon Is, Bougainville, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Kiribati, Aotearoa/NZ, Fiji, and Samoa.

We in the south are often thought of as being quite isolated because of the distances and time needed to come together. But we are enthusiastic Marists strongly committed to Journeying Together as a Global Family.

Volunteering is a good way of starting the Journey. We stand ready to WELCOME other Marists who have come to us just as Marists from other regions have welcomed volunteers from the south. The result is that we are connected – we are a Global Family.

Covid has dampened our ability to start the journey, but now that we have nearly learned to safely live with the virus, Marists are joining international communities as volunteers. Some are travelling to other regions others are joining international

communities within the new province.

A few examples: Silvia and Ruben from Spain and Kimberly from Philippines have joined the Laval-la200> at Mount Druitt.

Lavalla School in Cambodia is about to welcome two volunteers: Tony a teacher from Australia and Mona an English teacher from Germany.

Kath, Peter and Mick are three Marists planning or researching volunteering in Timor Leste.

Just before the onset of Covid Pat and Brad, two law students completed an internship with our office at the United Nations. They brought their skills back home and organised school students to engage in the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Australia. The young students were congratulated by members of 15 permanent missions (embassies to The UN) and one of them, Zain was invited to address the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Aotearoa/NZ and Cambodia are due for their UPR soon and it would be good to repeat this experience.

Looking Beyond in Marist Leadership

Dr. John Kyle-Robinson - Regional Director Marist Schools Australia (NSW & ACT)

I want something for my heart.

Recently I had the chance to speak with a group of Marist school students. The students had joined Game Changers, the Australian Youth Ministry program offered in 19 Dioceses across this vast continent. When I asked the students why they had joined Game Changers, one told me that while he had a full life with family, study, sports, and lots of friends in his new school, he had joined Game Changers because he wanted something more. In his words, he wanted “something for his heart.”

This student was one of over 50 000 young people educated in the 56 Australian Marist schools in Australia. He lives in the Australian State of New South Wales. New South Wales stretches from the coast to the desert, from the sub-tropical north to the vast farms that are home to many Marist families. New

South Wales is over three times the size of the whole United Kingdom, bigger than Turkey or Pakistan and the home to 23 Marist school communities. Some say its capital, Sydney is the most Marist city in the world though I think there would be fierce competition across the Marist world for that title!

For over 150 years Marist of Champagnat have provided a high-quality Catholic education to young people. Today, considering all the dimensions and complexity of educating young people and for that matter, the partnership that exists with teachers, families, and the broader Church, that 12-year-old boys reflection provides perhaps an insight on the future of Marist leadership – enhance a full life, present Jesus and his vision of how life was meant to be, provide high quality Catholic education, but please also ‘do something for my heart’.



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

- [Lay Marists in Africa](#)
- [Maristas Ibérica Innovation Days](#)
- [Vocational Assembly of Compostela](#)
- [Spirituality in mission - XIX Marist International Mission Commission](#)
- [Meeting of representatives of the Marist educational institutions of the Province of L'Hermitage](#)
- [Nurturing growth of Marist life in East Asia Province](#)
- [Lay Marists founded a school to Educate and Evangelize in Sullana](#)
- [100 years of Marist presence in Central America](#)
- [The Teams of the Marist Europe Region update the Strategic Plan](#)
- [Regional Assembly of Arco Norte](#)
- [Marist Symposium announced for December](#)
- [Marist International Network of Higher Education makes positive balance of 2022](#)

#LayMaristVocation

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