

Star MESSENGER

Dear Brothers

You may recall that last week I wrote about the need for Word and Eucharist to be at the centre of our fraternal life.

I return to that theme today. The Emmaus story was last Sunday's Gospel. What does it tell us? Two essential things. First, that the disciples found their "hearts burning" within them as Jesus talked and opened the Scriptures to them as they walked along. Secondly, it was when "He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them" that "their eyes were opened and they recognised Jesus". Emmaus captures the profound significance of Word and Eucharist for the followers of Jesus. Both bring Jesus to us. Both strengthen our faith. Both help create bonds of unity.

I'd like to focus on the place of the Word in our communities. We pray in community, and the prayers vary in style, length and engagement. That is our reality. However, I believe that we should take more time to ponder the Word of God together, and to share our thoughts, experiences and reactions.

The importance of this was brought home to me during a conversation the Steering Committee had before last year's Chapter with Bishop Tim Norton SVD. We asked Tim, who has done much work in cross-cultural awareness, to speak with us about ways we could help create inter-cultural sensitivity. From his experience, he suggested that one of the most powerful ways of achieving this within a community was to share the Word. He explained that deliberately structuring opportunities to listen to, ponder and share the Word together helps to build and strengthen fraternity. A major reason for this is that in sharing our response to the Word, we share ourselves. It takes us into our lives, our experiences, our faith. We share parts of ourselves that we don't

when sitting around watching television or working in the kitchen. In sharing our thoughts on the Word and the prayers that flow from it, we are expressing our inner hopes and desires in the context of our faith. Sharing the Word builds unity.

Pondering the Word is literally foundational for members of Religious Institutes. St John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation on the Consecrated Life and its Mission, *Vita Consecrata*, tells us that:

"The Word of God is the first source of all Christian spirituality... Founders and foundresses were inspired by these texts in accepting their vocation and in discerning the charism and mission of their Institutes...Meditation of the Bible in common is of great value. When practised according to the possibilities and circumstances of life in community, this meditation leads to a joyful sharing of the riches drawn from the word of God, thanks to which brothers or sisters grow together and help one another to make progress in the spiritual life". [#94]

To share the Word is not only to nurture our own faith, but to also exercise our responsibility to support and assist our Brothers on their own journey of faith.

Marist Pilgrimage

The 2023 Pilgrimage finishes tomorrow. From all reports, it has been a marvellous experience for all participants. Sincere gratitude to leaders, Michael Green, Tony Clarke, Carole Wark and Fr Tom Stevens. **John Hazelman** will return to the Province promptly. He will come to Australia to meet with Bryan Davis and Darren Burge about formation matters and visit his family in Wollongong. **Michael Green** will follow soon after. I express my gratitude to Michael Flanagan, Matthew Clarke and Peter Ciezak from Hunters Hill, who have supported the community in Michael's absence – particularly during a recent COVID outbreak that saw nine Brothers infected. **Peter Conolly** is following the Pilgrimage with a programme on St Paul and a visit to family who are living overseas.



Mid Life Renewal

Similarly, the Institute's mid-life renewal programme (formerly known as the Second Novitiate) also finishes tomorrow. **Finan Valei** and **Simon Serero** will head home to Port Moresby and **Afaese** will travel to Auckland for health checks before returning to Samoa. The Brothers have valued the opportunity, enjoyed the programme and benefited from the rich experience of inter-cultural community. Thanks to Michael Sexton and the team for their support of our Star of the Sea Brothers, as well as the other participants. Thanks to those in Port Moresby, particularly Sixtus Winduo, who has been Acting Community Leader, and those at St Joseph's, who have enabled Finan and Afaese to take this opportunity.

Br Dominic Stewart

Dom (or Neil) has moved from Mercy Place Abbotsford to **Mercy Place Keon Park, Melbourne**. The reason for this is the closure of the Abbotsford facility. All residents have now been relocated. Dom moved last Friday and was assisted by Michael Herry and John Varney (Melbourne nurse). He appears to have settled well. His new home is near Reservoir and so a little further from Fitzroy North. Brothers in Melbourne are invited to visit Dom and talk about the old days!



Br Peter Carroll

Provincial