

Star MESSENGER

Dear Brothers

Last week's extended Council meeting in Brisbane was beneficial on a number of levels. We valued the chance to have fuller discussions about significant issues, longer and deeper than is available in the normal six-hour online meetings. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with local Champagnat Marists: the senior staff of Marist College Ashgrove, the Board and staff of Australian Marist Solidarity, other supporters, friends and Association Members. We appreciated the hospitality of the Brothers at Ashgrove and Rosalie, and the chance to talk with them informally. Importantly, the time together helped consolidate our relationship as a team, committed to common values and purpose and working collaboratively in a complementary fashion. Our daily prayer together was significant, giving us time to share our faith and life. Finally, while Greg and Sefo might have found it slightly cooler than Timor Leste or Samoa, the rest of us appreciated the relative warmth and sunshine of a Queensland winter.

Province Development

Council talked at length about Province vision and directions. Over the last six months, we have all gained valuable insights into the diversity and richness of our Marist mission and life. We also considered the ideas that emerged from the Chapter and the wealth of material that was provided by the pre-Province Working Groups, summarised in the Synthesis document. Much of the written documents have been the basis of our prior discussions, especially in designing the Province Commissions, Committees and Task Forces.

In terms of Province vision, what emerged from our discernment was **Communio**. The word doesn't mean much outside Church circles but is the solid foundation of Christian faith and life. *Trinity*: communio of Father, Son, Spirit. *Church*: communio of believers. *Synodality*: communio of decision making. *Sacraments*: communio of the human and Divine. I could go on. The concept was enlivened by the work of the second Vatican Council and has been the focus of much dialogue in recent decades. Dictionaries tell us that the Latin word "*communio*" translates into English as *participation*, *collective*, *community* when used as a noun, and as *establish*, *construct*, *strengthen* as a verb. This emphasises that Communio is not simply a 'thing' but is more dynamic; there's an element of evolution, growing, becoming.

To put some words around it, Council would express the vision for the Province thus:

As a geographically expansive and culturally diverse area, our vision for the Star of the Sea Province is Communio: nurturing, sustaining, and witnessing to life-giving community and mission, enlivened by our shared Faith and Champagnat spirit.

This is draft and while we are conscious that Vision Statements should be concise, it will probably be developed further. However, it gives an initial indication of our thinking. We welcome comments or suggestions.

Communication

For any community of any size, effective communication is essential. Our internal communication is designed to achieve three things:

1. **Inform and advise** – keep up to date with the news about brothers and Province matters.
2. **Educate** – bring to attention issues and ideas that will assist us in our lives, faith and mission.
3. **Develop brotherhood and community** – help us know one another, our contexts and circumstances, and to develop relationships and a sense of fraternity.

Given the nature of the Star of the Sea, electronic communication is imperative. Some Brothers may think there has been an overload of email news and information over the last six months. This has been partly by design, to ensure there's an awareness and knowledge about parts of the Province we may not have had much contact with in the past.

However, at our meeting we decided to now streamline the email arrangements:

The Star – will be published **Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays** as required. This is for news and communication relevant to all Brothers in the Province.

The Star Messenger – is my personal newsletter to all Brothers in the Province and will continue to be published (mostly) on **Thursdays**.

The Regional (ANZ, AUS, Pasifika) Stars – will be reserved for **Tuesdays** as required. This is for information that relates only to Brothers in one of the designated areas of the Province.



Br Gerard Mahony

Gerard is a member of the community at 52 Crossfield Road, Glendowie (Sacred Heart College). He has been facing significant health challenges and retired from teaching at the end of last year. His health deteriorated suddenly earlier in the week, and he returned to hospital. His condition is serious. Br Peter Horide wrote to the NZ Brothers this morning:

“Our Brother Gerard remains settled in hospital where he is receiving special care. Tests and scans are being done to get a clearer picture. A small bleed has occurred in a tumour in his brain, causing Gerard to have speech difficulties. There is a possibility that he will have further surgery sometime next week. His sister has come from Wellington to be with him, and his brother will arrive from USA”.

Brothers, please keep Gerard, his family and community in your prayers.

Mrs Denise Aitken (mother of Br Robert)

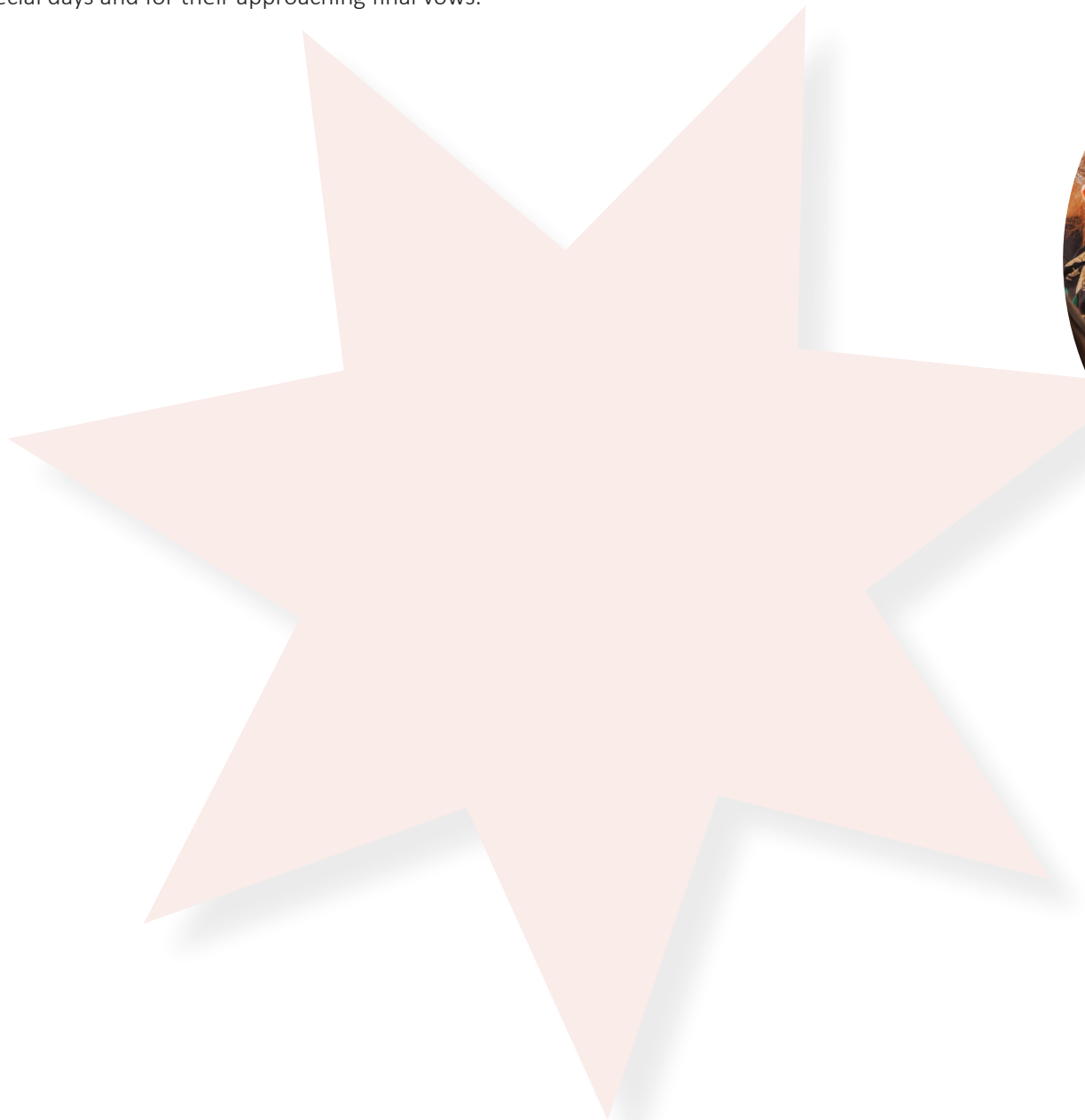
Br Robert (Mittagong community) informed us that his mother died peacefully last night. She suffered a stroke last week and has been receiving palliative care since then. I have offered Robert our sympathy and assurance of prayerful support.

Brothers Hudson Horoto and Raphael Fakaia

Hudson and Raphael are preparing for their Final Professions which will take place at St Joseph’s College Tenaru, Solomon Islands on 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption. They both participated in last year’s Pre-Final Vows programme coordinated by Tony Leon and Bryan Davis, and today they arrived in Sydney to take time for a retreat. I know all wish them well for these special days and for their approaching final vows.



Br Peter Carroll
Provincial





Last week the LaValla community celebrated the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the school which has grown into the LaValla Project. A prayer service was held where the story of the start of LaValla was retold and all those who have played a part in the last 25 years (Brothers, students, staff and donors) were remembered and offered blessings. After hearty renditions of “Happy Birthday LaValla” and the LaValla school song, a dance was held to celebrate this important anniversary. This was a day of joy and happiness to remember all that has been achieved over the past 25 years. Whilst this was a special day for everyone, for a number of staff who have been part of the LaValla story from its foundation, the day was also a celebration of their long contribution to Marist Solidarity Cambodia and disabled youth in Cambodia. For more photos, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/MaristSolidarityCambodia/>



BR TONY BURROWS AND BR BRIAN KINSELLA WITH SIX STAFF MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN AT LAVALLA FOR THE WHOLE 25 YEARS!

