



MSA Newsletter

A newsletter for Member Schools of Marist Schools Australia published fortnightly during term time



From Brother Michael Green

19 June 2012

Dear Members of the Marist Family

As a Principal, I was involved with the design of a couple of large multi-purpose halls. Heavily involved. From a distance I have also observed critically the building of some others. There's more than a little of the frustrated architect in me. Quite a lot, actually. I'm the kind of person who can't go into a building or onto a campus without immediately redesigning the whole thing in my head.

One of my particular concerns with big school halls is always how the acoustics will work. I have other concerns, of course, for such buildings: the style of lighting, the fittings, the floors, the colours, the building lines, the general ambience. But acoustics are right up there because they will define so much of the experience for users of the space. The inclusion of a top-drawer acoustics consultant on the design team is an essential for me. It's all about the quality of sound. What do you want to hear really well? Which sounds would you like to amplify? Which ones to resonate? Which ones to soften? Which ones to disappear altogether? Which to be clear and true? Usually, there are competing aims, such as the desire to reverberate and reward the vibrancy of congregational singing in a liturgy, against the wish to deaden the annoying bouncing of the basketballs or the screech of gym shoes in court games. I have learned that it is quite possible to achieve a "both-and" solution, and not be left with an "either-or" one, but it does take some imagination and decision.

What acoustic engineering do we build into our schools? I mean this in a spiritual sense. Let me ask a more pointed question: do our school "acoustics" allow us, as staff and students, to hear the voice of God in our school contexts? How well? Is it lost or conflicted amidst other "noise"? Can it be heard only faintly? Or is it too loud and perhaps distorted?

We and our students live in environments of sensory busyness. We make them like that. Even while in bed, we leave the mobile on. Yet Pope Benedict reminded pilgrims recently that to hear God speak to us we need to have both "interior" and "exterior" silence. He spoke of the "principle of silence" in prayer: "Only in silence can the Word find a place to dwell in us."

Many of our schools have invested considerable resources into creating chapels or prayer spaces. Typically, they are calm and beautiful oases – warm, inviting, quiet, well sited and well used. Most importantly, they are open. I find that there is nothing as symbolically closed as the locked door of a chapel or church. It's as if to say, "We're not doing God just now. That's for another time of the week."

Beyond these sacred spaces, what kinds of physical or figurative silence do we foster in schools, with a view to helping the voice of God to be heard? Some schools have commissioned wonderful works of art which give people reason to pause and to reflect. This year alone there are, for example, two new sculptures of St Marcellin in Australian Marist schools. Most schools have given much thought to the symbolism of their reception foyers. Many have ways of honouring and hearing the Scriptures, for example at Assembly. Some schools have quiet times built into their daily timetables or lesson structures. Others have practices that ensure things such as the harshness of the PA system or the crowdedness of stairwells are minimised or at least humanised. Usually, briefings and meetings give time for a prayer that is well prepared and not just something perfunctory or rushed. We have many ways. Which is great, because God has much to say.

It is well, nonetheless, that we sometimes step back – like a good acoustics engineer would do for a hall – to do some sound-testing and to evaluate the overall design. Is it working for us? Are sounds we want to be heard getting lost or smothered? Can the Gospel be heard here?

Nisi Dominus

Brother Michael Green FMS
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

COMING UP...

18 July Twilight Retreat, St Michael's Daceyville
 22 – 25 July Footsteps #02, The Hermitage Mittagong
 25 July Montagne Centre Staff Formation Day, Brunswick
 29 – 30 July Studies Coordinators' Retreat Day, St Francis Xavier College
 30 July Marist Pedagogy (1), MArist College Kogarah
 30 July MSA/MLF Regional Melbourne Meeting
 30 July – National Formation Network Meeting, Adelaide
 1 Aug
 4 – 5 Aug Berne Staff Family Retreat, Mittagong
 6 Aug Marist Pedagogy (2)

7 Aug Mary, the Mature Disciple, St Francis Xavier College
 9 – 11 Aug Proclaim 2012 - Conference on the New Evangelisation - The Concourse, Chatswood
 10 Aug MSA Leadership Team Meeting - Drummoyne
 12 – 15 Aug Mission Assembly
 17 Aug Petrie 25 Years Mass - Mount Maria College
 17 Aug Rockhampton Diocesan Education Council
 17 Aug Staff Spirituality Day - Red Bend Catholic College
 19–22 Aug Footsteps #03 - The Hermitage Mittagong
 24 Aug Staff Formation Day - Marcellin College Bulleen
 26–28 Aug Living Champagnat's Vision Retreat - Santa Teresa, Alice Springs

FAREWELL MIRA WELCOME LEANNE

At the end of this week we bid a sad farewell to Mira Fraser who has been PA in the National Office of MSA since our inception in 2010. Mira is leaving us to undertake some travel abroad. She will be greatly missed and we record our deep appreciation for all she has done in these early years of MSA.



Photo L to R: Leanne Bajada and Mira Fraser

A very warm welcome to Leanne Bajada who will be replacing Mira at the Montagne Centre from next week. Leanne's email is: leanne.bajada@marists.org.au

FIRST PROVINCIAL OF THE PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA

Last week Br Emili Turú, our Brother Superior General, confirmed the appointment of Brother Jeffrey Crowe as the Provincial of the Province of Australia.

We would like to congratulate Jeff and wish him well in his new role.

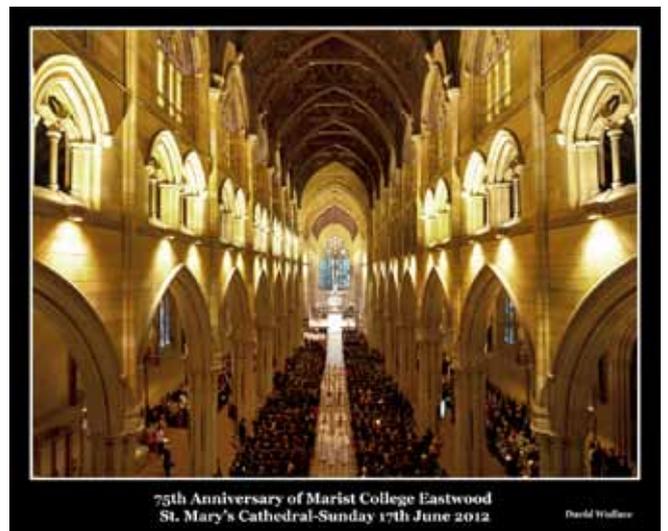
We would also like to thank Brother Julian Casey as Julian has shared with Jeff the responsibility of working towards the creation of the new Province, with all the many challenges this has involved. His generous and wise leadership of Marist life and mission over many years has been greatly appreciated.

We are very blessed in the quality and generosity of our leaders at all levels of Marist life. We are most grateful to Brother Jeffrey Crowe for accepting this appointment to lead us into our future together as Marists in our new Province.

75TH JUBILIEE MASS FOR MARIST COLLEGE EASTWOOD

Next year's Marist pilgrimage – which will include the Holy land, Rome, and the Hermitage – has created quite a deal of interest.

Application forms are due THIS WEEK, please send to Br Michael Akers, michael.akers@marists.org.au



CHAMPAGNAT WEEK 2012

The opportunity for members of the MLF team to visit a number of our schools around the country for their Champagnat Week Masses and celebrations was, as always, a great celebration of the deep Marist story and tradition so well embedded within our schools and ministries. The same of course has been true throughout the Marist ministries and schools in our Melbourne hub and also throughout Queensland and northern NSW.

What is so apparent in these visits is the energy and enthusiasm with which the students, their teachers and parents own and celebrate the man, Marcellin Champagnat, and the gift he is to all of us. They know him and love him; they speak his language and know his story. This is a great tribute to staff who have so enthusiastically taken up our Marist story and effectively used the excellent Marist resources that are compiled and distributed to all schools and ministries each year.

Of particular note at two of our Sydney area schools – St Patrick's Marist College, Dundas [celebrating their 50 years as a Marist school] and St Gregory's College, Campbelltown and at Marist College Emerald in Queensland, Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon was that the local Bishops – Anthony Fisher OP, Parramatta; Peter Ingham, Wollongong and Brian Heenan, Rockhampton, Christopher Prowse, Sale, not only presided at these events but spoke with affection and considerable knowledge of the Marist story and celebrated the contribution our schools and Colleges have made and continue to make to the educational endeavours of our Catholic Parishes and Dioceses.

The weekend just passed, Marist College Eastwood celebrated their 75 years with their Champagnat Mass at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney.

A striking feature at many of these events has been the acknowledgement of student 'Champagnat Awards' recognising those many young people in our schools who manifest the qualities that Marcellin taught us: tolerance, generosity, kindness, involvement. A growing tradition in many places is also the recognition of staff members who - as Br Charles Howard would have told us - "are Champagnat's for others".

Congratulations and thanks to all our Marist schools, Colleges and communities for your continuing commitment to "making Jesus Christ known and loved, in Mary's way."

In the Queensland region, Mt Maria College, Enoggera held an Assembly in the recently refurbished hall on the Enoggera site with the Brothers from Enoggera and Br João Carlos do Prado as special guests.

At one stage a group of Senior Students performed a play that highlighted significant moments in the life of Champagnat. Marist College Ashgrove held a beautiful mass in the College Hall with Bishop William Morris as Celebrant. Br Michael Callinan was the special guest: an old -boy celebrating 25 years as a Marist Brother.

Again, another highlight was the presentation of the Champagnat Awards to selected recipients: the staff member this year was popular teacher, Peter Lehman, who received sustained applause from an obviously admiring student body.

Trinity College Beenleigh celebrated a combined Trinity and Champagnat Mass in the school's Hall and followed up with a talent show that is obviously a hit each year with the students. Mt Maria Petrie's Mass was a much smaller affair but was moving and heartfelt and began with the screening of the hot off the press film released as part of the MLF Team's Champagnat Week Resources. Truly Champagnat has many faces!!



Pictured above: Brothers, staff and students after Mt Maria College, Enoggera's Champagnat Liturgy on 25 May



Pictured above: Brothers Nicholas Smith, Michael Green, PJ McGowan and Patrick Connell.

THE LUCK OF THE IRISH ...

The international nature of our shared Marist Project was made more tangible these last weeks by the visit of Marist Brothers, PJ McGowan and Nicholas Smith from Ireland. During their short stay among us both Brothers have been immersed into a mixture of Marist ministry and Australian culture! Their visit has taken them to Sydney, Melbourne, Alice Springs and Cairns. They are both very grateful for the warm hospitality extended to them.



This last fortnight has certainly been busy for the MAPS team as we've responded to a number of invitations from some MSA schools to receive and acknowledge their fund-raising efforts that took place earlier this year. We recognise that these visits can be helpful in feeding back to your students where their fund-raising is being directed, so please make contact with us if you would like a member of the team to make a visit and speak at an assembly or to class groups next term.

Our team has already commenced planning for next year's Solidarity Campaign and we have enlisted the support and expertise of Conor Ashleigh (a former student of St Francis Xavier College, Hamilton) to help guide the preliminary design stages. As a documentary photographer and multimedia storyteller, Conor is also helping us to utilise contemporary technologies to help MAPS communicate its core messages in an even more effective and transformative way.

In the last two weeks, our office has also released the first edition of *Solidarity Matters*, a new electronic newsletter designed to provide brief snapshots on some of the key projects that Australian Marists are supporting in Asia and the Pacific. To have this newsletter directly e-mailed to you, please email christian.nobleza@marists.org.au with your contact details.

As another school term draws to a close, we would like to express our thanks again to all MSA school communities for your continuing support.



Photo: Catherine Hannon (Volunteer & Advocacy Officer) visiting Trinity College, Auburn.



The Remar Ministry Team recently travelled to Alice Springs and Adelaide to run Red Caravel Days as well as



a Blue Retreat for Year 11 students from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College. Year 10

students from OLSH and Sacred Heart College embraced the concepts and realities of Christian leadership on themselves, their Caravels and wider communities. With the awesome beauty of the Australian desert as a backdrop Year 11 students from OLSH embraced the reality of God's love and the challenge and liberation in living as a disciple of Christ.



This camp, like the last one, has changed me. I have learnt that you can fit ministry hours into your daily life and what the "Our Father" really means – it's not just a prayer that I recite anymore. It was fantastic to be here with my friends and to get to know them that little bit more. I was challenged in the Step Up To The Line activity, because I really had to think about the questions and be honest with myself which was hard, but very rewarding at the same time.



I had a great time on this camp and I'm so glad that the Remar Team came to Adelaide!

Luke Milligan, Red Rower
Sacred Heart College Adelaide