



# MSA Newsletter

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



## From Brother Michael Green

29 November 2011

Dear Members of the Marist Family

Walking down Swanston Street last Thursday afternoon, I noticed that the bedraggled "Occupy Melbourne" protestors had decamped without trace from the precincts of the Town Hall, and that the Council was in the processing of installing a small forest of festooned Christmas trees in their place. A few school-aged saxophonists were busking and the familiar strains of carols filtered through the shoppers' bustle. Everything was back to normal.

There is indeed something reassuringly normal about the rhythm and rituals of this time of year. Each school tends to keep to a tried and tested script during these closing weeks: the prize-giving ceremonies and awards nights, the final liturgies, the cleaning-up and closing down, the sending of reports, the pattern of end-of-year farewells and dinners for staff, the Chrissie drinks. In shopping centres, there is little variation from year to year in the seasonal music, albeit somewhat homogenised, or the tinsel-laden trees. In the Liturgy, our weekday readings are drawn mainly from those rich and hopeful passages of the Book of Isaiah, and from the Gospel passages that describe the coming of Jesus into people's lives, especially in Matthew and Luke. They are the same readings each year, but no less heartening for that. In our families, we have our customs for gathering and celebrating. The usual people take up their usual roles and do them their usual ways. It's Advent, it's the end of the school year, it's Christmas: it's familiar. And there is good and there is healthy comfort in its being so.

The song of the angels over Bethlehem has the same key word as Jesus' message to his disciples after the Resurrection: PEACE! To this day, the greeting in Arabic *salaam* and in Hebrew *shalom* carries the Semitic sense of right order, wholeness, well-being, integrity, oneness and peace that these Scriptural verses seek to impart. God is in his heaven and all is right with the world.

Or do the seasons of Advent and Christmastide point us, on the contrary, to a quite a different and more profound truth? Certainly, they do. Brother Paul Creevey reminded us of it when praying the Grace at the Marist Ministries Mass and Dinner in Brisbane last Saturday evening. It is contained in the angel's message to Joseph in Matthew's gospel: ... *they shall call him Emmanuel, a name which means God-with-us*. God may be 'in his heaven', but the news of Jesus, celebrated with especial focus at this time of year, is that God is also in our very heart. In our day. In the stuff of every day. In our daily bread.

The ordinariness and normalcy of that can hide its wonder from us, and mostly it does, I suppose. Like the disciples at Emmaus, we do not recognise Him. The limitations of our own sight and our concerns can blind us, even discourage us. But it is the peace of Christ that is offered to us, to all of us.

As the school year winds up, let us be thankful for the many ways in which this peace has been at the heart of our life and ministry during 2011. Let us rejoice in the grace that we have had to open the eyes of young people to see it and to know it. And to respond to it.

As the weeks of Advent unfold I hope that all of us can take time to stand back in awe at the wonders God has worked in our very midst. Let our prayer be that of Mary: *He who is mighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name*. And let us hope and proclaim with her the mercy and justice that this presence of God heralds.

*Nisi Dominus*

**Brother Michael Green FMS**  
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

## COMING UP...

- Sat 3 Dec • Marist Ministries Mass & Dinner  
• Melbourne
- Mon 5 Dec • MLF Team planning day
- Tue 6 Dec • MSA Leadership Team meeting
- Thur 15 Dec • MSA Principals' Dinner - Sydney

## MARIST MINISTRIES MASSES AND DINNERS



Last Saturday evening, Marist College Ashgrove was the host for the inaugural Marist Ministries Mass and Dinner for the Brisbane Region. A large number of Marists – from Marist schools and other ministries – gathered for Mass in the College Chapel followed by a dinner in the Cyprian Pavilion.

During the dinner the Provincial, Brother Jeff Crowe gave Certificates of Marist Appreciation on behalf of the Brothers of the Province to four long-serving Marists, while the National Director, Brother Michael, presented special Service Awards to nine members of staff from five Marist schools who had been nominated by their Principals. Brother Jeff also gave special presentations to Brother Chris Wills and to David Lestrangle. The evening was also the occasion for the launch in Brisbane of the MAPS “Christmas Menu” by Brother Al Sherry.



## NEXUS :VOLUME 5

Here is the link to the latest volume of “Nexus”, the occasional newsletter on the development of the new Australian Province:

<http://www.maristoz.edu.au/Nd3Dodlo2ljo/NexusVol5email.pdf>



## LAST ISSUE FOR 2011

With a number Marist schools shutting their doors for the Christmas holidays from this week, this will be the final issue of the MSA Newsletter for 2011. MSA Offices will close on 9 December (Brisbane) and 16 December (Sydney and Melbourne), and re-open on 16 January. For urgent matters, Regional Directors can be contacted by mobile phone during the break. We wish all our readers a happy and holy Christmas, and a restful holiday with family and friends.

## STUDENT LEADERS GATHERINGS

Over the last three days, over 120 of next year's student leaders from the Melbourne and Sydney Regions have been participating in the annual gatherings, at Amberley and Mittagong respectively. Once again, they have been wonderful experiences.



## MARIST OCEANIA SHARED FORMATION EXPERIENCE

An engaging, life giving, inspirational and formative week aptly describes our time in Mittagong for the Marist Mission and Life Oceania Shared Formation Experience. Both Brothers and Lay Marists from across Oceania gathered to explore, discern and confirm our Marist life and spirituality working in a new spirit of communion. The highlight of the week was the intimate sharing our faith, vocation, mutual relationships and our Marist mission in our places of work, family, community and life. Moreover the shared experiences of Brothers and Lay Marist challenged us to renew our commitment to animate and energise our respective Marist communities to develop their passion for their love of God and work with young people.



*John Finnernan (Kogarah) & Br Kees Van der Weert (Fiji)*



*L to R: Sandy Francois (Traralgon) & Br Ismael Tauwato (Solomon Islands)*

## FIRST MEETING OF MARIST TERTIARY COMMITTEE



An important initiative was taken yesterday with the first meeting of

the Marist Tertiary Committee. Chaired by Brother John McMahon, the Committee considered a range of matters associated with tertiary accreditation of Marist programmes and post-graduate Marist studies. The Committee will continue its work next year, and will continue to develop links with different tertiary institutions. In 2012, Brother Tony Paterson will be the tutor and supervisor for Marists who are seeking accreditation for Marist programmes as part of master's degrees being undertaken in Australian universities.



## MSA SCHOOLS SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS 2011

### Schools Continue Generous Funding of Projects

The schools in the MSA network are responsible for one third of the funding of the projects of MAPS for young people at risk in the Asia Pacific region in 2011. The team at MAPS is very grateful for your ongoing support into 2012. The various fund raising, educational and promotional activities you activate in the MSA schools for Marist offshore work enables the work of the Marists to expand. During this week, certificates of appreciation are being sent to schools who recently forwarded donations as they clear their 'mission' or 'charity' column in school accounts and give priority to Marist solidarity endeavours.

### Immersion Conversations

Many MSA schools have immersions underway and a number have been assisted by the MAPS office staff. The MAPS office link person for this in 2012 will be Paula McLoughlin. In the New Year, MAPS and the MSA offices will forward a joint statement on the services MAPS provides for MSA schools planning immersions with particular attention to the demands on the Melanesian region. It is also planned to start a preparatory planning group in 2012 of experienced immersion leaders to work with MAPS and MSA to hold



conversations at gatherings in 2013 on immersion experiences' exchange and learnings. There is a wealth of experience in the MSA schools now with 29 immersions and volunteer placements being listed at MAPS during 2011.

### Menu Launches Go National!

The Marist Solidarity Christmas Menu Launches are new to the East Coast with the first for Brisbane last Saturday evening. It was preceded by Adelaide on November 20 and the Melbourne one was on Sunday evening. This is the principal fund raising strategy of Australian Marist Solidarity (AMS) which has its operational desk within MAPS in Brisbane. The booklet, in the design of a cafe menu, presents a menu of possibilities for donors to assist Marist projects in the Asia Pacific region. In the past two weeks AMS has been gazetted by the Federal Government as a fund which has Donor Gift Recipient status for tax

deductible donations. There will be official launches of AMS nationally in the capitals in 2012 so as to raise the profile of this new non profit organisation for Marist offshore development work.

For more details or a copy of the Christmas Solidarity Christmas Menu contact Brother Allen Sherry:

E [mso@maristmelb.org.au](mailto:mso@maristmelb.org.au)

## Remar Ministry Team 2011



When I think back over 2011, my heart is filled with tremendous joy for the witness of the five members of the Remar Ministry Team. I am so very grateful and proud of these amazing young people, who selflessly dedicate one year of their lives to the Marist mission in making Jesus known and loved. During 2011, they have, amongst other things, facilitated countless retreats and camps, been of active service to the members of the Exodus community and participated in various school based programs. Most importantly however, each has willingly shared their faith and what it means to be a Marist today as they have ministered to over 700 students across the country.

May God bless you Laura, Jasmine, Hannah, Jake and Kiran as you move into the next exciting phase of the your lives. We will keep you in our prayers.

**Simone Boyd**  
COORDINATOR - REMAR AUSTRALIA

