



marists 2017  
a new beginning



# Community Bulletin

Aotearoa New Zealand, Samoa, Fiji, American Samoa, Kiribati

August 2016

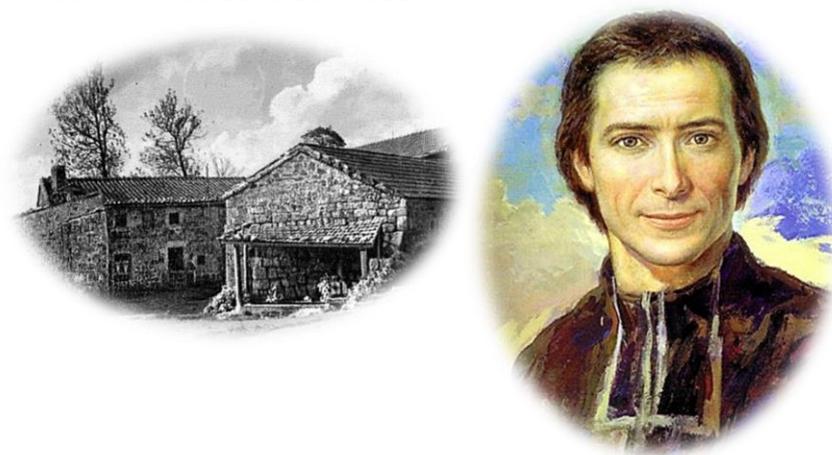
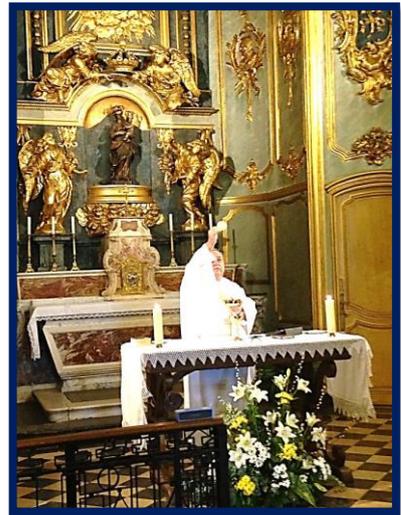
### *Among other things this edition contains:*

- Fourviere Celebrations in Samoa
- Vocations Update from Samoa
- Marist Family Fourviere Celebrations at Sacred Heart
- Fourviere and a story about a Statue
- Brother Douglas at Tenaru in the Solomon Islands
- Brother Humphrey reported in the Samoan Observer
- Reception into the Novitiate
- Champagnat in the Pacific News
- News from the Holy Land
- Pope Francis: A Spiritual Retreat – Part 3
- Fourviere – Marist Spirituality in Four Voices
- Gospel commentaries for September
- Champagnat Marist Pillars for Community Life
- 'A Passing Thought' and 'The District Calendar'

In 2016 each edition of the *Community Bulletin* will have an article related to the Year of Mercy and Fourvière Year.

#### **Cover image**

The image on the cover of the *Community Bulletin* is a model of the “Black Madonna” found in the Chapel at Fourviere. which has always been a popular place of pilgrimage. There has been a shrine at Fourviere dedicated to Our Lady since 1170. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1816 twelve Marist aspirants, priests and seminarians, climbed the hill to the shrine of Our Lady of Fourviere and placed their promise to found the Society of Mary (Marists) under the corporal on the altar while Jean-Claude Courveille celebrated Mass.



## **Marcellin Champagnat** **The Apostle of Youth** **A New Beginning for us all**

## *Fourviere Celebrations in Samoa*

Talofa from Samoa,

The Marist Family Samoa had a week of celebration to commemorate the 200 years of the pledge at Fourviere. Starting on Monday the Catholic TV Station (Upu Mana) broadcasted interviews of different members of the Marist Family, showed a short video clip of the Marist Family Samoa (locally made); showed at numerous times the Vocation Promotion talks by members of the Marist Family at our three Marist Colleges; a live broadcast of the Fourviere mass and the activities of art, drama, zumba, sports, liturgical movements, songs and speeches. His Highness the Head of State, Tupua Tamasese Efi, an old boy from the SMSM, FMS and SM priests delivered the Key Note Address which followed the Mass that was pre-sided by Archbishop Alapati Mataeliga.

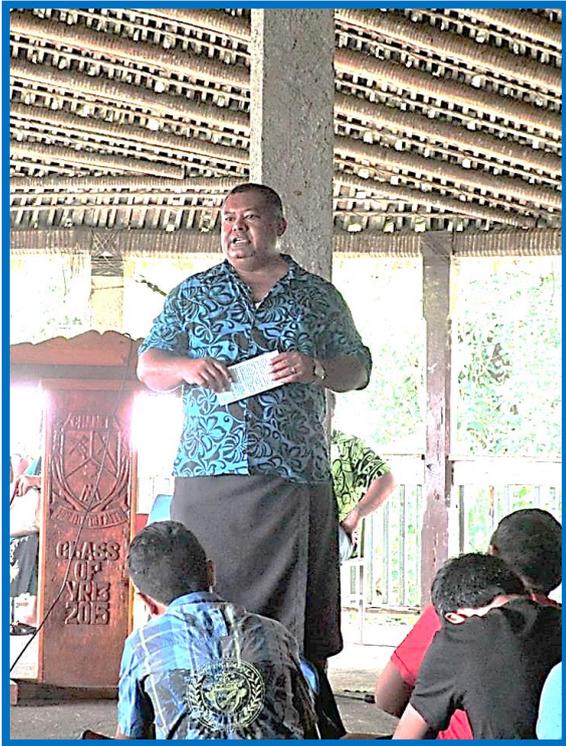


**Marist Muivai Students making banners**



**Brother John Hazelman delivering a brief input on the meaning of the celebration**

# FOURVIERE CELEBRATIONS IN SAMOA



**Brother Siaso talks about the Marist Brothers Vocation to students of Chanel College**



**Monograms used for the entrance procession**



**Members of the Marist Family Samoa ... Marist Family Tree.**



**Marist Mulivai staff and students join in Zumba to celebrate Fourveire 200**

**His Highness Head of State Marist Speech  
E OSO A'E PEA LE LA  
Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi**

## **CELEBRATION OF THE 200 YEARS SINCE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MARIST SOCIETY**

Rising is elemental to the nature of the sun: '*E oso a'e pea le la*'. This Samoan proverb indicates love as that which is eternally of God – a love that never fades or withers. It is always new and forthcoming. And, so, is hope. For however hard and long the struggles and difficulties, peoples and nations will always see the day, and it is heralded by the rising of the sun.

Today, let us reflect anew on the core meanings of '*E oso a'e pea le la*'. It can refer to a new day and a new moment



# FOURVIERE CELEBRATIONS IN SAMOA

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which signifies inter-connected existence. But, it also denotes a specific day and a season for making undertakings real and commitments firm. It will mean a new day for renewal and re-dedication of faithfulness to vows taken and visions re-imagined and re-kindled.



Today, we remember the *tāeao* – the day at Fourvière. The day in which several newly ordained young men came together to envision a new kind of Church. A Church that would be recognisably ‘maternal’; a Church with a feminine face and of Marian quality. It is at Fourvière then that they dedicated themselves to Our Lady of Fourvière and to the work of Mary in the Church: ‘To make Jesus known and loved throughout the world’ and to make the world ‘know and honour Mary’. This, then, is the inspiration, the dedication, and the mission of the Marists, placing themselves under Mary’s care, and calling themselves, ‘Marists’.

The backdrop to Fourvière was the French Revolution and the political, social, economic, and religious chaos resulting from it. 1816 is the year of the original meeting in Fourvière. It is one year after 1815 where France suffered a crushing defeat in Waterloo. And following that the Vienna Congress imposed harsh penalties on France. The woundedness of France was immense: Who would succour the widows? Who would comfort the orphans, the destitute, the displaced, and the confused and uneducated youth? Who would re-teach the faith to a people induced to hate the Church and religion? Who would re-model and nurture the ruined churches? Who else, but, a mother!

At Fourvière the Marists pledged themselves to carry out the mission of Christ – the mission of mercy and reconciliation in the ‘manner of Mary’. They saw Mary at Nazareth and Mary at the heart of the Early Church as foundational sources of both Marist spirituality and of the manner of being in ministry. Thus, the Society of Mary was born with many branches: the Marist priests, the Marist Brothers, the Marist Sisters, the Third Order of Mary, the Marist Missionary Sisters, and various groups of Marist laity.

We would like to remember some of the original members of Fourvière: Fr Colin – the founder of the Marist Priests; St Peter Chanel – Martyr and Saint; St Marcellin Champagnat – Founder of the Marist Brothers and St Julien Eymard – who formed the Third Order of Mary.

Mary was always at the heart of the Marist project – *le Fetu o le Moana*, the Star of the Sea, guiding and leading the Marists to do the work of Her Son in France and across the islands of the vast Pacific Ocean.

It is to this Mother, from whose womb the life of a human person – Jesus – was nurtured and given birth to. It is to this Mother that we pray, ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death’. She is also the Mother about whom we pray the words: ‘.....never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. To you do I come, before you I stand, O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petition, but in your mercy, hear and answer me, Amen’.



## FOURVIERE CELEBRATIONS IN SAMOA

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Opportunities for renewal and regeneration are core to Marist values and principles. The sun will always rise: *'E oso a'e pea le la'*. A fundamental belief in mission and ministry would take Marists to unknown seas, lands, and peoples. Our Mother Mary would remain throughout, for all Marists, their standard bearer. She is protector and comforter in times of hardships and despair.



Today, we see and hear the many challenges confronting France and we think of Fourvière. Right now, Marists from all over the world in their holy pilgrimage are uniting with us in prayer. We commend France, Samoa, and the whole world, to the protection of Mary.

The challenges facing the work of mission and evangelisation in the Pacific today are huge. The undertakings assumed by the Marist priests, Brothers, the Third Order of Mary, and the Sisters in 1845 and during their early years in France and in Samoa, are quite different from what they are now in 2016. Times have changed. But the spirit and manner of Mary that guided them then will always guide and inform them now.

The sun will always rise – *'E oso a'e pea le la'* – and with it a fresh dawn is announced, a new day sees new light and gives new hope and life. A new hope for love, kindness, gentleness, simplicity, humility, and for the enduring patience of our Mother Mary.

There was once a beautiful Catholic tradition where families prayed to God every day for a member of the family to offer his/her life to God, especially to become a priest, a Brother or Sister. Perhaps it is something worth re-introducing, beginning with our Marist families. Let us make this pledge as a fruit of this Jubilee Year, 200 years of commitment to the vision and mission of Fourvière, that Jesus and his mother Mary bless the Marist family with vocations on every new day. And let us begin praying for this intention from today!

As we recall and relive the pledge of Fourvière, let us continue to faithfully forge new ways to 'make Jesus known and loved throughout the whole world' and in turn 'making Mary known and honoured' by all her children.

Mary, Star of the Sea – Pray for us.



## *A Vocations Update from Samoa*

Talofa lava and greetings.

Steve Vaea (aspirant) and Br John Hazelman travelled to Savaii for a week of Vocation Promotion on the big island. Five parishes were included in the program. Steve joined in three of these vocational workshops before he went home to Mauga (Savaii village) for his deserved break; while John did the remaining three promotions.

There was a wonderful response from the priests, deacons and catechists. The talks, while based on vocations in general, were specifically on the Marist Vocations, especially the Marist Brothers.

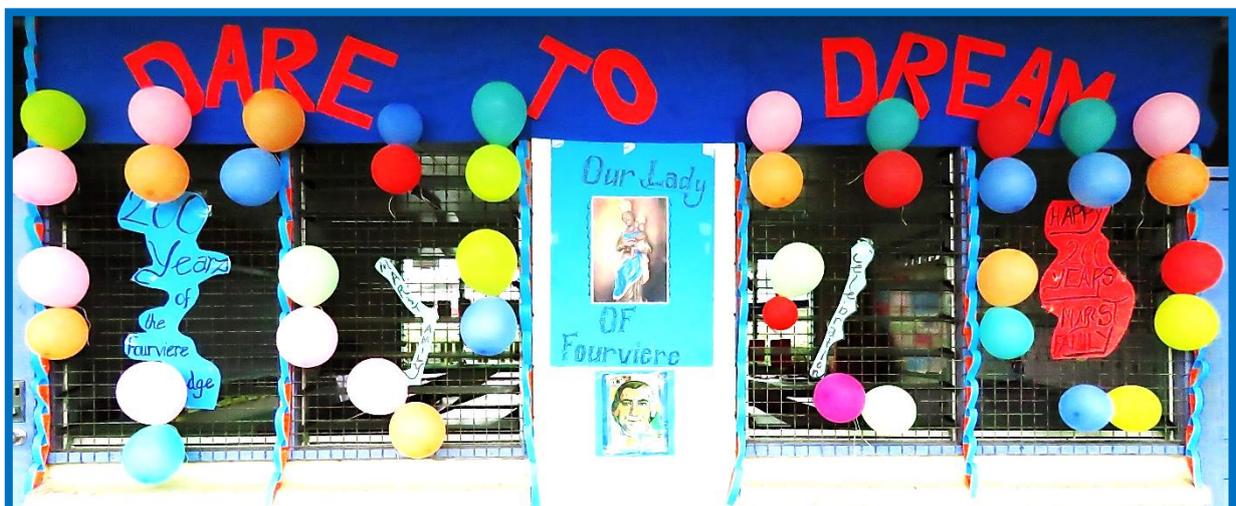
Ia Manuia,

*Brother John Hazelman*



**Steve Vaea talking with some interested prospects**

# VOCATION UPDATE FROM SAMOA



## *Fourviere Celebrations at Sacred Heart*

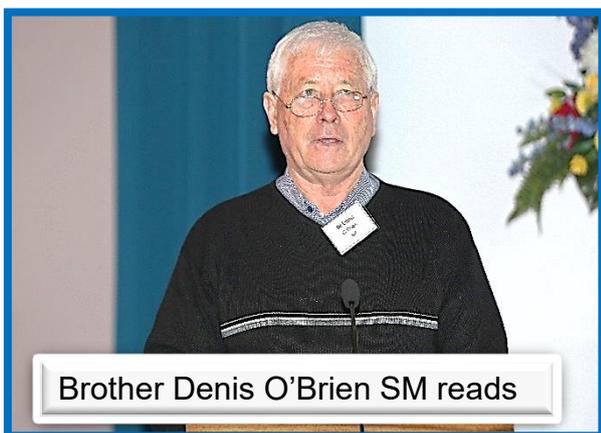
The Marist Brothers, Marist Missionary Sisters, Marist Sisters and the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Mary along with lay Marists joined together to celebrate Fourviere Day on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July at Sacred Heart College.

Brother Richard Dunleavy FMS opened the celebrations with a welcome speech in the Chapel where 150 plus people had gathered together to mark this special occasion.

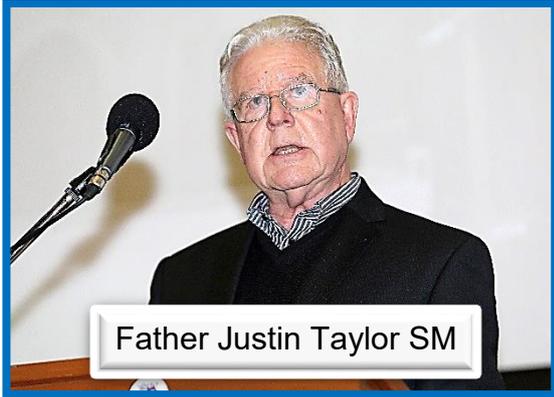
Father Justin Taylor was the key note speaker with a well-planned and presented address in the College auditorium. This was supplemented by Marist themed presentation workshops during the afternoon. These workshops included a series on Marian Music, Mary in Art, Keeping Pledges, Early Missionaries whose names were recorded in the heart of Mary, Mary, Mother of Mercy and the Work of Mary.

Father David Kennerly SM, concluded the day with Mass. Candles imprinted with an image of Mary of Fourviere were presented to each Branch of the Marist Family while all recited the Fourviere Pledge.

As per usual Brother Anthony Walker was busy with his camera so please enjoy some of these.



# FOURVIERE CELEBRATIONS AT SACRED HEART



Father Justin Taylor SM



Brother Kevin organizes everyone



Everyone gathered in the auditorium for Father Justin's talk



Lunch for everyone

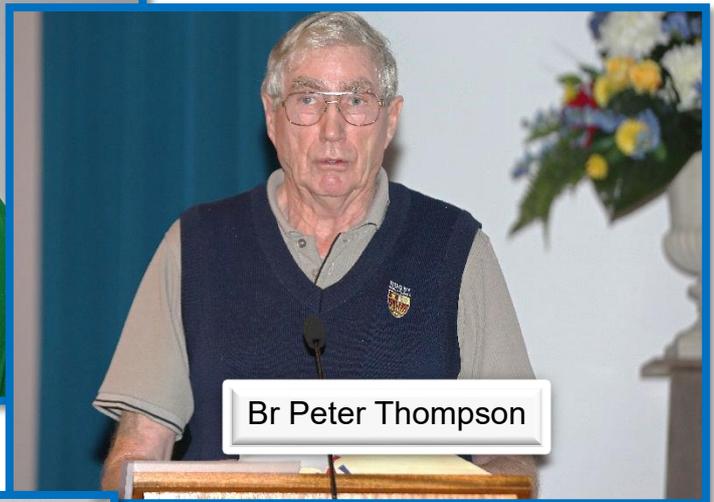
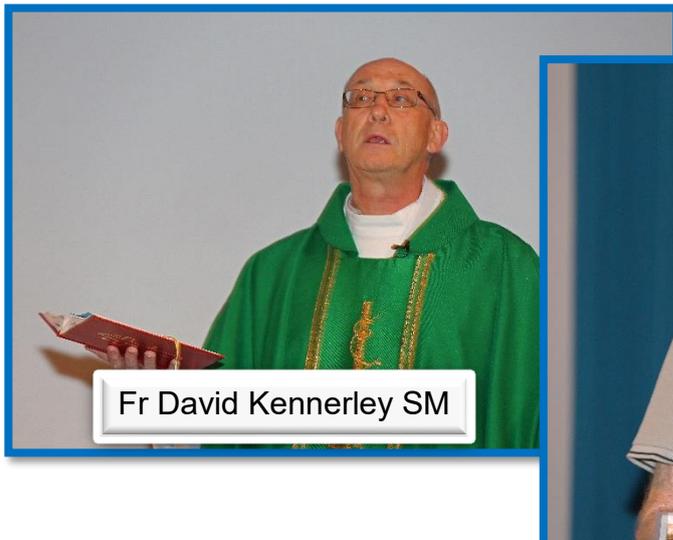


Sr Catherine Lawson SM with Br Joseph



Gathering for Mass

# FOURVIERE CELEBRATIONS AT SACRED HEART



### *Fourviere and a Story about a Statue*

On 23<sup>rd</sup> July, worldwide, Marist Sisters, Brothers and Fathers and Marist Lay People, celebrated an event which happened 200 years ago in Lyon, France. Then, twelve young men, five newly ordained priests and seven seminarians, climbed a hill to a Marian Chapel and in that shrine in front of a statue of the Black Madonna, pledged themselves to form a new congregation with the name of Mary to do her work in the Church. They put their names in a golden heart and hung it on a wall as a sign of their deep desire. In that group were Fr Marcellin Champagnat who was to found the Brothers less than six months later and Fr Jean Claude Colin who was to form the Marist Sisters and Fathers at Belley. Twenty years later in 1836, the Holy Father in Rome approved the project in a modified form, provided they accept a Mission to the South Pacific. They did.



Bishop Pompallier led the first group of Marist Brothers and Fathers. Fr Champagnat chose the three Hermitage-formed Brothers and Fr Colin chose the priests. The Bishop positioned Fr Bataillon with Br Joseph Luzy on Wallis and Fr Peter Chanel with Br Mary Nizier on nearby Futuna, in the centre of the Pacific. He continued on to New Zealand with Br Michel Colombon and Fr Catherin Servant and they first settled in the Hokianga. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1840, Bishop Pompallier sailed into Akaroa on the *Sancta Maria* which began the mission on our Island. On a subsequent visit, November 1841, he learned of the martyrdom of Peter Chanel. He sailed from Akaroa in the *Sancta Maria* to retrieve the body of the martyr.

When this part of the South Island became a diocese and a Marist became the first Bishop, Bishop Grimes bought in Lyon a statue of St Peter Chanel and brought it to Christchurch. He gave it to the Mission Sisters who placed it in their convent chapel beside the Cathedral. When the convent was no longer needed, the statue went to the Sisters' national archives in Petone. With a reorganisation of these archives, the sisters decided to give the statue to the Archives of the Marist Fathers in Wellington. However, since it was originally intended for Christchurch, they forwarded it to us in Addington.

St Peter Chanel, the first Martyr of Oceania, is a patron saint in the Pacific. His heroic life, a symbol of rebirth after tragedy, could be a fitting gift for a restored Cathedral. Before then, we Marists in Addington would like to keep and honour it until the Cathedral is repaired.

*Fr John Craddock SM*

### *Brother Douglas in The Solomon Islands*

After almost 3 months in Tenaru, Solomon Islands, it is quite a relief to return to the cold and wet of New Zealand, as opposed to the heat and absence of rain there. Since drinking water is obtained from the roof, channelled into tanks, rain is welcomed there.

I was in a community of 3 temporary professed Brothers (from PNG, Solomons and Vanuatu) and enjoyed the experience of living with them. Banging on the verandah outside my room one night turned out to be one of the Brothers killing a snake with a plank. Fortunately, non-poisonous. Thank you, David.

I taught at St Joseph's High School, a boarding school with a roll of just over 500, and had two Year 7 classes for RE and English, 52 students (boys and girls) in each. A very different situation from what I have been used to for the last half century. But I loved it! Because it is the first year at a secondary school, the students come with a wide variety of school backgrounds and that was very obvious. Solomonese students are basically very shy, especially with regard to using English, and it was quite a challenge to get them answering specific questions or offering answers to generalised questions.



**The community of Tenaru**



**A Tenaru School Class**

A highlight was going to Port Moresby in PNG for the Assembly at Bomana, out at 9 Mile (sic). This was led by Brother Michael de Waas, of the General Council. Here I was able to meet Brothers from Vanuatu, Madang and Bougainville (Mabiri community). I had already met the men from Vanga Point in the Solomons.

Another highlight was reading Brother Lawrie McCane's "Melanesian Stories", a comprehensive coverage of the Marist Brothers' mission to

Melanesia. I was mightily impressed with the huge contribution the Australian provinces, Sydney and Melbourne, had made to the area over many years – teaching, building, administrating – in some of the remotest and most difficult of terrains in PNG and Solomons. One photo was of Brother Jeff Crowe, District Superior, and Brother Benito, Superior General, wading bare-chested and waist deep across a river, accompanied by three local "boys". It can be rough at the top!

# BROTHER DOUGLAS AT TENARU



**St Joseph's School, Tenaru**



**Three of the Champagnat Marists from St Joseph's High School. Note the wording on the tee-shirts**



**The community just after Morning Prayer in the chapel**



**The newly established Early Childhood Centre at the school**



**Doug, ready to travel**

### *“The Academic Father of Generations”*

**From the Samoan Observer**

Carefully, he reads out the words that are displayed on the screen in front of the eight boys and encourages them to repeat what they just listened to.

With a noticeable amount of enthusiasm in their voices, the young students join in; ready to learn everything possible about the different vowels of the English language.



At 81-years-young, a glance at Brother Humphrey O'Connor's eyes reveals that despite of his age, the man still has preserved the sparkle of his youth which inspired many young Samoans over the last decades to make something out of their lives.

“The other Brothers always often tell me I should not work too hard because I am so old now,” he says. “But I am only teaching in the morning, and it's still enjoyable for me.” Sometimes, the definition of the term father does not always have to be used in a biological sense.

In the case of Brother Humphrey, the upcoming Father's Day should also be used to celebrate one of Samoa's most well-known teachers, who certainly has been and still is an academic role model for so many generations in the country.

Having first visited the country only a few days after its independence from New Zealand as a 27-years old, Brother Humphrey has been a teacher his whole life long “I've been teaching for 61 years now, and I am still enjoying it,” he says with a smile on his face.

The idea of becoming a Marist Brother had grown deep in Humphrey O'Connor's heart when he had made his first experiences with the religious community. “When I was thirteen years old, my parents sent me to a Marist Brothers school in Auckland, the Sacred Heart College, which was run by brothers. I was so impressed by their way of teaching, that it got me thinking about joining them.” By the age of 17, Brother Humphrey had made a decision that would determine his future. His decision of becoming a teacher and Marist Brother was one he never regret throughout his whole life.

While having started again to teach primary students at Marist Brothers Primary School in Mulivai since this March, the experienced lecturer has taught many different subjects

throughout his career. “I taught English, Religious Education, Music, Geography and a very good subject called Commercial Practice,” he says.

The last of these different subjects is one Brother Humphrey is particularly proud of. “It was sort of an introduction to business practice, dealing with the processes of taxation, insurance or how to set up a small firm.” In all these years, the cleric’s task of teaching has led him to many different places and schools

“I’ve taught at St. Joseph’s College here in Mulivai from 1962 to 1967 and I’ve been teaching in every year since, except for the last five years in which I was looking after some of our older Brothers, but I’ve done a little bit of help for boys with reading difficulties during that time.”.

Other stations of his academic life as a teacher include many years of lecturing at different facilities in his home country but also a short stay in the Philippines, where Brother Humphrey taught English to other Marist brothers.

Of course, during all these years of teaching, Brother Humphrey has seen many young faces in his classrooms which would take over leading roles in the development of Samoa as an independent Pacific island nation – including the one of current Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sa’ilele Malielegaoi.



## *District Calendar for September*

1	Marist Schools Workshop (DD)
2	SHC teacher only day
3	150th anniversary Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Father Julian Tenison Woods
4	Bishop Pat for lunch with Religious 12.30pm
9	<a href="#">Council Meeting Samoa</a> Concelebrated Thanksgiving Mass Bishop Pat Dunn 7pm
11	Social Justice Week
12	Marist Family Gathering
14	Wellbeing morning
16	Term 3 ends (Samoa)
19	Voting for General Council delegate Samoa Retreat 19-22 <sup>nd</sup> Sept
23	Finance Committee Term 3 Ends (NZ)
25	Daylight saving starts
26	Auckland retreat (26 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> ) at Mercy Centre /Onslow Ave Marist Brothers School and St Joseph’s strategic planning (TC @ Apia)

*Ceremony of reception into the novitiate of our First Year Novice, Tabunga Etuati from Kiribati*

**15<sup>th</sup> August - Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**



**First Year Novice: Tabunga Etuati**

**Brother Kees welcomes Tabunga to Lomeri and to Fiji inside the Novitiate Chapel at the beginning of the prayer.**



**Brother Afaese (Novice Master) presents the Constitutions, Bible and Office Book to Tabunga to guide his formation journey in the novitiate.**

**Second Year Novices: Beia Tibiriano and Anitelea Fidow**



# RECEPTION INTO THE NOVITIATE



**Two Second Year novices and one First Year novice wearing his traditional costumes in the middle.**



**(L to R) Beia Tibiriano, Terry Maney, Kees van der Weert, Anitelea Fidow, Luke Fong, Walusio Roseru (Champagnat Lay Marist), Tabunga Etuati and Afaese Afaese**

**Afaese with the three novices**



## *Champagnat in the Pacific*

**By Mr Dan Dungey**  
**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016**



Vaughan Park, Long Bay again provided the ideal location for the 2016 CIP Course from 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> August. 17 participants from our Champagnat Marist School's Network, along with Brothers Osmund Macnamara and Kieran Fenn, came together for a three-day retreat programme, exploring the spirituality and pedagogy of Marist education in the tradition of St Marcellin Champagnat.

Programmes like this cannot take place without support and this year we were very fortunate for the continual support of our workshop presenters Louise Oliphant (Sacred Heart College) and Brian Sparrow (St John's College) along with the wonderful contributions from Brother Kieran Fenn (Marial Workshop) and Brother Osmund Macnamara (Champagnat's Letters Workshop and Co-presenter of this year's programme in Brother Terence Costello's absence). Assistance with transport to and from Auckland Airport from Brothers Kevin



**Welcome - everyone**

# CHAMPAGNAT IN THE PACIFIC

King, Peter Thompson, Chris Maney and Peter Henderson was greatly appreciated.

It was very fitting to have Father Brendan Ward lead our course Eucharist on the Tuesday evening with a wonderful celebration of life around the table that followed. The presence of Joanie Roberson (Marcellin College) and a large representation of Auckland based Brothers at our Eucharist and Dinner was warmly felt by all participants. Many thanks to Brothers Richard Dunleavy, Brian Wanden, Colin Divine, Chris Maney, JP Wilson and Damien Shutt for giving so freely of your time to join us in community.

Once again the feedback received has been very positive and this shows that our charism speaks to the hearts of our educators.

- 'Lot's of learning for someone who did not know these stories and put a lot into context (*Marcellin's life & letters*)'
- 'Role plays were fantastic and made the session interactive.'
- 'Brother Kieran's insightful presentation on Mary – engaging delivery and affirming from a female perspective'
- 'Such a privilege to share the Brothers stories'
- 'Brilliant background information on St Marcellin Champagnat that I could easily use in my classroom'
- 'Great use of visual/activities to get us to discover Marcellin in his letters/story and how we will put this into practice.'

The journey is only just beginning as collectively we look at new ways to keep our founders dream alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The invitation to bring together participants from previous years CITP courses from within each school setting may see the holy spirit guide groups as they discern 'what happens next?'

*Dan Dungey*



**Fr Brendan Ward with Br Osmund**



### *News from the Holy Land*

Below is a communication from Brother Kevin Dobbyn about his third week in Jerusalem. Kevin is presently at Manziana.

*Shalom* and *as-Salaam* 'Alaykum, greetings another group, Oasis of Peace puts up in three languages: Hebrew, Arabic and English.



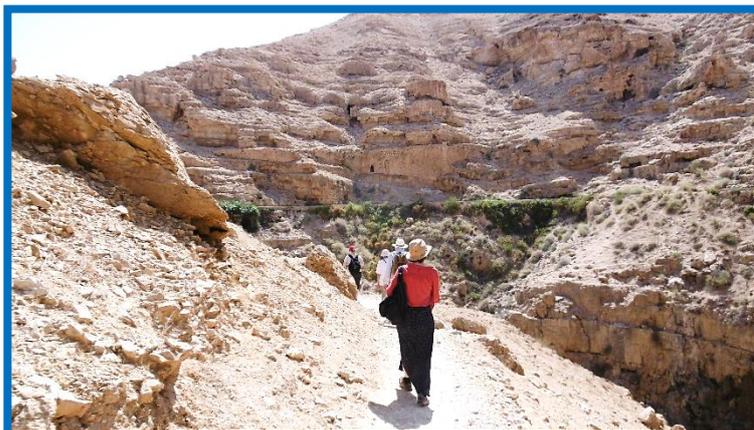
All of a sudden we have only a few weeks to go. Life here is surprisingly busy and there is barely time to absorb it all, which is quite frustrating especially when some of the guides talk too much and too long. In a month it is not possible to pick up everything. However, the last two days have been quite different as we gained insights into how the conflict plays out today.



We had two guides who have become friends, one a Jew and former soldier and the other a Palestinian Arab with Israeli citizenship. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, do not have citizenship and have so many constrictions on them. I cannot here write much more about it, apart

from saying that it becomes much easier to understand the situation of the gospels and the Roman occupation in the time of Jesus.

There is a distinct parallel, which makes the story of Jesus even greater than how much we take it for granted: that such a man of peace thrived in the midst of such violence both psychological, emotional and physical. I was hugely impressed with



our guides who did not flinch from being hopeful in the midst of such a despairing situation. They were a fine example of what dialogue can do.

We ended our day with a visit to the Tent of Nations, and to Roots two groups with slightly different agenda. One is about welcoming all people to their land (100 acres) and battling through the courts to keep it, since it is in the West Bank and they are committed to non-violent action and compassionate service providing holiday camps for Palestinian children. The other provides opportunities for work and dialogue between Palestinians and settlers.

We listened to an American Jewish settler (for 33 years) talk about the transformation of his thinking and conversion to stepping into the shoes of a Palestinian and a young Palestinian talk about – after the death of his friend and time in jail – his own transformation from violent action to his move and involvement in Roots and its non-violent approach. I think these two groups offer real hope for change. When I asked the rabbi which were the most difficult groups to speak to, he replied, as I had imagined, that the ultra-religious groups among both Jews and Muslims (Christians don't count because they are so small numerically, despite the prolific number of churches) were the most difficult since like himself, many have not even met their opposite.

[On] Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July, the theme was desert monasticism and we had the chance to visit the monastery of St George Khoziba in the Judean Desert. These monasteries (and there were 3,000 monks and hermits in their heyday in the 7th century), are



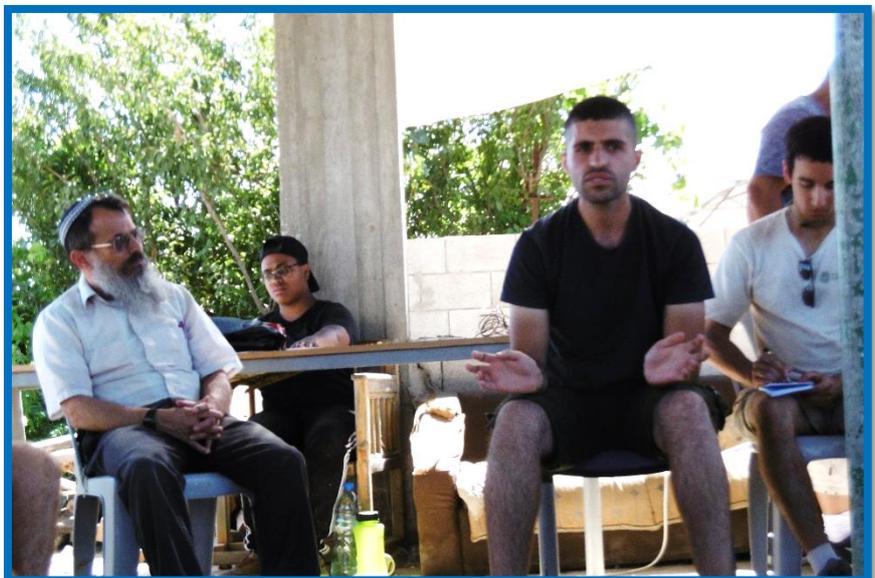
located where they find water. It was the coolest day of the summer (33°C). After visiting the monastery, we set about walking the short-cut trail to Jericho. It was a contemplative walk in silence to the first resting point. All up it took two and a



half hours. It made me realise that Jesus must have been very fit. As well, I learned that the 'Good Samaritan' would have taken his life into his hands because thieves and gangs found it an easy way to assault and rob people.

You can see in the photos plenty of holes in the limestone cliffs where hermits would spend time there, often dying there to be buried by the next hermit who came along to stay there. No one is there at present except for one monk from one of the other monasteries and he is the only one in the Holy Land. A rugged and austere life indeed. And from there we went to the Jordan river where we had a simple ceremony renewing our baptism. It's not the kind of river that you'd want to be fully immersed, though they do have showers afterwards. Just on the other side is Jordan with its relaxed border guard.

We finished with a sumptuous lunch in Jericho where we ate in the best restaurant yet. The contrast of the dry, arid land and the super-abundant, Middle Eastern hospitality is continually before us. Speaking of which, it's time for lunch. This evening I meet Peter Bray and his community for dinner. Bethlehem University is very impressive and they turn out some impressive young leaders.



One more week, then a few days before heading to Rome. The dryness and heat here I should be used to after so many years in Kiribati, but it has made me appreciate the cold.

Every good wish and non-violent peace,

*Keu*



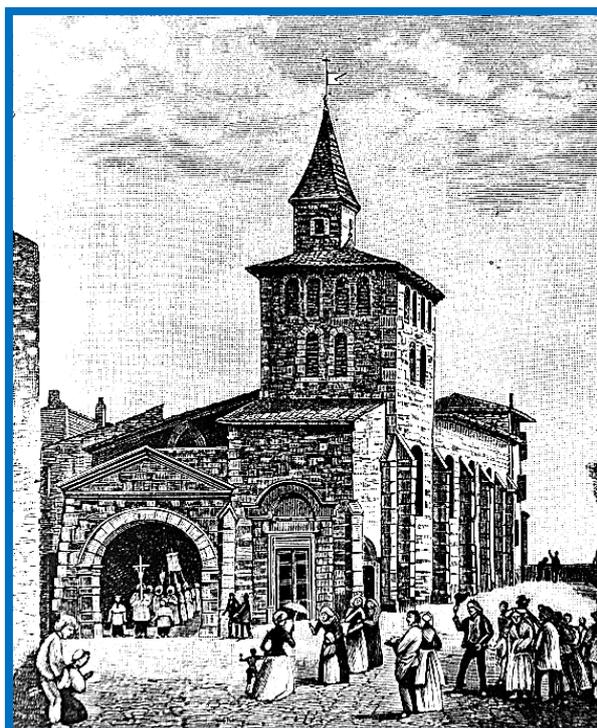
## *Fourviere*

### *Marist Spirituality in Four Voices*

**Part 1 of a conference given by Fr. Gaston Lessard SM at a meeting of the general councils of the four Marist congregations on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1988. Part 1 looks at each of the founders.**

#### **Introduction**

What are we going to do? You will dedicate the day to examining how each of the four Marist congregations can contribute, in its own way, to fulfilling the Marist mission in today's church. There is the work of Mary, what Mary wants to do through us so that she can be the mainstay of the church in this time. And there is what each of our congregations has become in the course of the hundred and fifty years, roughly, of its life. The work of Mary: we all want to be part of it, to do it, with all we have, all our passion, all our skills. What each congregation has become: that is what is proper to us, what distinguishes us, what enables the Marist concert in the church to have the richness of a variety of instruments, of several voices.



I propose that we proceed in three steps: first, that we greet the founders and the first pioneer: by age, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, Marcellin Champagnat, Jean-Claude Colin, and Françoise Perroton. Their presence alone reminds us of the Society of Mary to which all of us are linked and of the characteristics proper to our congregations. We could then attempt to get a sense of something that animated all four of them, namely a vision of the church being born anew, the work of Mary. Finally, we can take a look at how the actual groups each followed their own way. Perhaps such a quick overview will open up avenues for discussion.

#### **Part I**

On January 29, 1834, toward the end of his first stay in Rome, Jean-Claude Colin wrote a letter to Cardinal Odescalchi, the prefect of the congregation of bishops and regulars. This is the cardinal to whom Jean-Claude Colin, having been unable to do so with the

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pope, had opened his heart with regard to the spiritual experience which led him to write the constitutions of the Society during his first years in Cerdon (OM = *Origines maristes*, docc. 819, § 40 b; 848, § 5,) and now he asked that Mother Saint-Joseph, "superior and first foundress of the sisters of the Congregation of Mary" be allowed to come to Rome. Colin wrote:

The Sister has been favoured by grace from childhood; in 1817 with the advice of her spiritual directors, she left her family and commenced, with a friend, the Congregation of the Sisters of Mary, now numerous. The Lord has imparted to her many lights concerning the Society and the virtues of Mary. She desires to open her heart to the common Father of all Christians" (CMJ - Correspondence of Mother Saint Joseph, doc. 10).

Six weeks earlier, Colin had written from Rome to Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn:

Be courageous in the midst of your difficulties; we must give birth to the Society in pain, just as Our Blessed Mother gave birth at the foot of the Cross to us Her adopted children" (CMJ, doc. 9, §1).

It would have been difficult to express in stronger terms that in the eyes of Jean-Claude Colin the foundress of the Marist Sisters had a full share in concern for the Society to be founded and even that her spiritual experience represented an important contribution to the understanding of the spirit of Mary which is to animate the Society. Around 1839, Colin said about her: "In the three branches of the Society, she is the person with the greatest spirit of faith and prayer" (RMJ = Recollections: Mother Saint Joseph, doc. 141). His esteem for her extended to her way of governing: "With the Sisters at Bon Repos, thank God, we have a forthright superior who forms her sisters to be strong, fearless and sincere" (RMJ, doc. 138). Yes, Colin said, they reproach her "for being a bit hasty, but let them show me a house that goes as well as hers" (RMJ, doc. 143, §. 5).

The perfect harmony of views that these two strong personalities had enjoyed for over twenty years degenerated a few years later into painful misunderstanding. But the later conflict must not make us forget the twenty, the thirty years during which the spiritual intimacy of Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn and Jean-Claude Colin enriched Marist tradition.

Any attempt to clarify how the harmony between the two founders disappeared would take us in a different direction from the one in which you want to go today. Let us only remember that the change of climate in the relationship took place mostly in Jean-Claude Colin. Even in the midst of the storm, Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn preserved the faith she had always had in Jean-Claude Colin's mission with regard to the Society. She continued to carry out the role she had taken on in his regard since Cerdon, that of recalling him to the duty of belief in the future of the Society. In 1849, her awareness

of this role inspired her with the following lines, which aim at persuading Father Colin to settle down at long last to writing the rule of the Marist Sisters but which at the same time reveal Jeanne-Marie 's attitude toward the founder:

Who more than I should abandon myself to and put my trust in all the decisions that you wish to make for us for the fulfilment of this divine Will which was manifested to you from the beginning?

Who other than you, Very Reverend Father, can know that you have been chosen by God and Mary our Mother, in a special way, to rule her Society, and to rule it in its entirety, without there being any question of cutting away branches from the trunk and without interfering with the rights of their Lordships the Bishops?" (CMJ, doc. 40, §§ 2 & 5)

Sadly, Jeanne-Marie did not realize that much had changed since the happy years of Cerdon, when she could allow herself to speak to Jean-Claude Colin with complete freedom. Up to 1836 the Society of Mary with many branches had been a great dream shared by many. True, Jean-Claude Colin had agreed to act as "the rallying point" (OM, doc. 396, § 1), but there was no real superior, and Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn and Marcellin Champagnat were truly equal partners. But on January 31, 1834, Rome had said a firm no to the plan for a Society of Mary with many branches (OM, doc. 304). True again, two years later, in return for the acceptance of the mission of Western Oceania, Rome approved under the same name Society of Mary the branch of priests only, but precisely it excluded at the same time from this approval the brothers, the sisters, and the third order (OM, doc. 313, § 3).

On September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1836, therefore, Colin became superior general only of the branch of priests. This new situation was to bring about a profound change in his view of the relation between the trunk and the branches. On the other hand, while the exercise of his function absorbed him and transformed his vision of the broad Marist plan, the original dream remained very much alive in Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn and Marcellin Champagnat. This gap is probably at the root of the conflict which led to the break between Father Colin and Mother Saint-Joseph and of a similar misunderstanding which would perhaps have ended in the same way if Marcellin Champagnat had not died so soon.

But it is high time that we introduce him on the scene. I love to see him as he introduces to Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn three postulants whom he sends to her:

I told them that if they do not take with them real self-sacrifice, unshakeable submission, great openness of heart, a steadfast vocation and a true desire to love God as Mary did, then they should not proceed any further with their plans. They replied that such were their intentions and the desires of their hearts. I told them you would keep this letter to remind them of their

promises in due time and place; they replied that they were ready to sign all this with their blood if necessary"  
(CMJ, doc. 5, § 1).

One would think that the saying "not to beat about the bush" had been invented with Marcellin Champagnat in mind. But with him it is not simply a matter of frankness. More deeply, it is a matter of a spirit of faith, of generosity, of self-sacrifice, which he has in himself and which he knows how to bring out in others.

Let us watch him again on September 24, 1836, the day when the superior general of the priests was elected. A ceremonial had been designed ahead of time which directed that after the election "the tellers would immediately lead the superior general elect to his seat and then a member of the assembly would address a brief message to those present" (OM, doc. 402, 170).

Champagnat, who was one of the tellers, was invited to address the "brief message". Instead of addressing it to those present, however, he addressed it to the superior general elect. Father Maîtrepierre kept a vivid memory of the scene:

Father Champagnat stood before him and, with his distinct and rough accent, he began his allocution thus: 'Mr. Superior, we have just presented you with a very bad gift. What troubles lie in wait for you in your administration! Your dignity raises you up only to expose you to the winds and storms, and on the last day you will be accountable for each of us' "(OM, doc. 752, § 5).

Another version of this last phrase was not more reassuring: "While your children file past the great Judge, you will be left on the stand, and if a single one is condemned through your fault, you will be accountable" (OM, doc. 684, § 1).

This speech was not such as to lighten a burden which already weighed too heavily on Jean Claude Colin's shoulders. But it shows at what level of faith the first companions spontaneously placed themselves. As in his letter to Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, we can see in action the rugged frankness which is one of the most attractive features of Marcellin Champagnat. No circumlocutions, both feet on the ground, and at the same time he is telling Colin: "If ever I stray from the right path, I count on you to bring me back on it".

Less than four years later, after his limitless generosity finally got the best of his seemingly indestructible physique, Marcellin Champagnat stood before the great judge. In the years before and after his death on June 6, 1840, the congregations which originated from the Fourvière plan had grown, the sisters more slowly than the priests, the brothers much more rapidly, as they had from the very beginning, but all

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steadily. By 1845, Oceania claimed nearly half the priests (about forty, whereas they were not quite sixty in France). About thirty brothers, of whom many had been professed as Little Brothers of Mary, worked with the missionaries as coadjutor brothers. Since the start, everybody felt that women had a key role to play in the work of evangelization. But how could one expose them, aboard ship and in the islands, to living conditions which the men imagined only they were capable of enduring? Besides, what would the Protestants say about the so called celibacy of the Catholic priests. Françoise Perroton, at the age of forty-nine, stepped over these unsurmountable obstacles with humble and persistent daring.

At ten o'clock on the morning of November 15, 1845, L'Arche d'alliance sailed from Le Havre. The ship symbolized the grandiose aspirations of the Society of Oceania, which had recruited hundreds of shareholders. On that day it carried eight Marist Fathers, five Marist Brothers, and "a few passengers". The departure was one of the most spectacular since 1836. It was meant to inaugurate a new era in the history of the missions of Oceania, for the Society of Oceania was to solve the problems of supply and communication.

Unfortunately, the enterprise was to end in failure only a few years later. Among the few passengers was Françoise Perroton. She herself referred to her coming to Oceania as having caused "a stir" (Our Pioneer Sisters, vol. 1, p. 12). She was right, but probably no one was given less notice when she went on board, and none of the missionaries' letters even mentions her presence aboard during a trip which lasted a year. Still, whereas the Society of Oceania only lasted a few years, the twelve years which Françoise Perroton spent alone on Wallis and Futuna issued forth upon what is now the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary.



### *Spiritual Retreat 3 - Pope Francis*



The following article is the Third Meditation, *The good odour of Christ and the light of his mercy*, which formed part of the clergy retreat in Rome. It was given by Pope Francis at the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls on Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016.

Let us hope that the Lord will grant us what we sought in prayer: to imitate Jesus' example of patience, and with that patience to overcome all our difficulties.

This, our third meditation, is entitled: *The good odour of Christ and the light of his*

*mercy*. In this third meeting, I propose that we meditate on the works of mercy, by taking whichever one we feel is most closely linked to our charism, and by looking at them as a whole. We can contemplate them through the merciful eyes of Our Lady, who helps us to find "the wine that is lacking" and encourages us to "do whatever Jesus tells us" (cf. Jn 2:1-12), so that his mercy can work the miracles that our people need.

The works of mercy are closely linked to the "spiritual senses". In our prayer we ask for the grace so to "feel and savour" the Gospel that it can make us more "sensitive" in our lives. Moved by the Spirit and led by Jesus, we can see from afar, with the eyes of mercy, those who have fallen along the wayside. We can hear the cries of Bartimaeus and feel with Jesus the timid yet determined touch of the woman suffering from haemorrhage, as she grasps his robe. We can ask for the grace to taste with the crucified Jesus the bitter gall of all those who share in his cross, and smell the stench of misery - in field hospitals, in trains and in boats crammed with people. The balm of mercy does not disguise this stench. Rather, by anointing it, it awakens new hope.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in discussing the works of mercy, tells us that "when her mother reproached her for care for the poor and the sick at home, St Rose of Lima said to her: 'When we serve the poor and the sick, we are the good odour of Christ'" (No. 2449). That good odour of Christ – the care of the poor – is, and always has been, the hallmark of the Church. Paul made it the focus of his meeting with Peter, James and John, the "columns" of the Church. He tells us that they "asked only one thing, that we remember the poor" (Gal 2:10). This reminds of a story I have already told. Just after I was just elected Pope, while the reading of the ballots continued, a brother cardinal came up to me, embraced me and said: "Don't forget the poor!" It was the first message the Lord sent me at that moment.

The Catechism goes on to say, significantly, that "those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church, which from her origins, and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defence and liberation" (No. 2448). Without ideologies, with the power of the Gospel alone. In the Church we have, and have always had, our sins and failings. But

when it comes to serving the poor by the works of mercy, as a Church we have always followed the promptings of the Spirit. Our saints did this in quite creative and effective ways. Love for the poor has been the sign, the light that draws people to give glory to the Father. Our people value this in a priest who cares for the poor and the sick, for those whose sins he forgives and for those whom he patiently teaches and corrects. Our people forgive us priests many failings, except for that of attachment to money. This they don't forgive. It is not so much about money itself, but the fact that money makes us lose the treasure of mercy. Our people can sniff out which sins are truly grave for a priest, the sins that kill his ministry because they turn him into a bureaucrat or, even worse, a mercenary. They can also recognize which sins are, I won't say secondary (I'm not sure if you can say this theologically!), but that have to be put up with, borne like a cross, until the Lord at last burns them away like the chaff. But the failure of a priest to be merciful is a glaring contradiction. It strikes at the heart of salvation, against Christ, who "became poor so that by his poverty we might become rich" (cf. 2 Cor 8:9). Because mercy heals "by losing something of itself". We feel a pang of regret and we lose a part of our life, because rather than do what we wanted to do, we reached out to someone else in a work of mercy.

So it is not about God showing me mercy for this or that sin, as if I were otherwise self-sufficient, or about us performing some act of mercy towards this or that person in need. The grace we seek in this prayer is that of letting ourselves be shown mercy by God in every aspect of our lives and in turn to show mercy to others in all that we do. As priests and bishops, we work with the sacraments, baptizing, hearing confessions, celebrating the Eucharist. Mercy is our way of making the entire life of God's people a sacrament. Being merciful is not only "a way of life", but "the way of life". There is no other way of being a priest. Father Brochero put it this way: "The priest who has scarce pity for sinners is only half a priest. These vestments I wear are not what make me a priest; if I don't have charity in my heart, I am not even a Christian."

To see needs and to bring immediate relief, and even more, to anticipate those needs: this is the mark of a father's gaze. This priestly gaze – which takes the place of the father in the heart of Mother Church – makes us see people with the eyes of mercy. It has to be learned from seminary on, and it must enrich all our pastoral plans and projects. We desire, and we ask the Lord to give us, a gaze capable of discerning the signs of the times, to know "what works of mercy our people need today" in order to feel and savour the God of history who walks among them. For, as Aparecida says, quoting St Alberto Hurtado: "In our works, our people know that we understand their suffering" (No. 386).

The proof that we understand is that our works of mercy are blessed by God and meet with help and cooperation from our people. Some plans and projects do not work out well, without people ever realizing why. They rack their brains trying to come up with yet another pastoral plan, when all somebody has to say is: "It's not working because it lacks mercy", with no further ado. If it is not blessed, it is because it lacks mercy. It lacks the mercy found in a field hospital, not in expensive clinics; it lacks the mercy that values goodness and opens the door to an encounter with God, rather than turning someone away with sharp criticism. I am going to propose a prayer about the woman whose sins were forgiven (Jn 8:3-11), to ask for the grace to be merciful in the confessional, and another prayer about the social dimension of the works of mercy.

I have always been struck by the passage of the Lord's encounter with the woman caught in adultery, and how, by refusing to condemn her, he "fell short of" the Law. In response to the question they asked to test him – "should she be stoned or not?" – Jesus did not rule, he did not apply the law. He played dumb – here too the Lord has something to teach us! – and turned to something else. He thus initiated a process in the heart of the woman who needed to hear those words: "Neither do I condemn you". He stretched out his hand and helped her to her feet, letting her see a gentle gaze that changed her heart. The Lord took the daughter of Jairus by the hand and said: "Give her something to eat". He raised the son of the widow of Nain and gave him back to his mother. And here he tells the sinful woman to rise. He puts us exactly where God wants us to be: standing, on our feet, never down on the ground. Sometimes I feel a little saddened and annoyed when people go straight to the last words Jesus speaks to her: "Go and sin no more".

They use these words to "defend" Jesus from bypassing the law. I believe that Christ's words are of a piece with his actions. He bends down to write on the ground as a prelude to what he is about to say to those who want to stone the woman, and he does so again before talking to her. This tells us something about the "time" that the Lord takes in judging and forgiving. The time he gives each person to look into his or her own heart and then to walk away. In talking to the woman, the Lord opens other spaces: one is that of non-condemnation.

The Gospel clearly mentions this open space. It makes us see things through the eyes of Jesus, who tells us: "I see no one else but this woman". Then Jesus makes the woman herself look around. He asks her: "Where are those who condemned you?" (The word "condemn" is itself important, since it is about what we find unacceptable about those who judge or caricature us...). Once he has opened before her eyes this space freed of other people's judgements, he tells her that neither will he throw a stone there: "Nor do I condemn you". Then he opens up another free space before her: "Go and sin no more". His command has to do with the future, to help her to make a new start and to "walk in love". Such is the sensitivity of mercy: it looks with compassion on the past and offers encouragement for the future.

Those words, "Go and sin no more" are not easy. The Lord says them "with her". He helps her put into words what she herself feels, a free "no" to sin that is like Mary's "yes" to grace. That "no" has to be said to the deeply-rooted sin present in everyone. In that woman, it was a social sin; people approached her either to sleep with her or to throw stones at her. There was no other way to approach her. That is why the Lord does not only clear the path before her, but sets her on her way, so that she can stop being the "object" of other people's gaze and instead take control of her life.

Those words, "sin no more" refer not only to morality, but, I believe, to a kind of sin that keeps her from living her life. Jesus also told the paralytic at Bethzatha to sin no more (Jn 5:14). But that man had justified himself with all the sad things that had "happened to him"; unlike the woman, he suffered from a victim complex. So Jesus challenged him ever so slightly by saying: "...lest something worse happen to you". The Lord took advantage of his way of thinking, his fears, to draw him out of his paralysis. He gave him a little scare, we might say. The point is that each of us has to hear the words "sin no more" in his own deeply personal way.

This image of the Lord who sets people on their way is very typical. He is the God who walks at his people's side, who leads them forward, who accompanies our history. Hence, the object of his mercy is quite clear: it is everything that keeps a man or a woman from walking on the right path, with their own people, at their own pace, to where God is asking them to go. What troubles him is that people get lost, or fall behind, or try to go it on their own. That they end up nowhere. That they are not there for the Lord, ready to go wherever he wants to send them. That they do not walk humbly before him (cf. Mic 6:8), that they do not walk in love (cf. Eph 5:2).

### **The confessional, where the truth makes us free**

Let us now go to the confessional, where the truth sets us free. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* presents the confessional as the place where the truth makes us free for an encounter. It says: "When he celebrates the sacrament of penance, the priest is fulfilling the ministry of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep, of the Good Samaritan who binds up wounds, of the Father who awaits the prodigal son and welcomes him on his return, and of the just and impartial Judge whose judgement is both just and merciful. The priest is the sign and the instrument of God's merciful love for the sinner" (No. 1465). The *Catechism* also reminds us that "the confessor is not the master of God's forgiveness but its servant. The minister of this sacrament should unite himself to the intention and charity of Christ" (No. 1466).

Signs and instruments of an encounter. That is what we are. An attractive invitation to an encounter. As signs, we must be welcoming, sending a message that attracts people's attention. Signs need to be consistent and clear, but above all understandable. Some signs are only clear to specialists, are not of much help. Signs and instruments. Instruments have to be effective, readily available, precise and suitable for the job. Either they work or they don't. We are instruments if people have a genuine encounter with the God of mercy. Our task is "to make that encounter possible", face-to-face. What people do afterwards is their business. There is a prodigal son in a pigsty and a father who goes out every afternoon to await his return. There is a lost sheep and a shepherd who goes out to seek him. There is a wounded person left at the roadside and a goodhearted Samaritan. What is our ministry? It is to be signs and instruments enabling this encounter.

Let us always remember that we are not the father, the shepherd or the Samaritan. Rather, inasmuch as we are sinners, we are on the side of the other three. Our ministry has to be a sign and instrument of that encounter. We are part of the mystery of the Holy Spirit, who creates the Church, builds unity, and constantly invites to encounter. The other mark of a sign and instrument is that it is not self-referential. Put more simply, it is not an end in itself. Nobody sticks with the sign once they understand the reality. Nobody keeps looking at the screwdriver or the hammer, but at the well-hung picture. We are useless servants. Instruments and signs that help two people to join in an embrace, like the father and his son.

The third mark of a sign and instrument is its availability. An instrument has to be readily accessible; a sign must be visible. Being a sign and instrument is about being a mediator, about being available. Perhaps this is the real key to our own mission in this merciful encounter of God and man. We could even put it in negative terms. St Ignatius talked about "not getting in the way". A good mediator makes things easy, rather than setting up obstacles.

In my country, there was a great confessor, Fr Cullen. He would sit in the confessional and, when no one was around, he would do one of two things: he would repair worn soccer balls for the local kids, or he would thumb through a big Chinese dictionary. He had been in China for many years and he wanted to keep up the language. He used to say that when people saw him doing such completely useless things like fixing old soccer balls or working on his Chinese, they would think: "I'm going to go up and talk to his priest, since he obviously doesn't have much to do!" He was available for what was essential. He had his regular hours for hearing confessions, but he was always there. He got rid of the obstacle of always looking busy and serious. This is the problem: people don't approach their priests when they see them constantly busy and running around.

Everybody has known good confessors. We have to learn from our good confessors, the ones whom people seek out, who do not make them afraid but help them to speak frankly, as Jesus did with Nicodemus. It is important to understand body language, not to ask things that are already evident from body language. If people come to confession it is because they are penitent; repentance is already there. They come to confession because they want to change. Or at least they want to want to change, if they think their situation is hopeless. *Ad impossibilia nemo tenetur*, as the old maxim goes: no one is obliged to do the impossible.

Body language. I read in the biography of one of our recent saints who, poor man, he suffered much during the war. He had to confess a soldier about to face the firing squad. The man was clearly something of a philanderer, so our saint asked him: "Are you sorry for this?" The man replied: "No, Father! It was great!" Our saint didn't know what to do. The firing squad was waiting to execute the man, so he said: "At least tell me this, are you sorry for not being sorry?" ... "Certainly!" ... "Good, then!" The confessor always seeks the right way of acting, and speaking, to get to the heart of things.

We have to learn from good confessors, those who are gentle with sinners, who after a couple of words understand everything, as Jesus did with the woman suffering from a haemorrhage, and straightaway the power of forgiveness goes forth from them. I was very edified by a curial cardinal who I thought was quite strict. But when he had a penitent who was clearly embarrassed about confessing a sin, after a few words he would interrupt to say that he understood and to go on. He interrupted because he understood. That is tact. But there are those confessors – forgive me! – who probe and probe. "Tell me this, tell me that". Do you really need all those details to absolve or are you "making a film"? That cardinal edified me greatly.

The integrity of confession is not a mathematics problem. How many times? How? When? Sometimes people feel less shame in confessing a sin than in having to say the number of times they committed it. We have to let ourselves be moved by people's situation, which at times is a mixture of their own doing, human weakness, sin and insuperable conditionings. We have to be like Jesus, who was deeply moved by the sight of people and their problems, and kept healing them, even when they "didn't ask properly", like that leper, or seemed to beat around the bush, like the Samaritan woman. She was like a bird we have in South America: she squawked in one place but had her nest in another. Jesus was patient.

We have to learn from confessors who can enable penitents to feel amendment in taking a small step forwards, like Jesus, who gave a suitable penance and could appreciate the one leper who returned to thank him, on whom he bestowed yet more. Jesus had his mat taken away from the paralytic, and he made the blind man and the Syro-Phoenician woman have to ask. It didn't matter to him if they paid no attention to him, like the paralytic at the pool of Bethzatha, or told others what he ordered them not to tell, with the result that he himself became the leper, since he could not go into the towns or his enemies found reasons to condemn him. He healed people, forgave their sins, eased their suffering, gave them rest and made them feel the consoling breath of the Spirit. Perhaps some of you have already heard what I am about to say. In Buenos Aires I knew a Capuchin Friar. He is still alive, a little younger than myself, and a great confessor. There is always a line before his confessional, lots of people – all kinds of people, rich and poor, priests and nuns – all day long. He is really good at forgiving. He always finds a way to forgive and to bring people along. It is a real gift of the Spirit. But every once in a while he has scruples about being so forgiving. Once in conversation he told me: "Sometimes I have scruples". So I asked him: "What do you do when you have these scruples?" He replied: "I go before the tabernacle, I look at our Lord and I tell him, 'Lord, forgive me, today I was very forgiving. But let's be clear, it is all your fault, because you gave me bad example!'" He added mercy to mercy.

Lastly, as far as confession is concerned, I have two bits of advice. First, never look like a bureaucrat or a judge, somebody who just sees "cases" to be dealt with. Mercy sets us free from being the kind of priest who is so used to judging "cases" that he is no longer sensitive to persons, to faces. When I was in second theology, I would go with my classmates to hear the public examinations of the third theologians who were about to be ordained. We went to learn and we always learned something. Once, I recall, a student was asked about justice, but the question was so intricate and unreal that the student answered, very humbly: "But Father, this never happens in real life!" He was told: "But it does in books!" Book morality, unrelated to experience... The rule of Jesus is to "judge as we would be judged". This is the key to our judgement: that we treat others with dignity, that we don't demean or mistreat them, that we help raise them up, and that we never forget that the Lord is using us, weak as we are, as his instruments. Not necessarily because our judgement is "the best", but because it is sincere and can build a good relationship.

My other bit of advice is not to pry in the confessional. St Therese tells us that when her novices would confide in her, she was very careful not to ask how things turned out. She did not pry into people's souls (cf. History of a Soul, Ms C, to Mother Gonzaga, c. XII, 32r.). It is characteristic of mercy to cover sin with its cloak, so as not to wound people's dignity. We can think of that touching passage about the two sons of Noah, who covered with a cloak the nakedness of their father in his drunkenness (cf. Gen 9:23).

### **The Social Dimension of the Works of Mercy**

Let us now say something about the social dimension of the works of mercy. At the conclusion of the *Exercises*, St Ignatius puts "contemplation to attain love", which connects what is experienced in prayer to daily life. He makes us reflect on how love has to be put more into works than into words. Those works are the works of mercy which the Father "prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Eph 2:10), those which the Spirit inspires in each for the common good (cf. 1 Cor 12:7). In thanking the Lord

for all the gifts we have received from his bounty, we ask for the grace to bring to all mankind that mercy which has been our own salvation.

For this social dimension, I proposed that we meditate on one of the final paragraphs of the Gospels. There, the Lord himself makes that connection between what we have received and what we are called to give. We can read these conclusions in the key of “works of mercy” which bring about the time of the Church, the time in which the risen Jesus lives, guides, sends forth and appeals to our freedom, which finds in him its concrete daily realization. The conclusion of Matthew’s Gospel tells us that the Lord sends his Apostles to make disciples of all nations, “teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded” (28:20). “Instructing the ignorant” is itself one of the works of mercy. It spreads like light to the other works: to those listed in Matthew 25, which deal more with the so-called “corporal works of mercy”, and to all the commandments and evangelical counsels, such as “forgiving”, “fraternally correcting”, consoling the sorrowing, enduring persecution and so forth.

Mark’s Gospel ends with the image of the Lord who “collaborates” with the Apostles and “confirms the word by the signs that accompany it”. Those “signs” greatly resemble the works of mercy. Mark speaks, among other things, of healing the sick and casting out demons (cf. 16:17-18). Luke continues his Gospel with the “Acts” – praxeis -- of the Apostles, relating the history of how they acted and the works they did, led by the Spirit.

John’s Gospel ends by referring to the “many other things” (21:25) or “signs” (20:30) which Jesus performed. The Lord’s actions, his works, are not mere deeds but signs by which, in a completely personal way, he shows his love and his mercy for each person.

We can contemplate the Lord who sends us on this mission, by using the image of the merciful Jesus as revealed to Sr Faustina. In that image we can see mercy as a single ray of light that comes from deep within God, passes through the heart of Christ, and emerges in a diversity of colours, each representing a work of mercy.

The works of mercy are endless, but each bears the stamp of a particular face, a personal history. They are much more than the lists of the seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy. Those lists are like the raw material – the material of life itself – that, worked and shaped by the hands of mercy, turns into an individual artistic creation. Each work multiplies like the bread in the baskets; each gives abundant growth like the mustard seed. For mercy has these two important marks: it is fruitful and it is inclusive.

We usually think of the works of mercy individually and in relation to a specific initiative: hospitals for the sick, soup kitchens for the hungry, shelters for the homeless, schools for those to be educated, the confessional and spiritual direction for those needing counsel and forgiveness... But if we look at the works of mercy as a whole, we see that the object of mercy is human life itself and everything it embraces. Life itself, as “flesh”, hungers and thirsts; it needs to be clothed, given shelter and visited, to say nothing of receiving a proper burial, something none of us, however rich, can do for ourselves. Even the wealthiest person, in death, becomes a pauper; there are no moving vans in a funeral cortege. Life itself, as “spiritual”, needs to be educated, corrected, encouraged and consoled. That last word is very important in the Bible;

think about the Book of the Consolation of Israel, in Isaiah. We need others to counsel us, to forgive us, to put up with us and to pray for us. The family is where these works of mercy are practised in so normal and unpretentious a way that we don't even realize it. Yet once a family with small children loses its mother, everything begins to fall apart. The cruellest and most relentless form of poverty is that of street children, without parents and prey to the vultures.

We have asked for the grace to be signs and instruments. Now we have to "act", not only with gestures, but with projects and structures, by creating a culture of mercy. This is not the same as a culture of philanthropy; the two need to be distinguished. Once we begin, we sense immediately that the Spirit energizes and sustains these works. He does this by using the signs and instruments he wants, even if at times they do not appear to be the most suitable ones. It could even be said that, in order to carry out the works of mercy, the Spirit tends to choose the poorest, humblest and most insignificant instruments, those who themselves most need that first ray of divine mercy. They are the ones who can best be shaped and readied to serve most effectively and well. The joy of realizing that we are "useless servants" for others whom the Lord blesses with the fruitfulness of his grace, seats at his table and serves us the Eucharist, is a confirmation that we are engaged in his works of mercy.

Our faithful people are happy to congregate around works of mercy. Just come to a Wednesday General Audience and you can see so groups and associations engaged in works of mercy. In penitential and festive celebrations, and in educational and charitable activities, our people willingly come together and let themselves be shepherded in ways that are not always recognized or appreciated, whereas so many of our more abstract and academic pastoral plans fail to work.

The massive presence of our faithful people in our shrines and on our pilgrimages is an anonymous presence, but anonymous simply because it is made up of so many faces and so great a desire simply to be gazed upon with mercy by Jesus and Mary. The same can be said about the countless ways in which our people take part in countless initiatives of solidarity; this too needs to be recognized, appreciated and promoted on our part. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that here in Italy organizations of this kind are so strong and involve so many people.

As priests, we ask two graces of the Good Shepherd, that of letting ourselves be guided by the *sensus fidei* of our faithful people, and to be guided by their "sense of the poor". Both these "senses" have to do with the *sensus Christi* spoken of by St Paul, with our people's love for, and faith in, Jesus.

Let us conclude by reciting the *Anima Christi*, that beautiful prayer which implores mercy from the Lord who came among us in the flesh and graciously feeds us with his body and blood. We ask him to show mercy to us and to his people. We ask his soul to "sanctify us", his body to "save us", his blood to "inebriate us" and to remove from us all other thirsts that are not of him. We ask the water flowing from his side "to wash us", his passion "to strengthen us". Comfort your people, crucified Lord! May your wounds "shelter us"... Grant that your people, Lord, may never be parted from you. Let nothing and no one separate us from your mercy, which defends us from the snares of the wicked enemy. Thus, we will sing your mercies, Lord, with all your saints when you bid us come to you.

Occasionally I hear comments from priests who say: "This Pope is always chiding us, always scolding us". There has been a bit of that. But I must say that I have been edified by any number of good priests! From those – and I have known them – who in the days before there were answering machines, slept with the telephone on their night table. No one died without sacraments; when the phone would ring at all hours, they would get up and go. Good priests!

And I thank the Lord for this blessing. All of us are sinners, but we can say that there are so many good and holy priests who work silently and unseen. Sometimes a scandal emerges, but, as we know, a tree as it falls makes more noise than a forest as it grows.

Yesterday I received a letter. I left it on my desk with my personal letters. I opened it just before coming here today and I believe that the Lord wanted me to. It is from a priest in Italy, a pastor of three small towns. I think we would do well to listen to this testimony from one of our brothers. It was written on 29 May, just a few days ago.

Pardon my troubling you. I am taking advantage of a priest friend who is going to Rome for the Jubilee of priests simply to send you, as an ordinary priest in charge of three small mountain parishes, a few thoughts about my own pastoral service. They are occasioned by some things you have said, that challenge me to daily conversion, and for this I thank you. I know I am not telling you anything new; surely these are things you have heard before. But I feel the need to say them myself.

I have often been struck by your call to us pastors to have the smell of the sheep. I am in the mountains, so I know very well what that means. We become priests to know that smell, which is really the perfume of the flock. It would be wonderful if our daily contact and visits to our flock, the true reason for our calling, were not replaced by administrative and bureaucratic responsibilities of our parishes, schools and so forth. I am lucky to have good and capable lay persons who take care of these things. But as the sole legal representative of the parish, with all its responsibilities, the pastor ends up always running around, sometimes leaving visits to the sick and families for last. I say this about myself. At times, it is frustrating to see how in my priestly life I get so caught up in bureaucratic and administrative matters that my people, the small flock entrusted to my care, are almost left to fend for themselves. Believe me, Holy Father, when I say that I am driven to tears for this failure. We try to organize things, but in the end, there is only the whirlwind of daily affairs.

Another thing you have talked about is the lack of fatherhood. Today's society is said to be lacking fathers and mothers. It strikes me that we too can renounce this spiritual paternity, allowing ourselves to be reduced to sacred bureaucrats, with the sad result that we feel abandoned and alone. Our difficulty in being fathers then has inevitable repercussions on our superiors, who have their own responsibilities and problems. Their relationship to us can also risk becoming purely formal, concerned with the management of the community, rather than with our lives as men, believers and priests.

All this – and here I will conclude – takes nothing away from my joy and excitement at being a priest for people and with people. If there are times when, as a pastor, I do not have the smell of the sheep, I am nonetheless moved to realize that my flock does not lose the smell of its pastor! Holy Father, it is a wonderful thing to realize that the

sheep do not leave us alone. They can gauge how much we are there for them, and if perchance the pastor strays from the path and loses his way, they go after him and take him by the hand. I keep thanking the Lord because he always saves us through the flock, the flock entrusted to us, all those good, ordinary, humble and serene people, the flock that is the real blessing of every shepherd.

I wanted to send you these simply little thoughts because you are close to the flock. You can understand us and can continue to help and support us. I pray for you and I thank you, too, for that occasional “scolding” that I feel is necessary for my journey. Bless me, Pope Francis, and pray for me and for my parishes.”

He signed the letter and then, at the end, added, like every good pastor: “I am leaving you a little offering. Pray for my community, in particular for the gravely ill and a few families with financial troubles, and not only. Thank you!”

This is one of our brothers. There are so many others like him! Doubtless many are here in our midst. So many. He shows us the way. So let us go forward! Do not forget about prayer. Pray as best you can, and if you fall sleep in front of the tabernacle, so be it. But pray! Don't ever lose this. Don't fail to let yourselves be gazed upon by Our Lady, and keep her always as your Mother. Don't ever lose your zeal, and your closeness and availability to people. And also, may I say: Don't ever lose your sense of humour... So let's move forward!



### ***A PASSING THOUGHT ...***

**The winter migrant of tiny wax eye birds now abounds in urban areas. Enticed by sweet and other domestic scraps, they provide a welcome splash of colour to our back section here in Grey Lynn. Hopefully the same is happening in other areas as well.**

*Brother John E. Fitzgibbon*

## *September Gospel Reflections*

### **23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (4<sup>th</sup> September). Luke 14:25-33**

The conditions for discipleship are radical; even human family relationships and one's own life must not take precedence over the journey as disciple. Jesus' true relatives are described as those who hear the word of God and keep it. The Christian journey calls for total renunciation; without this, it is like worthless salt that has lost its taste. Jesus' attitude of total self-giving, placing the lives of others ahead of one's own, is what he is about to do on the journey he is about to take to Jerusalem. Unless this challenge of Jesus is accepted, his listeners are like the tower builder or king who set out to do something without taking the means to bring the project to completion.

It is hard to imagine Jesus telling us to 'hate' anyone, let alone parents. This is an example of Semitic hyperbole, an exaggerated way of speaking that demands not to be taken literally, but to be taken seriously. In the world of early Christianity, the following of Christ could lead to serious family divisions. Jesus himself left his own family to carry out his mission in life. His mission presents him as a Wisdom teacher, a link with the first reading.

### **24<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary time (11<sup>th</sup> September) Luke 15:1-32**

Loss-finding-celebration, Jesus tell three parables that are a defence and justification for celebrating the hospitality and the mercy of God. The first two pair – a man (the shepherd with a hundred sheep) and a peasant woman (the lost coin, one among ten). Totally unconventional behaviour is part of all three parables, what reasonable shepherd would leave the ninety-nine sheep, doesn't the woman's search for the coin seem obsessive, and isn't the father's behaviour totally unconventional for a dignified man of affairs in the Palestinian cultural world.

The complete reinstatement as son of the errant younger brother and a communal celebration contains no words of sin and repentance though they had a shadowy place in the young man's thinking. Complete and unconditional acceptance is the father's mode of receiving back the returning son, dead and now alive, lost and now found. Anger and resentment mark the older son's reaction to the return of his brother ('This son of yours'). Yet the father forsakes his dignity and goes out to plead with him. The older brother has the servant mentality, 'worked like a slave', a contract mentality. Did he go inside to preside along with his father at the banquet, or did he stay outside, angry with the unconditional forgiveness of his father? Who do we identify with in the story? It says much about our relationship with God.

## 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (18<sup>th</sup> September) Luke 16:1-13

This is one of those crisis parables where action is taken in face of impending catastrophe. Originally, when Jesus told it, the parable was a warning to the Pharisees to take action in crisis. The opening is the same as for the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Upon his dismissal, the steward calls in his master's debtors and instructs them to rewrite their promissory notes. Taking stock of his perilous situation, the crafty steward acts cleverly to provide for his own future, buying up to twenty years of care from the debtors. Who is the master (*kyrios Lord*) is a point of debate; it is Jesus, thus ending the parable, or is it the master of the cunning steward? A whole series of sayings are added to the parable; some are appropriate; others are not. They focus on the theme of the right use of money, notably in caring for the poor and needy. The wealthy corresponded to the leaders of the community; they are not to forget that the poor have rights as members of the community.

It is nothing unusual for Jesus to have disreputable characters at the centre of his parables. This one is in a class of its own if it is his master that praises his roguish behaviour. His behaviour may not necessarily be wrong if he is stripping away that portion that accrues to himself, cancelling his own cut to buy the goodwill of people who may be able to help him, welcoming them into their homes. The praise of the master would be for sensible action that has not clung to wealth but used it to win goodwill. For Luke, the only really useful thing to do with wealth is to give it away now to store up treasure in heaven.

## 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (25<sup>th</sup> September) Luke 16:19-31

Unique to this parable is the naming of a character (Lazarus) and the intervention of a biblical figure (Abraham). It breaks into two parts, the story and the final conversation. Two great Lukan themes are illustrated: first, the coming reversal of all things, notably the fortunes of the rich and poor, and second, resistance to conversion. Maximum emphasis is placed on the reversal that takes place when both have died, with total reversal of their respective fortunes. The rich man ('Dives' means rich) did not even notice the poor man at his door. At the end of the fixed situation of non-correspondence remains, the no 'crossing' on earth is fixed as a great chasm ruling out here (Abraham's bosom) to there (Hades). As he had not been hospitable to Lazarus, now Lazarus cannot be hospitable to him.

It is not as though Lazarus was a virtuous person. It is his poor and neglected condition that is the object of God's action. The parable is about failure in conversion and compassion. Unable to do anything about his own condition, Lazarus want Abraham to warn the five brothers of Lazarus, lest they too end up in the same plight. But Abraham tells Lazarus that care for the poor is fundamental to the Scriptures, that of Moses and the prophets, for the Jewish people, as well as the book of the risen Christ, the New Testament, for wealthy Christians.

## *Champagnat Marist Pillars for Community Life*



### *To Make Jesus Known and Loved*

Our charism today is clearly expressed through the implementation of the Champagnat Marist Pillars in our schools and other ministries.

In community we express our charism through the Champagnat Marist Pillars for Community Life. These Pillars are to be incorporated into the design of the new community residence in Onehunga.

### *Seekers of God*

- Prayerful
- Silent reflection
- Mystics and Prophets

### *Followers of Mary*

- 'Do as He says'
- Being open to God's Call
- Respond whole heartedly

### *Weavers of Brotherhood*

- Sense of belonging
- Warm and welcoming
- Attentive to the needs of others

### *Promoters of Mission*

- Solidarity
- Global Availability
- Working with others

### *Narrators of Simplicity*

- Genuineness
- Open to potential of others
- Accepting people as they are

## *For Our Recently Deceased*

**Brother Richard Glen CFC: aged 93 – based in Christchurch - uncle of Richard Glen - formerly with us.**

**Mrs Irene Dromgool (nee Denton): of Tuakau - Affiliated member since 1991**

**Mrs Veronica Clare Johnson: sister of Brother Henry Spinks, died in Auckland on the 19<sup>th</sup> August**

## *Brothers with Health Concerns*

**Brother Emilian O'Dowd**

**Brother Eugene Kabanguka**

**Brother James McBride**

**Brother William Lawson**

**Brother Romuald Gibson**

**Brother Aidan Benefield**

**Brother Roger Dowling**

## *Others to keep in our prayers*

**Mrs Janne Pender**

**Mr Jack McCaffrey (formerly Brother Ligouri)**

**Mrs Linda Kilkenny, of Liston Village, generous friend of many Brothers**

**Mr Hugh Lavelle, brother of Brother Paul RIP**

**Pa Tony Brown**

**Mrs Val Moynihan, sister of Brother Ray Harold RIP**

**Mr Thomas Brown**

**Mrs Vitalina Guibreteau**

**Mr Brendan Cole**

**Mr Philip Fenn, brother of Brother Kieran, ill with terminal cancer**

## *Other Intentions*

**For our New Era Leadership Projects**

**For Refugees throughout the Word**

**For our active part during the Year of Mercy**

**For our Jubilarians of this year - 2016**

**Our young Brothers in Temporary Profession**

**Our Brothers involved in School Apostolates**

**For our Ad Gentes Projects & Personnel**

**For our District Leader – Brother David**

**For our Provincial – Brother Peter Carroll**

**For the members and work of the FM Connection Community, Auckland**





"Your room is right in here, Maestro."

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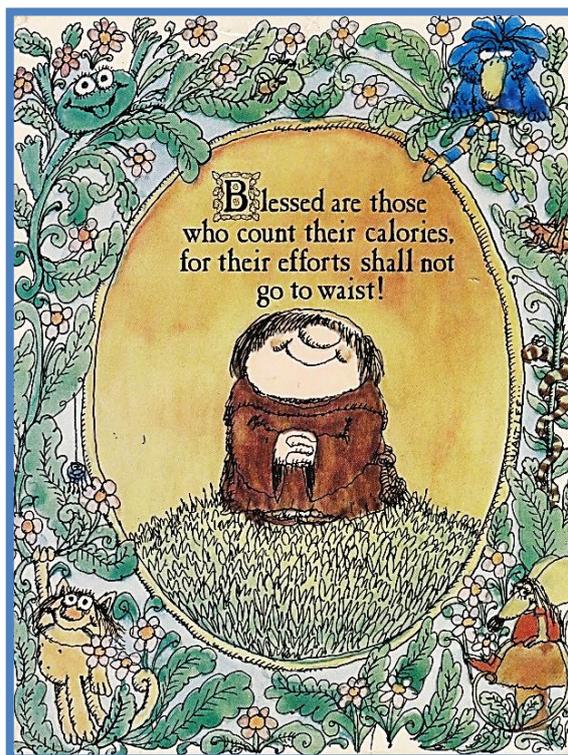
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## September Birthdays

4 <sup>th</sup>	Brother William Lawson
13 <sup>th</sup>	Brother Stephen Filipo
15 <sup>th</sup>	Brother Christopher Maney
15 <sup>th</sup>	Brother Christopher Poppelwell
19 <sup>th</sup>	Brother Sefo Une
21 <sup>st</sup>	Brother John Hazelman
25 <sup>th</sup>	Brother John Koorey

## September Memorials

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Br Augustine MacDonald 1926
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Br Emilian Cody 1949
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Br Laurence Gilmore 1940
4 <sup>th</sup>	Br Macarius Quemener 1933
5 <sup>th</sup>	Br Victor Montague 2002
5 <sup>th</sup>	Br Ptolemee Roer 1863
6 <sup>th</sup>	Br Hilarion Cowen 2011
8 <sup>th</sup>	Br Theophane Brailey 1999
9 <sup>th</sup>	Br Michael Murphy 1936
9 <sup>th</sup>	Br Nazarius Harney 1959
10 <sup>th</sup>	Br Majella Sherry 2002 Anniversary
15 <sup>th</sup>	Br Paul of the Cross Clarke 1935
15 <sup>th</sup>	Br Gilbert Donohue 1956
16 <sup>th</sup>	Br Austin Malley 1981
18 <sup>th</sup>	Br Basil Ward 2012
21 <sup>st</sup>	Br Clement Murray AG 1957
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Br Palladius Curtan 1936
24 <sup>th</sup>	Br Ross Gow-Smith 1991
24 <sup>th</sup>	Br Walstan Tillman 1903
24 <sup>th</sup>	Br Conrad Ryan 2009
25 <sup>th</sup>	Br Raymond Harold 2013
27 <sup>th</sup>	Br Lucien Magnhaudier 1873
27 <sup>th</sup>	Br George O'Meara 1926
29 <sup>th</sup>	Br Patrick Butler 1951



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