

On the day you cease to
change you cease to live.
(Anthony de Mello SJ)

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Greetings,

As we come to the end of this year, my overall feeling is one of thanks. To focus myself on the realities of communities in the Province I put together the Review document that has been distributed recently to the Community Leaders. That is why the feeling of thanks is so strong in me. The review does not pretend to assess the vitality of ministry, real as this is, but to name some personal and community happenings of some significance. No doubt you could add to the list.

My thanks in a special way to community leaders. This Review shows the amount of change you are dealing with – some planned, some unexpected. I borrowed the metaphor of ‘permanent whitewater’ to describe our context from the latest issue of Human Development. It has not been a solo journey either and this is where your leadership has been so impressive, helping others to stay on board physically, emotionally and spiritually!

Our thanks to Mark Murphy (Emerald), Anthony Robinson (Rosehill) and Michael Akers (Auburn) who are finishing as community leaders as their respective communities close. Anthony takes up the CL role at Eastwood in the new year as does Chris Hogan at Lidcombe.

The sort of change I mentioned above can often be very trying emotionally. Recently I called in to see Charles Howard at Campbelltown. It was the first time that he did not call me by name. He really had no idea where I lived. That is, he is slipping away from us as his Alzheimer’s condition becomes more evident. He himself seems at peace and as loving as

ever. It is us who can be distressed and feel powerless. Our thanks to the communities, nurses and carers who are so attentive to Charles and a number of us who need special support.

Geoff Kelly in Hanoi has other reasons to give thanks. The government officials are making very positive noises about granting registration for a Marist NGO to work in their country in partnership with a local NGO. Also, as can be seen in the photo, there is no shortage of Marist aspirants - a different sort of Christmas present.

Many blessings for Christmas and the New Year.



Farewell.

To Chris Wills - A Temporary New Mission

When I was contacted earlier this year by Br Joe McKee, the Vicar General, about releasing Chris for a new mission with the General Administration, I was not surprised. Chris is a big man and he is noticed. On at least one occasion before this year, when he was travelling through Rome, I had told him to keep his head down! While we are very disappointed to be losing Chris from among us for a time, we are very proud that an Australian son of Marcellin is being confided with such a significant role – to establish and lead a brand new secretariat for International Collaboration for Mission.

The experience behind such an appointment is what we want to acknowledge today. I do so happily as the Provincial, as former District leader of Melanesia, as a ‘missionary overseas’ looking for project support, as a friend.

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that MAPS has always existed. The Province has always had a ‘missionary outreach’ and we have had Lenten mission collections all along our history as well. Chris had a vision of doing these in a fresh way when he began a new ministry in January 2003. Fresh from the Farmhouse experience and his own previous experience as a Brother working in PNG, he was ready to fly.

So, a mission collection grew into an international solidarity agency. In a very special way, it has been an exercise in growing relationships - listening, sharing burdens, literally crossing raging seas and flooding rivers – to be with people. Many such people would love to be part of this event to say their thanks today. Going with that respect there has been a clear focus on ‘capacity-building’, assisting local partners to develop their own skills in planning, writing applications, implementing, reporting, reviewing. It is consoling

for Chris, us and our partners, to know that his leaving the scene now will not cause things to collapse. An important third element that was a focus from the start was that of communication within Australia, to the ‘donors’, particularly through the contact between MAPS and schools, consciously bringing them into relationship with their peers in the Pacific and Asia. A common thread through all this has been his confidence in lay people, here and overseas, to step up to the mark when given the chance.

When anyone speaks of Chris in these past nine years there is always a sense of marvelling in his capacity for innovation. He spots the opportunity or creates the opportunity. This has happened, with school immersions, volunteers, partnering with other agencies for big projects. He was asked to be part of a review of the Bureau of Solidarity in Rome which gave



birth to what is now the advocacy arm of FMSI. So advocacy for the well-being of children came onto our agenda. Chris was always the ‘go to’ man for special projects - refugees, Cambodia, Kuya centre in Manila, Operation Rainbow.

Two special ventures deserve special remarks. In 2006, with an eye for fostering greater collaboration and relatedness, the Oceania Solidarity Commission decided to sponsor a particular project that the four administrative units could get behind. Chris was quick off the mark to propose a project for the support of primary teachers on Bougainville, still recovering from the chaos years 1988-2003. This became Project Sankamap. The best of plans did not eventuate in terms of a Melanesian Brother leading the project but it went ahead, firstly under Br Gerry Burns, and is still continuing under the governance of the diocese.

Some years back Chris was aware of the considerable benefits to our partners in Asia and the Pacific if

we had access to more funds for humanitarian and development projects. Others had such funds at their disposal when they were able to receive tax-deductible funds. With Al Sherry, Chris worked to convince the Province leaders of the value of this. Australian Marist Solidarity was born as a registered agency and after a number of painful years now has government approval for receiving tax-deductible donations. A huge achievement. Just when Chris is leaving!

Chris has rightly been called many names – creative, innovative, charismatic, ‘big picture’ thinker, determined, relentless. He has the uncanny gift of being able to make Provincials squirm. He had a performance review a few years ago. People wondered what he was doing! And also how he was doing it! No news to anyone that he came through as a dynamo. From this review he moved out of his bedroom into an office and the team expanded so that there was at least one other person who actually knew what was happening.

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A special word of tribute to Lionel his banker and whole-hearted supporter. To Bill McAvoy his reliable back-stop and co-host of many visitors through the house. To Paula who made the mistake of offering her services and now is employed – she makes things happen and helps him vent. To all the Brothers of the community of Rosalie who have made the growth of MAPS possible.

Chris, we will miss your energy, your bright spirit, your presence. Your personal simplicity in relationships and lifestyle has underpinned the credibility of your work. Yours is a special vocation that has blended a spirituality, a theology, a vision of brotherhood, a passion, a competence, a commitment. We thank you in the name of the Province, of the District, of many young people overseas and in Australia who have benefited from your gift of yourself.

Enjoy your new role. Know where home is.

From The Marist Ministries Office

Oceania Shared Formation Experience

Well honestly I had no idea of what I was about to experience at the Oceania Shared Formation Experience. I knew how to get to Mittagong, the boss had given me the 'OK' to attend, my bag was packed and I still had absolutely no idea of the experience that was ahead of me. I don't think words could express the experience that I did have.

34 people came together for five days as brothers and lay from a multitude of cultures to share and enrich our Marist formation. Through this experience we had the opportunity to grow, share, listen and ignite the Marist fire to a new level within all of us. It was a challenging roller-coaster ride through various emotions, challenges and priorities that are at the forefront of Marist life. We lived and grew together as a community and had the opportunity to share our stories and work together as Marists and lay.

The Oceania Shared Formation Experience 2011 has confirmed that a vocational Marist life is a gift from God and open to all. It has confirmed that our inspiration for Marist life has come and continues to come from the lived reality of our communal relationships. It has provided us with a space for creative options for experimenting with the diverse possibilities of Marist life in the future. We respect highly the interdependence and complementarity

of all Marists across the region and look forward in hope to supporting one another with confidence and energy.

This experience has given me the confidence to interact, invite and live out Marist life with the support of a wide and varied community, I have grown so much from the experience and appreciate the opportunity to be part of such a powerful formation and networking experience.

Kathryn Collins
Varroville



From The Council

More appointments

Kevin Herlihy to join the Campbelltown community.

Assistant community Leaders

Bill Sullivan (Cairns)
Andrew Moraghan (Campbelltown)
Don Newton (Daceyville)
Mark Murphy (Eastwood)
John Mullins (Hunters Hill)
Tony Vaughan (Lidcombe)
Frank Elvidge (Mittagong)
Peter Stewart (Randwick)

Bursars

Joachim Fabbro (Cairns)
Andrew Moraghan (Campbelltown)
Eric Blumenthal (Daceyville)
Michael Callinan (Eastwood)
Paul Murphy (North Sydney)
Peter Stewart (Randwick)

Stanley Bakere from the District of Melanesia will join the community at Eastwood while studying for Graduate Diploma in Counselling at the Australian College of Applied Psychology.

Ministries

Matthew Green will be the Deputy Principal of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College in Alice Springs.

Paul Hough will be the Deputy Executive Director of Catholic Education Services in Cairns for two years. He will continue to have a special interest in promoting indigenous education.

Ashley Higgins will continue as a postulant in Melbourne in 2012. His father has a terminal illness.

We have been informed that the future of Marist College Penshurst is under review. In 2012 there will be a community consultation by the CEO to look at three options:

- 1) adding Years 11 and 12 boys to the existing College structure.
- 2) developing the school to a Co-educational Year 7-12 College.
- 3) maintaining the status quo.

"Boiling the Billy at Manziana"

Gerry Steele introduced the Third Age Program Brothers to a Mittagong style "boiling the billy." He built a fire, made billies from fruit tins, swung the boiling water and demonstrated toast making.

All joined in but there was no indication that any of the men will be repeating the exercise when they return home.



Don Newton, Michael Orucke (Nigeria) and Gerry

December

- 2 Graham Neist
- 3 Anthony Hunt
- 6 Joachim Fabbro, Patrick Thompson, Norman Hart
- 8 Cyril Quinlan
- 11 Mark Fordyce
- 12 Terence Heinrich
- 13 Timothy Beencke, John Maguire, Kevin Herlihy
- 14 Jeffrey Barrington, Lucius Burnheim, Silverius Lenehan
- 15 Ken McDonald, Luke Saker, Anthony Shears
- 16 Kevin Ryan
- 17 John Thompson
- 18 Matthew Green
- 24 William McAvoy
- 26 Paul Murphy
- 27 Christopher Wade
- 29 Brian Beggs
- 30 Anthony Robinson
- 31 Michael Haynes

January

- 1 Nicholas Howlett
- 4 Cyrus Callaghan
Bertrand Webster
- 10 Ian Bulkin
- 11 Michael Akers, John Curry
- 15 Roger Burke, Alexis Turton
- 17 Kieran Geaney
- 19 Raymond Arthur
- 20 John Wells
- 22 Graeme Peacock
- 27 Bede Maher
- 29 Neil O'Leary