



MSA Newsletter

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



From Brother Michael Green

9 February 2011

Dear Members of the Marist family,

In his unauthorised biography of Father Champagnat written in 1876 in the last months of his life, Brother Sylvestre tells us that the virtue with which Marcellin admitted to have struggled least successfully was that of humility. And it troubled Marcellin deeply. Perhaps this was just projection on the part of the author: Sylvestre was a colourful character all his life, a real attention-seeker. The practical-joking twelve year-old who famously ambushed Marcellin by jumping on his shoulders after compline one night, and whom Brother Dominique once locked in a cupboard to contain his youthful effervescence, always retained his enjoyment for being the centre of attention.

Yet Sylvestre's writings are permeated by a concern for humility. Run some textual data analysis software over it, and you'll find this to be his most recurring theme. In second place comes his fear of sin and damnation. He certainly shared that with Marcellin. The themes are related, and come out the French school of spirituality that helped to form both men, one that emphasised, among other things, an imperative for a person to become as nothing before God and so be open as possible both to God's immanence and to God's awesome wonder.

Today's Scientologists probably wouldn't buy that idea, nor would most of the mind-body-spirit charlatans who peddle various means for self-actualisation. Abasement and vulnerability are not really in fashion as aspirational goals. Perhaps Gen X's and Y's may also have some difficulties, if we believe the stereotypical way that our young adults have been cast. (Which I don't.) But look at the great masters of the spiritual life – from the Hebrew prophets, to St Paul, to the desert hermits, to the medieval mystics, to the early modern spiritual authors – and you'll find the same thing: the foundation of the spiritual life is humility. Pauline Christology begins here, with the self-emptying, the kenosis, of Christ. The sign of prayer (and of martyrdom) in traditional iconography is an open hand.

If we needed any convincing of it, our human puniness in the face of the forces of the cosmos has been shoved starkly before us over these recent months as so many of our Australian towns and communities have been devastated by natural disasters. Any self-delusion about our grandeur or self-sufficiency has been dismissively trashed by the power of earth, wind, fire and water. With a the same humility, let us also approach our God. The difference is, of course, that God comes to us not to kill and to destroy, but to love and to give life. While we have good reason to cower and clench when nature overpowers us, when God does it we need only to be open and welcoming.

It is God's work that we Marists do. As we take up that work again at the beginning of the 2011 academic year, let us recall that Mary of the Visitation was first Mary of the Annunciation. As for her, our primary call is to open ourselves completely to the God who loves us. Then, filled with this God, we can set out to the hill country of the lives of young people with a genuine song of Magnificat – bringing news that gives hope, news of mercy, justice, and a faithful God.

For those of us in leadership – to whom others so often look for their own encouragement and assurance – developing a style of humble and vulnerable leadership does not always come readily. But it didn't come immediately to Marcellin either, or to poor little egotistical Sylvestre. Nor indeed to Mary. God did great things in them all.

As he will surely in us this year.

Nisi Dominus

Brother Michael Green FMS
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Principals' Meetings March 2011

Melbourne

**4th March, 8.30am-4.00pm
Montagne Centre, Brunswick**

Brisbane

**11th March, 9.00am-2.30pm
Lavalla Centre, Rosalie**

Sydney

**16th March, 9.00am-2.30pm
Provincial House, Drummoyne**

**Each will be preceded by a dinner
the previous evening.
Regional Directors will provide details
closer to the event**



Have you heard of Conor Ashleigh?

Conor is a 22 year-old ex-student of our school in Newcastle, St Francis Xavier College.

He is a committed, articulate, compassionate, faith-filled and talented photographer and multimedia storyteller. He has worked in community development in East Africa, the Middle East, East Asia, the Pacific, and the Indian sub-continent. In this year's Australia Day Awards he was named as Young Australian of the Year for his region. Read more about him and look at some of his work by following this link:

<http://conorashleigh.com>

During 2011, Conor is working for a number of Church aid agencies, international NGOs, and universities. He is also very interested to visit Marist schools to work with students and/or teachers to share his experiences and his passion for justice. He attributes his time in a Marist school as the catalyst for awakening his social conscience. Some schools have already used him to run seminars, workshops and to present at assemblies.

Conor may contact your school, or you may want to contact him: conor.ashleigh@gmail.com

Marist Publications



Lavalla

This year, our staff journal Lavalla will return to the pre-2001 arrangement of being issued three times per year, at the start of Terms 2, 3 and 4. The first issue will be a joint AMSA-MSA effort, with its publication then entirely with MSA. From the start of the year, the Editor will be Brother Tony Paterson. Tony will be in touch with each member school to identify the name of the contact person for sending in material. His mailbox is now open: tony.paterson@msa.edu.au You are invited to submit photos and articles as and when they happen.



Do you receive the fortnightly international Marist News from Rome? Last Friday's issue carried a story about our own MLF Team: www.champagnat.org./NM/pdf/141_EN.pdf

Please feel welcome to subscribe yourself to receive all future issues: www.champagnat.org/en/261900002.php



Most member schools already subscribe to our academic journal, Champagnat. Does yours? Individual subscriptions are also much encouraged to be taken up by Marist educators searching for a deeper exploration of Marist issues. Email or ring Jenny at Templestowe to subscribe: jburke@maristmelb.org.au; 03 9846 1633

Blessing and Opening of the Montagne Centre

**The office for Marist Ministries in Melbourne,
which houses both our MSA National Office
and Melbourne Regional Office,
will be solemnly blessed
by Bishop Timothy Costelloe SDB
and Officially Opened
by Education Minister Martin Dixon MP at
4.30pm Friday 4th March.
Invitations are being sent out this week.
All are welcome.**

SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS

A reminder to ensure that your MSA Regional Office and the MSA National Office are on the mailing lists and/or email alerts for School Newsletters.

LEADERSHIP TEAM PLANNING DAYS

The MSA Leadership Team have some days set aside this week in Sydney for planning. Regional Directors will be in touch with Principals to share with them the details.

AROUND THE SAME TABLE, the FIRST SUPPER and MATTHEW'S GOSPEL



At opening assemblies, liturgies and Commencement Masses schools have been introducing the theme *Around the Same Table* in a variety of creative ways. Some have taken up the challenge to be places that are inclusive, that offer a shared table where there is a place for those who are different, those who often go unrecognised or feel unknown in our school

communities, or whose life is experienced as living more on its edges. Others put the challenge to the school community to be places offering a unique hospitality, a place where people are respected, their uniqueness embraced and individuality accepted. To highlight this theme some schools have creatively used the image of the table at La Valla, both on banners and through visual recreations. Interestingly, others have used Andrei Rublev's Icon of the Trinity or Susan White's *The First Supper*, based on Leonardo da Vinci's painting of *The Last Supper* depicting the Christ figure as an Australian Aboriginal women. There are a number of ways the theme *Around the Same Table* could be introduced throughout the year and later highlighted in a particular way during Champagnat Week celebrations.

An experience of gathering around the same table felt tangible at our recent Mission and Life Formation and Marist Schools Australia team meeting in Sydney. Our teams worked together to discuss and implement the most effective and practical ways that we can continue to serve the Marist school communities of Australia this year. The heart of our mission is to make Jesus Christ known and loved in our school communities. Our challenge is to offer effective formative opportunities and processes to encourage, nurture and develop this spiritual quest.



Staff group at St Mary's High School Casino who participated in a Staff Formation

for their child starting in this new place and upon the values, expectations and reality of belonging to a Catholic and Marist community.

There has been the further opportunity to work with other ministry areas including REMAR to offer an opportunity for leaders to explore a deeper understanding of Marcellin's charism as a gift to young people. There is an important opportunity for school leaders this year to make use of the readings of the Church's year that we will hear from Matthew's Gospel. Like Hamlet, this Gospel is full of familiar quotations: 'not fit to carry his boots'; 'go the extra mile'; 'here today, gone tomorrow'; 'don't cast your pearls before swine'; 'the blind leading the blind'; 'burn the midnight oil'; 'the salt of the earth'. It is a Gospel that also speaks clearly of presence, an important Marist quality. Matthew helps us understand the mystery of presence; 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' (18:20), and as it was in the beginning, so at the end, and forever: 'I am with you always.' It is a Gospel of the now that speaks of a readiness to feed the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to welcome the stranger, to clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit those imprisoned. It is a Gospel that invites us to recognise where the Lord, ever-present, may be seen, known and loved amongst us. Matthew's Gospel provides an opportunity for our school communities to grow in a deeper understanding of the Word as a source of nourishment to be shared and proclaimed with staff and students throughout this year.

Let us continue to 'proclaim from the rooftops' (Mt 10:27) our belief in a God we know and love, a God who delights in offering us a future full of hope and promise.

Tony Clarke
NATIONAL DIRECTOR MLF



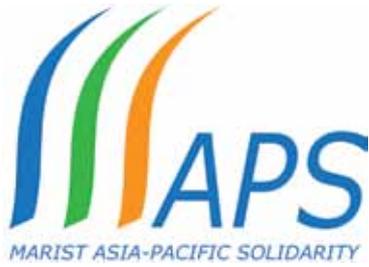
Michael Akers presenting to parents of Kindergarten students at St Michael's Primary School, Daceyville, in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs

As the year began there have been many opportunities to provide some of these formation experiences (although some were postponed in Queensland as communities struggled with the devastating elements of both water and wind). Already this year schools have taken the opportunity through staff formation experiences to explore the theme *Around the Same Table*. Staff have been encouraged to consider the edge they bring to educating young people, how to listen to what young people are really saying, how to respond with an authentic Marist heart, and how to care for themselves and nurture their own spiritual growth.

The team has also met with new staff and parents of students starting at both Primary and Secondary Marist schools. As part of these programs parents reflected upon the hopes and dreams they had



L to R - Brothers Michael Callinan and Michael Akers are welcomed at a Staff Induction afternoon at Mt Carmel High School Varroville by staff members Kathryn Collins and Laurence Malnesilia.



MAPS NATIONAL OFFICE BEGINS IN BRISBANE

The new national Marist Asia Pacific Solidarity Office (MAPS) anticipates the new province structure for Marists in Australia in the future. It has grown out of the Marist Solidarity Office of the Melbourne Province MSO) commenced in 2003 and MAPS Sydney Office (founded in 2002). The new office has two full time co-directors: Brothers Chris Wills and Allen Sherry. There are also four others working in the team in part time capacities: Paula McLaughlin (administration), Christian Nobleza (youth links, research and development), Brother Lionel Charlton (finance) and a volunteer David L'Estrange (advocacy for children's' rights). Some interns will commence once the academic year commences.

The team held its first meeting February 3 and concluded to hear the LaValla Centre Director, Brother John Thomson announce the arrival of 38 boxes for MAPS! A very hot and bothered delivery man turned his truck to front the steps of the building and carted them into a storage space. MAPS Melbourne office files and equipment had arrived! Al has settled into a first week of cyclonic threats, humidity and as a new team member.



FLOODS AND CYCLONES

The MAPS Office is situated at Rosalie, which was widely featured on many news broadcasts about the floods. We are, however, in "Upper Rosalie" (Paris end) and were only surrounded on three sides by water. Marist teachers, parents and students at Emerald and Riverview were not so fortunate. Nor were many boarding student families from Ashgrove. The Marist Flood Fund has been established to collect funds from fellow Marists in Australia. We are waiting on news from Cairns to see if they need to be included in the fund. Chris has stopped teasing Al about his escape from Melbourne weather!

We are confident that many schools will support the appeal.



Pictured are the newly commissioned school leaders from All Saints College - St Peter's Campus, Maitland: Carla Higgins, Jack Edwards, Adam Carmody, Phillipa Kuhnel with Carole Wark and Br Michael Callinan

COMMISSIONING OF ST PETER'S COLLEGE LEADERS

The St Peter's, Maitland campus of All Saints College this morning celebrated their Opening Liturgy and Commissioning of the 2011 leaders. The celebration took up the theme of Around the Same Table – a place for all. During the liturgy a large jigsaw depicting the table of the founding community at Lavalla, France was assembled by representatives of the parents, the student leaders, the new Year 7 students, support staff, teaching staff and the wider Marist family.

School and Sports Leaders for 2011 received their blessed badges from Mr Craig Wattum from the Catholic Schools Office and Br Michael Callinan. The Peer Support Leaders were also commissioned for the program which welcomes and supports the new Year 7 students at St Peter's. The strong commitment by the senior students of St Peter's to making a place for all in their community was remarkably evident when over fifty Year 10 students took to the stage to be commissioned.

Mr Michael Blake, Principal of St Peter's Campus, congratulated all of the leaders and warmly welcomed students to the 2011 school year.