

Cambodia – a mission of Marists

In what ways have the PRIORITIES of the 2012 Mission Assembly influenced the ministry in Cambodia these past few years?

Australian Marist Community living out vocational lives

Marist Solidarity Cambodia (MSC) has enabled many Marists (Brothers and Lay) to live in community for varying periods of time – a week, a few months or considerably longer. School Immersion groups, recent secondary school graduates and adult volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to not only do good works, working with the poor and disabled of Cambodia, but to also to explore and deepen their own spirituality.

These opportunities show a commitment from lay Marists; they give rise to a greater understanding of vocation and they help to promote, support and encourage the Brothers' vocation.

Co-responsibility

Co-responsibility has been at the heart of the development of Marist Solidarity Cambodia. All the managers are Khmer and there are Khmer members of the MSC Board. An existing challenge is finding Khmer Christians for succession planning and to continue the Marist and Catholic direction of the Marist project.

Formation

By their witness and the training they provide, the Brothers and visiting Lay Marists offer Khmer people, both young and adult, an insight into the way Christians develop their sense of God's will and activity in our world and a enable to Khmer people to grow in understanding of Marist life.

Ministry

The most marginalised young people in Cambodia are those hidden by their families or refused school entrance because of their physical disabilities. The accelerated learning programme and Marist family spirit at the LaValla school reinforces the dignity of these young people who were culturally destined always to be on the margins of life.

Being sensitive to the Buddhist beliefs of the Khmer has always been important at MSC. Each year, a small group of Khmer youth undertake instruction to become Catholics, reflecting the impact of the Marist ministry young people.

People on immersion are confronted and challenged to reflect on their lives and values.

Solidarity

In a country still coming to terms with providing the most basic human rights for the disabled, let alone an education for the disabled, MSC gives young disabled Cambodian children not only an education, shelter and health care, but a sense of identity and hope for the future. Marist Solidarity Australia is the main body sourcing funds for the Marist Cambodia mission. Land has recently been purchased for improved accommodation for secondary and tertiary students.

Young Marists: Our Future

The Marist ministry in Cambodia encourages Young Marists to become involved and their involvement is a key component in assisting the Marist Cambodia project.

How do the DREAMS from International Mission Assembly, held in Nairobi last year, inform new

Mystics

The Marist mission in Cambodia reveals God's face to the Cambodian people. It deepens our sense of who we are; it challenges individuals to evangelise by how they live and the way they make the Marian face of the Church visible to those with whom they come in contact. The Brothers introduce Khmer people with what it means to be Marist and foster a prayer life, within a Buddhist culture.

Prophets

Those involved in the Marist mission in Cambodia have moved out of their comfort zone and gone to the peripheries to be a significant presence in the life of the people they are involved with on a daily basis. Their education model promotes inclusive education and is delivered and supported by committed and compassionate people who are truly transformative in what they do for all those at La Valla. LaValla gives young disabled Khmer children a sense of identity and hope for the future.

Communion

The Mission in Cambodia is witness to living in communion. The Brothers' house at Sala LaValla regularly has visitors. Relationships are fostered that cross many geographic, social and cultural boundaries. There is genuine participation and co-responsibility in decision-making. They are a key part of an international network that assists and responds to people in need.

