



MSA Newsletter

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



From Brother Michael Green

22 March 2011

Dear Members of the Marist Family

Blame the Venetians. They started it.

The partying associated *Carnevale* in medieval and early modern Venice set a benchmark for excess and hedonism that is at least matched by modern-day events such as *Mardi Gras* in New Orleans (and its gay-and-lesbian mutation in Sydney) or Brazil's *Carnevale*. But, I suspect, most Venetians would have at least had some understanding that the reason (or excuse) for their carryings-on was linked to the start of Lent (*carne-vale*: farewell to meat), as similarly the old Cajun French would have known well that their "fat Tuesday" preceded the abstinence of Ash Wednesday. I doubt that very few, if any, of those who lined Oxford Street in Sydney a couple of weekends ago would have any sense at all of the connection of their parade to the Church's year. Nor too many of those who were drawn to Rio for the mega-party there.

One of the more regrettable effects of the commercialisation and the secularisation of contemporary western culture is the degree of disconnection that has been created between many of our cultural practices and their religious origins. Hot-crossed buns and Easter eggs have been in the supermarket since the Christmas decorations came down! Not that we Christians should become too indignant about modern culture's usurpation of old religious symbolism. After all, the early Church stole most of its feast days from pre-Christian festivals such as harvest, spring and solstice. Perhaps some things have just come full circle.

Our young people – as indeed ourselves – are nonetheless challenged to embrace the renewal time of Lent each year without much cultural scaffolding to remind and to assist them. Sure, we do a bit: I imagine, for example, that most of the reception foyers of our schools have a little splash of purple next to a crucifix or candle; perhaps there are some other Lenten reminders around the school campus on noticeboards and electronic screens. I know of at least one school that has a well-attended Way-of-the-Cross on Friday lunchtimes at this time of year, and that some of our boarding schools have no-meat Fridays, even though they don't have to do so. Of course, there is the fund-raising associated with the annual MAPS appeal and Caritas's *Project Compassion*. All good. All timely.

The post-conciliar Church, in which most of us have grown up, long ago let go of much of its legalistic requirements that badged us as Catholics. And well that it did. Many were empty and even counter-productive. Yet, some of those customs did help to create a milieu that facilitated our being Christian in daily living. They helped to shape cultural practices that augmented who we were as Catholics or, to put it another way, to incarnate the gospel in time and place, in people and customs. It is well for us to ask just how much we embrace the pattern and rhythm of the Church's year into the *culture* of our school's year – at least as much as some other annual events such as exam time, or the start of the footy season. It's more than just signs and symbols – although they are an important part of it, of course. It's about creating the school as an identifiable 'gospel place'.

Now a couple of weeks into Lent, to what extent would most students – and indeed staff – remember the significance of this time of the Church year in contrast to its being "Week 6" or "Week 7" of the term?

Perhaps we could learn something from the Venetians. But then again, maybe not too much.

Nisi Dominus

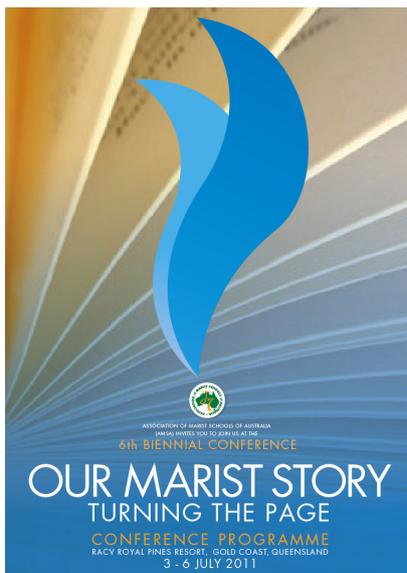
Brother Michael Green FMS
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

LAVALLA

THIS WEEK is the time to send in news and pictures for the next issue of Lavalla. Brother Tony Paterson is editing the May issue now. It is planned to go to the printers within the next couple of weeks. Thanks for all the material that has already come in.

RE CONGRESS IN LA

Tired but elated, the MSA contingent to the annual RE Congress in Los Angeles returned to Australian shores this morning after an action-packed weekend. Peter McNamara, who led the Aussie Marist delegation was effusive on his arrival back in Brisbane. The RE teachers who accompanied him from MSA schools across the country, along with David Hutton (Executive Director, Brisbane Catholic Education Office) were unanimous and enthusiastic in their high rating of both the Congress and the Marist engagement of it.



MSA BOARDING CONFERENCE

Over the last three days, nineteen Directors of Boarding and senior boarding staff from the seven MSA boarding schools have been hosted by St Gregory's College, Campbelltown, and St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, for their biennial conference. They were joined, as has been the custom over recent conferences, by the only Marist boarding school in New Zealand, Sacred Heart College Auckland. This year, staff from St Francis de Sales College, Leeton, a school formerly conducted by the Marist Brothers, also attended. During their days together, major sessions were led by Brothers Michael Flannagan and Michael Green, as well as workshops on practical matters of boarding. Brother Robert O'Connor also spoke at the opening dinner, and Ross Tarlington after dinner the following evening. Thanks to Matthew Brennan (SGC) and John Reading (SJC), and to their respective Colleges, for leading what was a very successful and enjoyable conference.

PRINCIPALS' MEETINGS



QLD Principals gather at the Lavalla Centre in Brisbane for the MSA Regional Principals Meeting

The March regional gatherings of Principals in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney are now behind us. Each meeting allowed the leaders of our Marist schools to come together to consider the directions, shape and priorities for MSA this year and into the future, as well as providing an opportunity for them to develop their sense of association with each other. At each meeting, updates were provided by the National and Regional Directors, as well as members of the MLF Team, the Remar Ministry Team, and the MAPS team. Thanks to everyone who had a hand in organising the meetings and the associated activities, and to all Principals for making arrangements to be there.



Peter McNamara (Regional Director - Brisbane), and Simone Boyd (National Coordinator of Remar) and Remar Team Members Hannah Silberstein (ex-student of Marist-Sion Warragul), Kiran Rajasingam (ex-student of Marcellin Bulleen).

MSA REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

The first meeting of the MSA Regional Council in Melbourne was hosted by Marcellin College, Bulleen last week, under the chairmanship of Brother Paul Kane. The first meetings for the Brisbane and Sydney Regional Councils take place in the next fortnight, with Helen Sinclair and Brother David Hall chairing each of these. Among the items of business on each Council's agenda are the draft Charter for the Councils (the same for each one), the directions for MSA nationally and within each Region, and specific issues associated with schools of the Region.

WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED



The biblical quote “where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be there in the midst of them” was certainly evident as 1300 students and staff gathered to pray at the Opening Mass of

Lavalla College Traralgon, Victoria. Br Mark Paul (MLF team) spoke of ‘the awe inspiring sight when the Year 7 students processed into the sacred gathering space as they were welcomed into the school community’. Ms Erica Pegorer, Principal, commissioned new staff and student leaders calling on them to give Christian witness in the spirit of Champagnat. Certainly the power of ritual in liturgy was alive and well in this community!

At The Hermitage, Mittagong, 30 participants gathered from across the country and Melanesia to take part in the Sharing Our Call - Sharing Champagnat’s Vision program (6-9 March). Feedback from participants showed their appreciation for the experience: ‘This has been a most enjoyable, educational and enlightening experience. I have gained a greater understanding of what it is to be Marist and I am inspired to be guided by Marcellin in my teaching and everyday life.’

Tony Clarke
NATIONAL DIRECTOR MLF



Vicki Innes from All Saints College – St Peters Campus, Maitland, on “Sharing Our Call” - Sharing Champagnat’s Vision at The Hermitage, Mittagong.



School Captains of Lavalla College with guests at the Opening of the School Year Mass (L-R): Br Mark Paul (from MLF Team), Mr Paul Herrick (Regional Director), Fr Matthew Joseph, Rhiley Wentworth, Rhys McDonald, Katrina Barrett, Fr Bernie O'Brien OMI, Jessica Lewis.



Georgette Dalla (Parramatta Marist High School), Tracey White and Sue Blundell (both from St Thomas More Primary, Sunshine Beach), enjoying the beauty of The Hermitage, Mittagong.

LOCAL MARIST LEADERS MEET at the MONTAGNE CENTRE



Recently a gathering was held at the Montagne Centre to encourage the development of local Marist groups across the Region.

There was representation from:

Adelaide – Chris McCabe, Bendigo – Jeremy Darmody, Kilmore – Terry Cooney, Melbourne – Gail Coates, Mark Anania, Liz Wake, Sale – Julia Wake, Traralgon – Robert Tarraran, Alby Van Berkel, Sandy Francois, Kathy Matters, Wangaratta – Jim Salmon, Warragul – Jim Salmon, Marist Brothers – John McMahon, Bill Dillon, Doug Walsh, Tony Caddy.

Br John McMahon gave a presentation that provided an extensive context to the journey that lay Marists have had, particularly in the last 25 years (the PowerPoint presentation can be accessed from his blog). The day then focused on the various ways that Marist communities are being developed and fostered across the Country, and what is needed to create new experiences in places that do not currently have a Local Marist group.



The term Shared Marist Life was adopted as the most useful description of the work and experience of the groups. The ‘shared’ aspect is that, where possible, it is a coming together of Brothers and Lay. The ‘Marist Life’ component ensures that the dynamic between spirituality, ministry and community are all given attention in the life of the group. A video link with Drummoyne (Sydney) where Carole Wark was hosting a similar gathering of local Marist leaders, provided a national perspective to the developments.

Joe McCarthy
LEADER & FORMATOR OF LAY MARISTS



SCHOOL IMMERSIONS

St Joseph's College, Apia, is one of a number of Marist communities across the Asia-Pacific which welcomes MSA school groups on immersion experiences, facilitated by MAPS. St Joseph's hosts Catholic College Bendigo on its student immersion to Samoa in July of each year. The College has been visiting Samoa for four years now. Br Stephen Filipo, the Principal of St Joseph's, has invited two Queensland MSA schools on immersion in September of this year as well. Samoans have a great tradition of hospitality. The open-plan architecture of their homes reflect this, and each family group has a guest 'fale' or pavilion in their front yard to greet guests and offer the traditional welcoming ceremonies offered to visitors. About 18 Marist Schools are registered with MAPS for international immersions this year. In order to foster the sustainability of this program MAPS works with the schools and the receiving communities. This is becoming one of our ways of expressing our solidarity with the Marists of our Oceania region.



Left to Right: Max Pielasinski (Head Boy) & Alistair Molioo (Deputy Head Boy) stand ready to welcome Australian immersion students to St Joseph's Apia, Samoa

While in Samoa we were able to assist with project advice and with the development of some volunteer services to the schools. MAPS also reconnected with Fr Pio SM, Principal of Chanel College, and started to plan immersions with our Marist Father cousins in the region. A formal march, marking the beginning of a very dignified and formal occasion.

**Brother Allen Sherry FMS
DIRECTOR MAPS**



REMAR HELMS GATHER



An inspirational and energetic group of new Helms came together for a two day introduction to Remar at Casa Pallotti, Millgrove Victoria. Whilst

ministry Remar is a peer youth movement, we do rely on school staff to lead or 'Helm' the groups, and it is their witness that guides the young people to want to know more about following Christ. We are very excited to welcome all of our new Helms to the Remar family and look forward to a blessed and rewarding journey together.



Our Red Helms for 2011 are as follows:

Pamela McKillop – St Francis Xavier College, Beaconsfield
Sr Mary LaBruna and John Paul – Penola Catholic College, Broadmeadows
Emily Andrews and Jane Normoyle – Marcellin College, Bulleen
Jess Simkin – Notre Dame College, Shepparton
Jess Pahor and Jason Blackburn – Marist-Sion College, Warragul
Kallie Rodham – Catholic College Wodonga
Ellis Black – Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Alice Springs
Aaron Richards – Newman College, Perth
Amy Barwick – Marist Regional College, Burnie
Darryl Tuppen – St Patrick's College, Launceston
Paul Morgan – Sacred Heart College, Adelaide
Vicki Devine – Assumption College, Kilmore

We are also grateful to welcome the following new Helms:

Louise McCarthy – Blue Helm Notre Dame College
Sharon Gardiner – Gold Helm Marist-Sion College
Tracey Marsh – Blue Helm Marist-Sion College

**Simone Boyd
DIRECTOR REMAR**