



Greetings to our Marist Family,

## The table at La Valla

The adjacent is no ordinary table for us Marists, and no KFC or McDonald's for the six local lads, who joined Marcellin Champagnat to eat at his table on 2 January, 1817. Their bread was the colour of soil according to one lad, Jean Audras, who sat with these first Brothers as they planned strategies to give hope and purpose to the wayward youth of the parish of La Valla.

Take a look at this table today venerated by all Marists when they enter the very room where the name of Marist came into being 200 years ago. Visitors from around the world have chipped away at its edges in the hope of capturing the pure gift of Brotherhood so as to share with others in other lands.



The La Valla table

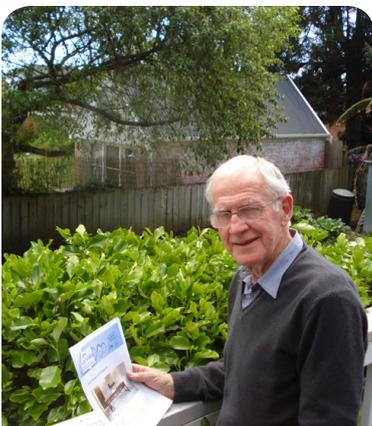
Aotearoa was surely a chip of the original block. When we look at our own history we see how our pioneer Brothers grew up in little known towns ...Kumara, Lawrence, Temuka, Waimate, Pahiatua, Hawera, all young men who were to dedicate their lives to the education of the youth of NZ for over a hundred years. 2017 then is a timely for us to pause and to give thanks for this marvellous Marist journey of which we are all part.

In this year of thanksgiving we have many to remember and we invite you to be part of this celebration.

You will find a calendar of events outlined through the attached link: [maristbrothers.org.nz/news-blog](http://maristbrothers.org.nz/news-blog)

## Br Colin Divane

## Personality of the Month: Simon Gibson



Simon Gibson

Many Marist men while touring overseas have made it their business to visit Champagnat country in France. Two years ago Simon Gibson with his wife Faye found their way to the little town of La Valla and sat at Champagnat's table. For them who have been closely associated with the Marist Brothers' family it awakened many profound memories.

Simon's grandfather was a pupil of the Brothers in Christchurch in the 1880's and his father, Jim Gibson, made sure that his two sons, Tom and Simon, followed in this tradition. Simon was Head boy of Xavier College and went on to play his Rugby in Masterton and in Hamilton where he lead Marist to win the Stag Trophy both as the captain then as the coach.

The Gibson family is but one of many families in NZ who have been and continue to be part of the Marist family.

Simon is now a resident in Auckland and he has three grandsons at Sacred Heart College, so expect to see him on the side-line or on the boundary on a Saturday morning.

## Marist Alternative Education Centre, Auckland

The School year is quickly coming to an end for most of our students. Our school at Greenfield is no ordinary school for many reasons. Set in an industrial area the children come with a variety of special needs. The ratio of teacher to pupil is rather high as many of the students come from a background of being bullied, with learning and psychological problems, all requiring personal guidance and attention. If you would like to contribute a few dollars to increase the number of computers for our classes we would be most appreciative.

Contact can be made through: Champagnat Marists, PO Box 24-400, Royal Oak, Auckland 1345.

## St John's College, Hamilton

Music students from St John's College and Sacred Heart Girls College Hamilton have recently returned from a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de l'Hermitage, the global hub of St John's College special Marist Character.

The group visited and performed to four Marist schools in the region and presented two public concerts. It was an enriching experience for students, staff and accompanying parents alike. The trip was based around their pilgrimage to Notre Dame de l'Hermitage and of significance was the visit to the chapel of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, the founding Father of the Marist Institute.



St John's & Sacred Heart Girls College tour party

The group were able to see where Marcellin was born, grew, worked, worshiped and more. Without any doubt the trip offered and provided rewards culturally, educationally, musically and spiritually.



## Christmas Greetings to all members of the Marist Family

As we move through Advent heralding the upcoming celebration of our Saviour's Birth it is an opportune time to reflect on St Marcellin Champagnat and the Marists contribution to Christ's mission that people, as a Christian community, reach out to those in need. In this spirit of celebration may Christmas blessings be with you and your Family/Whanau.



For information about events please use the link: [maristbrothers.org.nz/news-blog](http://maristbrothers.org.nz/news-blog)



With Thanks,

**John Metherell**  
Chairman of Marist Brothers  
Champagnat Trust

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