



Te Pūtātara

Champagnat Marists - District of the Pacific

Newsletter 2

August 2018

He Pitopito Korero

A conversation on the future of our Marist Family. Edward Clisby and Richard Dunleavy start an internet conversation about their dreams for the future of our Marist Family. Their conversation will be published in this and the next issues.

PART ONE

RICHARD: We all know that the very original dream of Courveille, Colin, Champagnat and their companions was to have a three-pronged Society of Mary: priests, sisters and laity. And Marcellin insisted on including teaching brothers as well. Colin, when he later prepared the first constitution, wrote to the Pope: ‘We have the constitutions from no book or no other constitutions’. Their idea was new and unique. That was why it got short shrift from the Vatican. I think they would get a different reception today.

EDWARD: Probably you’re right. If we go back in our more recent history, already in 1971, just after the Second Vatican Council, Br Basilio

was warning the brothers that the situation required not simply a process of renewal but one of refoundation. Our general chapters ever since have been harking back not only to the origins of our institute but even to the beginnings of the Society of Mary. This growing appreciation of our common Marist patrimony must have inspired the writers of one of the regional letters in preparation for the 2009 general chapter. It talks in future terms of Marists becoming an international movement in the Church, with an identified charism and spirituality, a vision for a Marian Church, dynamic and daring in its evangelisation and solidarity. Not surprisingly, the region concerned was Oceania. Where else, outside France, has there been a longer history and closer collaboration of the congregations forming the Marist Family? We are all well into our refoundation phases. It seems about time that we had a serious look together at the original vision of the Society of Mary and what it has to say to us today about the whole refoundation process.

RICHARD: Yes, I agree with what you say. The Vatican Council gave Religious three pathways or signposts for their renewal by saying “Go back to the Gospels, and to the original charism of your Founder(s), and interpret them in the light of the signs of our times”. Up until now we Marist Brothers have focussed mainly on our Champagnat charism only. Marvellous research has been produced by a number of Brother scholars. Yet wasn't Marcellin's original vision that of the wider Society of Mary, as you have said? Like you I believe that - to be true to what Vatican II asked - we do need to go back that step further, respecting the explicit words of Marcellin in his spiritual testament: “Just as your wills are to be united with those of the Fathers of the Society of Mary, in the will of one and the same Superior, so I desire that you be always united with them in Jesus and Mary”. The rest of that paragraph is even more insistent. But it must all be studied in the light of “the signs of our times “, as Vatican II directed. How do you think we might do that in practice?

EDWARD: Well, let's be clear, first of all, about what vision of the Society we're talking about. The Society of 1840 was not the same as the one envisaged by the first group in 1816. This is evident in the place occupied by the brothers in Colin's scheme of things. For him, the main purpose of the brothers was to be at the service of the priests and that is why when he approaches Rome for approval he lumps them all under the title of Lay Brothers. Obviously this was not the way Champagnat saw them, nor was this the thinking of Courveille who founded several groups of teaching brothers of his own. This is why I consider that Champagnat and Courveille at the Hermitage were more in line with the founding vision of the Society of Mary than Colin, in this matter anyway. So I think Marcellin's insistence in his Spiritual Testament on the brothers being united with the fathers conceals a certain fear he had about their future under Colin. But they survived and flourished anyway.



RICHARD: Thanks for that very interesting distinction about the differing emphases held by Colin and Champagnat, which I fully accept. But, nevertheless, aren't the sacred promise and ideals of the group of seminarians and priests expressed in their Fourviere declaration, the absolute, original true spring and fount which are the deepest historical source of the Marist charism: to help to renew the Church in the spirit of Mary? Aren't they the foundational commitments to which we – and all the Marist branches - must return to in order to find the seeds for a true re-foundation? Is that not what Br Emili was inferring in his emphasis on the Marian face of the Church? Does that not call for us to be working much more closely with the wider Society of Mary, if we want to fulfil the original vision of that group of founding men, and later Sisters and laity? I will be interested in your understanding of that point of view.

EDWARD: I entirely agree. I don't see how any one of our congregations can fully reflect the Marian face of the Church but together - priests, sisters, brothers, laity - that seems quite possible. And in these times - similar in many ways to the post - French revolution social breakdown - really necessary. We are all in a process of refounding, rediscovery, restructuring. Can we somehow expand or extend those structures to bring us closer together to make this possible?

To be continued.....



Our Marist Founders

You are invited to join this conversation and can do so by contacting Richard and Edward who would welcome your input: Richard; rdunleavy@fmstpacific.com
Edward; eclisby.fms@gmail.com





Mission Stewardship Team, Kiribati

A Practical Response to a New Beginning

A strong and passionate ‘Yes’ to a future mission in Kiribati when the brothers in Kiribati were presented with the question in late November 2017. The ‘Yes’ took into consideration that we have many committed lay Champagnat Marists who are open to new calls for mission. Vision Statement:

‘We are Champagnat Marists united in taking shared responsibility for our Marist mission now and in the future’

On Saturday 23 June the Mission Stewardship Team, a standing committee of the District Council of the District of the Pacific, were commissioned at a simple ceremony at the La Valla Spirituality Centre. The MST will assume local responsibility for our mission. Appointed MST members to serve a two year term until 31 June 2020 include:

- Ioane Tokaua (Chair), Br Sefo Une (Deputy Chair), Br Barry Burns (Secretary), Tioera Ioane (Treasurer), Mangauea Baiteke, Tangaroa Arobati and Taatite Babetara (RIP 25.06.18)
- Ituantaake Taariri has accepted a position on the MST to replace Taatite following his sudden death.

Looking Ahead

Br Barry Burns has reported that the MST have met twice since the commissioning ceremony to elect office bearers while the following sub committees have been formed with supporting terms of reference for each to move forward:



Ioane -
Chairman



Tioera -
Treasurer



Br Barry -
Secretary



Br Sefo -
Deputy Chairman



- Education: Charism & Spirituality (St Louis High School and Pre Schools)
- Finance
- Social

Fundamental to the ‘new growth’ in Kiribati is the connection with families and to ensure that there are opportunities for young and ‘young at heart’ to gather and build a community of belonging. Maybe an opportunity of reflection for us all when considering - Who do we invite around our table? Who do we exclude?

Champagnat in the Pacific, Lomeri, Fiji

Empowering Local People to Lead

When the Oceania Partnership Commission (OPC) meets twice a year it is essential that each region is working in support of each other, meeting recognised needs. From listening and sharing one idea that emerged was ‘Identifying and sharing key programmes and processes’.

In August last year Sheena Penjueli and Br Luke Fong , along with fellow representatives from Samoa, Solomon Islands, Australia and New Zealand, attended the Champagnat in the Pacific formation programme at Long Bay, Auckland. Following the programme the Oceania representatives gathered together to support one another in writing a local formation programme with local context, language and symbols at the forefront of the planning. Less than 12 months later the mustard seed has reached fertile soil with the first CITP, Lomeri formation programme taking place under the guidance and support of Sheena and Br Luke.

From 29 June -1 July 2018, 16 participants from the Fiji Marist Schools network, along with the Head Teachers from Lomary and St Peter Chanel Primary School’s gathered at the Marist Brothers Noviciate at Lomeri, Fiji for a time of reflection, discussion and activities on the vision and philosophy of St Marcellin Champagnat. A full programme was led by Sheena and Br Luke with fellow presenters including Br Jone Seduadua(Champagnat), Br Fergus Garrett (Marcellin’s Letters), Dan Dungey (Tanoa Talanoa & Pillars) and Percy Wong (Realities, Challenges & Calls).



Programmes like this can't take place without a lot of love and support including:

- All participants and school leaders (commitment of time and finance).
- Sian, Sheena's sister, for her amazing cooking and presence.
- The Fiji Marist Old Boys assistance with some meals and refreshments.
- The Marist Brothers Communities of Vatuwaqa and Carew Street for their presence on the final day and assistance behind the scene's leading up to this event.
- Br Jone and Luke for opening the doors of Lomeri to host this programme over three days.
- The three wonderful novices (Petero, Steve and Vai) for their hospitality and preparation of rooms and meeting areas at Lomeri.

Finally, a big vinaka vakalevu to our programme coordinators, Sheena Penjueli and Br Luke Fong for their vision and leadership – from moving this dream into a reality.

Looking Ahead

Beyond the programme the hope is to establish core Champagnat Marist groups in schools and be a resource and support for one another. The initial plan to support this hope is for all participants of this year's course to come together later this month on a Saturday morning at Marist Brothers Primary School. From a planning perspective, the wheels are already in motion to enhance the CITP, Lomeri programme in 2019 and beyond.



Champagnat in the Pacific Fiji participants





Marist Learning Centre Newsletter

Mid-year greetings from all of us at the Centre,

There are certainly a lot more of us here than when I began my time here in 2016! Some donors have asked me to give you an idea of a typical day here at the Centre, and I am very pleased to do that.

The day begins before the students arrive with meetings; for new students and their parents, development of behaviour plans and planning lessons. The students complete their personalised lessons through Te Kura, the Correspondence School. Our staff; John, Jackie, Don and I provide individualized goals for each student daily to ensure that they are keeping up with their work.

Once our preparatory work is completed, the staff join in our morning prayer. The students arrive between 8.30 and 9am. For many, this is an opportunity for them to have breakfast - we know that it can be very challenging for our students to learn if they are hungry. In the winter months, we begin each Monday with a cooked breakfast prepared by staff. Students share breakfast with staff and with others including the registered nurse from Health West and our Youth Aide police officers. Circle Time begins at 9.15 am where we check in with each other, share items of interest from the news and go over the activities for the day. This time ends with a karakia before lessons begin at 9.30 am.

Each day is dedicated to a different subject delivered through the Te Kura online learning platform. We supplement this work with subjects such as Physical Education and Art. For many of our students, the learning they undertake here is challenging but smaller class sizes mean that they are made to keep on task, ask for help and complete their work.

We deliver three lessons each day, which are separated by two break times.

During break times, students play basketball, table tennis, badminton and board games, or enjoy spending time with each other and staff over kai. We always make sure the students have a range of healthy food to prepare in the kitchen, and like a family, each person is responsible for cleaning up after themselves.

Unlike a mainstream school, at the Marist Learning Centre there is no segregation between students and staff. We all eat our lunch together, and this builds our family spirit. After the third lesson, it is jobs time. Each student is allocated a job for the week, and once these are completed, our afternoon program begins.



On Monday we focus on film and art, Tuesday is our Physical Education day, where we take the students to the local park to participate in a variety of team sports, or if it's raining, we hold round robin tournaments of different sports at the centre. Wednesdays we take the students to the gym where the Breakers basketball team train, and we join with other Alternative Education providers to participate in basketball games. These events are also supported by the local youth aide police officers. Our students enjoy competing with them on the court! On Thursday we take the students to Elite Thai Kickboxing, where they take part in a fitness program. Friday sat the Centre we focus on our Marist values.

Staff teach the students the behaviours we expect, and together we unpack what each of our values looks and feels like. This is also the day where different community groups work with our students.

Agencies such as Netsafe, Body Safe and the Kaipatiki Youth Development Trust deliver tailored programs for our students. We are grateful to our donors, as the rich program we provide for our students is only able to be delivered with the support you provide.

SAMMI'S STORY



I've been at Marist Learning Centre for just over one year. Sadly, this Friday I am leaving somewhere I feel safe and secure, but I know that what I have done here will make the next step easier for me to cope with. I have achieved so many of the goals I have set myself here - I got my full license, I have a part time Job, and I am playing for a netball team. I am not as anxious or scared as I used to be.

I am leaving to move on to learn at Ashton Warner Nanny Academy for six months. Then in 2019 I will begin studying at Auckland University of Technology to get my certificate and diploma in patisserie. I am very passionate about baking and cake decorating and Marist has let me grow this and everyone is always so happy when I bring in my baking on Monday mornings!

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At the beginning of 2018, I came to the District of Melanesia to add a helping hand. Half way through July means the year is more than half gone and I guess time to say something about what I've been doing to occupy my time up here in Melanesia.

My main task is to offer some assistance to Br Jean Marie, the District Leader. Assistance in terms of being an ear, someone for him to share ideas and thoughts with, for me to offer my thoughts and be a community member at the same time. So, I have my household duties and I cook, as do the other Brothers.



I sit in on the District Council meetings and contribute my five cents' worth but don't have a vote on any issues that require voting on.

We have Brothers coming and going, passing through Moresby en route to wherever and seldom a week goes by without someone being picked up from the airport or taken out to the airport. Not just Brothers. Priests and Sisters are often at our table.

We have a young man from Bougainville who has been with us since March, getting his National ID card and passport, with a view to joining the other aspirants, now postulants, at Laumanasa in the Solomons. I have been working with him each day on English and Champagnat and I think it is fair to say we both enjoy those morning sessions at the kitchen table. At this stage a decision has to be made about whether he will go to Laumanasa, as his NID and passport have now been obtained, or remain with us for the rest of the year and join the others at the start of 2019.

I have opted not to drive here as the roads are hectic and confusing, with very few street signs and I could see myself easily getting lost. It is a very sprawling city and quite haphazard by Kiwi standards.

I visit communities, sometimes with Br Jean Marie, sometimes on my own (I am writing this in Port Vila, Vanuatu, on my way back to Moresby from visiting the community on Espiritu Santo). Br Jean Marie and I will be going to Bougainville in August to visit the community at Mabiri. We had a Council meeting at Laumanasa in February but before the aspirants arrived, so I would like to go back there maybe in September or October.



Recently Br Rodney (now in Sydney for study), our Postulant, as I am calling him, and I went to a youth weekend about an hour and a half out of Moresby to give a session on “Living our call in the manner of Mary”. There were about 100 young people there. We obviously did OK as the parish priest, a Tongan Marist, is planning a weekend on vocation and wants us to present a session on the Marist Brothers.

The house in Moresby is very comfortable, unlike the one on Santo, where my ensuite consisted of a section of the room divided off with a shower which was a bucket and basin, plus a hand basin that didn’t have any running water. And no hot water, of course, but in this climate that’s not an issue.

All in all, the year is rolling along steadily and happily even though quite different from New Zealand. You might like to remember the Brothers of the District of Melanesia in your prayers as the mission here is not without its challenges. The sort of place Champagnat would revel in, I think.



If you would like to contribute to the October edition, please email Kerri at nzmarist@fmspacific.com.

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