

new lands

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN MARIST COMMUNITY

VOL 5: 9th October 2013



Greetings.

Did we “awaken the dawn” at the General Conference last month? Lots of colouring in the sky, that’s for sure.

We were some 30 Provincials or District leaders, gathered with Br Emili and his Council, plus Brothers in executive roles in the General

Administration. The main languages used were English and Spanish. There was a great community feel about the gathering from beginning to end - the best international Marist event ever according to Sean Sammon!

The Conference was about taking stock, about visioning, about inspiring current leaders. The processes used were table dialogue, personal reflection and consciously walking (literally!) paths trod by Marcellin in his days. Emili used a phrase inspired by the last General Chapter, now more focussed on the upcoming bicentenary of 2017: “A new beginning”.

The direction of this “new beginning” that emerged had six key elements that should be taken together: the most vulnerable children and young people; global availability; Marist international communities; a meaningful life; evangelisation and governance. It is understood that we are becoming smaller



General Conference 2013
AWAKENING THE DAWN
PROPHETS AND MYSTICS FOR OUR TIME

Our Marist future includes Lay People committed to our charism and spirituality and whose formation is critical. The General Council will discern how to take forward suggestions made.

Unsurprisingly we saw that “a new beginning” has a personal meaning, uncomfortable as this might mean. Each of us is called to be a “prophet and mystic” for our time –

as Emili has written and spoken about in recent years. There is no age limit on this! What would happen if I, if my community, took this very seriously? Emili quoted from the address of Pope Francis to the Carmelites: what the Church wants / needs is for you to not be “worldly” but return to

simplicity and a way of life in tune with the Gospel; to be contemplatives in the midst of the world – to live, cultivate and transmit your spirituality. Emili went on, “How is my contemplative life? How much time do I devote to this each day?” This is our path of becoming more who we really are.

as a Religious Institute of Brothers but there is an inexplicable hope and enthusiasm in the hearts of Marists in mission everywhere. The internationality of our Institute will feature strongly in the years ahead.

**new
beginning**

the most vulnerable children
and young people...

global availability...

Marist international
communities...

a meaningful life...

evangelisation ...

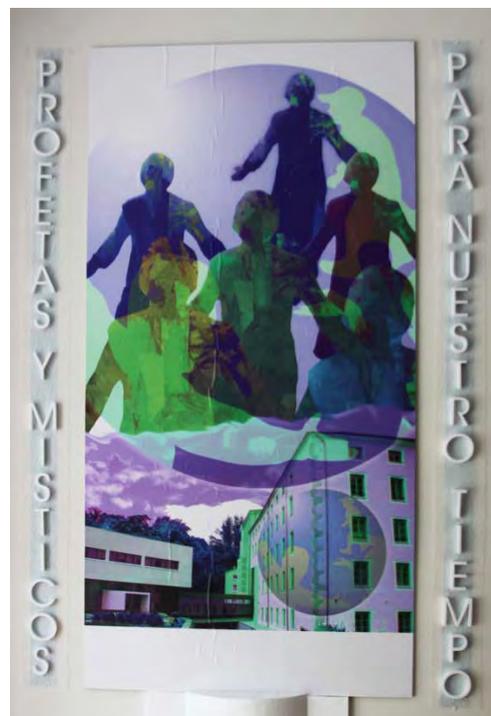
governance...

It changes our image of God. It puts the 'self' in its right place.

Young Brothers were present at the Conference via video-clips from the Marist gathering in Rio in July and the Under 45s of Europe. They 'connect' easily with each other and this is important when they are so few in many countries and risk lacking peer companions. Caring for their well-being and vocational growth must feature on the agenda of all Councils. There was a strong desire expressed to strengthen and support vocation promotion (Marist Brothers for the world) in areas that are still fertile grounds. Tony Leon will join César Rojas in the Brothers Today secretariate in 2014 to follow through on these matters.

What does this General Conference mean for Australia?

- Our basic vision of the future as expressed at the Mission Assembly in 2012 and last December's Chapter was confirmed.
- Our younger men will connect up with their peers around the world at some time in their initial formation and probably for an extended period of active ministry at some time in their lives.
- A proposal was made for the Institute to be present in countries that are towards the bottom of the socio-economic scale. Our Province already has communities in two of these – East Timor and Cambodia – and supports Marist presence in two other – PNG and the Solomon Islands.
- We have been asked to continue the ground-breaking work we have begun to develop an Association of Christ's Faithful (Brothers and Lay). It is unique in holding



together the two aspects of vocation and governance. It offers the most sustainable way of ensuring the future of Marist life, charism and mission. Twenty one other Provinces indicated their interest in attending a workshop on this to be led by the Superior General at the end of March 2014 in Rome.

- T h e r e was interest and verbal support for establishing new international communities of Brothers in countries like ours. These were seen as needing sufficient 'space' to develop fresh expressions of Marist life and mission. This parallels what we called a "sector" at our December Chapter. More on this later!
- There is a new system for determining the financial support of Provinces for the General Administration - i.e. no longer a 'per capita' formula. We will need to be continue to be generous in this regard.

- Our new Oceania regional structure of a Province and two Districts – autonomous and inter-dependent – caused some talk! The three of us leaders did our best to explain how we see our structure working. So much depends on the open relationship between the leaders. Among ourselves, we started to talk about future financial relationships in Oceania.
- In the background of the Conference, and very much in its spirit, I met with two groups on the future of Marist East Timor. The Provinces of South Asia, Australia and the Marist District of Asia (Ad Gentes), have agreed to create an international novitiate in Tudella, Sri Lanka. This will start in June 2014 with a group of around eight. We decided on the first formation team: Canisio (a Brazilian Brother from the District of Asia); Ranjith Perera (a Sri Lankan Brother). Anthony Robinson (from Australia). The postulants from East Timor will join their peers from Pakistan at Tudella to do intensive English early in 2014. The second group I met was the Provincials of Brazil. They have already sent us Br Lecio Heckler to work as a formator in East Timor. Now they have indicated their willingness to support us to establish a Marist school in East Timor. We want this operational before 2018 when the first group of East Timorese Brothers should be returning after their post-novitiate. Much remains to be determined re this project but this support of Portuguese-speaking Brothers will be very helpful.



Some final thoughts:

Faced with the reality of our rapidly changing circumstances of ourselves, the church and society, we are being called to make a deep act of faith in our future. We believe that Mary is with us. That was her promise at Le Puy and at Fourvière we renewed our promise on behalf of Marists everywhere to continue in her name. As Br François wrote to the Brothers after Marcellin's death, "It's up to us now ..."

Jeff, 5/10/13



australian
marist
community

it's up
to us
now ...



Brother Coman Sykes FMS

Born 5th May 1928

Died 20th September 2013

A Marist Brother for 67 years.

The eulogy for Co, given by **Br Peter Corr** can be downloaded from [here](#)

In our next volume ...

- ▶ report on the AMC forum (Australian Marist Community forum)
- ▶ Marist Youth Ministry Update

Happening in the
Marist World ...

**The school at Peshawar reopens
after the bombing**

02/10/2013: Pakistan

On 22 September, the Marists of Peshawar in Pakistan experienced a time of terror when a bomb exploded in a church near the Brothers' residence. They conduct a school in the neighbourhood, St. John Vianney Boys High School, Kohati Gate, which takes in poor children, 60% of them Muslim. Many persons associated with this Marist work were affected by the attack .

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