

Marist Laity Australia



Cathy's Report

Dear friends in the spirit of Mary,

Easter Greetings!

I hope this Easter season has brought you deep peace, grace, and blessings.



We have accompanied Jesus to the Cross, mindful of the echoes of death in our own lives, and the life of the world.

We have recalled those times when we have felt 'entombed', experiencing a sense of emptiness in our lives, and in the world.

And, with Jesus, and all of creation, we have broken through the empty the tomb and the echoes of death to rise again, in hope, wonder, and faith.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it. (John 1:5)

Alleluia!

Welcome

We warmly welcome Fr Michael Carroll SM to our Marist Laity Australia Committee. Michael

is the representative of the Marist Fathers on our committee.

We also give heartfelt thanks to Fr Paul Mahony SM, who served as the Fathers' representative for many years. Thanks, Paul, for your expertise, warmth, wonderful sense of humour and generous service. May your new appointment at St Patrick's bring you great peace and fulfilment.

Events for 2024

We are very excited about several events we have planned for this year and would be delighted to see you join us!

1. Hopefully, you are already aware of our Reflection Day planned for May 4 on the theme, Living with Today's Paradoxes. For more information and to register, please go to this link:

<http://www.maristlaityaustralia.com/paradox>

2. We are celebrating the origins of the Marist Family on Sunday, July 21. The Promise of Fourviere made by twelve young Frenchmen in 1816 will be celebrated across Sydney in much the same way as it was last year. We will start on the north side of the harbour, climb the steps to the Sydney Harbour Bridge and walk across, then make our way to St Patrick's Church Hill. From there we will travel to the Holy Name of

Mary Parish Hall. More details to come. Save the date!

3. We are very enthusiastic about a weekend we are planning for Saturday, September 21, and Sunday, 22. This is still very much in the planning phase, but we're hoping members of all five branches of the Marist Family will gather on Saturday, September 21, focusing on our Marist identity and how we work together, now and into the future. This especially seems appropriate in the Church's call to synodality.

On Sunday, September 22, members of Marist Laity will gather again, essentially to reflect on, discern and begin to chart a course based on our experiences from the previous day. Again, please save the date! More details to come.

Peace and blessings to you, your families, and communities,

Cathy Larkin

Your Invitation to an Event

- Living with Today's Paradoxes

Marist Laity Australia would like to invite you to join us on a Spirituality Day entitled 'Living with Today's Paradoxes'. Exploring questions like 'How do we maintain hope and joy in the face of global challenges and personal trials?' and 'What does it mean to be a peacemaker in today's world?'

Keynote speaker Brother Tony Leon fms who has worked many years in Marist spiritual formation both in Australia and internationally.

Details:

St Patrick's

Church Hill

in the Crypt

Saturday May 4 2024

9.45 am to 3 pm

Morning Tea provided

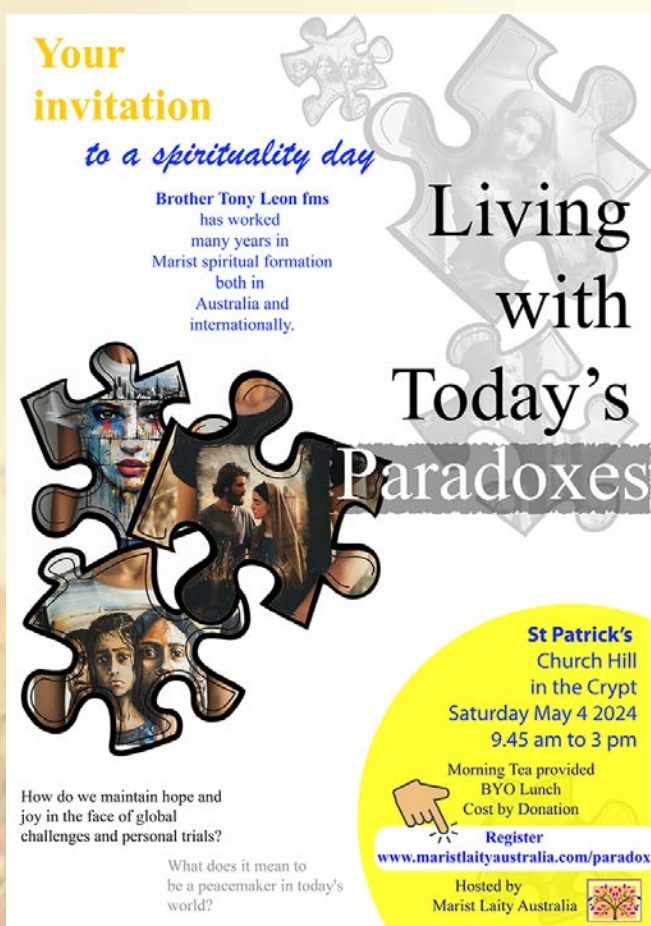
BYO Lunch

Cost by Donation

Please register

Go to

<http://www.maristlaityaustralia.com/paradox>



Your invitation
to a spirituality day

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**Living
with
Today's
Paradoxes**

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Saturday May 4 2024
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Morning Tea provided
BYO Lunch
Cost by Donation

Register
www.maristlaityaustralia.com/paradox

Hosted by
Marist Laity Australia

How do we maintain hope and joy in the face of global challenges and personal trials?

What does it mean to be a peacemaker in today's world?

Mary Roddy RIP

Mary Teresa Roddy was born on the 14th of November 1934 in rural NSW and died last Thursday, 25th April 2024 at Calvary Nursing Home, Ryde. Mary was a Marist through and through and her dream was to be a Marist lay woman living contemplatively in all the situations presenting themselves in her world.



Mary's earliest connection with Marists was through her aunt who was a Marist Sister. After her schooling, Mary became a nurse, indeed a triple certificated nurse. In 1959, Mary headed off to Bougainville to work with the Marist Fathers and was missioned to Tabago in southern Buin along side Fr Wally Fingleton SM. Amongst the messages of sympathy was one from a Bougainvillean woman, who remembered Mary as the nurse who gave a four year old girl dark chocolate when she would not take her medicine....a small but memorable act of kindness never to be forgotten!

Mary returned to Australia after three years and in 1964 entered the novitiate of the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary at Woodened, Victoria. First Profession took place in 1966 followed by several years on the novitiate staff and nursing at Lourdes Hospital in Killara. In 1970, Mary began studies to become a Nursing Tutor at the School of Nursing at NSW University. This was to prepare her for her return to Bougainville and the training of local nurses. Mary carried out this service for five years at Tearouki Hospital and then Arawa. Named as Provincial Superior, a role she carried out faithfully and caringly from 1976b until early 1984, Mary was ever on the move visiting every community in the Province several times and taking great interest in all the sisters were undertaking in PNG, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, Bangladesh, Indonesia

and Australia. Mary showed great concern for all the sisters and their ministries and made a point of keeping connected.

At this same time, it fell to Mary and her team to negotiate the SMSM departure from Lourdes Hospital Killara and the sale of the property to the Hibernians. Looking to the future, Mary was convinced the SMSM needed to have somewhere to care for their older sisters and so Marist Villa was custom built within the Aged Care precinct at Lourdes. Years of negotiating had to take place with the local government before these dreams became a reality.

At the conclusion of her term as Provincial, Mary commenced working at CTU Hunters Hill. In 1989, Mary left the SMSM and began a new journey as a lay Marist. It was her dream to live the Marist spirit as a contemplative in the world, welcoming all and sundry who came within her sphere and being available to people in need. Even though Mary was no longer an SMSM, the friendships from her 25 years remained. ..Mary was interested in all that happened and was ever ready to offer support, consolation and encouragement. May Mary now live in the peace, joy, light and love of her Risen Lord, Alleluia!

*Much have You given to me,
Yet I ask for more –
I come to You, not merely
for the draught of water,
but for the spring;
not for guidance to the door alone,
but to the Master's hall;
not only for the gift of love,
but for the Lover himself.
Rabindranath Tagore*



25th Anniversary of the Canonisation of Saint Marcellin Champagnat

By Brother Peter Carroll fms



Today we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the canonisation of Marcellin Champagnat. Marcellin wasn't canonised because he founded the Marist Brothers.

Nor because he helped envisage the Marist project. Marcellin wasn't canonised because he was a compassionate pastor who wanted what was best for the people of his locale. He wasn't canonised because he founded schools and worked for the education and care of young people. Nor was it because he was courageous and persistent, facing down opposition, even from colleagues, and doggedly pursuing government approval for his work. He wasn't canonised due to his simple, down-to-earth approach to people, or the high standards he set for his parishioners and Brothers. It wasn't because he was a good guy who did good things! While all these are true, none of them account for the decision the Church made to canonise him.

In our current secular age, any one of them might be a good reason for a local or national honour. But for canonisation, they aren't enough.

There is only one reason for Marcellin's canonisation: he was Christ-like.

His life was a deliberate, positive response to St Paul's exhortation (Romans 13:14) "Put on

Jesus Christ, and do not focus on satisfying selfish desires". Marcellin followed Jesus Christ, he was motivated by Him and his Gospel, he had the "mind" of Jesus, and he responded as he believed Jesus would. Nothing Marcellin did was for his own personal advancement or reputation. He was true to Colossians 3:3 "Whatever you do or say, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him." The long processes leading to beatification and canonisation, the exhaustive study of the candidate's life and merits, the intense deliberations and discussions are all aimed at establishing this fact – that as far as humanly possible the individual was focussed on, and committed to being Christ-like. This is why Marcellin was canonised.

The words of St John Paul II 25 years ago make this clear:

"The desire to bear witness to Jesus arises in the hearts of believers from their personal encounter with Him...", and in referring to the three who were canonised that day he said: "They opened their eyes to the signs of Christ's presence: they adored him and received him in the Eucharist; they loved him in their neediest brethren; they recognized the signs of his saving plan in the events of daily life... They listened to Jesus' words and sought his companionship, feeling their hearts burning within them..."

Referring specifically to Marcellin, Pope John-Paul said: *"The burning desire for God in the disciples of Emmaus was vividly felt by Marcellin Champagnat, who was a priest captivated by the love of Jesus and Mary. Because of his unshakeable faith, he remained faithful to Christ despite difficulties, in the midst of a world sometimes lacking the sense of God... St Marcellin proclaimed the Gospel with a burning heart. He was sensitive to the spiritual and educational needs of his time, especially to religious ignorance and the situations of neglect experienced in a particular way by the young..."*

We celebrate this event 25 years ago, not only as a significant historical moment, but

also because it is a reminder of what Marcellin wanted for all who take the name Marist: to be Christ followers, Christ bearers, Christ-like. This is the call from our Founder today and every day.

I finish with the words of St John Paul at the canonisation Mass, which are an invitation to us today:

"Marcellin Champagnat also invites us to be missionaries, to make Jesus Christ known and loved as the Marist Brothers did even in Asia and Oceania. With Mary as our guide and Mother, the Christian is a missionary and the servant of human beings. Let us ask the Lord to give us a heart that burns like that of Marcellin Champagnat, to recognize Him and to be His witnesses".

Enhance Your Family's Spiritual Life with Our "Beyond the Pew" Program



We are looking for families to join our program "Beyond the Pew," a unique weekly program designed to enrich the spiritual lives of families. This innovative initiative combines Family Prayer, Mindful Colouring, and Faith Development activities tailored specifically for children and teenagers.

What is included:

Each week, participating families will engage in a series of spiritually enriching activities:

Mindful Colouring: Unite in a calming, reflective practice that involves colouring while focusing on Gospel themes.

Gospel Reflection and Discussion: Dive deeper into the Gospel with guided discussions that make religious teachings accessible and relevant to young minds.

Contemporary Music and Prayer:

Experience prayer in a dynamic way, complemented by contemporary music that resonates with all ages.

Aims of the Program

Our goal is to explore how regular family prayer and spiritual activities can enhance the faith life of your children. This program provides a platform for:

Enhancing Spiritual Understanding:

Foster a deeper spiritual engagement and understanding among children and teenagers through interactive and thoughtful discussion.

Join Us!

Do you know a family who could benefit from "Beyond the Pew"? Or perhaps your own family is looking for ways to grow together spiritually? This is a perfect opportunity to strengthen family bonds and develop faith through creative and reflective practices.

Families are invited to join from Australia or outside Australia. We would dearly like to have many families from many places...

Learn More and Sign Up

Ready to transform your family's prayer life? Visit Beyond the Pew for more information and to register. Let's pray, reflect, and grow together!

Go to

www.maristlaityaustralia.com/1/beyond-the-pew

Note: As part of our security measures, please remember that Marist Fourviere occurred in 1816.

100 Shares for the Planet: Join Marist Laity Australia's Earth Day Challenge!



Marist Laity Australia invites you to be part of a pivotal environmental movement. We're looking for 100 eco-enthusiasts to share our "Earth Day Resource Page" on your social media platforms. It's simple! Just visit the page and tap the SHARE ICON on Facebook to spread the word.

Our Earth Day Resource Page contains many valuable tools to empower your eco-friendly journey. You'll find on one page engaging introductory videos, the Earth Day news, and 40 actionable tips to make a difference. Highlights include practical activities like "Starting a Garden," "Conducting an Energy Audit," and committing to "Observe Earth Hour every Saturday."

Taking action on environmental issues often starts with a conversation, but the real change comes from committing to tangible actions. To help facilitate this, our page offers innovative ideas on how to create impactful pledges within your family or community.

Support Our Mission: Click and Share! Ready to make an impact? Click on the link below and share it to help us reach our goal of 100 shares. Together, we can foster a more sustainable future.

www.maristlaityaustralia.com/1/earth-day

Let's unite for our planet. Your share counts!

Add us on Facebook

Please **ADD** us to your Facebook Account



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www.facebook.com/marist.laity.Australia

Lay Marist Themes for Living Simplicity

Reflection by Mary Roddy

Origins

The notion of 'Simplicity' as a central theme of life for Lay Marists has its origins in the founding spirit of the Society of Mary. Research in the last century by Marist Fathers Jean Coste and Gaston Lessard on the writings of Fr.



Colin and the first Marists clarified that there were two elements to Fr. Colin's vision that had been largely overlooked by succeeding generations of Marists. These two elements are best described as the cosmic dimension and a utopian vision that underpinned Fr. Colin's appeal for approbation for the new Society of Mary during visits to Rome in 1830s.

The cosmic dimension had its sources in Mary in the Cenacle as mother of mercy in the midst of the apostles – symbolising the whole church (Acts of the Apostles 1:14). Here Mary is the model and inspiration for Marists in

living out their particular mission to be 'instruments of divine mercy' to others in daily life.

The utopian dimension is reflected in Colin's vision of the eschatological people of God in the last days centred around Mary. Just as Mary was present at the beginning of the church so she would continue to be until the end of time. While such a vision, like all utopian visions, was unrealisable, it brought an extraordinary strength to the vision that Colin expressed. Marists were to replicate the kind of presence in the church and the world that Mary brought to the first community of the Acts of the Apostles. Colin's vision was inclusive, embracing the whole world - the Society of Mary would be open to everyone, even the Pope!

Clearly, this openness to the world called for Marists to be formed into a particular way of living daily life – what has come to be called the 'Marist way'. At its core, this 'Marist way' is best expressed in Colin's words, 'hidden and unknown', that links the Marist to Mary's life in Nazareth from where she 'pondered all these things in her heart' (Luke 2:19).

Context

From the beginning, Marist spirituality and mission was understood to be for the service of the church and the needs of people living in 'the present age'. In Colin's time, the present age reflected the enormous changes wrought by the Enlightenment, the emergence of Modernity and the effects of the French Revolution.

The 'present age' in the contemporary world is an openly secular age characterised by a rather literal perspective on life that reflects the impact of the technological revolution. So, the challenge facing Marists today is how to live in a secular world in ways that reflect the call to live as Christians in a 'hidden and unknown' way and as 'instruments of divine mercy'.

Simplicity

Marist Simplicity calls a person to a certain 'way of being' that is best expressed in the form of a particular kind of 'presence' that is essentially 'hidden and unknown' i.e living with a low profile. This 'way of being' must perforce be grounded in what IS – in reality, not in pious flights of imagination or devotion to Mary under all kinds of titles. It calls one to be in the present moment, be present to oneself, be present to the 'other', be present to the world at large. In other words, it must be grounded.



This is where the spirit of 'Simplicity' becomes central to the life of Marists. It provides the foundation for living as it were 'hidden and unknown' in the world, while at the same time always never ceasing to learn what it means to be an 'instrument of divine mercy' to others, irrespective of difference in beliefs, culture, nationality, race, and religion. Marists do not exclude; the spirit of Simplicity teaches them how to be quietly inclusive in the way they speak and act.

Mary is the model for Lay Marists in living Simplicity. Marists have never had devotion to Mary under any particular title. Marists live with Mary in a spirit of simple, loving friendship – always aiming to 'listen at a deeper level' to what is being said or what is happening - aware that sometimes the best response is silence. For guidance and inspiration in living the spirit of Mary, Marists go to Nazareth ('hidden and unknown') and the Cenacle ('instruments of divine mercy').

Living in a Secular World

Some would say we are now in a post-secular age, especially given the continual searching by many for some kind of spirituality. Be that as it may, the impact of the secular age is evidenced especially in the way people living in secular societies are very attached to the idea of freedom (which they often confuse with the notion of 'democratic rights'). It is in this secular world that Lay Marists can come into their own, refusing to collude with the increasingly adversarial nature of private and public life and the impact this has had on the way we speak and act towards one another. For all its emphasis on the 'individual' (as distinct from the 'person') the ground of the secular world keeps shifting because of the unceasing demands for 'equality'.

This modern notion of equality is essentially concerned with 'equality of conditions'. The founders of modern democracy knew that human beings are, in fact, not equal in terms of their conditions of life or physical and mental capacities. But because their intent was to demolish the political form of monarchy and its inherited aristocracy, they came up with the idea of a democracy where everyone would learn to live 'as if' they were equal.

Writing in the middle of the nineteenth century after two visits to North America, the French aristocrat and politician, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, 'Nations of our day cannot have it that conditions within them are not equal; but it depends on them whether equality leads them to servitude or freedom, to enlightenment or barbarism, to prosperity or misery.' Tocqueville was prescient in claiming that a new aristocratic class would emerge from among those who became very wealthy.

Concerning this secular age, the philosopher Charles Taylor has asked whether, in fact, we are not living beyond our moral means in this secular age that has spawned such 'values' as universal justice and benevolence, based on the modern notion of equality. Here he is alluding to the fact that there appears to be a

basic incompatibility between the Christian tradition that has largely provided the foundational values for life in the Western world in pre-modern times and the contemporary secular world that readily rejects notions of the transcendent, especially those arising from traditional faith perspectives. The current crisis in the Catholic Church reflects this.

Conclusion

Today, technology has involved humanity in a process of globalisation that calls for a re-connection with its human origins and a recognition of the interconnectedness of all creation. For Christians, this has led to a renewed appreciation for the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel writings. The task at hand is to rediscover what it means to be a human being and to live as a human being who is capable of transcending the limits of secular, scientific notions of reason that must be solely 'evidence-based'.

The best Christian and Marist response to this secular world is a thoughtful life, in contrast to an unexamined life, that is nourished by prayer and the witness of a life of simplicity, inclusiveness and flexibility. We must trust in God's Word and in the fact that truth will speak for itself. The essential task of Marists is to learn what it means to live truthfully. This lies at the heart of their commitment to seek what it means to live the Marist way of simplicity.

It is a fact that faith can only flourish in a climate of freedom. Faith is essentially a free act of a free person. This at least resonates with the central place given to freedom in this secular age. Today the Marist needs to have sympathy with the secular city and humankind without becoming secularist in the process. The modern world can be said to be increasingly profane, especially under the impact of globalisation and the mass media. Therefore, the Marist needs to be tuned in very finely to the Spirit of God, as Mary is, while living in a world where God is so often thought to be absent.

2024

Marian Lecture

The Jewish Jesus: Why It Matters

7 May 2024 | ONLINE 6:00 PM - 7:30 pm AEST

The lecture is also open to the public.

Venue: Southern Cross Catholic College, Burwood, Sydney
(limited tickets available)

Internationally renowned scripture scholar Professor Amy-Jill Levine will explore the Jewish context of Jesus and what message His words and actions have for us in the Church today.

Professor Amy-Jill Levine

Amy-Jill Levine ("AJ") is Rabbi Stanley M. Kessler Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace (Hartford, CT, USA) and University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies Emerita and Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies Emerita, at Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN, USA).



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