
THE BLESSING OF INTERRUPTIONS

Br Mark O'Connor FMS

There used to be a poster years ago which said something like: 'Life is what happens to you when you are making other plans!'

Many of us are indeed surprised when our planning goes awry and we are 'interrupted'. Perhaps it is this common experience that prompted Wendell Berry to write:

It may be that when we no longer know what to do we have come to our real work, and that when we no longer know which way to go we have come to our real journey.

The mind that is not baffled is not employed.

The impeded stream is the one that sings.

The Spirit very often takes us in different directions from what we had hoped for in our lives.

In our youth what we dreamed of has probably taken on another form later in life.

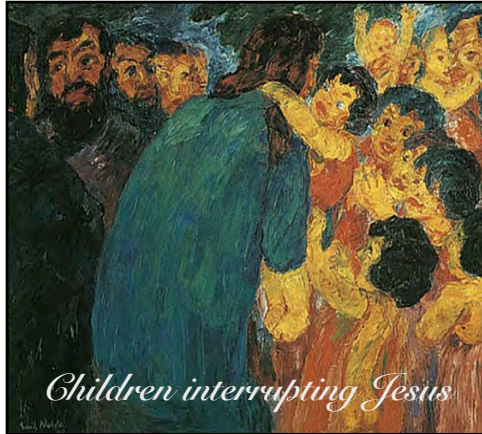
In our Church some had high hopes for the renewal of the Church at Vatican II which are not being realised in the way they had expected.

Some others grieve the loss of valuable aspects of our Tradition which they believe have not been 'conserved'. But they too cannot control where the Spirit will lead us.

In our inner lives, relationships that we thought would last forever breakdown irretrievably and we are taken sometimes like the Apostle Peter 'where we do not want to go'..

Many of us can feel like the disciples at Emmaus. 'We Had Hoped' - is our mantra!

And yet - as disciples of Jesus - for us 'interruption' is God's invitation. God is inviting us to see him all around us, in the lives of others, in our conversations and in our serving to those in need.



Interruption is not simply a matter of developing patience in the heart of the Christian, it's about experiencing life! 'Interruption' is perhaps God's way of encouraging us to go on 'pilgrimage'.

I take heart from Wendell Berry's poem which suggests that it is precisely in life's interruptions and impediments that the Holy Spirit is at work.

For only the gospel-bearer impeded and interrupted is strong, courageous and creative enough to sing.

We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly crossing our paths and canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions. We may pass them by, preoccupied with our more important tasks...

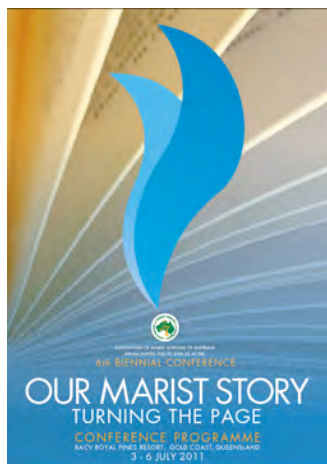
It is a strange fact that Christians and even ministers frequently consider their work so important and urgent that they will allow nothing to disturb them. They think they are doing God a service in this, but actually they are disdainng God's 'crooked yet straight path.'

Dietrich Bonhoeffer - "Life Together"

AMSA 2011

In early July, 162 delegates from Marist schools around Australia, and those who work in support and leadership of them, gathered for the sixth biennial conference of the Association of Marist Schools of Australia (AMSA) which was held at the RACV Royal Pines Resort at Benowa, in Queensland.

The Conference Committee organised a rich and engaging program. Facilitated by Professor Anne Cummins (from ACU), keynote speakers included the noted Marian theologian Professor Tina Beattie (from the UK), social anthropologist Fr Gerald Arbuckle SM, Aboriginal educator and artist Miriam Rose Ungunmerr (from the NT), Brother David Hall FMS (educator and Chair of the new Province Mission Council), and Fr Kevin Duffy SM (Assistant General of the SMs, from Rome).



The three days interweaved sessions that dealt with Marian theology, Catholic school leadership, Marist spirituality and education, the place of charism, and some key challenges provided by contemporary

Western and Australian society. As always the days were complemented by a prayer-and-worship program and warm conviviality.



Br Julian Casey FMS, Sr Gail Reneker SM, Bernie Boss, Fr Paul Cooney SM

This conference was the last such conference under the old AMSA banner; the 2013 conference will be an MSA-sponsored gathering.

Brother Julian, addressing the delegates at the end of the conference, highlighted the shared origins of each of the three Marist branches that have been members of AMSA, and assured the Marist Fathers and Marist Sisters schools that, although MSA members will all come from the Champagnat family, the mutual bonds will continue and that the other Marist schools would be welcome in future conferences, not as guests but as family.





Countdown to World Youth Day

Maddie Hellings

The countdown has well and truly begun for World Youth Day 2011. For Hendrika Duivenvoorden, Maddie Hellings, Cassie Schumacher, Simon Martino, Jack O'Sullivan, and James Mazzolini, the chance to attend the renowned celebration as representatives of the Marist Brothers Australia Southern Province means not only gathering with over two million other young people, but also making the journey to the spectacular city of Madrid, Spain!

The two-week pilgrimage will find these dedicated young Marists attending the 'International Gathering of Marist Youth' (IGMY) for the first week of the trip, in Buitrago (74 kilometres from Madrid). Here, between 125 and 200 young people (from 18-25 years of age) representing Marist Provinces from all over the world will come together and spend time expressing their concerns, sharing their dreams and achievements and planning the future for the Marist network worldwide. This will present an opportunity for young people to deepen their personal identity as well as their Christian convictions, echoing the slogan of WYD 2011: "Planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith".

After what no doubt will be a thought-provoking week in Buitrago, the adventure continues in Madrid. The following week will comprise of meeting more young people from all over the world, receiving the Sacraments, listening to the words of our Holy Father Benedict XVI, eating plenty of delicious food, maybe sipping on some Sangria, walking hundreds of kilometres, climbing over 1,000 stairs and sleeping under the stars.

Hendrika, Maddie, Cassie, Jack, Simon and James would like to take this opportunity to say *gracias* (thank you!) to the Marist Brothers for their generous sponsorship. Without this financial and spiritual support, this trip would not have been possible for all of us. We feel very privileged to have been selected to represent the Province and we will do everything possible to be good ambassadors. We ask that you keep us in your prayers and we look forward to sharing our stories and pictures with you when we return.

Hasta luego!



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A Word from the Composer



For many years I have been writing and publishing short reflective chants based usually on the Gospels. I have found them to be a very useful means of praying with the scriptures, and readily adaptable to many times and places. In this collection, the scripture sources are the Sunday Gospels from Year A of Ordinary Time, so musicians and choirs will find them the perfect 'music-match' for these particular Sundays. The chants will however be found to have broad liturgical and catechetical use.

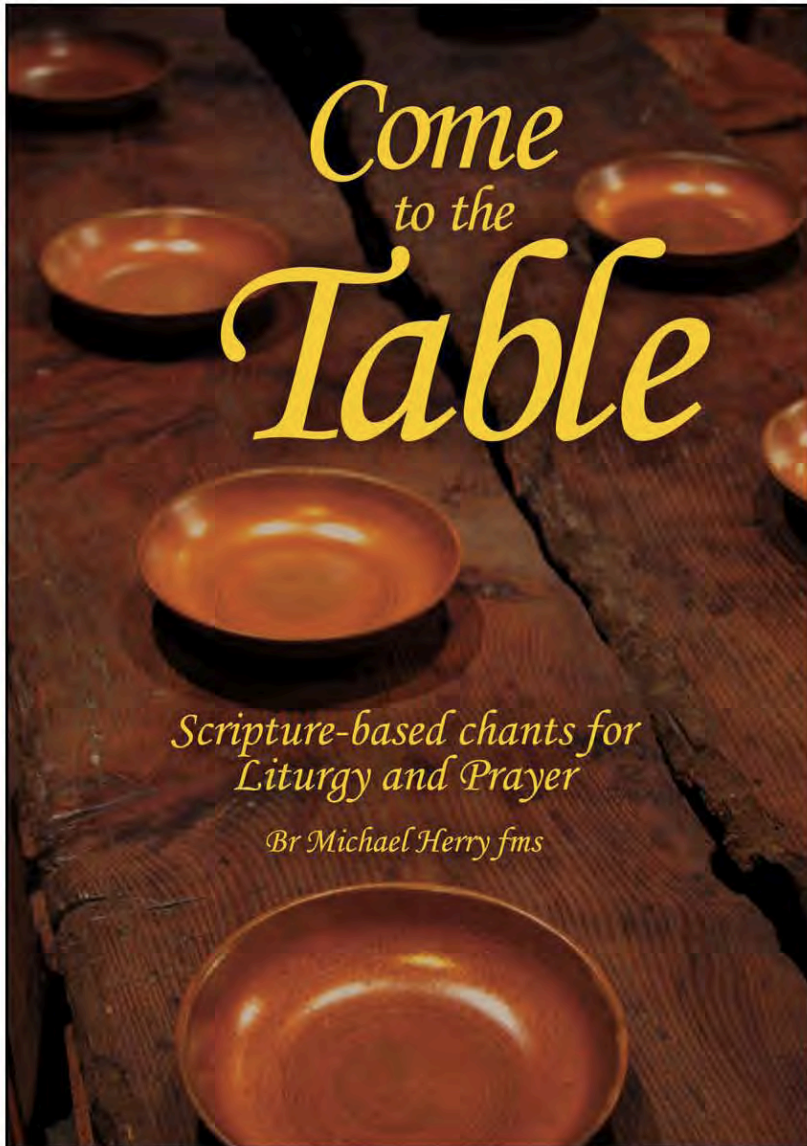
In the Sunday worship context they may be used for gathering, for reflection time after the homily or Holy Communion, and some of the brighter chants make very attractive dismissal songs.

My hope and prayer in publishing these simple refrains is that people, far beyond simply enjoying them, might hear and ponder the Word deeply in the heart, indeed as Mary did, and in so doing, become nothing less than the presence of Jesus for our world today.

Br Michael Herry

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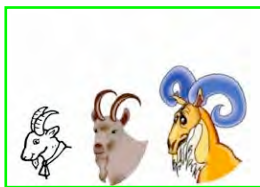
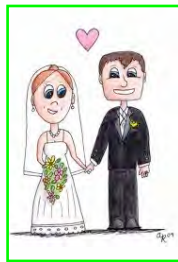
AT WORK

- ASTRONOMER** = *MOON STARER*
THE EYES = *THEY SEE*
THE MORSE CODE = *HERE COME THE DOTS*
SLOT MACHINES = *CASH LOST IN ME*
SNOOZE ALARMS = *ALAS, NO MORE Z'S*
A DECIMAL POINT = *I'M A DOT IN PLACE*
ELEVEN PLUS TWO = *TWELVE PLUS ONE*
THE EARTHQUAKE = *THAT QUEER SHAKE*
ANIMOSITY = *IS NO AMITY*
DORMITORY = *DIRTY ROOM*
ELECTION RESULTS = *LIES - LET'S*

RECOUNT

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?" "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So why is the groom wearing black?"



Considering all the brilliant, devious minds some kids exhibit in high school, I don't know how I missed doing this...

At a high school in Montana, a group of students played a prank. They let three goats loose inside the school. But before turning them loose, they painted numbers on the sides of the goats: 1, 2, and 4. The school administrators spent most of the day looking for No. 3.

The school inspector is assigned to the year 4 class in one of the local state schools. He is introduced to the class by the teacher. She says to the class, "Let's show the inspector just how clever you are by allowing him to ask you a question".

The inspector reasons that normally class starts with religious instruction, so he will ask a biblical question.

He asks: "Class, who broke down the walls of Jericho?"

For a full minute there is absolute silence. The children all just stare at him blankly.

Eventually, little Bruce raises his hand. The inspector excitedly points to him.

Bruce stands up and replies: "Sir, I do not know who broke down the walls of Jericho, but I can assure you it wasn't me".

Of course the inspector is shocked by the answer and looks at the teacher for an explanation. Realizing that he is perturbed, the teacher says: "Well, I've known Bruce since the beginning of the year, and I believe that if he says that he didn't do it, then he didn't do it".

The inspector is even more shocked at this, storms down to the principal's office and tells him what happened, to which the principal replies: "I don't know the boy, but I socialize every now and then with his teacher, and I believe her. If she feels that the boy is innocent, then he must be innocent".

The inspector can't believe what he is hearing. He grabs the phone on the principal's desk and, in a rage, dials the Premier's telephone number and rattles the entire occurrence to him. He asks him what he thinks of the education standard in the state.

The Premier sighs heavily and replies: "I don't know the boy, the teacher or the principal, but just get three quotes and have the wall fixed!!!"



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