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Shared Formation Experience

2011

The Hermitage, Mittagong



**STATEMENT**  
*from the*  
**SHARED FORMATION EXPERIENCE**  
**FOR MARISTS**  
**15-19 June 2011**

From 15-19 June, we, the participants of the *2011 Shared Formation Experience*, gathered at The Hermitage, Mittagong, to explore a new relationship between Brothers and Lay Marists.

As Marists, Brothers and Lay, we lived an experience of community and communion where we explored, deepened and affirmed our Marist life, spirituality and mission.

The gathering was a graced opportunity characterised by

- \* shared leadership and responsibility
- \* a strong sense of unity and community
- \* genuine sharing of faith, where daily prayer, Eucharist, reflection and dialogue were integral to the experience
- \* respectful searching and questioning together
- \* honest sharing of hopes for the future of Marist life in our part of the world openness to the mysterious presence of the Holy Spirit.

Attentive and open to the Holy Spirit, we have been enlivened, energised and encouraged to revitalise Marist life personally, in each other and in our local communities.

At the end of our time together we affirm our beliefs that

- \* *the charism of Marcellin is a gift given to the Church and the world, a gift which we are being invited to further develop and live by, progressively deepening our participation in this charism. .... It is a grace of the Holy Spirit entrusted to us as Marists for the purpose of building and unifying the Church as the Body of Christ.* (direct quote from **Water From the Rock 13**)
- \* the charism can be, and is shared, lived and loved by all Marists.
- \* at the heart of the Marist vocation is *a passion to reach children and young people and to help them live life to the full* (taken from **Gathered Around the Same Table 58**). We carry out our mission by *welcoming young people seeking meaningful relationships with those whom they can trust. .... We show them they are dearly loved by God.* (taken from **Water From the Rock 141**)
- \* we are called to be the Marian face of the Church, taking Mary as the model for our Gospel response, emphasising listening and nurturing, and the inclusive, just and compassionate dimensions of Christian life.

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Further, we believe that, at this particular time, it is imperative that we

- \* explore and respond to new edges for ministry with the most marginalised of young people, faithful to our Marist mission, while maintaining a strong commitment to Marist ministry in schools
- \* use our collective voice to advocate for young people and their needs, challenging our society and its institutions to deal compassionately and justly with the most vulnerable
- \* encourage and support new forms of community, where Marists can share their life, faith and mission
- \* promote, support and deepen the Marist vocation shared by all Marists, particularly young people
- \* actively investigate with respectful searching and questioning the possibilities for developing appropriate, formal pathways for Lay Marists to discern and proclaim their Marist vocation
- \* actively offer further shared formation opportunities to continue to promote greater vitality of the Marist charism and its mission in our region.

We appreciate greatly the very significant opportunity that we have lived as Marists in communion during this *2011 Shared Formation Experience*. We have listened to the Spirit and commend this statement to all other Marists who share our passion for Christ and young people, especially those charged with the responsibility for the vitality and viability of Marist life and mission into the future. We believe that now is the time.



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# Shared Formation Experience 11

## Mittagong, June 2011

### *A Response*

**Br Harry Prout FMS**

It was a wonderful opportunity to be with fellow Marists from many parts of Australia during the wintry days at Mittagong. Marist hospitality was typically generous and warm.

#### **Marist call.**

The XXI General Chapter statement: *[There is] a new relationship between Brothers and Lay Marists, based on communion, searching for a greater vitality of the Marist charism for our world*, was certainly affirmed at Mittagong. Marcellin's vision for a Marist family with various branches seems to be slowly coming a reality in Australia.

I believe there is a Marist vocation to which many are called and to live in a variety of forms – some as brothers, some as single people, some married; young and old together.

*Together we will promote greater vitality of the Marist charism and its mission in our world.*

(XXI General Chapter).

Those with a Marist vocation are not additions to the brothers. Marists are not tag-ons to the brothers. We are Marists together, equal in call and commitment, different in expressions of the same vocation. The Marist brothers have no greater claim on the Marist vocation and expression of it than other Marists. There ought to be partnership of equals.

#### **Formation.**

As was pointed out during the Shared Formation experience, there is currently in

Australia an inequity in formation of and for Marists. Some individuals have generous resources of personnel, experience and education available to them, while others have far fewer opportunities. Some Marists are formed as they go and often are left to learn from brothers what being Marist is like. This places the brothers in a position of privilege and power. It could be seen that there is a presumption of hierarchy in the Marist vocation with brothers considered more important or valued. Some of us wonder if Marcellin dreamed of this inequality.

Could the formation opportunities and resources afforded to a few (brothers) be made available to all who are called to Marist life, some of us pondered. And could the formation experience be spread over a lifetime rather than concentrated at the early stages of one's life as Marist?

*We believe the Spirit is calling us to live in a new communion of brothers and lay Marists. Together we will promote a greater vitality of the Marist charism and its mission in our world.* (XXI General Chapter).

'Communion' and 'together' could hardly mean such discrimination and difference as exists presently in Marist formation.

Affirming the appropriateness of equitable sharing of resources in formation for all Marists, it was pointed out that most brothers (who have generous formation resources directed to them), leave the Institute. It was also

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noted that some possibly remain as Marist and continue their vocation and ministry in new forms.

### **Community.**

In supporting the various Marist expressions of vocation and in support of differing ministries, there will be different expressions of community life.

Some will find living together most supportive, some will live with a partner who is possibly not Marist yet will find common ground, support and ways to live Marist life with others in a nearby geographical location. Some brothers may live with Marists who are not brothers because their ministries support such an arrangement.

Various forms of community will emerge if we are open to the Spirit and to the belief that the Marist vocation is truly shared with many and that community can support ministry, especially to poor children and youth. They will generally be found in areas of social and economic disadvantage and where community support is most necessary for effective ministry.

### **Affiliation.**

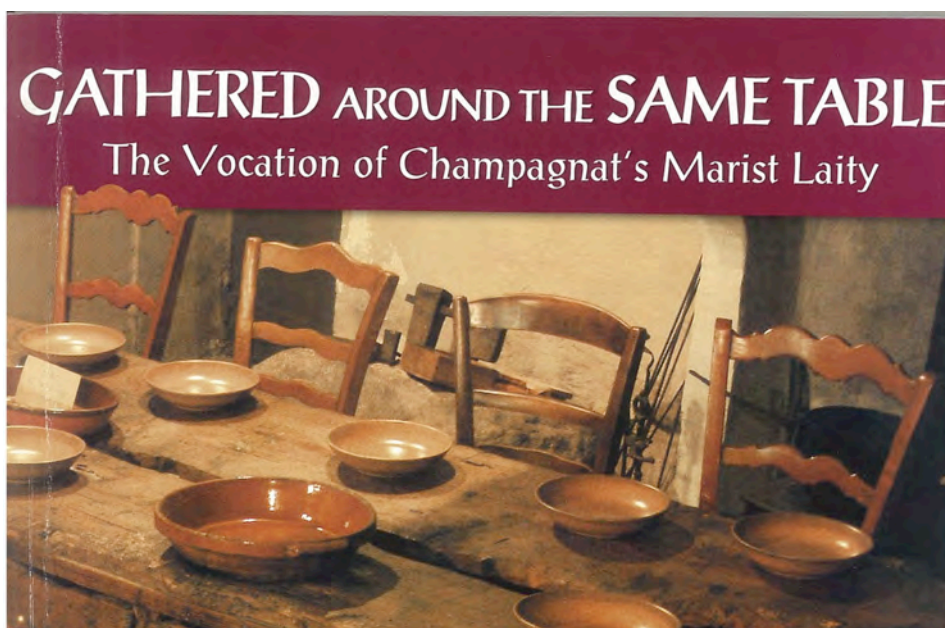
Some Marists feel the need for some kind of public recognition of their vocation. Some believe a form of insignia would be useful in identifying them as Marist. Some feel formal recognition is not necessary.

At the moment in Australia, some Marists are given great notoriety. Their vocation is marked by ceremony, name giving, clothing and insignia. Other Marists live somewhat hidden and unknown, except by those who know them best.

If we are to be Marists together, consideration will need to be given to affiliation.

### **The Future.**

As we 'haste to a new land', let us not leave some members of our great Marist family behind, or allow differences to divide, for our *Marist future as a communion of people in the charism of Champagnat, where our specific vocations will be mutually enriching*, (XXI General Chapter) is a gift to Australia. It is worth struggling for.



*The end for us Marists, our goal, is to bring 'Christ-life' to birth  
in young people.*

*In describing to the Marist Youth Care staff what 'Christ-life' might look like, I drew from the well-known passage of Scripture which Marcellin also often used when he was explaining to his first Brothers how they were to teach.  
(1 Corinthians 13).*

*Christ-life can be recognised in young people when they come to be patient and kind, not jealous or pompous, not rude or self-seeking, but forgiving and truthful, resilient and empathetic, when they live by faith, by hope and most especially by love. To achieve this end, Marcellin intuited that it was all about the kind of personal relationships that teachers were able to establish with their students – relationships that were genuine, open and friendly, marked by affection and confidence, by maturity and wisdom. Those who are able to establish such relationships are people who themselves have had Christ-life born and nurtured in them, people who themselves are kind, patient, humble, generous, forgiving, truthful and resilient, people who are faith-filled, hoped-filled and loving.*

Br Michael Green FMS  
National Director  
Marist Schools Australia Newsletter  
21 June, 2011

## MARIST - ST COLMAN'S

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

STUDENTS & STAFF REUNION

**SAT. AUG 20<sup>th</sup> 2011**

3.00pm Tour of College  
6.30pm Overlander Hotel

**SUN. AUG 21<sup>st</sup> 2011**

11.00am St Brendan's Church 1.15pm Tour of College  
11.15am Tour of College 3.00pm Formalities  
12.15pm 8 Course Lunch

**REGISTRATIONS CLOSE 29<sup>th</sup> JULY 2011**

Contact: **Notre Dame College** on (03) 5822 8400  
or e-mail: [marist@notredame.vic.edu.au](mailto:marist@notredame.vic.edu.au)

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# Smile Awhile

## INNER PEACE

If you can start the day without caffeine,  
If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches  
and pains,  
If you can resist complaining and boring people  
with your troubles,  
If you can eat the same food every day and be  
grateful for it,  
If you can understand when your loved ones are  
too busy to give you any time,  
If you can take criticism and blame without  
resentment,  
If you can conqueror tension without medical  
help,  
If you can relax without alcohol,  
If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,  
Then you are probably...  
The Family Dog!



*This is what a bad mood looks like*



*This is what impatience looks like*

## SHAMPOO

While shopping in a food store, two nuns happened to pass by the beer cooler. One nun said to the other: "Wouldn't a nice cool beer or two taste wonderful on a hot summer evening."

The second nun answered: "Indeed it would, Sister, but I would not feel comfortable buying beer as I am certain it would cause a scene at the checkout stand."

"I can handle that without a problem," she replied as she picked up a six-pack of beer and headed for the checkout.

The cashier had a surprised look on his face when the two nuns arrived with a six-pack of beer.

"We use beer for washing our hair," said the nun: "A shampoo of a sort, if you will."

Without blinking an eye, the cashier reached under the counter, pulled out a packet of pretzel sticks and placed them in the bag with the beer. He then looked the nun straight in the eye, smiled and said: "The curlers are on the house."



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