

## *From our Provincial*



2 September 2010

Dear Brothers and friends,

In collaboration with Brothers from around Oceania we are about to undertake more meetings, more changes and more planning as we move in earnest to begin shaping our future. Such is our task and challenge, but the goal sought is always and everywhere the same: namely what kind of organization suits the growth and expansion of our Marist Mission the best; what kind of organization is best for the Brothers as Marcellin Champagnat would have wished?

We do not have “a pillar of cloud by day nor fire by night” to guide us, but we do sense the presence of God with us, walking with us into a new land, guarding us in our vulnerable moments, calming our anxieties and bringing peace into our lives. The Holy Spirit, who has guided us to this stage of our discernment, is the same Spirit of strength and wisdom that will stay with us to animate and prosper the new organization.

Such a challenge will need much effort, work and sacrifice on the part of all. I see the potential for much growth, both internally and in our development of new forms of collaboration in the Provinces and for the Church, both in Australia and in Oceania. Remember that change is brought about not so much by individuals, as by a group of people united in a common vision and a common passion. The articulation and the living out of a vision is really a collective responsibility and is not simply a role that is left to a leadership team. Each and every Brother has an important part to play; together we are called to shape the future of Marist presence and ministry here in Australia and Oceania. We pray that we will truly be open to the guidance of the Spirit in the weeks and months ahead, and that we may have the courage and generosity to follow wherever the Spirit may lead us.

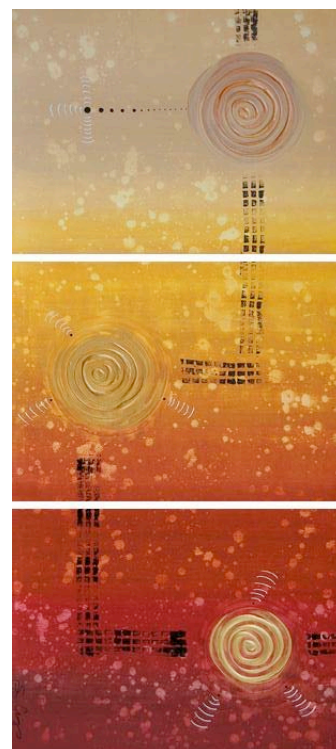
As we take up the questions raised in our regional meeting, there are two questions you might think about and bring to your prayer:

- ◆ *What blessings of your life would you most want to carry with you as we become a part of a wider organization?*
- ◆ *What blessings are you most in need of as we make our way forward in the development of Oceania?*

Fraternally

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Br Julian Casey".

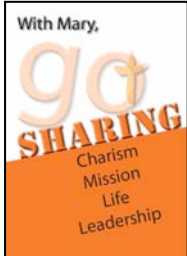
Br Julian Casey  
Provincial



# Province News ...

## THE FUTURE

You would have now received the Booklet relating to the ongoing discernment about the three main questions to which, by the Chapter time, we need to have a formal answer.



1. The Amalgamation of the Australian Provinces;
2. The way co-responsibility by Lay and Brothers will be implemented;
3. How the three Administrative Units, Australia, New Zealand and Melanesia will relate.

In order to help progress the consensus around these questions and to respond to any emerging concerns or issues, some Regional Gatherings have been organized.

1. **Victorian Communities** at Templestowe facilitated by Julian on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> September (*details will soon be distributed*).
2. **Forbes and Canberra** facilitated by Julian, probably 22<sup>nd</sup> September.
3. **Alice Springs and Santa Teresa** facilitated by Peter Walsh at a date to be organized.
4. **Darwin and Baucau** facilitated by Paul Kane at a date to be organized.
5. **Perth** facilitated by John McMahon on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> September.
6. **Adelaide** facilitated by John McMahon on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> September.

## NEWS

### BR MAURIE BAMBRIDGE

Maurie is making good progress and is in good spirits. After he is released from the Alice Springs Hospital he will go to the Old Timers Village in Alice Springs for continuing care and support. Having been in Alice for so long, Maurie knows many of the residents and staff and is quite comfortable with them all.

### BR DAVID BLAY: COMMUNITY AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

David Blay will be doing the Third Age Course and in his absence we are asking Br Ambrose Reilly to take on the Leadership of the Somerton Park Community. We are also asking Br Leo Kavanagh to be a daily contact person for any medical issues for the senior Brothers of the community.

For the finance arrangements, David has asked that all mail continue to come to his address at Somerton Park. The mail and emails fall into the main categories of Community Finances, Pensions and Stipends, Health Refunds and GST Refunds. Br David Christian has kindly agreed to attend and sort the mail and to deal with Pensions, Stipends and Community Finance. He will hand over the Health Refunds to Leo Kavanagh who will liaise with Templestowe. The GST Refunds can wait until David returns. Many thanks to all for covering David's absence. Closer to his departure date, we will put out a further reminder of these arrangements.

### BR KEVIN LANGLEY

Kevin has had a long stint as Superior at Bendigo Community and is currently looking forward to the Third Age Course in Manzianna this year. He has offered his resignation as Superior of the Bendigo Community and Br Peter Bourke has been appointed Superior for the next 4-5 months. Thanks to both these Brothers.

## Province News ...

### **BR JOHN McMAHON**

After 12 Years as Director of Champagnat Education, Br John McMahon has been asked to take on an expanded role as Vice Provincial for the Province for 2011. He will continue his contribution to the "Sharing Champagnat's Vision", the Animation Committee, the Journal, the Pilgrimages and occasional lecturing at ACU. The remainder of his current work in education and schools will be taken up by the Regional Director of Marist Schools Australia. An advertisement for this position will appear from September 11, 2010.

It goes without saying that we owe a debt of gratitude to John for 12 years of painstaking work in ensuring that the charism of Champagnat is alive and well in our Colleges. His approach to the development of the charism has been well based on his academic work and on his continuing studies.

He has shouldered the burden of Professional Standards in our Colleges and attended to all the legal and industrial issues as well as the occasional parental complaint. He has displayed a nice balance of fairness and assertiveness and has represented us well with Catholic Education Offices and other educational agencies. He has been a significant support to Principals, listening to them and offering advice where that was sought. He has been instrumental in gathering them together and facilitating good peer relationships. As well, he has been a regular presence in Marist Communities and has brought that same gentle listening attitude.

It has been a long haul and I am sure that at our next Ministry Dinner at the end of the year we will find time to recognize his contribution.

### **BR ANTHONY O'BRIEN**

Please note Tony's new contact details.

Jemalong Residential Village  
240 Edward Street  
(PO Box 388)  
Forbes NSW 2871  
Main Phone: 02 6853 9200



### **BR DOUG WALSH**

Doug is recovering from open heart surgery and will be in hospital for a few more days. He will then go to a Rehabilitation Centre and is looking forward to celebrating (or otherwise) Collingwood's feats at the impending Grand Final.

### **COMMUNITY VISITATIONS**

Over the last month, I have been visiting Brothers in Darwin, East Timor, Bendigo, Macedon and Kilmore. I also ensure that the community at Templestowe have the same opportunity as other communities in having an annual talk with the Provincial. Having the opportunity to sit down with Brothers and talk with them is one of the best parts of a Provincial's job and I have enjoyed and been inspired by my visits to the communities.

## BULLEEN

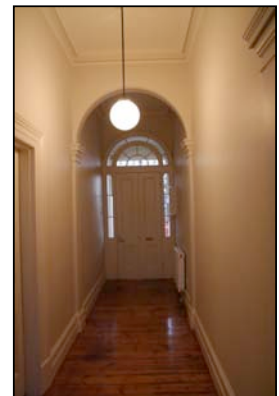
The departure from the residence (except for Br Michael Herry's Music Office) is now completed and Marcellin College will begin using the residence. No accommodation will be available at the Bulleen Residence. Many thanks to Br Peter Howes for his painstaking work in supervising the clearing of items of furniture. A list of items available for sale is being distributed and any interested parties should contact either Peter Howes at [printer@maristmelb.org.au](mailto:printer@maristmelb.org.au) or Wayne Kerr at [wkerr@maristmelb.org.au](mailto:wkerr@maristmelb.org.au).

## NICHOLSON STREET - FITZROY

It was with great joy that we accepted the keys to Nicholson Street and had a formal handing over by the Architect, Mr Robert Simeoni. All who had some familiarity with Nicholson Street have expressed their delight at how well the refurbishment has been completed and how well the "new and the old" of the houses have been so tastefully integrated. There are a number of outstanding features and I am sure that the community will welcome visitors who simply want to have a look.



We will host a formal Opening and Blessing once Rex Cambrey returns from his Sabbatical. This Opening will also give us a formal opportunity to put on record our particular thanks to the original Committee of Rex Cambrey, Br Peter Walsh, Sheree Limbrick, Br Allen Sherry and Peter Mahoney and to Rex and Peter who attended fortnightly site meetings over a very long period.



## NORTH FITZROY

We are still in negotiations with the Parish and Archdiocese concerning the purchase of this property. We have had the first sketch plans drawn up which utilize the existing building which was extremely well built in the early 60's. Obviously a lift is being incorporated in the design. While we are waiting for the plans to take shape, the house will be used as a Hospitality Centre for visitors. Br Peter Howes has kindly agreed to look after this.

# Province News . . .

## COMBINED PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING

There will be a combined Provincial Council Meeting of the Sydney and Melbourne Province in Melbourne on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> September in order to begin the task of co-ordinating any combined Province initiatives or projects. We anticipate that there will be some basic questions about practicalities at the Chapter and we want to be sure that both Provincials and Councils will be on the same page when it comes to deal with these.

## DOXA SCHOOL BENDIGO

Financial constraints have meant that the DOXA School Bendigo will seek a partnership with a Vocation Education and VCAL Training Organization. This will mean that the Province will step aside to allow the full development of this initiative in another direction. We have assured the parties of our ongoing support, even though we will not be a part of the Governance structure.

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## BAUCAU - EAST TIMOR



The Provincial, Brother Julian, has just made his annual visit to the Marist Community in Baucau, East Timor. As well as spending time meeting with the Brothers, he also met with the Bishop of Baucau, Don Basilio Nascimento and some members of the staff of the Catholic Teacher Training Institute.

Brother Teófilo Minga, Coordinator in Rome of the Mission Ad Gentes Project, has also been a welcome visitor to the community during the past week.

**Brs Tony, Julian, John & Fons**

## WHAT A FANTASTIC NIGHT!

Melbourne's WYD 2011 journey officially kicked off on Friday 20 August 2010 when over 700 young people squeezed into St Brigid's in North Fitzroy.

The young people gathered for praise and worship, led by Deacon Rob Galea and then joined in a beautiful, vibrant Mass celebrated by Archbishop Hart, with music led by "Shalom", a Spanish-speaking youth group. There were so many young people attending that not all could fit into the church with crowds spilling out into the car park! The crowd then moved over to the parish hall and celebrated Spanish-style with a Fiesta that included traditional Spanish music, dancing, and tapas.



**Que noche tan fantastica!**

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# *God is Kindness*

*Br Mark O'Connor fms*

One of the great religious books of the past 25 years is Henri Nouwen's classic study of pastoral care, 'The Wounded Healer'. One passage in particular has always stuck in my memory: 'A life-saving relationship can develop in an hour. One eye movement or one handshake can replace years of friendship when a person is in agony. Love not only lasts forever, it needs only a second to come about.'

Personal experience tells me that Father Nouwen is right. So often a very simple act of kindness from someone has had deep and lasting effects in my life.

We bring about God's kingdom, as Dorothy Day used to say, "by little and little." We human beings so very often underestimate the tremendous power we do have, to bring others to life.

This is the meaning of our being witnesses to the Gospel in our daily lives. We can bring others to life because the Spirit of the Risen Jesus lives in us, that same Jesus who day and night was surrounded by people who were blind, deaf, paralysed, mute and afraid. They were people who in their own eyes could hardly do anything at all; who were paralysed like flies in the web of intriguing spiders, cocooned by political and religious ropes.

Jesus always followed a very simple pastoral 'strategy' with wounded ones. Fr Joe Donders spells it out:

The blind saw, the deaf heard, the paralyzed walked, the mute spoke; those who were afraid

got courage; and those who had been hardly anything at all in their own eyes were liberated and became prime movers in the history of salvation that the Risen Jesus started among us.

They said: "There are no fish. What are we to do?"

He said: "There are fish. You, throw out your net. I will make you a fisher of men."

They said: "There is no bread. What are we going to give them to eat?"

He said: "You, divide what you have. There is plenty for all."

They said: "We cannot pray."

He said: "Start praying like this: Our Father..." And they who had thought that they could not pray, did pray.

He empowered them in very simple little ways.

That is what he asked his disciples to do when he sent them out, saying: "Baptise them in the power they have, the power of their origin, created by the Father; the power of their origin, created by the Father; the power of their kinship, blood-related to Jesus Christ, the Son: the power of the Holy Spirit in them."

This is especially true of our contact with young people. What good we can do by constantly affirming our young people. Cardinal Basil Hume OSB made this same point reflecting on his years as a teacher:

"Schoolmastering, like much we do for God, is "iceberg" work. Very little, perhaps appears on

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the surface, but deep down, under the surface, something is going on which is very, very important in a boy's life.

The very contact with men who are committed to God and known to be committed to him and are seen to be, is of more value than all we say to do.

Boys are very perspicacious, they are very much more shrewd than we think, and they know whether the man who is looking after them or with whom they have dealings is genuine or not.

Little things can have a tremendous effect on boys. Years later a man of, say 25 will meet you and say: "I always remember the first thing you said to me. I arrived very nervous and worried about coming to school, and you said ..."

You probably didn't say it, or you have forgotten, or it was something very trivial.

But that is what one discovers in school-mastering: it is the 101 things one says or does which have an importance and effect out of all proportion.

That is why school-mastering is worthwhile: for everything helps toward building up a life. It is what we are that matters. It is the small things that count."

Very few of us will be called to make dramatic gestures in our lives - but all of us can take heart that the Kingdom is coming in the small acts of so many good people all over the world.

The temptation to despair is gradually overcome if one meditates on this "ocean" of goodness and kindness within which we live. Yes, there is a "Mystery of evil", but the greater more joyous mystery is the "Mystery of Goodness". God is kindness.

The New Zealand Catholic poet James K. Baxter summed up this "little" way of kindness in his "credo" of the works of mercy:

**Feed the hungry;  
Give drink to the thirsty;  
Give clothes to those who lack them;  
Give hospitality to strangers;  
Look after the sick;  
Bail people out of jail, visit them in jail,  
and look after them when they come out of jail;  
Go to neighbours' funerals;  
Tell other ignorant people what you in your ignorance think you know;  
Help the doubtful to clarify their minds and make their own decisions;  
Console the sad;  
Reprove sinners, but gently, brother, gently;  
Forgive what seems to be harm done to yourself;  
Put up with difficult people;  
Pray for whatever has life, including the spirits of the dead.**

James K. Baxter

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# Ode to my mechanic

SASHA SHTARGOT

Mechanics are not the sort of people who reach for publicity, and they rarely get it. But I have a desire to hoist my mechanic before the bright lights and celebrate every grease-stained inch of him.

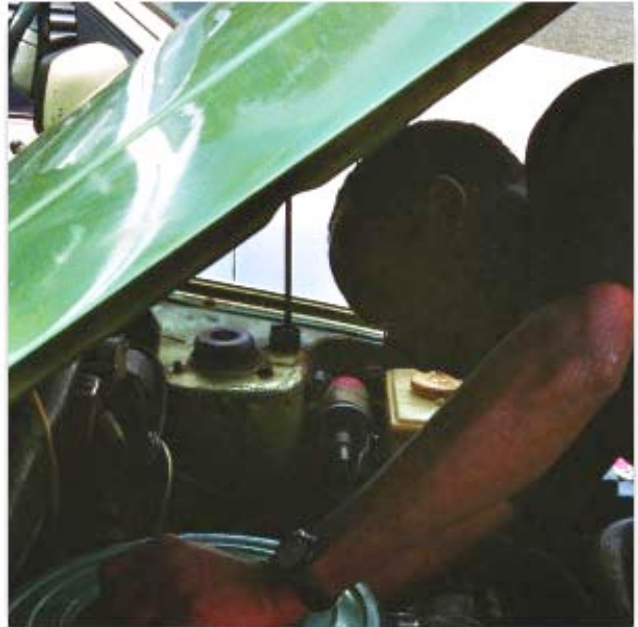
He has been intimate with every part of every bomb I've driven over the years. He's known the axles, picked through the engines, changed the groove-worn tyres and oiled the pistons. He's been my counsellor and saviour countless times when, forlornly, I've rolled into his suburban garage with the latest problem.

His name's Mick. You don't get many words out of him, and when he does speak they come rapid-fire and always end in a question.

'It's gonna cost a lot to get new tyres, knowata mean? You're better off getting re-treads, knowata mean?'

Mick works on his own and his garage is always full of cars, some jacked up high, others lolling about in various states of disrepair. His workshop looks like the grubby inside of hell. Even the girlie poster that once stood out near the entrance has succumbed and is buried under layers of grime.

He's invariably busy but somehow always finds the time to attend to mechanical no-hopers like me. His patience, like the stream of cars that come in and out of his garage, seems endless.



George Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier* observed that there are millions of people who work in jobs essential to the running of society who receive no recognition. Orwell investigated the lives of coal miners in northern England in the 1930s. The miners' work led to the generation of electricity that powered the country, yet they lived in abject poverty and neglect.

In 2010 in Australia few workers endure conditions anything like those described by Orwell, but there still exists a kind of social short-sightedness and lack of approval towards many blue-collar jobs. Amid strict divisions of labour, we are still a society ruled deeply by status. And when it comes to dirty, repetitive or dangerous work we prefer to look away. Imagine a car-dependent country like ours without mechanics. Or the

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conditions we'd be working and living in without cleaners or garbage collectors. Or the hunger we'd feel without the food process workers whose products pile up in supermarkets.

There are hundreds of jobs that don't rate a mention in a society like ours that is obsessed with wealth, status and celebrity — and armies of unsung workers who nevertheless keep it functioning and well-oiled. The illusion exists that the work of the CEO and his office cleaner are unconnected. The truth is that one cannot operate without the other, and this extends to a web of connections throughout our complex society, binding the high and the low. Friends of mine have the quaint habit of placing a stubby of beer and a thank-you

card next to their letterbox at Christmas for the postie. I haven't met anyone else who does this, or hardly anyone who even acknowledges the person who scoots up and down their street daily delivering their mail. I try to say hello and thanks when I am at my mail box as the post is delivered, but the response is often one of surprise — as if anonymity is the ordained consequence of the thankless job.

My mechanic Mick may not be the poorest worker around, but in his concrete grease pit he's certainly one of the less glamorous. Fundamentally it's about what we value, and the ability to see and appreciate all the parts that make the whole.



*Sasha Shtargot is a freelance writer and media officer for the Alternative Technology Association. He is a former journalist with The Age and local Melbourne newspapers.*

*EUREKA STREET: 17 August 2010*



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# Natural disaster and human greed in Pakistan

Simon Roughneen, Eureka Street, Sept. 2010

On the road in from the airport, the water shimmered under the moonlight as men, women and children sat in the dark near the would-be lakeshore. During the day, river dolphins can usually be spotted in the nearby river. Idyllic, you might think. But this dusty and ramshackle town is at the front-line of one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters in living memory. Usually there is no water lapping up at the roadside, and the only people there would be those out for an evening snack after the daytime Ramadan fast. But since torrential monsoon rain sent the Indus River spilling onto towns and farmland the length of Pakistan, an area the size of Italy has been deluged.

In downtown Sukkur, I spoke to Ashraf, who said he had left his family at the outskirts before coming into town to buy some food. 'We managed to gather up some of our possessions before the waters came, but we did not have much warning. Our home is under water completely. I have enough money to feed my children for another couple of days, that is all.' Like a few more flood victims I encountered, he had to pay three times the normal price for a bus to the city, as opportunists capitalise on people's desperation, to make a quick rupee.

Nature's unwitting cruelty was followed, here and there, then, by man's calculated greed. The last time a natural disaster hit this country, 80,000 people died in thirteen seconds when an earthquake rocked Kashmir. This time, the death-toll is much lower and the disaster is unfolding slowly over many weeks. But the impact is vast – running the entire 1976 mile length of the



**Watching the waters rise again,  
Shahdadkot, Sindh province.**

Indus River from the mountainous north of Pakistan, where that 2005 quake hit, to these flood-prone plains in the south.

Everywhere cases of diarrhoea, cholera, skin diseases, as well as malaria and dengue – with mosquitoes proliferating amid the floodwaters – are growing. Almost 5 million people now have no access to clean water, an irony seemingly lifted from Coleridge's line about 'water water everywhere and not a drop to drink.'

17 million acres of land is under water and, out of the mind-boggling 20 million people thought to be affected by the floods – around 800,000 remain beyond the reach of aid workers or the Pakistani army, cut off by the rising waters that dissolved bridges and submerged roads. This disaster seems as vast as the swollen country-long lake that the Indus River has become, but the real

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human suffering and loss can be obscured by or sanitised into mere statistics – with people's lives traduced by the actuary-level numbers required to account for such vast destruction.

The name Sukkur is derived from the Arabic word for intense, according to some historical accounts that date the place-name to Umayyad conquerors who marched east to this region over a millennium ago. For aid workers trying to help the displaced who are now – for want of a better word – flooding the town, the epithet seems apt. Brian Casey worked at the forefront of relief operations in Haiti after the recent earthquake and in Burma after the 2008 Cyclone Nargis – with Irish NGO GOAL. He says that the extent of the slowly-unfurling crisis in Pakistan comes close to these massive disasters. 'People are hungry, people are getting sick, and we don't know yet how much worse things will get as the water rises in places. And at the same time we have to think about how to help people rebuild homes and farms once the waters recede.'

Outside the city, Nizam Ud Din Bharchood of Pakistani charity 'Hands' takes me to a string of ad-hoc campsites along the highway. At one, around thirty women and children lolled under trees in the dust-

infused forty-degree heat. 'Some of these people are here almost three weeks without shelter, without regular food or water', he says. 'The men have gone into the city to see if they can get work somehow.'

'Hands' has been helping out with food and medicine since the start of the flood, and is partnering with GOAL to reach more people. Back to numbers again, and these are rising in tandem with the still-swelling waters in an odd sort of *danse macabre*, 4 million Pakistanis are now homeless, and another 600,000 are threatened down-river in this southern region. This means they might have to flee as well with two more weeks of monsoon rains expected.

Mohammed Ramza had less than a day to pack up with his family, and move, along with all his neighbours, to the roadside outside Sukkur. 'Our homes were destroyed, we managed only to save a few animals', he said, pointing to a half-dozen goats sitting in the shade, their ears tugged-at by a trio of giggling children, none of whom is more than five years old. Ignoring maternal admonitions to leave the animals alone, they compete to play up for the foreigner's camera, some temporary respite from their still-unfinished ordeal.

