



Marist Sisters: Region of Asia-Pacific

Aotearoa-New Zealand / Australia / Fiji / The Philippines

Regional News



Marist Sisters on the Move

From the earliest days in our history
the Marist Sisters have been on the move...

To begin the Congregation our foundress, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin, left "home and country". According to national borders she actually remained in the country of France, but by making the journey from her home village of Coutouvre to that of Cerdon she had ventured into a totally different milieu, not only geographically, but culturally too - with unfamiliar customs and dialect.

Within a few years the group left Cerdon for Belley where there are still Marist Sisters today. From Belley Jeanne-Marie and her Sisters made a number of foundations - in Meximieux, Lyon, Collonges, Jarnosse. Interestingly our foundress was not fearful of "making mistakes". She preferred to give something a go and then adjust as needed. For example, within the city of Lyon the Sisters moved a number of times before finding the most suitable place in which to form community and minister.

So, it is not surprising that the Marist Sisters of today are also on the move. In the following pages you will see that in the last few months the Marist Sisters of Asia-Pacific have moved both in and out of certain places believing that it was the Spirit calling us to do so.

Moving out of Papua New Guinea

With the faith and courage shown by all our Sisters who have been called to begin new communities, three Sisters from our Region set out early in 2009 to begin a new foundation in Wama, Parish of Kanosia, Papua New Guinea. Sisters Lavinia Henry (Fiji), Kathleen Bright (New Zealand) and Kate McPhee (Australia) were asked to commit to this new venture for an initial period of two years after which our presence and mission would be evaluated. Earlier this year that evaluation was conducted with deep reflection and prayer. Through it we came to recognise - with considerable sadness - that despite the good work achieved over the past two years, we are not in a position to maintain our community presence in Wama.



Kate left first...



...then Lavinia and Kathleen...

However, we are hopeful that in the future our Sisters may return to Papua New Guinea as a number of local women are in the initial stages of formation for Marist life.

Our missionaries left with mixed emotions - sadness and yet overwhelming gratitude for what they had experienced among the people of Wama. And in turn the parishioners poured out their appreciation in the beautiful farewell celebrations. The photos tell the story...



Moving into the Toowoomba Diocese

Some time ago the Bishop of Toowoomba, then Bishop William Morris, invited the religious congregations of Australia to consider making a foundation in his diocese. For years he has been working to prepare his people to keep the Church alive in the face of rapidly decreasing numbers of priests. He saw the presence of religious men and women as a vital element, supporting and encouraging the laity, nurturing the development of faith and spirituality.

Our Sisters in Australia began to discern whether they might be able to respond to this plea for help. After a couple of visits to the diocese by several different Sisters, during which there were lengthy discussions with the Bishop, his assistant, priests and local people, there was further consultation among the Australian Marist Sisters and with our Regional Leader.

It became clear that the needs particularly in the St George area are very much in keeping with our understanding of Marist mission. In spite of our diminishing numbers of active Sisters, two were found, willing and able.

The outcome was that on 26th July Sisters Beverley Lewis and Kate McPhee took up residence in St George to be a Pastoral Presence in the Balonne faith community (formerly two separate parishes of Goondiwindi and St George). The parish priest, Fr Michael O'Brien, is delighted to have them - as are the local people. The main focus of the Sisters' ministry will be on supporting, mentoring and forming parishioners to respond to their baptismal vocation and assume greater responsibility for the life of their parish.

Alleluia!

We thank our God
for:

Sr Joan Sheppard (Australia) who
departed this life on 17th August 2011

and

Sr Blaise Manuelli (Fiji) who
departed this life on 16th October 2011

May they rest in peace!

On 19th November 2011
in the Philippines
two young women
from Papua New Guinea
will make their **First Profession**
as Marist Sisters.
We thank our God
and ask many blessings on
Cathy Sariman and
Celina Gavia.

Congratulations

...to our Jubilarians!

Sr Karin Christieson (60 years)
Sr Joan McBride (60 years)
Sr Mary Picone (60 years)
Sr Rose Shields (60 years)

Sr Gemma Wilson (50 years)

Sr Vilomena Ruru (25 years)
Sr Vika Rokowai (25 years)
Sr Judith Lythall (25 years)

Let's Pray!



Bev and Kate being welcomed by Rob McCormack, the Diocesan Director of Pastoral Formation, and the Parish Priest, Fr Michael O'Brien. The painting of the Balonne River is by a local artist.

Book Launch

"In a Hidden Manner"
- the Story of
the Marist Sisters in Aotearoa-
New Zealand
by **Sr Karin Christieson SM**,
was launched
on 13th February 2011

Copies are available from:
Marist Sisters,
26 Kitenui Ave,
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Regional Team Move House



Margaret, Vivienne and Julie
- outside their home...



...and inside...

Another recent move within our Region of Asia-Pacific has been the relocation of the Regional residence/office. Since the inception of our Congregation's structural change from Provinces to Regions and Sectors in 2006, the Regional Leader and her two Regional Councillors have lived in Auckland. In 2009 the Sisters of the Region were consulted about the location they considered most appropriate for the Regional House.

After due process, the decision was taken to establish the Regional House at 147 Hector Street, Sefton in south-west Sydney soon after 29th August 2011 - the beginning of the Regional Team's mandate. At the time of announcing this decision, Sister Julie Brand, our Regional Leader, wrote:

*I wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the Sisters of the **Sector of Aotearoa-New Zealand** for their wonderful support over these past six years. The Sector readily and generously made the house in Orakei available as a Regional residence/office from 2nd February 2006 and warmly welcomed the members of the Regional team, firstly under the leadership of Sr. Jane Frances and then during my first mandate as Regional Leader. We have experienced overwhelming kindness, helpfulness and loving care over this period of time, and it is with sincere gratitude, tinged with sadness, that we will leave New Zealand at the end of August. At the same time I wish to express our gratitude to the Sisters of the **Sector of Australia** who, in offering us the Sefton house, have likewise assured us of a warm welcome, assistance and support. We are indeed most blessed and give thanks to God for the generous and loving spirit so alive in our Region.*

So it was that on 10th September 2011 Julie and her two recently appointed councillors, Margaret Vaney and Vivienne Goldstein, took up residence in the new Regional House for Asia-Pacific to begin a three-year term of leadership.

May Mary
lead us
as we
go...

