



Marist Sisters: Region of Asia-Pacific

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Aotearoa-New Zealand-Australia-Fiji-The Philippines-Papua New Guinea

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As 2010 draws to a close we look back upon the events of the year with its sorrows and pain, blessings and joy. One particularly joyful occasion for Srs. Anne Rounds, Margaret Vaney and me was our presence in St. Peter's Square, Rome, on 17th October for the canonisation of St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Together with other members of our Marist Family and many thousands of pilgrims, we joined the Sisters



of St. Joseph in jubilant celebration as we gave thanks for the gift of our first Australian Saint. I know that we will continue to invoke her intercession for the needs of our world as this year closes and another begins. I thank each of you for your prayerful support throughout 2010 and ask God's abundant blessings upon you and your families. May Mary, who brought Jesus into the world, lead us in Her spirit that we may give 'flesh to the Word', bringing the love, hope and peace of Christ to all whose lives we touch.

In Mary's Name,
Sr. Julie Brand SM – Regional Leader

NEWS FROM AOTEAROA-NEW ZEALAND

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

This year our communities celebrated the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary (12th September) by inviting lay people we knew to come and learn about our charism and pray together. This was the result of a decision taken at our Assembly to find practical ways of sharing our charism. The group who offered to co-ordinate this project now includes two lay Marists. The Report from their meeting expressed their desire for Marist Sisters and lay Marists in partnership to embrace fully Mary's way of living the Gospel. They will continue with an action plan for 2011.

The canonisation of St. Mary MacKillop in October this year was for us an occasion of joyful celebration. There were inspirational Masses throughout the country and especially in those areas where Mary visited and where her Sisters established their earliest Schools. In the South Island these included Arrowtown and Balclutha, where the Church was renamed for her. In the North Island, Remuera, where Mary stayed during three of her visits, displayed School reports in Mary's handwriting. Mary went to Rotorua in 1902 for its thermal waters to relieve her rheumatism so there were a series of ceremonies there linked to her canonisation starting with a Mass at which the Rotorua pilgrims to Rome were blessed and farewelled. Later there was prayer at the grave of Sr. Anselm, the only Josephite Sister buried in Rotorua. Mary's relic was blessed and

installed at St. Michael's Church where she had worshipped. Whanganui, home to the Sisters of St Joseph of Nazareth since 1880, added its tribute to Mary.

MINISTRY

Sr. Makareta Gilbert began her ministry in Tawa, Wellington, two years ago after eleven years of ministry in Matata in the Bay of Plenty. She soon found her niche in the Parish of Te Ngakau Tapu,



which was named as a personal Parish for Maori by Cardinal Williams in 1999. The small Church, formerly known as Sacred Heart Church, is situated next to Bishop Viard College in Porirua, about ten minutes away from our community in Tawa and Makareta attends the Maori Miha there each Sunday. She assists with the liturgy, often teaching new hymns and playing her guitar. The small but vibrant group of parishioners has welcomed her enthusiastically. She also assists families preparing for their children's Baptisms. Monsignor Gerard Burns, Vicar General for the Wellington Archdiocese, is Chaplain to the Maori people and he gives great encouragement to

Makareta who often accompanies him to Waka Aroha and the Hui Aranga in various places. She has given workshops on Maori Spirituality to the Te Ngakau people and to staff at a Catholic Primary School in the Hutt area. Recently some parishioners from Paraparaumu attended a meeting in Tawa to arrange for her to give workshops in their Parish. She has also been asked to act as chaplain to the Wellington Ex-Students of St. Joseph's Maori Girls' College. It is always a joy for us to welcome friends from Te Ngakau Tapu to our community. Long may Makareta's ministry be blessed!

NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA

MARIST SISTERS' COLLEGE WOOLWICH – THE END OF AN ERA

As the 2010 School year comes to an end, so too does an era of Australian Marist history. Since February 1909 the College at Woolwich has been led by Marist Sisters and for the past 26 of those years by Sr. Fidelis McTeigue. With the retirement of Fidelis the principalship of the College passes into lay hands. Needless to say, the sense of loss is felt keenly by pupils, staff and parents. Yet, there is so much to celebrate! Marist Sisters' College Woolwich has gone from strength to strength over its centenary of life. Building on the work of the 16 principals that preceded her Fidelis has seen the College flourish. It has augmented yearly both its educational vitality and its Marist spirit. In countless ways Fidelis has ensured the constant provision of opportunities for the development of each student to her full potential. She has done this largely through the consistent development of her staff. All this has been achieved in a setting full of reminders of what it means to be Marist – in both human and artistic expression. Perhaps the most eloquent reminder is Fidelis herself – who focuses the spotlight always on others, particularly on the girls for whom she has spent herself over these years.

Clearly, Mary has been the model of leadership in the College and its mainstay. We pray She will continue to be so. We give thanks for Fidelis and our Sisters who according to their particular gifts and with the help of staff, parents and



students, have helped shape the life of the College over these one hundred years. With Mary they have “brought forth the College into the life of grace” (words of Sr. Marie Jotillon in reference to our Foundress, Jeanne-Marie Chavoin).

A CHURCH ALIVE!

I have often asked myself what an active Church in the present Australian climate would really look like. I believe I found a large part of the answer to this question in the Catholic Asian Students' Society (CASS), a group of young people where Gospel, Culture and Church come



together in a remarkably life-giving way. In the early 60's Fr. Chang OFM had formed a University youth group called CASS but this was subsequently dissolved in the 70's. Sr Teresa Chiu re-founded this group in a small but very effective way with a particular style and function. Teresa began working with the Chinese community in 1991 and from there she was able to track down a group of young boys and girls who were attending the University of New South Wales. The following year she invited them to a Retreat. This became the seed of the CASS we know today. In 1993 Teresa gathered overseas Catholic students from Asian countries from Sydney University; in 1994 she extended this to Macquarie University and finally UTS in 1995. The extent of the increased numbers in CASS has been remarkable. They grow, gather and celebrate in a spirit of Faith and Fun. Because of the nature of University life (3-4 years) CASS is a youthful body. As Fr. Chang said: This enduring youthfulness makes CASS a highly valued part of the greater Chinese community. We all benefit from the constant rejuvenation experienced by CASS. Indeed, I believe the whole wider Church community could benefit by emulating this group. As the Spiritual Director of the group, Teresa works with the students of the four Universities.

Each Uni has its CASS chaplain and its own committee which deals with functions for internal members. This involves weekly Bible-sharing sessions, which are seen as the educational and inspirational heart of CASS. These committees also organise inter-university fun functions, usually with some faith focus e.g. Angel Cup - a religious quiz; the Pray and Play meeting, which is a welcoming function usually held in the Marist Sisters' College Chapel. There is also a Central Committee, which organises the annual Mass, annual Retreat and annual Dinner. "Gospel", "Culture" and "Church" are three separate pockets in so many young people's lives. For CASS, all activities add up to enhance their motto: "Reach out, Serve and Unite in Christ". May God continue to bless this great part of the Church. (Sr. Fidelis McTeigue)

NEWS FROM FIJI

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

It was with great sadness that we gathered in Nadi on 28th July for the Requiem Mass of Sr. Nolasco Storck, who died peacefully on 23rd July, aged 95. May she rest in peace. On a very joyful note, we were happy to celebrate the Renewal of Vows of Sr. Florence Sariman, from Papua New Guinea, which took place in Lami on 8th September.

MINISTRY

Sr. Salome writes: "For some years I have been Lecturer in the Diocesan Catechetical Centre in Fiji. This is a great work where I journey with lay people young and old, male and female, preparing them to be Ministers of God's Word in their Parishes. I work as part of a team with a Diocesan Priest as Director. I also work as part of the team in my local Parish. This work includes Sacramental preparation, planning workshops for the youth, organizing prayer sessions for different groups and visiting the sick. I enjoy being involved in the way of life of the people, accompanying them in their joys and their sorrows and just being the presence of Mary in their midst." Sr. Mariana Maramanicava shares: "Working and teaching in Nadelei over recent years has been very challenging. Resources are scarce and parents find it difficult on a financial level to send their children to School. The main income is from the sale of root crops and working in the sugar cane fields during the harvesting season. The School has a role of 132 students with eight teachers. Some of the students walk one hour through fields of sugar cane to get to School while others come on horseback. Apart from working in the local school our community has been involved in family visitation, youth work,

Marian prayer group, fundraising activities and the preparation of liturgies. Due to the shortage of Priests and the fact that we are in a remote area the Priest comes to celebrate the Eucharist twice a month."



Sr. Mareta Nai Raikivi tells us: "I have been ministering as Head Teacher in Lami Convent School. It is a small Primary School with 380 children. This is a very demanding role but I have been well supported, especially by the staff, the children and their parents. The families live in settlements and they work very hard to earn enough for their day-to-day needs. Fortunately, last year the Government offered free travel by bus. This means that more children come daily to School and come early in the morning. The Government also donated text books to all the children which enables them to improve their level of literacy. Apart from Government Aid the Parent / Teacher Association plays a big role in fundraising which helps to maintain the buildings and provide necessary sanitary conditions."

NEWS FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA

MINISTRY

September was a month of celebrations for us. On 16th September we celebrated the 35th Anniversary of Independence of Papua New Guinea. Starting with a colourful Eucharistic celebration, followed by entertainment and lunch shared with the surrounding communities of the Wama Station. Our own Parish Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, falling on the 27th, was celebrated in the 3 separate Zones of the Parish. In Vanuamai the Nara people gathered for the first time in many years and celebrated the Feast over a couple of days with 21 Baptisms at the Eucharistic celebration. At the end of the month Sr. Lavinia Henry prepared herself to go to Hisui with about 20 Youth Leaders of the Parish for a Youth Leadership workshop given by the Diocesan Youth Team. Lavinia was on the PMV (Public Moving Vehicle) again on the 17th October with

55 youth of the Parish for a Youth Congress in Veifa, about 2 ½ hours from Wama. The community was very happy to have 15 FODE (Flexible and Open Distance Education) students sit for subject exams in the latter part of the year. Of the 50 or so students who enrolled in courses over the year, 25 students were consistent with their studies. Considering distance, conditions and the self-discipline needed for such study we were very happy with this number.



CELEBRATION

On 7th December Sr. Kate McPhee celebrated 25 years of Marist profession. She was in Sydney on this day and marked the special occasion with Eucharist in the Woolwich Chapel followed by Afternoon Tea.

NEWS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

It was with great joy that we celebrated the Renewal of Vows of Srs. Arlene Bello and Edna Gado on 8th September.

Another event of special note was the extension of the small Centre for the Badjao children's project.



There is now a much bigger space that is pleasant for the children. The community of the Badjaos and Muslims living in the area asked to use the space for the celebration of their weddings one weekend. Sr. Monica Lum and Virgie, with whom she ministers, welcomed them as they have no

other space in the vicinity to hold their functions. Most of the houses are very small and are built over the water, as is the Centre itself. On that particular weekend there were Badjaos, Muslims and Christians celebrating together! We felt very much a part of their community. They were happy to have us among them and there were good inter-relationships between the groups. Here we could see the Holy Spirit at work, creating communion in a community of different cultures, religions and languages, and Mary in their midst supporting.

NETWORKING

Since we began our foundation in the Philippines in 1998, networking with other groups has been a special characteristic of our approach to mission and it has proved to be a very effective way of being Mary's presence in the Church, and in society in this locality. In our ministries we mostly network with others for the welfare of people and transformation of the situation where needed. The Philippines has a huge population and there are many issues that affect the lives of people. We need to network and be in solidarity



with other groups to be effective. We have joined the Sisters Association in Mindanao (SAMIN). These are religious who take their prophetic role seriously and journey along side people who need their voices heard, their rights respected and needs attended. We have joined others in working for the welfare and rights of children, and we strive to unite with justice and human rights groups and participate in various forums. We are also part of Silasilah, which works closely with the Bishop-Ulama Conference for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue in pursuit of true peace. We believe that the following lines from our Mission Statement, *"to work discreetly and effectively with the People of God in renewing the Church; to collaborate with all who seek to transform society, so that the reign of God may prevail in a world where each person is valued and creation respected"* can be concretized through networking.