

Marist Laity Australia



Leader's Reflection

A few days before my Dad died last year, I saw him looking intently around the room, his eyes darting from one spot to the next. I asked him, 'What do you see Dad?'

To my surprise, he replied, 'The Queen of Peace'.

I made some reference to Mary, and he corrected me saying, 'The Queen of Peace has just won the third race at Flemington...'

To my greater surprise, the Queen of Peace to which Dad referred was indeed a racehorse...



After Dad's burial as we were leaving the cemetery, my eldest daughter noticed a little chapel across from Dad's resting place. This time, I wasn't surprised to learn that the chapel was named, Our Lady Queen of Peace.

As I reflect on Dad's final days and think about his journey from this life to the next, I know that he's now enjoying a glorious existence where, you might say, he's making every post a winner!

In this Easter Season, may we deeply embrace the mystery that IS the Paschal Mystery, with courage, humility, honesty and hope. May we hold BOTH the echoes of death AND new life in our hearts and spirits, in whatever way they manifest in our lives.

Cathy Larkin

Visiting the homeless on a Street Retreat



For the past year I have been helping Mercy College to lead Street Retreat's visiting homeless people every 3 to 4 weeks. Spending an entire day walking the Streets of Sydney is a powerful way of forming young people. Often today we are caught up in our own worlds. We often talk about caring for the poor, but do we, do it? Do we know people who live on the margins? Do we seek the excluded out?

Listening to each homeless person's story enables us to go beyond what we see on the surface. Often homeless people are judged as "the problem" where the finger is often pointed at the homeless people themselves. It is not until we actively listen and see the world behind the person that we begin to see the deeper realities of who they are. We see the person. In 2023 instead of just walking

up and talking to someone sitting on the ground, we have been walking up, and then, sitting on the ground next to the homeless person. When we are on the same level as the homeless person everything changes. The conversation flows so much more. Back in March while sitting on the ground in Pitt Street Mall Sydney listening to a homeless person with 12 girls in a semi-circle, many businesspeople walked past quickly. Some turning with shocked faces responding by what we were doing. Then suddenly one day a random lady came up to me crying. A mother of a child who sent her son to a Catholic school. Quietly speaking to me "thank you so much for doing what you are doing with these girls. Spending an entire day visiting homeless people". Instead of busily spending the day at work, or doing a thousand things at school, here we were prioritising being with homeless people.

Coming away from this day students are quiet moved and changed by the experience. This is a heart-meeting-heart encounter. Girls come away feeling a call to respond more fully and often with a need to go out again to actively listen to the story of the homeless person.

Andrew Dumas

One Solitary Life

James Allan Francis
(1864–1928)

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman.



He grew up in another obscure village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book.

He never held an office.

He never owned a home.

He never had a family.

He never went to college.

He never put his foot inside a big city.

He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where He was born.

He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness.

He had no credentials but Himself.

He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of His divine manhood.

While still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against Him.

His friends ran away.

One of them denied Him.

He was turned over to His enemies.

He went through the mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying—and that was his coat.

When he was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centrepiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that

ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life.

God has blessed us and continues to bless us!

Jen Bolster from the Hunters Hill Marist group

An Active Participant

One day many years ago I was asked by one of my lecturers: "Were you an observer or a participant at the Good Friday liturgy?" A quick response came: "A participant."

Without a doubt for many more years I have been one of the latter. As many of my Sisters know, not for a singing voice, but definitely in the "conversation" of mass - "The Lord be with you." "And with your spirit."

Over recent years in my congregational role I have been to New Caledonia a number of times.



Regularly attending mass there, through the priest's actions I know the part of mass where I am. Nevertheless in my heart and spirit I want to be an active participant. So with the aid of a little French mass book I find my place in, and participate with, the local worshipping community in the celebration of Eucharist.

May this Easter Season be filled with many blessings as each of us journey with Jesus Christ and those who shared and continue to share his life then and now. Amen.

Sister Vicki Wilson SMSM

Star of the Sea Province

The Star of the Sea Province is made up of 11 nations across Australia, Asia, Melanesia & the Pacific.



The Marists of Champagnat Star of the Sea Province came into existence on 8 December 2022.

It was formed by the reconfiguration of three previous Administrative Units: The District of the Pacific, the District of Melanesia and the Province of Australia. It is now the newest of the 25 Provinces or Districts that comprise the Marist Brothers. To distinguish this particular Institute from other branches of the Marist Family, such as the Marist Fathers, the Marist Sisters or the Marist Missionary Sisters, the Brothers use the nomenclature, Champagnat Marists or Marists of Champagnat.

<https://www.mariststar.org/our-province>

From Br Peter Carroll FMS and Br John Hazelman FMS

Our new name is rich in symbolism, significance and relevance. First and foremost, it is a well-loved title for Mary, our patron and mother. As Fr Champagnat taught us, we look to her for direction and support; we expect direction and support from her. This particular title has its origins in the Fifth Century when St Jerome translated her name in Hebrew – Miryam, meaning drop in the sea - into the Latin, Stilla Maris, which later became, by accident or design, Stella Maris. As a star, Mary guides us just as the star led the Magi to the Christ child. The evolution of the title is most

fitting: a drop in the ocean becoming the guide for the entire sea; an unknown girl through faith and generosity becoming the Mother of God. The title suggests God's exaltation of humility – one of Fr Champagnat's favoured virtues.

The sea features prominently in the expansive area covered by the new Province. In fact, there's probably more water than land, and most of its countries are islands or parts of Islands. Those who live close by the sea know how treacherous the waters can be. The weather conditions can change rapidly spelling real danger. To the sailors in ages past, the stars meant survival. Before technology, they needed the stars to point them in the right direction. In a very real way, the stars represented their salvation. They showed the path to safety. "Mary, as Star of the Sea, directs us to safety, to salvation, to life beyond mere survival. Her hands point to peace. Her hands, with their memory of holding the Christ Child and then preparing for His burial, lead us home. Her hands, like the stars for the sailors, guide us to the safe harbor of her Son". Mary helps us navigate the sometimes turbulent waters of this world and our own conflicted desires. Mary, Star of the Sea, is a promise that we'll never be lost, that the storms of life will never spell disaster. We can place ourselves in her hands – strong, worn, tender – and know that we are safe.

We finish with a twelfth century prayer from St Bernard of Clairvaux:

*If the winds of a tempest arise, look to the star, call on Mary;
If you are driven upon the rocks of tribulation look to the star, call on Mary;*

*If you are tossed upon the waves of pride, ambition, envy, look to the star, call on Mary.
If anger, avarice or worldly desire violently assail the frail vessel of your soul, look to the star, call on Mary.*

Let us entrust ourselves and our future to Mary, that she may always be our Star: luminous and enlightening, guiding us to her son Jesus.



Easter Reflection

What Easter is Really About?

"The true division of humanity," Victor Hugo wrote in *Les Miserables*, "is between those who live in light and those who live in darkness." Victor Hugo, it seems, understood Easter.

We love to think of Easter as the feast of dazzling light. We get up on Easter Sunday morning knowing that the sorrow of Good Friday is finally ended, that the pain of the cross has been compensated for by a burst of brilliant victory from the gates of the grave, that Jesus is vindicated, that the faith of the disciples is confirmed for all to see, and that everyone lived happily ever after. We love fairy tales. Unfortunately, Easter is not one of them.

On the contrary, Easter is raw reality. Easter stands in stark witness, not to the meaning of death, but to the meaning of what it is to go on despite death, in the face of death—

because of death. To celebrate Easter means to stand in the light of the empty tomb and decide what to do next. Until we come to realize that, we stand to misread the meaning not simply of the Easter gospel but of our own lives. We miss the point. We make Easter an historical event rather than a life-changing commitment. We fail to realize that Easter demands as much of us now as it did of the apostles then.

Most of all we miss the very meaning of the Easter that we are dealing with in our own lives, in our own time.

Easter is the feast that gives meaning to life. It is the feast that never ends. After Easter, the tomb stands open for all of us to enter. If Jesus is risen, then you and I have no choice but to go into the tomb, put on the leftover garments ourselves, and follow Jesus back to Galilee where the poor cry for food and the sick beg to be taken to the pool and the blind wait for the spittle on their eyes to dry. All the fidelity in the world will not substitute for leaving the tomb and beginning the journey all over again. Today. Every day. Always.

That's what Easter is really about. It is the "division of humanity" to which Hugo refers in

his dramatic rendering of the struggle between light and dark. Yes, Easter is about dazzling light—but only if it shines through us.

Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

Up Coming Events

- Sunday April 30 – 7 pm Sydney Time: MLA members will facilitate **prayer and reflection via zoom** to celebrate the Easter season, as well as mark the Feast of St Peter Chanel on April 28
- Friday, May 5: Sister Fidelis SM will be facilitating the **Liveable Spirit formation program** with staff from Marist Sisters Woolwich
- Check out the **Catalyst for Renewal website** for information regarding reflection opportunities, <https://catalystforrenewal.org.au/>
- For members of the **Marist Association of Marcellin Champagnat**, and/or for those wishing to find out more, check out their website, <http://www.maristassociation.org.au/>

He Has Risen 2023 Invitation

We would like to invite you to join us together with Marist Laity Australia on **Sunday April 30 at 7 pm (Sydney time)** to celebrate in person. We will pray, sing, reflect and discuss together. This online zoom forum enables us to enter conversation and dialogue with each other. To listen to the word of God, not just within ourselves but other Marists from across the world.

Click here to register. <http://www.maristlaityaustralia.com/2030/Events/1022.php>

Your invitation to join us.....
Prayer and Reflection
Via ZOOM

Christ is risen

Sunday April 30
9 pm Auckland time
7 pm Sydney time
5 pm Philippines time
10 am England time
8 am New York time

www.sinyuri.com/he-has-risen-2023
Marist Laity Australia

