

Marist Mission Newsletter

in the New Millennium

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Hope for the future

Marist commitment to the young finds expression in MMC support for numerous projects involving children and young adults. These are often ones ignored by others and which reach out to the alienated and marginalized.

Left: Stephen Beun and Mark Chharn represented YODIFEE [Youth with Disabilities Foundation for Education and Employment], Cambodia, in Marist parish mission appeals in Australia. **Below:** A growing number of Thai children are being orphaned by HIV/AIDS. MMC supports their life and growth.



Above left: These girls are cared for by the Redemptorist mission at Viengkhu, N.E. Thailand. MMC funds contribute towards hope for a healthy future for children afflicted or orphaned by HIV/AIDS. **Above right:** MMC's first task is to support the international missions of the Marist Fathers including the training of Marists-to-be, such as these novices of the Oceania province at Tutu, Taveuni Island, Fiji.

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COMING SOON

Up front

Recent mission appeals

Accompanied by Cambodian landmine victim, Stephen Beun, I visited five parishes in Marist care in recent months inviting support for the work of MMC.

The response was humbling with a total nudging \$50,000 as I write this column. There is such great generosity amongst God's people.

Regular appeals

An even deeper level of generosity is evident in the response to the five regular appeals we make yearly: the Big Bike Ride ['Cycling for Seminarians'] followed by our quarterly newsletters with their donation slip and return envelope.

This is the 'bread and butter' of MMC in our work of supporting the international missions of the Marist Fathers and a range of special projects presented in our newsletters.

End of a service

With mixed feelings I have decided to end a service which has grown over the years whereby MMC forwarded gifts to the favourite missionaries and projects of various good Catholic people in Australia.

Our first task of Marist mission support has become increasingly difficult under the growing burden of this other work.



Parishioners of Mater Dei church, Ashgrove, Qld, with Cambodians **Mark Chharn** (left) and **Stephen Beun** (right) during the recent mission appeal.

it will still be possible to direct donations to a selected number of Marist projects. Transfers are made quarterly.

SM Chapter and Asia-Pacific

In October the four-yearly Provincial Chapter of the Australian Marist Fathers looked closely at our position in the Asia-Pacific region.

MMC's focus received strong support. This Summer's 'TOH' ['The Other Half'] journey will involve young adults from PNG, Fiji and Vanuatu. They will join other youth from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand in our six-monthly AYDP ['Asia-Pacific Youth Development Program'].

In addition I am pleased to announce that Chinese-born Sr Teresa Chiu SM has joined MMC's Development Committee.

Christmas

Once again I will be spending Christmas in the jungle refugee camp of Maera Moo on the Thai-Burma border with 15 TOH-ers.

MMC office will be closed Dec 23—Jan 04 and our donor services supervisor, Roza Vukovich, will be part of the TOH-AYDP group Dec 16—Jan 09.

Roza and I will be working hard to send response letters and receipts to all Christmas donors. Early gifts will guarantee a response before the end of the year.

The path to Rome

With my provincial, Fr Bill Ryder, I have been called to Rome in early February to meet with our Marist superiors about international mission funding for the future.

I will travel on from Bangkok after the TOH-AYDP events. So my absence from the office will be extended this Summer.

May Jesus and Mary gift each of you with blessings of peace and confidence over the Christmas season and may our Father carry us gently through the weeks...




Christmas Gifts for Marist missionaries

MMC will again send a Christmas cash gift to Marist missionaries in the Pacific. With our focus on Asia-Pacific we are extending this to Marists in the Philippines and Myanmar [Burma]. The Thai Madonna [above] is a reminder of our place in the region.

Here's what some missionaries said last Christmas...

'Thank you for your generous gift at Christmas. I realize how much commitment and hard work it represents.'

'A great many thank you's and joyful appreciation for the surprising Christmas gift. May I assure our benefactors of my prayers for them.'

'Je vous adresse un grand merci! Veuillez remercier les bienfaiteurs. Chaque mois nous celebrons une messe a St Michel pour tous les amis et bienfaiteurs.' [To my French confreres: excuse the lack of accents, s'il vous plait! - RN] 

San Nissen SM



In 2000 the world community endorsed the United Nations Millennium Declaration — a commitment to create a fairer, safer world. From that Declaration emerged the **Millennium Development Goals** [MDGs].

These are a set of eight goals intended to halve global poverty by 2015. The MDGs are ambitious but they can be achieved if enough people take action right away.

As a member of the Australian Council for International Development [ACFID] MMC is proud to be part of the Fair Share campaign to promote Australia's proper part in addressing the needs of the poor.

What does Fair Share want?

Doing our fair share means that we:

- Increase overseas aid towards the internationally-agreed target of 0.7% of our national wealth



The Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development through fairer trade, debt relief and better aid.

Each of the MDGs has specific targets and indicators. See:
www.un.org/millenniumgoals

[Australia is currently at 0.26%]

- Focus our aid on basic rights [education, health, clean water and sanitation for the poor]
- Cancel the debts owed to us by poor countries who cannot adequately support their own people while having to repay the rich
- Work for fairer trade to help the poor trade their way out of poverty
- Actively participate in international



initiatives to increase global finances for aid and development

What can MMC supporters do?

- Get informed. Look at the Fair Share website:
www.acfid.asn.au/fairshare.htm
- Sign the on-line petition
- Write to or visit your MP. Letter writing guides and other information are available on the ACFID website





Bangladesh's Big Wet

Australia is removed from the disaster of nationwide floods. By contrast Bangladesh straddles the waterways of the Ganges delta prone to severe seasonal flooding.

MMC's links with two Dhaka-based organisations have enabled us to make quick responses with emergency relief to some of the thirty million people affected by torrential rains and widespread floods in recent months.

The Human Development Program's executive director, Robert Simon Gomes is also the founding father of the Don Bosco Students' Home.

They share common though modest premises in the Tejgaon district of Dhaka.

When the floods hit recently even the inner suburbs of the capital city were not spared.

HDP and Don Bosco were quick to contact us at MMC seeking funds for emergency assistance for the many local families forced from their homes and sheltering in Catholic parish centres in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods.

HDP's project management expertise was complemented by the energy and enthusiasm of the lads of Don Bosco.

There are continuing linkages between HDP, Don Bosco and



Top: The lads of Bon Bosco Students' Home, Dhaka, were amongst the first to volunteer for flood relief activities. Many of these young men have themselves experienced the trauma which seasonal rains so often produce in their nation. **Above:** This man stands in shoulder-deep water outside his home on the outskirts of Dhaka. Millions of people throughout Bangladesh were rendered homeless overnight in the disastrous downpours. **Left:** HDP workers at an emergency relief centre in Dhaka.



MMC with DB's new director, Amar Gomes, having participated in our Asia-Pacific Youth Development Program earlier this year.

During a project visit in August MMC's Fr Ron Nissen inspected several sites for a future DB Students' Home. A significant bequest or donation would enable MMC to free the lads from cramped conditions and poor study facilities of their present Tejgaon rented residence.



Right: Purchasing a section of this new building may solve Don Bosco's housing and study problems. **Below:** Don Bosco student, **John Paul D'Rozario**, participates in an MMC-conducted management seminar for the staff of the Human Development program. DB's present director, **Amar Gomes**, [front right] was a participant in MMC's first AYDP seminar in



Above: Robert Simon Gomes, director of HDP and founder of Don Bosco Students' Home with MMC's Fr Ron Nissen. **Below left:** Some lads of Don Bosco after their emergency work.



Masses offered by Fr Ron in recent months for deceased Marists and MMC benefactors:

Molly Biddle, Marie Bottom, Mollie Comerford, Hugh Fardy, Noela Griffin, Kevin Jenkins, Robin Kelsey, Margaret Mary Kennedy, John Lynch, Rex Mann, Catherine McGee, Ennis Mockler, Catherine Morrison, Jack Nevin, Mary Owen, Rose Page, Jack Partridge, Mary Rowan, Fr Dick Strauss CSSR, Rita Sweeney, Edward Taylor, John Turley, Patricia Wynne.

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Tutu

The support of young Marists in the Pacific is an MMC priority. At Tutu, Taveuni Island, Fiji, the Marist novitiate and Formation Community are sources of hope for the missions of Oceania.

This page shows glimpses of life at Tutu...



Above: Tutu boasts 'this is where time begins' sitting as it does on the international dateline and with breath-taking vistas of the South-West Pacific. **Right and below:** A good Marist novice is well-domesticated, healthy and happy as these photos show thanks to a well-balanced formation program.



Above: Tutu's simple buildings are used by two groups: the novitiate community and Marist Formation Centre. Tutu welcomes others discerning their future. **Right:** Australian SM Brothers, **Peter Somers** and **Andrew Ayliffe**, are valued community members — and formidable 'Scrabble' contestants.



Your donor dollar

Marist Mission Centre Australia continues to support the international missions of the Marist Fathers and selected projects in developing countries of the Asia-Pacific.



Clockwise from above: 1. Laloki parish church near Port Moresby, PNG, will soon have a new floor with MMC help. 2. Seminarians of Marist College, Suva, are supported by MMC. 3. Bangladeshi Sr Ruma SMSM during a missioning ceremony in Dhaka city. 4. Despite spina bifida **Sam Hodge**, Milton, Qld, will enjoy MMC's sponsorship for 'The Other Half' journey this Summer. 5. At Bomana, PNG, deacons, **Sam Young SM** [Fiji] and **Robert Taria SM** [Bougainville] will soon be ordained to the Marist priesthood.



The faces of MMC

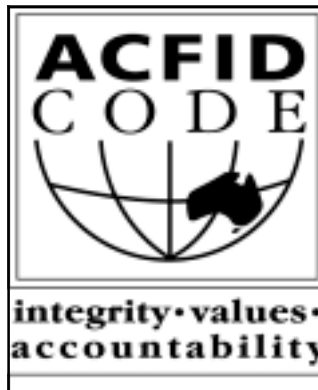
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Clockwise from left: 1 Provincial Chapter members join MMC staff at morning tea. 2 **Br Terry Heinrich FMS** from Lavalla School, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, with **Stephen Beun**. 3 MMC supporter, **Sr Mary Edward RSM**, with Fr Ron Nissen. 4 MMC Development Committee members with Marist Assistant-General, **Fr Hubert Bonnet-**



Above, left to right: 1. **Fr Allan Jones SM** visiting from New Zealand. 2. Marist International Care volunteer, **Martin Morris**, will teach during 2005 on the Thai-Burma border. Martin currently teaches at Marist Sisters' college, Woolwich, NSW. 3. Two more M.I.C. volunteers: **Jeanette Walsh**, who will work with HIV/AIDS children at Sarnelli House, Thailand, next year with MMC's **Roza Vukovich** who spent 2002 at this mission. Jeanette's expertise and experience with infant care will build on the work of **Kate Introna** who returned last year from Sarnelli House.



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