“Giving Hope”

MMC is a Marist outreach addressing the roots of injustice and poverty in Asia/Pacific by raising awareness and resources within Australia shared through Marist networks alleviating poverty in projects serving youth, children and women facing social, physical and mental challenges. MMC also supports the training of Marists for Mission.

An invitation: Make a difference through the Marist Family Network:


to Poverty Alleviation, Spiritual and Social Development

Australian Marist Fathers Mission Centre
Marist Fathers International Mission Fund
Australian Marist Centre Overseas Aid Fund

MARIST MISSION NEWSLETTER - Winter, June 2010, Vol.61 No.2

Protecting the rights of Children & the lay face of modern Marist Mission

Election years generate levels of ‘grandstanding’ that contrast vividly with the self-effacing inspirational folk who quietly sustain the hope of children hurt by injustice, poverty, conflict and personal tragedies. You rarely see these humble folk in the headlines. However, it’s my joy often to meet them in the forgotten hotspots of suffering served by our Marist networks.

There is change in the air. Traditionally, Religious were the front-line troops in Mission supported by a few heroic laity. Today, traditional roles are reversing. Laity are increasingly the new face of Mission presence on the front lines involved in ways appropriate to their skills and availability. Their growing tribe, with specialized skills and generous service, takes on the legacy of a former generation of dedicated Religious in a way that continues to transform the lives of the marginalized children in remote lands especially through education.

Recently, I caught up with one such couple pioneering this new presence in Mission. I first met Andrew and Nuala in Thailand, a land of deceptive calm as recent events have shown. They were working with Marists and lay Marists in Ranong, a city bordering the lower tip of Burma and home to 70,000 Burmese migrant laborers who are needed but not wanted by the Thai bosses. Sadly, some migrants are

Andrew, an engineer and Nuala, a barrister, newly-married, offered their skillful enthusiasm to the Marist Mission team who four years previously had opted to work with victimized Burmese in Ranong, after they themselves were forced from Burma. From the beginning, Marist Ranong has been sustained by young lay missionaries working together with just two Marist priests.

En route to Europe, we volunteered for six months in Marist Mission Ranong. We focused on creative education for exploited children of migrant workers. Our daily challenge was how to make a difference before these children were robbed of their childhood and pushed prematurely into the work force aged 10-12 years.

In our hearts, we knew six months would not be enough.

Insurance, their story did not end there. Andrew and Nuala cut short their European venture and returned to Sydney mid-May to earn enough to help support themselves for a new two-year commitment to the impoverished migrant Children in Ranong. This new chapter of their lives begins this September 2010.

Andrew and Nuala are typical of the new faces of Marist mission: young, dedicated, generous, qualified to make a difference where there is no room for grandstanding. Can we financially help this inspirational young couple continue with their Marists their work among Children in this sad corner of Thailand? They are there on our behalf so that our generosity might then share in their generosity. Donations are fully tax-deductible.

God bless & sincere thanks for your ongoing support, Fr Kevin Stewart SM
CHILD ABUSE - CHILDREN IN TROUBLE ... sadly

- Around 11 million children die each year from largely preventable diseases caused by lack of clean water and inadequate health care.
- More than 110 million primary school age children worldwide are not enrolled in school.
- Most of these children are girls. Many are refugees.
- An estimated 250 million children aged from five to 14 around the world are forced to work.
- Close to 2 million children have been killed in armed conflicts in the past decade.

The Good News Corner

Fr Paul Glynn SM, received an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Southern Cross University to recognize his literary efforts promoting reconciliation healing between Australia and Japan.

Fr Paul follows in the steps of Fr Lionel Marsden SM, whose reconciliation work in Japan was born from traumatic experiences in Changi and on the Thai-Burma railway.

Fr Paul’s books tell stories of every day, heroic people dedicated to peace and reconciliation in the aftermath of the war. *Song for Nagasaki, Like a Samurai* and *The Smile of a Ragpicker*, published by Paul, has resulted in a million dollars being given to programs of spiritual and social development for the poor of Asia.

 MMC’S RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN

MMC sponsors people like Andrew and Nuala in projects involving disadvantaged children. All projects in small practical ways implement the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Partners also commit to a Code of Ethical Conduct governing their own child-based projects. Oversight visits are made to ensure compliance and children are safe.

**The Declaration of Children’s rights & The Marist Mission Response**

* A family, a name and a nationality
  MMC programs in 3 Refugee Camps in Thai-Burma Border
* Grow up with love, affection and security
  MMC support in Children’s Centres, Mindanao, Senegal, Burma
* Enough food to eat, a decent place to live and play
  All MMC supported programs involving Children
* Be looked after when they are sick
  MMC grants for medical resources and maternal care in India, Africa, Bangladesh, Philippines, Thailand.
* Speak their mother-tongue and practise their religion
  MMC grants in Bangladesh, Thailand, Philippines, Oceania, Peru
* Not be made to work before a certain age
  MMC sponsorship in Burma, Venezuela, Africa, Thailand
* Go to school - speak, read, write, count, worship, play, culture
  MMC support in Thailand, Bangladesh Philippines, Cambodia, Solomon Is., South America, Africa, Oceania, China
* Disabled Children have a right to receive help so that they can live with others while becoming as independent as possible
  MMC support in Solomons, Cook Is., Cambodia, China, Bangladesh
* Protection from neglect, abuse and exploitation
  MMC support in Burma, Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh
* Protection against discrimination, war and all forms of violence
  Thai Burma Refugees, Mindanao, China, Africa, Oceania, Australia
* Protection of Children’s interests in all decisions concerning them
  Community and Child-involvement in MMC sponsored programs
* A child-friendly justice system / participation in decision-making
  MMC support for Marist Programs Davao, Mindanao, Philippines

**Reverse Reconciliation Mission - Japanese Community**

MMC was founded to sustain Marist Missions in postwar Japan. Today, 61 years later, *Sydney Japanese Catholics* are helping sustain and alleviate poverty in MMC Child protection projects in Thailand and Myanmar. *Congratulations!*

See [http://maristmissions.blogspot.com](http://maristmissions.blogspot.com)

**Japanese BBQ - dining for a cause!**

Available through MMC

Price: $10 + postage ($2.45)

Make Cheques payable to “Marist Mission Centre”.

ANDREW & NUALA

Why return?

A project we worked on last time was the development of a three-year curriculum covering 8 basic subjects which we hope will allow greater continuity of learning for the students. We hope that the project will allow them to learn how to learn, to question, to explore and to develop themselves into the leaders of tomorrow. That’s a big task and why we need to return...!

.... BURMESE CHILDREN ARE IMPORTANT
NALA: (teaching at the Marist Training Program)
This runs like a secondary school but officially its not a “school” due to local politics and difficulties of getting right documentation for anything that caters for migrant kids. These kids have already overcome the hurdle of parents expecting them to work come age 12 or 13.

These are the lucky kids. Their love of school and their hunger for learning is humbling especially when I think of teenagers back home who moan about school. I’m teaching them English. I had to call on all my dormant acting skills to mime just about every new piece of vocab. They found this hilarious—lots of laughter which is great.

What I really struggled with, however, was the realization that none of my students had ever learnt how to think - in fact, the Burmese education system as controlled by the military junta, thinking is positively discouraged. To my students, there was only ever one right answer to a given question, and that was the answer the teacher wants to hear. Gentle prompting to have a ‘guess’ provoked expressions of absolute fear in the hapless student…

So even more than teaching the basics of English, my goal was to encourage students to think critically about their world and to try to express their own opinions freely...

ANDREW: (Teaching at several Burmese Learning Centres) While the kids are a really mixed bag in terms of ability, their attitude is, amazingly, composed, cheerful and respectful. While you can often leave wondering whether there’s any point in trying to teach anyone in that environment, (too small, too hot, too noisy with sixty other kids all crammed into the same room) however, on some days you get a glimpse into the indomitable human spirit that, often through strength and courage but sometimes through simple innocence, just refuses to let oppression win.

"With real compassion and caring, we all can create Hope" - Nelson Mandela, Opening Ceremony, 2010 Soccer World Cup
THANKS

Today I am sending our 2010 Anondo Neer Project Proposal for the intellectually disabled. We have had to face major problems here in the past two months, problems that made the future of this important project unsure.

However, thanks be to God, we are now over the worst and the project is again running well. In fact, having ‘hit the bottom’ the only way was up and that’s what we feel is happening.

We are now confident that things are going to get better. Know that you are in our prayer… I find it reassuring, in the midst of so much seeming disaster, to know that good always finally wins out over evil.

- Sister Julienne SMSM, Dhaka, Bangladesh

This was the worst cyclone that Fiji has ever experienced. We have only heard of one woman losing her life which was sad – the people here are experienced in what to do in these situations.

We are alive, knocked around, but smiling, praying, and getting on with restoring our lives. The planes are flying, the ships are operating, the power is on, the water is on: and we have plenty of space for visitors: so if you’d like to come and stay for a while then you are most welcome. Just bring a chainsaw and some building materials…! Blessings,

- Fr Ben McKenna, SM

Photos above of the Marist Novices in Fiji ready for action. They seem to be waiting for Fr Ben who hails from Tasmania to join them. MMC donors gave them the two chainsaws above. Fr Kevin wisely declined the invitation to join in the action!

MMC NEWSLETTERS
JUST A ‘CLICK’ AWAY... try it!

MMC Newsletters are available via email or on-line. Go to the MMC website: www.maristmissions.com, click on the ‘Sign-Up’ link at the bottom of the home page and register your name/email address. (Your email address appears only on your copy).

You can also forward an E-copy to family/friends. The Newsletter is on-line: www.maristmissions.com

If you wish to receive BOTH E-copy and a hard copy email us and you will also remain on our mailing list.

E-Newsletters reduce costs (printing/postage).

END OF FINANCIAL YEAR

Donations to the Australian Marist Centre Overseas Aid Fund (AMCOA) are FULLY TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

All 100 cents of your AMCOA dollar goes to those in need, giving them hope

MMC ONLINE DONATIONS

The online donation facility on our website has been upgraded and represents best practice in security and privacy of online donations.

For further information: email donations@maristmissions.com or go direct to www.maristmissions.com for online donations.

BEQUESTS

A GREAT WAY TO CONTINUE YOUR SOCIAL CONCERN FROM HEAVEN

Bequests are an important way of continuing your legacy of social concern. Some prefer to designate a percentage eg., 1%, 2%, 5% etc or a fixed amount.

Should you wish to make a bequest in a new will or simply add a codicil to your existing will, the wording is:

“The Director for the time-being of the Marist Mission Centre, a special work of the Trustees of the Marist Fathers for the Province of Australia, 3 Mary Street, Hunters Hill, NSW 2110”

The victory in Jesus of Life over Death.

“I have come that you may have life”.

Thank you for the MASS OFFERINGS for your loved ones. They support our Missionary and Retired Priests who daily celebrate Mass for your special intentions and those of all our Marist Mission Benefactors.

MMC is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct. The Code represents the active commitment of Overseas Aid agencies to conduct their activities with integrity, transparency and accountability. ACFID issues a certificate of compliance annually when Code standards and conditions are fulfilled.
With real compassion and caring
We all can create Hope.

- Jesus,
  Gospel of Matthew 25:35
  2000 years ago