

Media Release

National gathering of Marists

Over 180 Marists from across Australia met in Adelaide from October 2nd – 4th for the National Assembly of the Marist Association, with every State and Territory represented. Young people in their 20's, retirees, working men and women, married couples with infants and Marist Brothers came together as one, making their own arrangements for travel and accommodation to be in attendance.

Joe McCarthy, the Director of Belonging and Development for the Marist Association and Chair of the Steering Committee remarked, “when we began plans for this Assembly 18 months ago, we thought that 100 people might attend, but as time progressed, more and more people registered. We ended up changing the initial plans for where to gather and move it into the gymnasium next door!”

The venue for the Assembly was the beautiful grounds of Sacred Heart College in Somerton Park, the site of the Marist school since 1914, following the establishment of a school by the Marist Brothers on another site in 1897. Steve Byrne, current Principal of Sacred Heart College said, “it is fantastic to host an event such as this which is big picture, and essentially about the wider Marist family imagining itself into the future.”

The Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat is a new way that Marist community is being experienced and deepened between people who identify strongly with the spirituality and mission that is *Marist*. Joe McCarthy describes it as “one way in the greater scheme of things that people are at home as church...belonging to a charism and spiritual family that has a rich tradition, which is now expressing a new ecclesiology and morphing into a contemporary expression of communion.”

Currently there are over 850 people across Australia who have joined the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat, including over 100 Marist Brothers. Pending endorsement of the formal petition presently being considered in Rome (submitted by the General Council of the Marist Brothers), it will play a role in the life of the catholic church as a Public Association of Christ's Faithful.

The governing Council of the Marist Association, that is formed largely from the membership, holds the ultimate governance responsibilities for the core Marist ministries in Australia, including education, solidarity, and youth ministry. The Council is also responsible for fostering the ‘spiritual family’ dimension within and between members of the Association.

The National Assembly was an opportunity to come together to dream, plan, pray, engage in critical conversations and connect more deeply. The facilitators, from the Kinharvie Institute in Scotland, led a rich process that was framed around the method of appreciative inquiry and the power of story. Br Peter Carroll, the Leader of the Marist Association said that the assembly was “a great sign of hope, a true reflection of co-responsibility for Marist life and mission into the future, and wonderfully joyous occasion that saw old friendships rekindled and new ones made.”