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HUMAN DIGNITY – AN AUSSIE VALUE?

MARIAN LECTURE 2022

Fr Frank Brennan SJ

Online Lecture

Marist Association of Saint Marcellin Champagnat

On the evening of Tuesday 10 May, over 600 people gathered together online and in small groups for the Marist Association of Saint Marcellin Champagnat’s annual Marian Lecture titled *Human Dignity – An Aussie Value?* Led by prominent Australian and Jesuit priest, lawyer, and academic, Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO, the lecture attracted Catholics from dioceses throughout Australia and overseas, including participants from Sri Lanka, Japan, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and New Zealand.

Fr Frank is a highly respected public voice in Australia, particularly on ethical and social issues. He is the current Rector of Newman College at the University of Melbourne and the former CEO of Australian Catholic Social Services. Frank reflected on the challenges surrounding the issue of human dignity as an Aussie value, especially for young people today given the realities of the war in the Ukraine, the pandemic, economic pressures and climate change.

He spoke of these as the big questions that confront young Australians:

“They are the first generation since the Second World War who don’t have the promise that life will be materially better for them than it was for their parents and their grandparents.”

He encouraged us as a Catholic faith community to look to Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si* to guide us to accept responsibility for the planet; to always have an eye for those on the margins; and to keep the common good above self-interest, whilst attending to our interior prayer life.

Fr Frank spoke in detail of the challenges of defending human dignity in relation to the issues of Temporary Protections Visas for refugees, and recognition of our First Nations People and their voice as represented in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*.

“If we are committed to human dignity as an Aussie value we have to be prepared to have the difficult discussions, and we have to be able to see things through the eyes of those who are most on the margins.”

Brother Peter Carroll FMS, Leader of the Marist Association of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, Provincial of the Marist Brothers, and President of Catholic Religious Australia, thanked Fr Frank for his passion, public advocacy for justice and reconciliation and voice for those on the margins. He said:

“There is nothing more important for us than witnessing to Jesus in our Marian way of affording dignity to every single human being we encounter.”

ENDS

Further information:

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Photos: Some of the Local Marist gatherings for the 2022 Marian Lecture with Fr. Frank Brennan



Fr Frank Brennan SJ



Br Peter Carroll FMS



Marists gathering in Bunbury, Western Australia



Marists gathering in Parkes, NSW



Marists gathering in Kilmore, Victoria



Marists gathering in Shepparton, Victoria