# ANNUAL REPORT

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MARIST MISSION AND LIFE FORMATION

The Marist Formation Team provides for the service of animation, formation and support of those leaders and staff involved in the various Marist Schools and Ministries across Australia. The team works with ministry leaders, educators and others, to provide a variety of formation opportunities tailored to meet the specific needs of their local context and community.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Marist Mission and Life Formation (MLF) Team exists to support the Catholic Church's evangelising mission to make Jesus Christ known and loved and to ensure high quality faith formation for leaders and staff in Marist schools (Marist Schools Australia) and ministries across Australia.

Marist Schools Australia (MSA) is an Australia wide organisation comprising 56 schools. Other Marist ministries include:

- Australian Marist Solidarity
- Marist180
- Marist Youth Ministry
- Marist Tertiary Education

The MLF Team is aligned to the mission of the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat and also aims to work more broadly in partnership with all Catholic dioceses across the country in the formation of staff involved in school and other ministries. The MLF Team consists of 9 staff who report to the Director of Mission and Life Formation who is a member of the Marist Schools Australia Leadership Team (MSALT). MLF staff develop, present, evaluate and refine contemporary faith formation programs across the Marist network and in other settings as required. Staff are based in the 3 Marist Centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and present the majority of programs face-to-face at the local school level or at 'The Hermitage' Marist Spirituality Centre in Mittagong, NSW. In addition, a number of programs have been developed recently to cater specifically for an online audience.

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Tony Clarke Director – Mission and Life Formation



### Target Groups and Nature of Programs

Formation is a critical ingredient to both the development of staff and the subsequent level of impact of our ministries. The programs developed and run by the MLF Team and those they work in partnership with, are carefully targeted to specific groups. Certain programs, like the one built around the Annual Theme for example, are designed for all staff in Marist Ministries and are also easily adapted to wider audiences. Other programs are developed specifically for targeted groups, for example:

- Induction for new staff
- Leadership programs for
  - Middle Leaders
  - Emerging Leaders
  - School leadership teams
- Those pursuing post graduate study
- Council/Board members of Marist ministries
- Members of Marist ministries other than schools (e.g. Marist 180)
- Multiple Retreat programs for small groups and individuals
- Multiple bespoke programs developed for the specific needs of individual ministries

In order to cater for the above, the MLF Team continue to be agile and flexible in responding to the diverse needs of ministries. The diverse nature of the programs caters for a significant range of areas integral to the professional and personal learning and development of staff.

### Focus Areas

- Theology (T)
- Scripture (S)
- Catholic Tradition and Identity (C)
- Marist History and Spirituality (MHS)
- Marist Education and Pedagogy (MEP)
- Leadership (L)
- Spiritual dimension of the human person (SD)
- Prayer (P)
- Marist Identity (MI)

### **Formation Overview**



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### Major Programs and Initiatives

- 1. Known and Loved Dignity for all: National Staff Spirituality Program.
- 2. In the Marist Way (IMW): New Staff Formation program.
- **3. Footsteps 1 Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved:** *Staff Formation on Marist Education and Spirituality.*
- **4. Footsteps 2 Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved:** *Staff Formation on Marist Education and Spirituality.*
- **5. Marian Lecture:** Annual Lecture providing high quality theological and spiritual input, reflection and dialogue.
- **6. Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat National Assembly III:** *A third gathering of members of the Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat across 2 online meetings and one face to face experience under the theme "Known and Loved A New Humanity," to discern the spirituality, ministry and future direction of the Association.*
- **7. Marist Solidarity Retreat:** *A three-day program where participants encounter the living spirituality of the desert and witness the Marist ministry of solidarity in Central Australia.*
- 8. Holding the Space A Contemplative Conversation (Online Retreat): An online retreat across four weeks. Retreatants receive spiritual input every Friday by email for four weeks which consists of spiritual input including a variety of reflections, questions for journaling, prayer practices to explore, and meditations to help contextualise the content.
- **9. Faith Formators' Colloquium:** The Colloquium, for Directors of Mission, APREs, RECs, Youth Ministers, Solidarity Coordinators and Chaplains, explored the theme 'Known and Loved Dignity for All' and its implications for forming young people, creating spaces for their voice to be heard, and building inclusive communities where people are known and loved.
- **10. Marist Schools Australia Biennial Conference:** Marists from around the nation and beyond gathered together to experience innovative presentations and forums, prayer and liturgy, and thought-provoking events that explored new horizons and common dreams for the future.
- **11. Marist Educational Leadership:** Annual Post-Graduate Master's Level Course on Educational Leadership from a Marist Perspective.
- **12. Art of Reading and Praying Scripture:** Online Modules Focusing on Methodology to Interpret and Pray the Divine Word of God.
- **13. Middle Leaders Program:** A Program for Teachers who hold Positions of Middle-Leadership in Marist Schools.
- **14. Marist Methodology:** This course is provided to look at the art and science of education and considers this from a Catholic perspective, in the Marist tradition, reflecting a specific understanding of the human person.

# **Marist Tertiary Education**

Marist Tertiary Education (MTE) is a vital and growing part of the work of the Mission and Life Formation (MLF) Team, providing programs and resources in areas of educational leadership and spirituality. The programs and courses offered are academic in nature and utilise principles of adult learning.

A key aspect to this work is academic recognition (accreditation) of our courses with other Tertiary institutions and in exciting developments this year, the following arrangements will be in place commencing in 2023:

- A new and updated agreement with Australian Catholic University (ACU) for recognition into an expanded range of post graduate courses for the following 5 programs:
  - Marist Educational Leadership
  - Leadership From a Marian Perspective
  - Footsteps 1: Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved
  - Footsteps 2: Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved
- Marist Pilgrimage and Study Tour
  Our first formal agreement with The University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA) for recognition of the same 5 programs

- Our first formal agreement with Australian Institute of Theological Education (BBI) for recognition of the same 5 programs
- Continuation of recognition by University of South Australia (UniSA) of the Marist Methodology program as part of the Graduate Certificate in Religious Education in South Australia
- Ongoing arrangements with all dioceses across Australia for Work, Teach and Lead in Catholic Schools accreditation for Marist programs

Marist Tertiary Education has also been in talks with the Marist International Network for Higher Education into future collaboration with Marist Tertiary Institutions in other parts of the world.

With its focus clearly on Leadership and Spiritual Formation, the work of Marist Tertiary Education will continue to be a crucial and ongoing part of the work of the MLF into the future as we seek to expand and further develop accredited training and formation for current and future leaders in Marist schools and ministries.

### Known and Loved -Dignity for all

#### **Focus Areas**

S/T/C

### About

This national program explores the way Marist communities strive to be places where everyone, especially the least, lost, and invisible are 'known and loved;' places where each person's voice is heard and respected, where their dignity is recognised and honoured. We know that we are called to move beyond simply recognising human dignity, and to act accordingly.

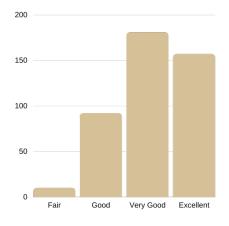
### **Program Aims**

- Grow in awareness of our own inherent dignity and that each of us is known and loved by God.
- Draw on contemporary expressions of society and culture to carefully listen to the voices of the unheard or invisible.
- Explore how all Christians are called to go out to encounter the stranger and share the Good News.
- Examine how to restore and uphold human dignity through our witness to Christ in words and actions.
- Discern ways to hear the diverse voices within our community.

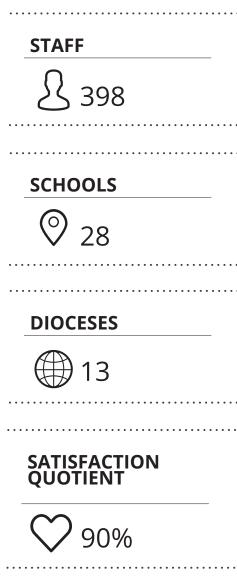
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How would you rate the effectiveness of this particular style of program? (440 responses)



I have learned that through ensuring the dignity of others in my interactions with them - students, staff, society's vulnerable - I have a wonderful opportunity to make Jesus known and loved. I have learned to be attentive to the experience of others so that I can better live the Gospel values.



### In The Marist Way

#### **Focus Areas**

#### MI, MHS, MEP

#### **Program Aims**

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- To introduce the story, spirituality and pedagogy of Marist education in the contemporary Catholic school.
- To explore Marist mission as a mission of the Church.
- To gain an insight into the charism of the founder, St Marcellin Champagnat.

#### About

The *In the Marist Way: New Staff Formation Program* introduces staff to the story, spirituality and pedagogy of Marist education in the contemporary Catholic school. It is an initial formation program designed for staff who are new to Marist schools. Participants will explore the Marist mission as a mission of the Church and gain an insight into the charism of the founder, St Marcellin Champagnat.

The key insights I gained from the In the Marist Way: New Staff Formation Program were mainly how the Marist characteristics apply to every part of what we do as educators in Marist schools as well as how extensive the Marist network is.

Did the program help develop your understanding of the Marist story and spirituality and its expression in the contemporary Catholic school? (21 responses)





### Footsteps 1

#### **Focus Areas**

### S/T/C/MHS

#### About

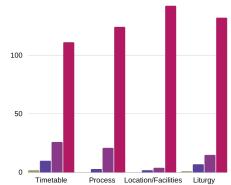
A three day residential program for staff who have been in Marist schools and ministries for two years or more. It provides a new way of understanding and living Marist life, whilst providing spaces for prayer and reflection. This experience provides an opportunity for participants to understand and embrace the Marist charism in their lives, as well as explore the various expressions of Marist life. Through experiences of quality input, shared dialogue and creative processes, this program provides a platform for all participants to enrich and deepen their own faith journey.

#### **Program Aims**

- To promote as a work of the Church the Marist way of making Jesus Christ known and loved.
- To enrich our appreciation of the story and charism of Marcellin Champagnat.
- To provide an opportunity for participants to explore the unfolding context of their lives and faith journeys and to discern how these realities enrich their lives, spirituality and ministry.
- To promote and encourage ongoing connection with Marist life and mission, personally and professionally.
- To identify and nurture a contemporary Marist way of forming and evangelising young people.







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I have to say I have never been to a retreat where I have walked away feeling so empowered and conscious. Every activity and session we did had been so full of value to me and my pedagogy.

### Footsteps 2

### Focus Areas

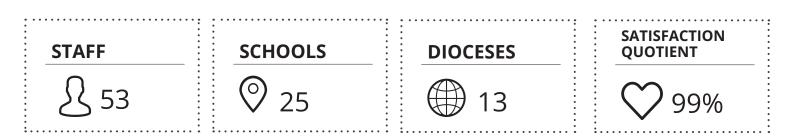
### S/T/C/MHS

#### About

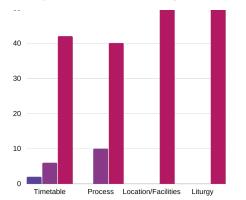
A three day residential program for staff in Marist schools and ministries and who have completed Footsteps 1. It provides a new way of understanding and living Marist life, whilst providing spaces for prayer and reflection. This experience provides an opportunity for participants to understand and embrace the Marist charism in their lives, as well as explore the various expressions of Marist life. Through experiences of quality input, shared dialogue and creative processes, this program provides a platform for all participants to enrich and deepen their own faith journey.

#### **Program Aims**

- To promote as a work of the Church the Marist way of making Jesus Christ known and loved
- To enrich our appreciation of the story and charism of Marcellin Champagnat.
- To provide an opportunity for participants to explore the unfolding context of their lives and faith journeys and to discern how these realities enrich their lives, spirituality and ministry.
- To promote and encourage ongoing connection with Marist life and mission, personally and professionally.
- To identify and nurture a contemporary Marist way of forming and evangelising young people.



How would you rate the following? (50 responses)





My knowledge of Marcellin, understanding of the Marists & learning of God, has been enhanced beyond my expectations.

# Marian Lecture

### Focus Areas

S/T/SD

### About

A conversation with Jesuit priest and human rights lawyer, Fr Frank Brennan SJ. Discussion on the theme of restoring and upholding dignity and the implications for living as a just society.

### **Program Aims**

- To provide an opportunity for deeper reflection on what a Marian Church might look like into the future.
- To explore contemporary issues in the light of recent Papal encyclicals and Church documents.

I appreciated Fr Frank's challenge to me to reflect on the four areas where 'Human Dignity' is being neglected in our society. It is easy to steer clear of the issues as not affecting me directly. "I am not blind, so I don't see the problem , or the solution". I am called to recognise the need and to accept the responsibility to be part of the solution.

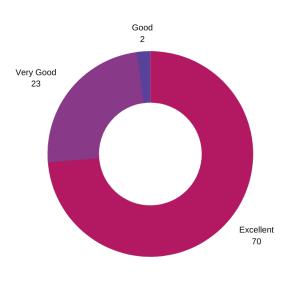
### PARTICIPANTS

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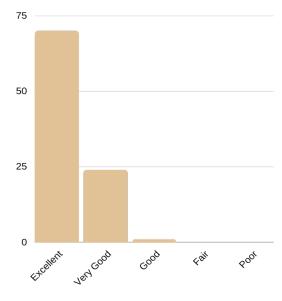


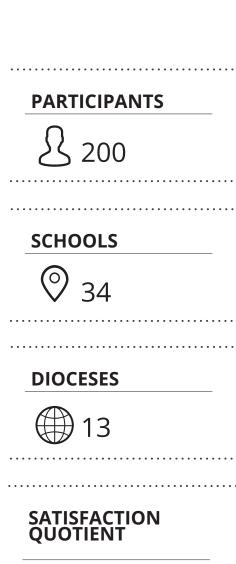
SATISFACTION QUOTIENT 97%

How would you rate your experience of the Marian Lecture? (95 responses)



How likely are you to participate in another experience like this? (95 responses)







# Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat National Assembly

### About

2022 saw the third Assembly of the Marist Association take place. The theme running through the Assembly was 'Known and Loved: A New Humanity.' It took the form of a process, rather than a one-off event. Over a period of months, there was online consultation and dialogue between Members regarding the spirituality, ministry, and future direction of the Association. Following this, an inperson gathering was held at the MacKillop Centre in North Sydney with Members also having the option of virtual attendance.

Focus Areas MI/SD

#### **Program Aims**

- Provide a forum for members of the Association to discuss current and future directions for the Association.
- Experience a reflective and prayerful discernment in relation to the function and the works of the Association.

In your experience of Forum One, what stands out as most significant to you?

"The quality of genuine faith sharing"

"Sharp, engaging, well-planned, professionally produced" "Strong interest and diverse representation which is fantastic"

"The real sense of connection and positivity" How would you rate your experience of Forum One? (39 responses)



The breadth, depth, and wealth of Marist spirituality as evident in the wideranging programs and services across Australia. There was a lot of goodwill and a sense of hope in the aspirations and dialogue that occurred. It was a great process - I'm looking forward to the next one.

### Marist Solidarity Retreat

### Focus Areas

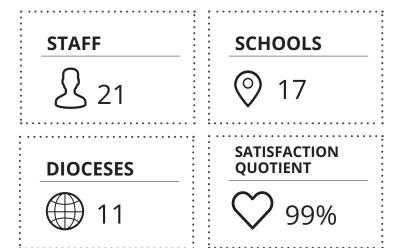
### About

A three-day program where participants encounter the living spirituality of the desert and witness the Marist ministry of solidarity in Central Australia. It is suitable for anyone who has been in Marist ministry for three or more years.

#### **Program Aims**

- Offer a rich experience of Indigenous culture.
- Provide spaces for reflection upon our world and our individual faith journeys.
- Gain an appreciation of how the Marist story is being lived and loved.
- Provide a rich background of desert environs, connecting with the land, its people, and the Marist mission.

What has been your key insights or learnings gained from this retreat? (14 responses)



"On an academic level I learnt a lot I can take back into my classroom teaching, especially for Studies of Religion. On a personal level, I understood very keenly how important the relationship dynamic is and the dependance on community is. Not only for story but also for survival. It moved beyond a head understanding to genuinely understanding the spirit of this relationship. Additionally, the generosity of our first nations people in sharing their culture and their home with us was overwhelming, particularly in light of the treatment that they have had at the hands of our own ancestors."



An awesome group of diverse people with a common purpose, knowledgable, compassionate and caring group leaders, a true retreat and a reflection on the challenge we face in response to the needs of 1st Nations Peoples. Great food and accomodation.

### Holding the Space – A Contemplative Conversation

#### **Focus Areas**

S/T/C

#### **Progam Aims**

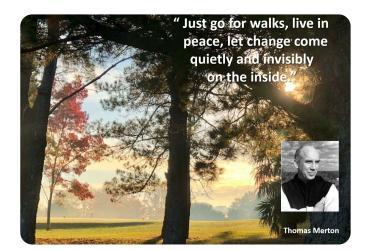
- Experience the power of contemplation as a tool for living with awareness.
- Experience the richness of dialogue founded on listening to others with an open mind and an open heart.

### About

This online retreat is a fourweek experience. Retreatants will receive spiritual input every Friday by email for four weeks. The spiritual input includes a variety of reflections, questions for journaling, prayer practices to explore, and meditations to help contextualise the content. Every Thursday retreatants gather on Zoom to engage in a shared contemplative dialogue in response to what has emerged over the week.

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	∅ 8
• • •	DIOCESES
•	6

**STAFF** 





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Inspirational. Prayerful. Insightful. Soothing. Meaningful. Very appropriate and 'spot on'. We are moving into a new phase of what it means to be a dedicated Christian and this retreat helped me embrace the need for silence and to deepen my relationship with my God.



### Faith Formators' Colloquium (Online)

### **Focus Areas**

C/SD/MHS

#### **Program Aims**

- Explore the implications and possible impact of the 2023 theme for forming young people.
- Discuss ways of creating spaces for young people's voices to be heard.
- Explore ways of continuing to build inclusive communities in our schools and ministries where people are known and loved.

#### About

This online gathering, originally planned to be in person at The Hermitage in Mittagong, brought together Directors of Mission, APREs, Youth Ministers, Solidarity Coordinators and Chaplains from Marist schools and ministries all over Australia. Keynote speakers Hugh Mackay, Catherine Keenan, and Isaiah Dawe broke open different aspects of the national Marist theme of 'Known and Loved – Dignity for All.'



The quality of presentations as well as their simplicity. Very innovative and inspiring for me to be a leader. All the presenters have presented in such a way that expressed the realities of the experiences and motivated me as a leader to assist the teachers to become more effective teachers in their roles.

# SCHOOLS 39 DIOCESES 18 SATISFACTION OUOTIENT

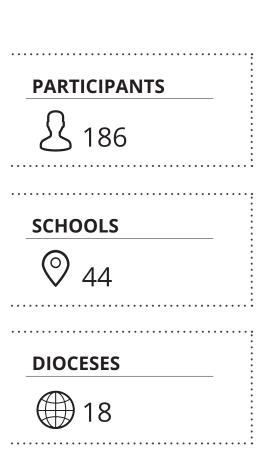
100%

PARTICIPANTS

<u>الا 95</u>

How would you rate your experience of the Faith Formators' Colloquium? (34 responses)

> 100% Excellent or Very Good



### Marist Schools Australia Biennial Conference

Focus Areas

### MEP/S/MI

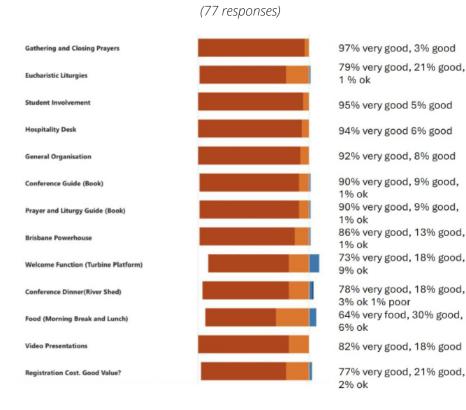
#### **Program Aims**

- Explore new horizons and common dreams for the future.
- Build dialogue and collaboration among our Marist colleges and ministries.

### About

Marists from around the nation and beyond gathered in Brisbane for the Marist Schools Australia Biennial Conference. Three days of innovative presentations and forums, prayer and liturgy, and thought-provoking events gave Marist educators a memorable experience with many practical takeaways as well as opportunities for collaboration building networks.

### How would you rate various aspects of the program?



How would you rate your experience of the Biennial Conference?

(77 responses)

100% Exceptional or Very Good

**66** ,

The conference was very well organised with a had a good mix of keynote engaging speeches, practical workshops and opportunities to connect with other Marist leaders from around Australia

### Marist Educational Leadership

About

#### **Focus Areas**

MEP/L/S

#### **Program Aims**

- To clarify knowledge of the key principles of leadership from a Marist perspective.
- To extrapolate these principles to their own school context.

A Postgraduate Masters level course offered annually for people studying at university, for those seeking accreditation with a Catholic Education authority, or for those who simply wish to learn more about Marist Leadership. The program focuses on educational leadership from a Marist perspective, internationally and nationally, at both system and

school levels.



I am blessed to be teaching at a school with dual charisms that are complementary. Thank you to all presenters for an inspirational two days. I too valued the sharing from the "class". Not that I needed any reminding about the joys of life-long learning. David's explanation of the Ascension Icon will stay with me for a very long time.

### STAFF 21

### SCHOOLS



### DIOCESES



### SATISFACTION QUOTIENT

100%

Did your participation in the course provide you with new insights or a greater appreciation the of value of Marist Leadership and its approach to education? (19 responses)





### Art of Reading and Praying Scripture

### Focus Areas

S/P

#### **Program Aims**

- To help people understand and experience how God speaks to us through Sacred Scripture.
- To gain the necessary skills and insights to effectively interpret and pray with the living and active word.

#### About

The Art of Reading and Praying Scripture is a series of four onehour modules examining different methods of reading Scripture. Each module will focus on a different methodology for the reader to come to know and pray using the Divine Word of God. The modules concentrate on selected Scripture passages from both the Old and New Testament.

How would you rate the effectiveness of this particular style of formation? (54 responses)

> 91% Excellent or Very Good



### "

The key insight I have gained from this course is that the teaching of Religion has to be more than an intellectual pursuit. As St. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words." It is one thing to read scripture as a class, it is another thing for students to critically engage with scripture through a combination of prayer, reflection and meditation – as discussed in this Professional Development.



### Middle Leaders Program

### Focus Areas

L/MEP/S

### **Program Aims**

• To explore how we perceive our leadership role as an ongoing evolution of our humanity and the call to bring Christ Life to reality.

• To engage with the wisdom of Marist documents and contemporary leadership concepts in creating a trusting family spirit, open to pastoral dialogue and professional feedbacks.

• To examine our personal models of leadership and the reinvention of charism in our own particular school settings today.

• To nurture the authority and confidence in the person's own role as Marist leaders engaged in transformational relationships with colleagues and young people.



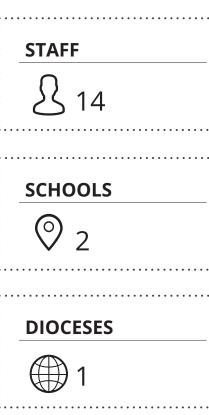
### About

After a very successful pilot with Marist College Canberra in 2021, the Marist Middle Leaders course was rolled out to a number of other Marist schools in 2022. A program for teachers who hold positions of middle-leadership in Marist schools, it is an opportunity to explore and deepen their leadership capabilities within the Catholic schooling context, as well as mapping their professional and vocational growth as educators.

It draws upon the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and specifically addresses AITSL descriptors 6.2 and 6.3 to build upon their understanding of teaching and leading in a Marist school. The program is practical, future-oriented and provides spaces for ongoing reflection, learning and action. Based on the writings of St Marcellin, these interactive sessions engage with contemporary research and practice, enabling participants to explore their sacred role within the school community.



STAFF	schools
DIOCESES	SATISFACTION QUOTIENT
3	98%



I loved listening to Br Michael Green talk. His passion was infectious and the way he broke things down was incredible. You have done a Marist Methodology

### Focus Areas

MEP/MHS

### **Program Aims**

- Research, explore and apply a range of contemporary educational principles and approaches within the learning environment.
- Reflect on key learning principles and develop professional practices in the light of these principles.
- Critically reflect upon the ways in which the Catholic understanding of the human person impacts on learning in a Marist school environment.

### About

This course in Methodology for Catholic Education is provided by Marist Schools Australia and Sacred Heart College, in consultation with Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) and the University of South Australia. It looks at the art and science of education and considers this from a Catholic perspective, in the Marist tradition, reflecting a specific understanding of the human person.

Would you recommend the Marist Methodology Course to a colleague?

good job John, Thanks!





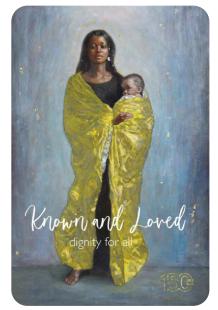
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# Bespoke/Specialised Programs and Initiatives

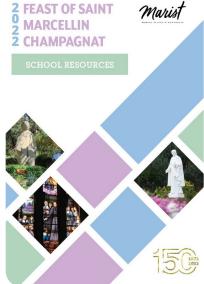
- 1. Fratelli Tutti Growing Friendship and Dialogue Together across the Pacific
- 2. Parent Formation
- 3. Council and Board Formation
- 4. Staff Services Formation Programs
- 5. Various Bespoke Afternoon/Evening Formation Programs
- 6. School Officer's Program
- 7. Nurses Conference
- 8. Professional Breakfasts on the National Theme
- 9. Champagnat Day Celebrations
- 10. Various formation sessions on Marian Spiritualty
- 11. Leadership Team Formation Sessions
- 12. Local Coordinators Forums
- 13. Various Local Association presentations
- 14. Easter Liturgies and Celebrations
- 15. Staff Training & Facilitation Days for Retreats
- 16. Student Leaders' Gatherings
- 17. Staff Spirituality Session on Marist Values
- 18. Hail Mary: Reflections on the Mysteries of the Rosary

# Resources

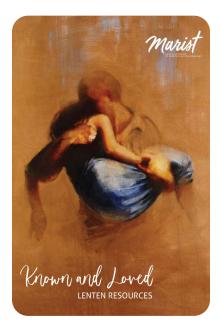
In the process of developing and delivering a diverse range of programs, both face to face and online, the MLF Team have produced extensive resources, most of which are provided to the schools and other ministries who participate in the programs. To further complement these, other resources are developed for specific times and events throughout the year and include:



Theme Resources A comprehensive range of resources prepared to accompany the National Theme for the year



Champagnat Week Resources A comprehensive range of prayers, reflections, articles, and liturgies focusing on the Feast of St Marcellin Champagnat and distributed to all schools.



Lenten Resources Designed to nurture faith communities through the season of Lent and assist with exploring the Association Theme.

A range of other prayers, readings and presentations for individual schools as required.

### Program Feedback & Review

The feedback from participants in our programs is overwhelmingly positive as can be seen from the data provided in this report. Both qualitative and quantitative data indicate in general elevated levels of satisfaction and in some cases, a specific positive impact on spiritual development and/or professional learning and practice. Where issues are raised or suggestions for improvement made, they are incorporated into the review and evaluation process.

The MLF Team use the feedback data as part of this review and evaluation process. The other part of this process involves discussion and feedback from all team members in relation to their own experiences in delivering the programs. Learnings and insights gained are used to adapt, modify and update programs over the course of the year and can often lead to the development of new programs and resources.



### Program Impact on Participants

A closer analysis of some of the qualitative data gives some insight into the impact of courses/programs on the participants involved. For those involved in 2022 programs, it is obviously not possible to determine the longer-term ongoing impact both personally and professionally. As noted above however, what does emerge from survey responses for many participants, is a better understanding of the Catholic and Marist context within which they work and a willingness to incorporate what they have experienced into their work in an ongoing way.

Specifically, using several of our key programs/courses as examples, the following key themes come through consistently.

### Footsteps

- A stronger connection to the broader Catholic and Marist world.
- A deeper sense of community and belonging to the Marist family.
- Particularly for teachers, a commitment to their ongoing responsibility for nurturing the Catholic tradition and Marist Charism in their classrooms.

### The Art of Reading and Praying Scripture

- A transformation from 'reading stories' to 'praying the scriptures.'
- The three different ways of praying the scriptures provided a specific and practical 'toolkit' for deeper understanding.
- Easy transfer of skills learnt to children in a classroom setting.

### Marist Educational Leadership

- The relevance of St Marcellin's vision and intuition for schools in the twenty-first century.
- A willingness to further explore the issues and concepts on leadership raised in the course and to continue to develop the skills to be an effective leader.
- Strong desire to collaborate into the future with colleagues from other schools.

### Middle Leaders Program

- The imperative to keep on learning through an infinite mindset.
- The freedom and strength to be honed through the Marist values of Simplicity, Humility and Modesty.
- Commitment to continue to cultivate a culture of openness vulnerability.

