



MARIST LINKS

In this edition of Marist Links, Fr. Denis Green introduces us to Françoise Perroton and some of the early Marist women on mission. We also see that Fr. Peter Chanel (martyr) also needed some last minute encouragement from Jean Marie Chavoin (foundress of the Marist Sisters) before his voyage to the South Pacific. Other items in this edition include, the Marist pilgrimage to Lourdes, the visit to Shekina reflective gardens in Glenmalure, Co. Wicklow, an account of the Marist family retreat, notices of a number of Marist Laity conferences, some interesting websites on Marist spirituality and also a couple of Lenten reflections.

Marist Women on Mission 1836

There was great jubilation among the first Marists in 1836. The priests of the Society of Mary were approved by the Pope and given the task of opening up a Catholic mission in a vast area of the western Pacific. The first group of Marists consisted of a bishop, four priests and three brothers. Why no sisters? These were certainly not lacking in enthusiasm or courage, but apart from some practical considerations at the beginning, Fr. Jean-Claude Colin decided that Marist sisters were to remain within their convents. Meanwhile...

Françoise Perroton

Here let me introduce you to one of the really great characters in the Marist story. Françoise came from a very poverty stricken background, in old Lyons. Although the family was always flitting from one two roomed tenement flat to another, she managed to get a good primary education, and expressed herself in a faultless French, uncommon among our founders. In her twenties she got a job as a servant in a well off family. When the lady of the house died she became housekeeper. The family was cultured: literary and artistic people frequented the house, where Miss Perroton was able to receive them and converse as an equal. She also

became active in her parish, in its social and missionary out reach. Her faith developed a whole new dimension.

One day, in 1844, reading the Annals for the Propagation of the Faith, she noticed a letter from some women on the Pacific island of Ouvea. They were asking for “pious women to come and educate us, to teach us the many useful things we should know”. In that year she also met a Captain Marceau (later a member of the Marist Third Order), who was in Lyons to raise funds for financial help towards a boat for Marist mission service in Oceania.

The following year, after earnest prayer and discernment, Françoise made two visits. First, to the Marist Provincial, Fr. Peter Julian Eymard. He did not discourage her from going out on her own to Oceania, but with Fr. Peter Chanel’s death fresh in mind, he told about the difficulties she might expect, and dissuaded her from mentioning her project to Fr. Colin who would not give her backing. Her second visit was to Captain Marceau. Would he take her to Oceania on his ship.. .she would be unable to pay her passage. He thought well of her, but left her to meditate further until the summer. She wrote to him again asking for a passage, offering to work her way as an

ordinary servant aboard ship. He agreed to take her in the autumn.

Before she left for Le Havre, Fr.Eymard took Francoise to Fourviere where the first Marists had made their promise to found the Society of Mary, and where Marist missionaries now placed their names in a golden heart round Our Lady's neck, before leaving France. He put her name in with the others...the first woman, a lay woman, on the mission in Oceania. She was already forty-nine but would live there for twenty-eight years, the first twelve as the only European woman. Like most of the missionaries at that time, she never saw France again.

In another edition of Marist Links I will tell you more about Francoise Perroton in those years. But just now I want to tell about what was to happen later as a result of her brave and ardent initiative.

The Third Order Regular of Mary

There was a lot of missionary zeal in the church in Lyons. Many young women wanted to go out to the mission of Oceania, as Francoise had done. On some islands there were white men, drifters, beachcombers. It would be difficult for the priests and brothers to ensure the safety and protection of lay women in unpoliced circumstances. They needed to be visibly part of the Church institution, but Fr.Colin had ruled out allowing Marist Sisters to go there. Also the climate was enervating, disease prevalent and medical remedies seldom available. So what was to happen was this: lay women, members of the Third Order of Mary would be accepted on the missions, but they would wear a religious costume and take a vow or formal promise of engagement, live in groups and follow a rule. This group would be called Third Order Regular of Mary.

Fr. Eymard was in charge of the Third Order,

and sometime after Francoise arrived in Oceania he wrote to tell her he had inscribed her into the Third Order of Mary, that she might have all the more prayer to support her and feel more deeply under Mary's protection. After twelve years alone, some young women arrived. Francoise also donned the costume they were wearing on their arrival. If she is not the founder of this branch of Marists, she is so much its inspiration, that we refer to "Francoise Perroton and the Pioneers"

Many years later, in the nineteen thirties, the Third Order Regular became another Marist religious congregation under the title "Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary".

They are now in many places in the world, as well as in Oceania. In Ireland and Britain we really have not known much about the "SM.SMs" as we call them for short. The time came when they needed to seek English speaking members, and they went to America to do so.

We all share the spirit of Mary and its essential characteristics, but our varied histories and emphases make for a great richness. The SMSM are Marists like the rest of us, but they derived from the inspiration of Francois Perroton's lay missionary action, and from a group of pioneering women Tertiaries, and not directly from the action of priest founders. This, and over most of their history concentration on missions abroad, lends their Marist-ness a distinctive quality of its own.

Jeanne-Marie Chavoïn encourages Peter Chanel (not yet a martyr saint !).

There was plenty of eagerness among the first Marist Sisters to accompany the groups of priests and brothers going out to Oceania. Father Colin would not have that, but at least

they could pray and encourage missionaries. And they did.

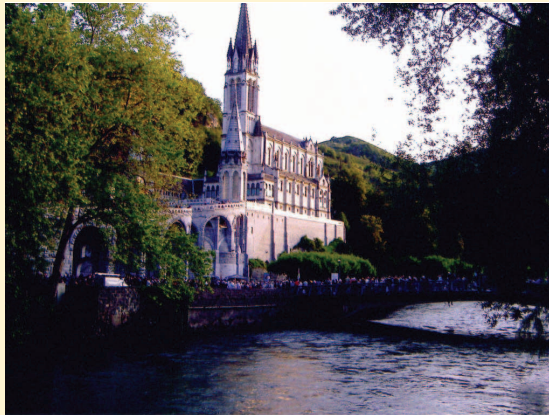
Jeanne Marie Chavoin (Mother St. Joseph) tells of her part in encouraging Father Chanel, who was having doubts about pursuing the missionary call and who was strongly tempted to give up the venture. When Mother Superior met him, she cheered him up, saying “Oh ! Father Chanel, what great grace God has shown you”,

and to keep up his courage she added a few energetic words about priests who grow mouldy in the midst of comfort and do nothing for God’s glory.

He let himself be persuaded by her great enthusiasm, and they thanked God together for the great favour he had received in being chosen. In a few days the temptation faded and was overcome.

Marist Pilgrimage to Lourdes in June 2006

In June 2006 Fr. Ray Murray sm led the annual Marist Pilgrimage to Lourdes.



Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive... C. S. Lewis

You were speaking of the last Judgement. Allow me to laugh respectfully. I shall wait for it resolutely, for I have known what is worse: the judgement of men. *Albert Camus*

Some Marist Websites

www.maristspirituality.org

A new website is available now which presents common themes in Marist spirituality from the perspectives of the Marist Sisters, the Marist Missionary Sisters, the Marist Brothers and the Marist Fathers and Brothers. The first topic deals with the theme: "Called to be Marist – What does this mean to me?"

www.maristlaity.com

An information site for the Marist Laity in the USA. Contact person: Ann Browne

www.maristlaityaustralia.com

An information site concerning Marist Laity in Australia. Contact person: Maria Baden

Shekina trip



A small Marist group spent some time of reflection at Catherine McCann's sculpture Garden 'Shekina', in Glenmalure in Co Wicklow on a rainy day in August 2006. If you are looking for some reflective time out, it is well worth a visit.

Michael Keating

Please pray for the happy repose of the soul of Michael Keating, (far left in picture) a dear friend of Sile O'Reilly, and a member of the Marist Spirituality group in Dublin, who attended many of the recent days of reflection and prayer. Michael died on the 23rd of December 2006. May he rest in peace.

The Marist Family Retreat - july 2006

There were about twenty (?) people attended the weekend; the group were joined on Saturday by three Marist Sisters from Raheny and on Sunday by two more Marist Sisters who were all very welcome. The Lay group consisted of members from Donore Avenue, Clogher Road, Coolock, Dundalk and Milltown. The weekend was given by members of the Lay Marists plus an input from Sister Pearl Deery from the Mercy Sisters in Dundalk. It was decided by the Spirituality Group in Milltown in May that a weekend Retreat should be held on 21-23 July upon the theme of "Community" to include an input on the Trinity as the model for the "ideal community." Sile O'Reilly, Mairead McGrath and David Corrigan were asked to undertake its organisation.

What evolved from their meetings was that it should start on Friday evening with a half-hour's presentation on the Trinity and that six members would be asked to give a ten minute reflection on

their experience of community in their particular field.

1. The Trinity	Mairead McGrath
2. Family	Pat Petherick
3. Hospital Chaplaincy	Sile O'Reilly
4. Religious Life	Sr. Pearl Deery, rsm

5. Probation Service	Elaine Geiran
6. Workplace	Nuala Fox
7. Community life	David Corrigan
8. Drawing the Threads Together	Reena McDermot

Acknowledging she was not a Theologian, Mairead's presentation was based on the Gospel of St. John – a Literary and Theological Approach by Fr. Thomas Brodie, O.P. She presented Jesus' relationship with the Father through his preaching, teaching, miracles and healings. She showed how, in his hands the Law brought Freedom but in the hands of the Pharisees it was a heavy burden which they used to exercise their control over people. He shone his mirror of Truth upon them to reveal their worldly values which he said came from Satan who was the Ruler of the world and the Father of Lies, therefore they also told lies. In their fury they made several attempts to kill him, even to taking up stones, but because his hour had not come his Father protected him. She then went on to touch briefly on his washing of the disciples feet; his unique Prayer to his Father, his promise to his disciples to send them the Holy Spirit and the two Dramas of the Crucifixion: His Trial before the Jews and His Trial before Pilate, finishing with the return of the disciples to their fishing after the Resurrection and to Jesus cooking fish for them on the shore symbolising out return to Daily Life at the end of the weekend.

On Saturday morning Pat took us into the warmth and love of her family growing up. Her Father died when she was very young and her Mother reared six children leaving on them her indelible mark of Love. Her vivid recollection of their conversations over the tea table; her Mother listening to their homework; her own delight in rushing home to show her Mother what she had bought when she was working and her delight in seeing her Mother's smile as she opened the door to her which remains with her to this day.

Sile explained to us how community in the hospital was experienced by her through the interweaving of co-operation in the general administration of the hospital and indeed how she could see the care the staff had for the patients; the care of the staff for the staff and the care of the patients for the staff. She spoke of the pain of the patients often loudly expressed through crying or screaming and this was intermingled with smiles and enjoyment of sing-songs, activities and outings.

Pearl told us how very happy she was to be a Mercy Sister. She gave us the symbol of the gates of the Convent which to her represented the Gates of Heaven and her grief and shock upon hearing from one of her young companions who had left her home one night that for her they represented the Gates of Hell. She told us she "owned" the events in her congregation that had caused great trauma to some of the children in their care but that in spite of the highs and lows of the years she had spent in religious life she was very happy with the path she had chosen and gave us an example of the care shown in the order by saying how she had come in late one night to meet an eighty-year old sister who mentions she was tired because she had spent the day in the infirmary looking after the "elderly" nuns there.

Elaine gave us a detailed presentation of the meaning of Community in the wider context of the Justice System. She prefaced her talk by quoting the Scripture verses which guided her in her life and caused her to choose Social Work. She revealed to us the boundaries involved in community and how it was appropriate to exercise both inclusiveness and exclusiveness at different times. She broke down the various components of community and opened our eyes to the different aspects involved causing us to look at the whole area of community with a much broader awareness.

Nuala spoke about the values she brought to being an employer in a very busy business where everyone worked very hard. She said herself and the six women she works with share the ups and downs of each others' lives. She highlighted the importance of affirmation and she has seen how people light up when the beautiful work they do is praised. She also acknowledged how important it is to point out if someone is not pulling their weight but how essential it is never to humiliate them by speaking of it in public but to always honour their human dignity in the way she handles the situation.

David spoke about the Marist community he belongs to in South Circular Road. They drew up for themselves three ground rules: 1. They would be involved in each others' lives, in their ups and downs. 2. They would share their faith together. 3. They would have a meal together two or three times a week and Hospitality would infuse their lives so they would be free to invite people to join them at their community meal. These community/life values are reviewed each year so while each member is carrying out their own individual work they are also sharing in the life of the community they are building with each other and their house is also open to others.

On Sunday morning Reena made an excellent job of pulling all the threads of the weekend together. She used a chart to pictorially show us the journey we had made and went through each presentation drawing out and connecting the various points. She took as her starting point the reference Mairead had made to Jesus not starting with a blueprint but responding to people's needs as he met them and showed us how important it is not to structure too tightly but to leave room for the Spirit of God to work. She pinpointed the links between all the presentations and invited us to put up one word which for us meant Community and then we saw its "whole". She then asked us three Questions. As a result of the Retreat: What will we stop doing? What will we start doing? What will we continue doing?

The Retreat ended with Mass and Lunch on Sunday. In between all of that we had food...and food...and more delicious food! We also had informal discussions and on Saturday night, for those who stayed on after Supper, we had Meditative Movement to Music and sharing and then Wine, Nibbles and Ghost Stories!

Mairead.

PS: For a copy(s) of the notes from the retreat, contact david at anturas@dna.ie or 01 4731613.

Ash Wednesday / Lent reflection

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Be careful not to parade your good deeds before other people to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven.

So when you give to those in need, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win other's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give to those in need, your left hand

must not know what your right is doing; your giving must be in secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you’.

‘**And when you pray**, do not imitate the hypocrites; they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray go to your private room and , when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you’.

‘**When you fast** do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let others know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.’

(Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18) - Reading for mass on ASH WEDNESDAY

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Forgiveness

Let us be practical and ask the question, How do we love our enemies?

First, we must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. It is impossible ever to begin the act of loving one's enemies without the prior acceptance of necessity, over and over again, of forgiving those who inflict evil and injury upon us. It is also necessary to realise that the forgiving act must always be initiated by the person who has been wronged, the victim of some great hurt, the recipient of some tortuous injustice, the absorber of some terrible act of oppression. The wrongdoer may request forgiveness...like the prodigal child...but only the injured neighbour, the loving parent back home, can really pour out the warm waters of forgiveness.

(Martin Luther King)

Laity Conferences 2007

Marist Laity Gathering in England.
Building a ‘New Church’
The Role of Marists

3.45pm Friday 27th – 2.00pm Sunday 29th
April 2007

Cost £125 (Sterling), includes full board for the duration the conference, conference facilities and special celebration dinner.

Guest Speaker; Fr. Jan Hulshof sm
(Superior of the Marist Fathers)

Venue: The HAYES Conference Centre
Swanwick, Alferton, Derbyshire DE% % 1AU

Final date for payment: 16th March 2007
Further information from: Pat O’Connor at
kevinandpat@ntlworld.com

Marist Laity Gathering USA

First Western Regional Marist Laity Gathering
May 25 – 28th 2007

Santa Cruz, San Francisco, California
Speaker: John Craddock sm New Zealand
Application forms available in February
Further information Contact: Ann Brown at
anniebees@aol.com
8905 East Emerald Drive
Sun Lakes AZ85248. USA

European Marist Laity Gathering

Turin, Italy
August 23rd – 27th 2007
Theme: Happy to be Marist
Cost: Four nights full board €200.00, plus air fare. Marist Laity from eight countries of Europe will attend. For further information Contact:

Eileen McCann 042 9331276
Nuala Fox 01 2876960
Sr. Moire Ryan 094 9254133

The following is a report from Nuala Fox on the meeting held on 22nd August 2006 in La Neyliere in France, to prepare the Laity gathering in Turin.

On August 22nd. Eileen McCann and Nuala Fox joined a group of Lay Marists from all over Europe in La Neyliere. Present were representatives from Spain, Italy, France, Germany, England, and Ireland.

On the first day we introduced ourselves and talked about our groups at home. It was interesting to learn the different ways Lay Marists are structured in each country.

In Italy the Lay person spends four years in formation and then signs a pledge. France has a similar structure. The Germans are looking to set up a formal structure while in England they have a central council who organize retreats and days of recollection and also set study themes for the groups.

Holland was not represented because their groups have become fractured and are being reorganised. Spain was awe inspiring. The Lay Marist were almost extinct, but thanks to one lady, Pepita, who took it upon herself to write

to former members and re-established a core group of 12 people who meet every two weeks. On the second day it was down to business. From an earlier meeting of the Marist Fathers, who have decided to form one European Province, a suggestion had been made to bring all the Lay Groups together for a colloquium. The Italians had already found a suitable venue in Turin and we decided to accept this venue. The date for the gathering was fixed for the 23rd-27th. of August 2007. The cost of attending the colloquium and four nights full board is €200.00 plus air fare. The Theme is "Happy to be Marist"

Elected to the organizing committee are two Italians, two French, and one Irish, Eileen McCann.

Nuala Fox

The mystic, the true believer, is the one who learns how to continue believing in the far-off God, the God of Jeremiah "Am I a God near at hand only, says the Lord, and not a God far off?" (Jer23:23)
 ('A Marian Vision of the Church: Jean-Claude Colin' Jean Coste, Maristica 8, P. 288)

40th Jubilee of Mount St. Mary's, Milltown 2006



In 1966 a new wing was added to the Marist formation house in Mount St. Mary's Milltown to accommodate the increased number of students. Frs., Brendan Bradshaw, Sean Fagan, John Hannan, Paddy Corcoran, , Des Hunt, (front row), Edwin McCallion, David Corrigan, Frank Hennigan, Denis Green, Jimmy McElroy, Paddy Byrne, Martin McAnaney, Kieran Butler (back row) and Ray Murray (behind the camera) gathered to mark the event.