

**MEDIA RELEASE 2/07/2025**

**Marist Association of St Marcellin Australia Holds Fourth National Assembly in Brisbane**

BRISBANE, Australia: From 27 to 29 June, the Marist Association of St Marcellin Australia held its Fourth National Assembly at Marist College Ashgrove, bringing together more than 120 Marists from across the country. It was a deeply reflective and energising three days filled with prayer, listening, discernment, strategic discussion, storytelling, and moments of genuine connection.

This Assembly marked a significant milestone - ten years since the Association's founding. From its inception, the Marist Association has grown steadily, now with over 1,000 members and 50 local groups across Australia, in nearly every state and territory.

Set on the beautiful grounds of Ashgrove, the Assembly opened with a welcome from Executive Director Richard Quinn, inviting participants into a space of spiritual focus and honest reflection. It was an opportunity to revisit commitments made three years ago, to assess progress, and to imagine a renewed vision for the road ahead.

At the heart of the Assembly was the use of Spiritual Conversation methodology - a thoughtful and prayerful approach to dialogue popularised by the 2021–2024 Synod of Bishops. Through deep listening and mutual respect, members were invited to engage with questions such as: Who will we be? What do we care about? What will we do?

Facilitator Prof Br David Hall described the experience as “an opportunity for profound wisdom to emerge in an environment of mutual respect.” He noted that this year's discernment centred on key themes such as deepening our spiritual grounding, strengthening local group connections, ensuring financial and structural sustainability, and renewing our commitment to walking with young people - especially those on the margins.

One participant, Stuart McClorey from Newman College Perth, reflected, “It was nourishing to be among people who hold the same hopes for their communities and who are committed to walking gently, purposefully, and with faith. What stayed with me most, though, was the quality of listening - how every voice was heard and every story respected.”

**Commissioning of New Leadership**

At the closing Mass, Archbishop Mark Coleridge formally commissioned the new Association Leader, Br Darren Burge, and the incoming Council.

Br Darren succeeds Br Peter Carroll, Provincial of the Marist Brothers Star of the Sea Province, who served as the Association's Leader over the past two terms. Joining Br Darren on the

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Council are Br Michael Callinan, Lee MacMaster, Joe McCarthy, and Zack Pizzigrilli, who will serve alongside continuing Councillors: Julia Lederwasch (Deputy Leader), Jasmine Brown, Madeline Forde, Br David Hall, Daniel Lynch, and Donna McLaughlin.

Reflecting on the leadership transition, Br Peter Carroll said, “Br Darren has the full confidence of the Association. He has been deeply involved since its inception, and his warmth, attentiveness, and deep experience make him a natural choice to lead. His years of leadership at the John Berne School and St Augustine’s College Cairns, as well as his service on Provincial Councils and as Vice Provincial, have equipped him with the skills and vision needed to guide the Association forward.”

Br Darren and the new Council will now begin the task of developing a Pastoral Plan - a strategic roadmap to guide the Association’s mission over the next three years.

### **A Time to Reconnect**

Beyond structure and planning, the Assembly was also a deeply communal experience - a time to reconnect with friends, share stories, and draw strength from a common Marist heritage and vision.

There is much to celebrate - and much to look forward to - as the Marist Association continues to walk with young people, especially those most in need, making Jesus Christ known and loved, and living out the Marist way of being Church in today’s world.

[See the full story here.](#)

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Participants take part in Spiritual Conversations at the Marist Association National Assembly IV



Pilgrims of Hope, the theme for Marist Ministries in 2025, is reflected in the prayer presentation at the Marist Association National Assembly IV



Prof Br David Hall FMS describes the process of the Spiritual Conversations methodology and the questions participants will discern.



Marist Association Executive Director, Richard Quinn, welcomes participants to the Assembly.



Newly appointed Leader of the Marist Association, Br Darren Burge, thanks Br Peter Carroll, outgoing Leader, for his service and legacy.

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