

Marist Mission Centre (MMC)

Managing both:

The Marist Fathers International Mission Fund (MFIM)

ABN 91 030 510 250

and

The Australian Marist Centre for Overseas Aid Fund (AMCOA)

ABN 87 382 823 140



MARIST MISSION NEWSLETTER
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MMC Celebrates 70 Years A Christmas Story Thai-Burma Railway Prison Camp 1943

One evening in this notorious prison camp, Fr. Lionel Marsden sm, the camp chaplain, was approached by Shigemoto San a member of the Japanese medical Corp and guard of the Japanese Imperial Army. Contrary to regulations, he quietly confided to Fr. Lionel that he was a Catholic and requested the sacrament of confession. In gratitude, the guard asked if there was anything he needed. Fr. Lionel's simple but seemingly impossible request was bread and wine for a Christmas Mass.

Shigemoto somehow managed to produce a bottle of wine and small cakes made from rice and flour. The prisoners quietly and secretly gathered on Christmas Eve in a bamboo hut in the sweltering, oppressive conditions of a tropical night. No doubt their thoughts were filled with their loved ones at home.

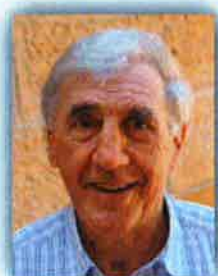


Above: Fr Lionel Marsden sm

In the midst of this cauldron of suffering, hunger, disease and pain, Fr. Lionel preached on the Christmas story of God's love, the need for forgiveness and the importance of clinging to hope. It is not certain whether it was during that Christmas Mass or later but at some point, Fr. Lionel promised his POW friends that if he survived this ordeal he would go to Japan as a missionary and share the mystery and message of Christmas: the gift of God's love and forgiveness.

In April 1949, 400 POW's, war widows, friends and relatives gathered in the Sydney Town Hall to listen to Padre Marsden share his story and farewell him as he departed for Japan.

On Wednesday, 1st May, 2019, MMC will celebrate 70 years since these extraordinary beginnings. MMC supporters are invited to join in this celebration at the Holy Name Parish Hall, Hunters Hill, 3 Mary Street from 10:30-12:00. Please see the back page of this Newsletter for details.



ACFID
MEMBER

Fr Paul Sullivan sm, Executive Officer

To Donate visit MMC Website: www.maristmissions.com

SUSTAINING HOPE OVER 70 YEARS

Thai-Burma Railway Prison



Above: Building the Thai-Burma Railway. Building bamboo bridges was demanding and relentless work for prisoners under the watchful eye of ruthless prison guards.

Sustaining Hope

Fr. Lionel Marsden sm together with the other chaplains and medicos such as Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop were a source of hope for the prisoners on the notorious Thai-Burma Railway. Fr. Lionel walked up and down the railway line, burying the dead, comforting the dying and ministering to the sick. The chaplains and medicos were a 'gift of hope' to the prisoners.



Above Right: Hellfire Pass

Hellfire Pass was aptly named by the prisoners - it was their closest experience to 'hell on earth'. A lot of hard work was done on the railway track with pick and shovel under the hot and wet tropical conditions. Visitors remember and pray for all who suffered and died in this prison.

Left: Fr. Lionel on mission in Japan

Fr. Lionel made a promise to himself and his fellow prisoners: 'for every sleeper on the railway track - a Japanese convert and for every dead soldier - a Japanese convert. Less than one year after the war, Fr. Lionel was a foundation member of the Japanese Mission on behalf of the Marist Fathers. Some Marists are still working in Japan and there is an active Japanese Catholic community in Sydney with Fr. Paul Glynn sm as Chaplain.



SUSTAINING HOPE OVER 70 YEARS

Cambodia: Marist Solidarity Cambodia (MSC)

AMCOA Project

MSC EMPOWERS YOUTH WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES



MSC sponsored by the Marist Brothers is a mission encompassing the La Valla School, Villa Maria Hostel, the MSC Village and other support projects for young persons with disabilities. These young people who are often abandoned by their own families, now have a new family at MSC Village thanks to your support.

Skills training & employment – the gift of a future

MSC also offers vocational training including an agricultural training programme. These young people can now support themselves and their families.



A safe place to live with the gift of education

MSC provides the support needed for students to be able to participate in the educational programmes including accommodation, food, transport, and schooling costs.



SUSTAINING HOPE OVER 70 YEARS

Tonga: Cyclone Gita 2018

AMCOA/MFIM Project

Thanks to the generous support of MMC donors most of the repair work at 'Api Fo'ou College is now completed. The students are actively involved in education, music, sport and community projects. Fr. Ekuasi Manu sm, the new school Principal is developing leadership awareness and training skills for senior students. Thanks to you, our MMC supporters.



Above: Students glad to be back in their school after Cyclone Gita



Left: Fr Ekuasi Manu sm who has just completed an MA in Educational Leadership at ACU, is developing leaders within the school.

70 Years of the Marist Mission Centre

An Invitation to thank our generous supporters and celebrate our story

Wednesday 1 May 2019: 10.30 am - 12.00 noon



Morning Tea at Holy Name of Mary Parish Hall, 3 Mary Street, Hunters Hill NSW 2110, Australia

Please R.S.V.P. by Friday 29 March 2019 to

admin@maristmissions.com or **mail** to Locked Bag 5002, Gladesville NSW 1675 or **PHONE** +61 2 9844 2275



**Gifts in Your Will
Supporting the
Mission Centre**

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