# District ANZPPNG – Visit of Br. Armin Luistro, Superior Gneeral and Councillors

*"There is no proclamation without movement, without 'going out', without initiative. This means there is no Christian if not on the move… if the Christian does not go out of the self, in order to set out on the journey". (Pope Francis 12 April 2023)*

When the Superior General of the Lasallian Brothers arrived in Perth on 26 March, he would possibly not have counted the ten plane trips and the several thousand kilometres he would fly, to encounter Lasallians and their mission in this far-flung District. With members of his Councillor team, and accompanied by **Br. Tim Peter, Visitor**, he showed himself an engaging Christian leader who impressed many.

Interviewed in Sydney, midway in his peregrinations, he could still smile, greet warmly and have a joke in true Filipino – and Down Under – style. His eighteen days of interaction and mutual learning began at the one large Lasallian school in Western Australia, La Salle College Middle Swan.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA – MIDDLE SWAN & BALGO HILLS/WIRRIMANU**

On Monday 27 March, Br. Superior was welcomed by Principal Ms. Giovanna Fiume and senior staff members, and then attended a school assembly, where he was invited to speak to the students. The occasion highlighted, said its media person, that the College is "part of a much larger Lasallian community, a world community".

This sense of community was central to that day's inauguration of the "Yarning Circle". There was a Welcome to Country by Mr. Vaughan McGuire, the presence of other indigenous Elders, one of whom performed a traditional smoking ceremony using eucalyptus leaves and bark…to cleanse the area and ward off bad spirits from the people and the land. The meeting place is hoped to be a space to share stories and learn culture.

**La Salle College** students had designed the Circle with painted Noongar seasons. Some students are indigenous boarders from the Kimberley region of W.A. Br. Armin also met the Lasallian Youth ministers and the Lasallian Volunteers.

To reach the most remote Lasallian community- at Balgo Hills / Wirrimanu – the Superior and Br. Tim flew 3 hours to Kununurra, for a stopover, and the next day a further three hours to the indigenous community, situated 10 hours drive from the centre of the continent.

Upon arrival, Br. Armin met with the Principal of **Luurnpa Catholic School**, Ms. Rachel Smith, and other staff members. He visited Tjiriki (Year 1/2) class and Kipara (Year 5/6). There was singing, dancing, and cooking with students. In Tjiriki the two visitors joined the class for their Stations of the Cross Prayer Service, with the children of course asking them where they were from The 2-day visit also included a staff meeting and shared meal, meeting with local Church leaders, learning about Balgo Hills' remote schools' attendance strategy, and a presentation outlining the Student Well-Being program.

Brs Michael and Rick are two long-time staff members. All staff live on site and work in partnership in the classroom with indigenous Teacher Assistants.

After two days in the Western Desert, it was retracing steps to the state capital,

Perth on Friday 31st March, to meet **Mr. Wayne Bull, the Chair of the District Lasallian Mission Council**, and the Deputy Executive Director of W.A. Catholic Education. Conversation centred on the Lasallian mission at Balgo Hills and in Papua New Guinea.

**AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND / SIGNUM FIDEI / ROTORUA & AUCKLAND**

An overnight flight from Australia's West Coast and across the Tasman Sea brought Br Armin and Br Timothy to Aotearoa New Zealand on Saturday. Here they were joined by **Brother Chris Patiño, General Councillor**. Meeting and luncheon with the local **Sector Mission Council** of lay and Brother composition, was followed by a 'meet and greet' session with the Lasallian Partners' "**Signum Fidei" group** in Rotorua. The group renewed their annual commitment to work with the more marginalized students at **John Paul College** and to live more deeply Lasallian spirituality.

The third day, Monday 3 April, saw the visitors welcomed and shown the College. The Principal, Mr. Justin Harper noted the way students stepped up with their powhiri and haka. “It is abundantly clear that our students are thinking about the College, our collective Lasallian values, and where their own personal journey is taking them. It was a real highlight of Term One”. The following day was a brief acquaintance, via an Assembly, with **De La Salle Mangere**, the vibrant Maori & Pacifica majority College, which is a benchmark of the Brothers’ commitment in the country.

**MELBOURNE BROTHERS’ MEETING / LASALLIAN MISSION SERVICES**

The four days in the New Zealand sector of the District led to a return to Australia. On Wednesday 5 April, at **St Bede’s College** on its two campuses, he addressed the student cohort prior to its Holy Week Liturgy. A Mentone campus tour was conducted by the Student Leaders. An important familiarization was a meeting with **Lasallian Youth Ministers**, and members of **Lasallian Mission Services** – its Director, Mrs. Julie Alibrandi, Mr. Sebastian Duhau Dtr Young Lasallians, and Youth Co-ordinator Mr Joshua Cant, this at **Malvern.**

As Easter approached there was time to slow down, to participate in the Easter liturgies, and to meet all the Brothers in Melbourne at Mentone on Holy Saturday. The Superior encouraged the Brothers to keep witnessing the Gospel, supporting students and schools, and being symbols of faith to others, especially those on the peripheries. There was a visit also to elderly Brothers in a local nursing home.

**SYDNEY BROTHERS’ MEETING / ‘SAN MIGUEL’ YOURTOWN / APLEC**

After the four days in Melbourne, Brs. Armin and Chris arrived in Sydney, and with prayer, sharing and luncheon, as in Melbourne, they interacted with all the Sydney Brothers at the Cronulla Community on Easter Sunday. Prayer, an involving discussion and an Easter luncheon completed the occasion. The Monday entailed a **Special District Council Meeting**, which included two other members of the Rome team **– Br. Ricky Laguda, General Councillor for PARC and Br. Sergio Leal, the Executive Secretary for the General Council**.

The following day had a prelude in a visit to San Miguel, North Richmond, a child-centred family residential service administered by ‘yourtown’, which provides intensive, individualised support for at risk young parents and their children. The four Team visitors then attended the opening of the biennial **Asia Pacific**

**Lasallian Educational Conference** (APLEC) at North Sydney campus of Australian Catholic University. Here Br Tim gave a welcoming address and Br Armin a main presentation.

Presentations by Dr. Marion Byrne, Mr. Pat O'Reilly & Dr. John Molineaux variously – on youth rights, mental health, Lasallian spirituality/pilgrimage and teacher well-being were enlightening on Wednesday 12th (Day 2 of the Conference), as well as a wide smorgasbord of workshops, networking and liturgies throughout.

Brs Ricky and Sergio with some adult and young Lasallians, and some other Brothers attended for the full three days, while Br. Armin and Br Chris proceeded to Queensland on the last leg of their pilgrimage with Br. Tim.

**QUEENSLAND BROTHERS' MEETING / YOURTOWN**

On Wednesday 12th April, Brs. Armin and Chris visited **'yourtown' Deception Bay facility** which offers child and family services including mental health, parenting, and early childhood development. This was followed by a tour of the extensive 'yourtown' work training, employment and education centre at **Kingston, in outer Brisbane**. There was engagement with staff and young people, and afternoon tea.

The day finished with a gathering with Queensland Brothers at Shailer Park. A prayerful reflection was followed by a presentation by the Superior, and a lively sharing of Brothers' diverse ministries. A meal of relaxed conversation ensued.

The last day of the Superior and Councillor's visit on 13 April was engagement with the CEO, Ms. Tracy Adams and the staff at the **Headquarters of 'yourtown'** in central Brisbane. Presentations and viewing were offered in the areas of Kids HelpLine Service Design, Advocacy and Data, Technology Roadmap – all focused on delivery of services to needy young people in most states of Australia.

On 14 April, Br Ricky, Councillor, was visiting 'yourtown' services in outer Sydney, to complete his visit.

***It was a gruelling itinerary spread over three weeks and the Easter feast. But it was one the four visitors from the Rome Generalate of the Institute***

***were enthused to make. This was not purely information-gathering, but, as many lay colleagues and Brothers experienced, a very true and engaging series of encounters of brothers and sisters in the Lasallian mission in one area of PARC. It celebrated ministries within the Church, and signalized deep commitment to young people and adults, especially those at the margins.***

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