

Kiribati

Background

Our Marist Ministry in Kiribati started in 1984. However, the first Marist Brother to work in Kiribati was from Australia, Br Michael (Flavius) Donnelly (Melbourne Province), who volunteered to replace his sister, a member of the congregation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, who had lost her life in a sailing mishap. He was teaching there when he died of a heart attack towards the end of 1972. He is buried in the cemetery at Teoraereke.

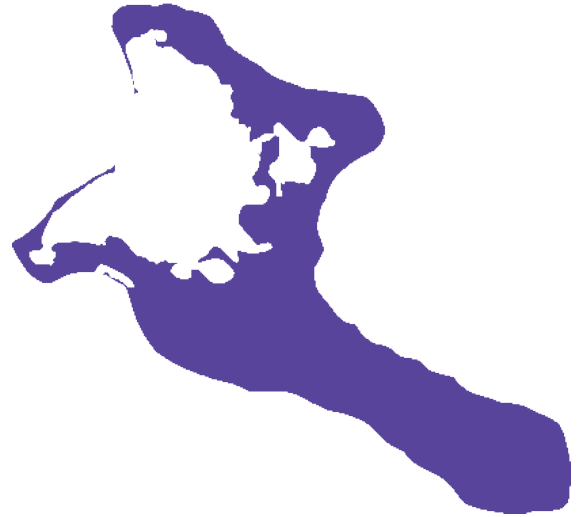
Some years later, in June 1982, Br Gregory Ryan, New Zealand Provincial, received a letter from Paul Mea, an MSC priest, who had been a student at EAPI with him in 1974. Paul had been made bishop of the diocese of Tarawa and Nauru in 1979; he was the first local bishop. Since 1980, he had been trying to get brothers from the Sydney province to direct a post-primary institute, called the St Louis Vocational Centre, located at the diocesan centre at Teoraereke on Tarawa. Sydney was having difficulty in finding men, and once the bishop heard that a man he knew had become provincial of NZ, he thought he would appeal to him as well. This invitation from Bishop Paul Mea was accepted by the NZ Provincial Council in 1983. The men chosen for this new ministry were two New Zealanders and a Samoan: Francis Eggleton (now Fr Frank Eggleton), Camillus Aylward, and Edward Daneilson. They arrived in Tarawa at the beginning of 1984 to run the St Louis' Vocational Centre, which became St Louis High School when it was registered as a secondary school in 1986.

(Thanks to Br Ed Clisby for the information which is from his History of the Marist Brothers in New Zealand, "Far Distant Shores").

Since then 14 Ikiribati men have become Marist Brothers. One died as a Brother and four are still Brothers today. At present, one Postulant and one Aspirant are living with the Brothers in Kiribati.

Marist Life and Mission Groups (Lay/Brother)

Kiribati Mission Stewardship Team - created in 2018 in liaison with the District Council of the Pacific, consists of five Lay Champagnat Marists and two Brothers. Purpose: for Brothers and Lay Champagnat Marists to be co-responsible for our future Marist Mission in Kiribati. Meet monthly. Champagnat Youth Group - about 25 members ranging from University Students to Secondary school students: meet regularly: help animate other youth outreaches. Saint Louis High School Champagnat Marists - consists of St Louis Lay Teachers committed to deepening the Charism within the School.



National Identity	Independent Presidential Republic, gained Independence from Britain in 1979
Number of Atolls	33 - 20 are inhabited
Main atoll and capital	Tarawa
Languages	I- Kiribati and English
Population	120,000
Time Zone	U.T.C + no daylight saving changes
Main Religions	Roman Catholic and Protestant
Arrival of Marists	1984
Number of Marist Brothers	4
Number of Marist Brothers Communities and location	1 - La Valla, Bikenibeu, Tarawa
Number of Marist Schools and location	1 - Saint Louis High School, Teoraereke, Tarawa

Marist Ministries and Schools

St Louis High School - Co-educational Secondary School Forms 1 to 7: school roll - 1,200: Diocesan Owned: under Marist Governance. Brother Sefo Une is acting as School Commissioner. La Valla Spirituality and Retreat Centre - both the residence for the four Brothers and also a Centre for running retreats, and various Champagnat Marist Gatherings: two brothers assigned to this mission. Champagnat Marist Preschools - there are three Preschools which we support in terms of animating the Champagnat Charism, assisting the religious Teachers' spiritual and professional development, and offering financial support from some international donations.

Formation

La Valla Formation Centre, Stewardship Team Retreats, St Louis High School Staff Orientation, "Champagnat in The Pacific" Programs, and Charism Workshops and Retreat for Preschool Teachers.

