

New Caledonia



Overview

There is a very long connection with Marists in New Caledonia going back to the arrival of the first Marists in 1837 in the Pacific. France annexed New Caledonia in 1853 and the brothers were very active in development of schools and orphanages and in catechetics from that time on. By 1873 New Caledonia was in fact a part of the Province of the British Isles which included England, Ireland, Scotland, Cape of Good Hope, Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. So many french speaking brothers worked in new Caledonia over the last 170 years, supported by the French provinces and of late by the Province of the Hermitage in France. New Caledonia is now part of the Province of Australia and from 2023 the Star of the Sea Province.

Currently there are two french speaking brothers residing at Paita, not far from Noumea, the capital.

Marist Life and Mission Groups (Lay/Brother)

The brothers are actively engaged with the parish and with Marist laity in Paita. The brothers offer hospitality to students from Vanuatu who study in New Caledonia.

Marist Ministries and Schools

The current community of two brothers reside at Paita, next to the College Sainte Marie and are involved as volunteers in catechetics in the parish. The brothers extend hospitality to Marists lay groups from time to time especially feast days and celebrations and eucharist.

National Identity	·Devolved parliamentary dependency of France
Capital	Nouméa
Languages	French and Kanak languages
Population	289,209
Time Zone	UTC+11:00
Main Religions	Christian(50% Catholic, Protestant) Smaller groups include Buddhist. Muslim
Arrival of Marists	1853
Number of Marist Brothers	2
Number of Marist Brothers Communities and location	1
Number of Marist Schools and location	5

The brothers began their ministry in Paita in March 1875. They also opened a school for indigenous students which eventually became the College Sainte Marie we know today. The brothers also founded a second college, St Marcellin Champagnat, and it became a 'lycee professional' or vocational College. Also at Paita is a primary school.

There are two Marist schools in Noumea, the Capital of New Caledonia, Sacre Coeur Primary School, next to the Cathedral, located on a very historical site, and the newer College Champagnat, a secondary school.

The Marists were in other parts of New Caledonia, including the Isle de Pins, but over the years the communities closed and schools were handed to the locals.

Currently the five Marist owned schools in Paita and Noumea are administered by the Catholic Education Authority. The current Archbishop, Michel-Marie Calvet is a Marist Priest, as all his predecessors, except one, have been. The Marist Missionary Sisters also have a significant presence in Noumea, with their regional centre, located there.

Next year will be the 150th Anniversary of the establishment of the first Marist Brothers community and school in New Caledonia. Celebrations are being planned for September 2023.

