

# Solomon Islands

## Overview

Four Marist Brothers, Hyacinth, Gennade, Aristride and Optat, arrived in the Solomon Islands in 1845 with Bishop Epalle SM and their 9 Society of Mary companions. The Marist missionaries' early years in the Solomons was dangerous and dispiriting. After just five years, Brother Hyacinthe was dead, killed by the local people on San Christobal Island, and the other three had fallen ill and needed to be repatriated to Sydney. The Mission closed in 1852.

Eighty-six years later, at the invitation of Bishop Aubin SM, Marist Brothers were again in the Solomon Islands. Brothers John, James and Ephrem arrived on 2 August 1938 to lead the school at Makina on Marau Sound. In 1941 another three Brothers, Augustine, Donatus and Ervan, arrived. Soon afterwards, Augustine, John and Donatus were sent to neighbouring Bougainville to start a new mission.

War came to the Pacific in December 1941 and fighting spread to the Solomon Islands soon after. The Brothers on Marau were temporarily imprisoned by the Japanese but eventually evacuated to Australia. Their confreres on Bougainville were not so fortunate. Following the end of World War II, in 1946, the Brothers returned to the Solomon Islands and opened the school at Tenaru, which still exists today.

After years of consolidation, development at Tenaru and the profession of vows by local Brothers, the Marists opened schools at Vanga Point, a Rural Training Centre, and at Rokera on the Island of Malaita. The Brothers' education ministry and community at Rokera closed in 1990. In 1989 the Brothers established an outreach community at Avuavu on the remote weather coast of Guadalcanal. Local, Br Henry Uguni was in the first community. Unfortunately, it was short lived and closed in 1993. The Brothers withdrew from Vanga Point in 2020.



<b>National Identity</b>	Solomon Islands
<b>Capital</b>	Honiara
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Population</b>	708,102
<b>Time Zone</b>	UTC (UTC +11)
<b>Main Religions</b>	Roman Catholic, Anglican, United Church, Seventh Day Adventists, South Sea Evangelical Church, Protestant
<b>Arrival of Marists</b>	1845
<b>Number of Marist Brothers</b>	3
<b>Number of Marist Brothers Communities</b>	1 - Laumanasa
<b>Number of Marist Schools</b>	1 - St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School - Tenaru

## **Today**

There is one community of three Brothers in Honiara. One Brother is studying at the National University and two are involved in the school.

## **Marist Life and Mission Groups (Lay/Brother)**

- Marist Family (Brothers & Lay Families)
- Marist Lay Core Group

## **Marist Ministries and Schools**

- Laumanasa Formation Centre
- St Joseph's Catholic Secondary School - Tenaru

## **Formation**

Laumanasa House (named in honour of one of the first Solomon Islander Brothers) has been the centre of initial formation for the Melanesian Brothers since 1988. During the COVID crisis, it was also a temporary Novitiate. It is hoped that it will resume its original purpose in the near future, as well as provide opportunities for Lay Marist formation.