

Vanuatu

Background

Vanuatu is a Melanesian country 800 kilometres west of Fiji and 1,770 kilometres East of Australia. It consists of 13 principal, and about 67 smaller islands that stretch for 1,300 kilometres. The largest island is Espiritu Santo (or just Santo) which the first Europeans, Portuguese, visited in 1606. In the 1880's both France and the UK claimed parts of the archipelago and in 1906 they agreed to jointly govern it as the New Hebrides. After World War II an independence movement developed and the Republic of Vanuatu was founded in 1980. The people of Vanuatu are referred to as Ni-Vanuatu or Vanuatuan.

Vanuatu's motto is: "Long God Yumi Stanap" (bishlema) - "In God let us stand Tall".

Marist Links

In the areas of strong English control, Presbyterianism became the dominant faith. Similarly, where French influence was strong, such as on the islands of Santo and Malekula, Catholicism dominated. The Marist Fathers first arrived in Vanuatu in 1887.

The Brothers opened a school in Port Vila in 1905. Due to a number of factors, it closed after only 8 years. The Brothers returned in 1991 to conduct a vocational centre, the St Martin De Porres Centre at Lololima. This was staffed by Brothers from New Caledonia, mostly French. They withdrew in 2010. The Brothers are still present at the St Michel Catholic Technical College on Santo.

Community

Four Brothers comprise the community at Santo. Three are Ni-Vanuatu and one is a Solomon Islander. The Brothers' House is



National Identity	Republic State (country) that gained its independence from a colonial government, France and British in 1980.
Capital	Port Vila
Languages	Bislama, French and English
Population	243,304
Time Zone	U.T.C + no daylight saving changes
Main Religions	Christianity (Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Bahá'í Faith, Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Church of Christ, Neil Thomas Ministries (NTM), Jehovah's Witnesses, and others)
Arrival of Marists	1991
Number of Marist Brothers	4
Number of Marist Brothers Communities	1
Number of Marist Schools	None

located at 'Lycee et College Technique St Michel', which is a diocesan school. The Brothers are involved in teaching, both in the academic and technical sections, administration, boarding and the school development projects. In 2020 the savagery of Cyclone Harold destroyed much of the school and the Brothers' house. With the assistance of AMS and the Province the school has been repaired and rebuilt, and a new Brothers' house constructed.

Marist Life and Mission Groups

A Marist group exists with the name, *Champagnat Marist Family*. It consists of Brothers, teachers and students. At the moment there 15 Lay Teachers and over 60 students, boys and girls are involved. The purpose of the group is to deepen the Marist Spirit and strengthen spiritual awareness and life within the school. The group also does outreach work with the sick in the parish and the nearby local communities. It gathers for prayer and helps animate Masses in the Parish.

School Ministry

'Lycee et College Technique St Michel' is a co-educational school and technical college from Years 7 to 12 governed by the Diocese. It has both academic and technical strands. The Technical section helps students develop their skills so they can find employment in fields such as joinery, mechanics, cooking, hospitality, sewing and housekeeping.