



SM bulletin

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REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL FORMATION

The Report on the Review of Marist International Formation 2014 - 2015 by Frs Andrew Murray SM and Noel Connolly SSC was received by ARC in La Neylière in October. The meeting discussed the Report with its recommendations and offered advice on a number of significant issues to be taken up by the Superior General and council.

Although the two international formation communities were the focus of the review, the terms of reference are very broad. They include 'current and potential international formation programs' and 'the quality, consistency and continuity of the whole of initial formation in the Society and the Society's human and financial ability to sustain these programs'.

Significant findings of the Report are:

- The international formation programs in Davao and Rome are functioning well and should be continued and supported.
- In order to ensure the quality, consistency and continuity of formation, there is urgent need for serious work to establish a clear understanding of the principles of Marist formation shared by all those engaged in formation in the Society.
- There is need of a coordinator of Marist formation, either a general councillor or another Marist appointee.
- The International Formation Committee needs to be reconstituted so as to enable significant formators from each of the major formation houses to meet regularly.
- Having formation houses of one or two students is not a viable option for quality formation, so that provinces/districts should seek to cooperate in providing houses of philosophical studies for their students.
- Recognising that English has become the common language of the Society, all Marist students should be given the opportunity to learn English to a high standard.
- A number of recommendations are made on financial issues covering financial reporting and funding. At the present time, financial cost cannot be regarded as an obstacle to the current international formation program.

Detailed consideration of these and other matters are found throughout the Report and in the 42 recommendations made.

The Superior General and his council have now given close consideration to the Report and to the response of ARC and have put in place an action plan to follow up on the recommendations made which will engage them, major superiors and formators for many months to come as they strive together to establish and strengthen further the quality, consistency and continuity of formation in the Society.

Of the 42 recommendations most will be able to be implemented, with the cooperation of the formators in the time before the General Chapter of 2017. A number of recommendations will be followed up at the Formators Workshop in July 2016 in La Neylière. Some, e.g. the change of make-up of the International Formation Committee, will depend on decisions of the next chapter. Others, e.g. the appointment of a coordinator of Marist Formation may require a time of preparation that will lead to final decisions by the next administration. Few may prove unattainable within the present limitations of the Society.

ARC expressed a vote of thanks to Andrew Murray and Noel Connolly for their excellent report and the hard work that led up to it, for the thoroughness and professionalism they brought to their task, and for their generous service to the Society of Mary. For some time to come the Report will form an important reference and guide for the GA, for formators, for major superiors and all those charged with planning and administering our programs of formation from early accompaniment to pastoral placements.

The full text of the Report is available on the Society website, members section - "shared documents" – www.maristsm.org