



MARIST COLLEGE

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COVID FORCED CHANGE, IMPOSED A NEW NORMAL IN ACTUAL FACT BUILD A MARIST FOR ALL SEASONS



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The year, 2021, started off just like any academic year a seminarian would have been prepared for. I began it knowing that this year is a very important part of my time here at Marist College since I have to make serious decision about taking a step further that would take me, if I am called and prepared to the novitiate. I had set goals for the formation year and had started to work towards them.

Towards the end of the first semester the news of a new case of Covid 19 in Nadi brought a significant concern to everyone. I began to wonder what would happen, and the thought of being re-introduced to zoom was not really something that we were all keen on. Within a week lectures were back online. I find it very odd listening to lectures and discussing matters with fellow seminarians and lecturers who are on the other side of the laptop screen. I guess, at the same time, it brought a new dimension to learning that I needed to get used to.

Zoom classes have continued since then and are still what we have now. I must say that it had made me appreciate the lectures more and I am more determined to do better in the classroom. In the normal academic situation of classroom learning, lecturers are better able to deliver their classes and impart their knowledge and students are more effective in carrying out their work given by their lecturers. I imagine that has something to do with the art of communication. We learn from words and from pictures and even from simple things like hand gestures. A lecturer can see a look of puzzlement on the faces of students and can realise that he needs to give a better example or say more so that students will get the point. Body language, eye contact, gesture, even the way someone walks around while they talk all helps a lecturer to get the point across. As a student being there in person allows seeing those gestures, hearing those additional sounds and it makes learning simpler and easier.



Highlights of the week
Fourviere Day—23rd July
Vanuatu Independence Day—30th July
Ecology Wednesday—28th July
Exam Week—2nd-4th of August
St John Mary Vianney Feast Day - 4th August

After a time on Zoom I think that both lecturers and students get a little sleepy, and a little less engaged with the subject matter. It isn't anyone's fault, it is just that face-to-face learning is preferable. But as they say, "Needs Must" and we are all getting to grips with what is practical and possible and doing our best. It can be easy as a student to think that it is not as good for oneself and it is harder to understand the subject matter. I am quite sure it is not as easy as well for the lecturers and we are grateful for their adapting to the situation too.

The new normal of the forced change has created new challenges in studies and has made the learning quite difficult. The access to the physical library has now been reduced to few taps on a computer. I have often heard people say that they much prefer to read a physical book that they are able to hold in their hands than it is to read material online or on any screen.

Part of the difficulty of this new normal is that we have become used to the back and forth of dialogue that occurs in the classroom. Physically seeing another student ask a question is quite different to just getting a small picture of a questioner and possibly a larger of the lecturer.



Did you know?
St. Jean Marie Vianney was a contemporary of Jean Claude Colin..

Upcoming dates to take note of:

August 7th - Jean Claude Colin's Birthday

August 7th - 29th - Term 2 Break

August 27th - Patrice Teguebou's Birthday

August 30th - Mikaele McVery's Birthday

Mid-August—Bulletin #8 - Fr Donato Kivi sm



I think that we have all discovered that studying and having classes is a communal activity and one that is better shared with one's peers. Even the very small interactions as you enter the classroom and you hear another student ask when the assignment is due or what the meaning of the topic of the assignment is helpful to each of us. But none of this happens online, or perhaps very little.

Finally, it is not as easy to take notes in class nor to hear perfectly online or on Zoom. But we are all in the same situation and with the medical conditions as dire as they are in Fiji at the moment this situation is not going to change soon. I really hope that what I am learning and what I am doing to study is not going to mean that I miss the point of lectures or that somehow we all get behind with our studies.

The most important thing for us to do as well as our studies is to act responsibly and avoid doing things that might spread the virus within our community or the country and to get the vaccination as soon as we are offered it. We need to be ready to take up the challenge when it faces us – hopefully that will help us to be adaptable in our Marists years of ministry – hopefully we will be men for all seasons.



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