

SOLIDARITY MATTERS



DECEMBER - 2020



VANUATU RECOVERY APPEAL

Workshop and toilets at St Michel Technical College have been completed.

SANTA TERESINHA PRIMARY, QUELICAI

Br Greg McDonald visits two of our projects in Timor Leste

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60 seconds with...

The chair of our Board, Peter Sheehan





FROM THE CEO

Dear friends,

As we near the end of 2020 it is timely to reflect on the challenges that this year has delivered. Many in our Australian community have faced health and economic consequences of the pandemic, if not directly then certainly through our families and communities. Our Victorian communities in particular have demonstrated resilience and fortitude in the face of significant hardship and are able to look forward to a Christmas with loved ones after many months of separation.

Further afield of course the challenges have been even more devastating. Communities already experiencing vulnerability before the pandemic continue to endure extreme lockdowns with few safety nets, limited health services and little access to government relief. For many it is a choice between compliance with restrictions and survival, particularly for those participating in an informal economy. AMS welcomes the commitments made by the Australian Government to maintain aid and development funding in our region and to ensure that access to a vaccine is available to all those who need it.

However 2020 has also provided us with examples of deep joy and hope. As our catch-cry has echoed #COVID can't stop good! Our project partners have continued to ensure that those experiencing vulnerability are not abandoned and that places of belonging, support, learning and hope are ready to embrace our children and young people the moment they can return. In the meantime there have been visits, food drops, connections with health providers, messages, phone calls, lessons via whatsapp and many other vehicles of solidarity to ensure that young people and their families remain supported and connected. To our partners, thank you for everything you have done and continue to do, inspiring us all to hope and to 'be the change' we wish to see in the world.

And of course no reflection on 2020 is complete without noting the significant support of our AMS friends and donors. Our school networks continued to advocate for our projects and raise funds, even when confined to their kitchen tables and bedroom desks. Our supporters came out in droves to respond to the devastation of Tropical Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu and can read here of the successful renovations already of the mechanical classrooms and boys toilets. Your continued support of AMS has meant that none of our projects lost their ability to support their local communities this year. Along with the Vanuatu updates, you'll find in the following pages news from a range of our partners in Timor Leste and an inspiring story from Vietnam.

The AMS team has been energized and inspired by your support and commitment. We've worked hard and are looking forward to a rest over the Christmas period and will come back refreshed and ready to implement exciting and ambitious plans in 2021. We'll have some changes in our team after farewelling Ash and Leigh (see p 7) and look forward to introducing you to our new team members in the new year.

Until then, have a blessed and joy filled Christmas and a healthy and safe start to the new year.

Yours in Solidarity,

Rebecca Bromhead
CEO



2020 CHRISTMAS APPEAL



Be part of our story of hope this Christmas



We know that the current COVID-19 pandemic has increased the level of vulnerability for all our partner communities across the Asia and Pacific region. At AMS, we believe education is the most powerful catalyst for hope and wellbeing and that the long-term recovery of communities from the current challenges requires a continued investment in quality education for all.

This Christmas, we are asking those who have the capacity to give, to join our AMS circle of hope to ensure that safe learning environments are ready and learning can continue as quickly as possible for vulnerable children and young people in our region.

This year, we were overwhelmed with the support we received from you, our community of supporters, and we wish to share with you a short video on how your support has impacted the lives of the most vulnerable. You can watch it on our Australian Marist Solidarity YouTube Channel.

We believe that education provides the best catalyst for building brighter futures for vulnerable young people and their communities.

Christmas donation gift card

Make a donation in lieu of a gift this Christmas and give vulnerable children a gift of hope.

A gift in lieu is where you make a donation on behalf of someone else. You will then receive this card to give to that person to let them know what their gift is. This is their Christmas present, a gift of hope, ensuring that vulnerable children and young people within the Asia Pacific region are able to access education.

This year, we thank Marcellin College Bulleen for their time and support in producing in this card.

ORDER NOW on our website to give a gift in lieu, simply click on the card, then fill in your details.

The card will be sent to you, for you to write in and then give or send on to the recipient for Christmas.



Our 2021 stories of hope



01 ACCESS FOR ALL

Access to quality education for vulnerable children and young people

- Providing computer classes for vulnerable young people in Uai-Lili, Timor-Leste (*image above*).
- Investing in the education of young Burmese migrants in Thailand.



02 FACILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Investing in infrastructure to ensure safe places for learning

- Installing water tanks to improve hygiene and sanitation in Bougainville.
- Building toilet blocks and communal spaces for a school impacted by climate change in Kiribati (*image above*).



03 RESILIENCE AND READINESS

Supporting community development activities that prepare vulnerable young people to engage with education

- Provide care and support for the girl children of females working in prostitution in the Philippines (*image above*).
- Empower and build the life skills and literacy of young people with a disability in Bangladesh.

To donate and be part of our story of hope visit:

www.australianmaristsolidarity.org.au



ST MICHEL TECHNICAL COLLEGE, VANUATU

RECOVERY APPEAL UPDATE

IMAGE: (L-R) TECHNICAL WORKSHOP DESTROYED BY TC HAROLD, BEFORE IMAGE OF BOYS TOILET BLOCK, INSIDE THE COMPLETED TECHNICAL WORKSHOP, INSIDE THE COMPLETED TOILET BLOCK, THE OPENING OF THE TECHNICAL WORKSHOP, STUDENTS THANKING AMS IN FRONT OF THE TOILET BLOCK

OUR 2020 STORY OF HOPE

On April 6, 2020, Tropical Cyclone Harold made landfall on the island of Espiritu Santo as an intense Category 5 system with sustained winds of 200km/h. St Michel Technical College, which has been supported by the Marist Brothers for 26 years and has 320 students enrolled, was severely damaged. Within 7 months, we have been able to rebuild some of the classrooms, thanks to many generous donors from our Marist Schools Australia network.

On Friday, 23 October, 2020, celebrations occurred at St Michel Technical College, Vanuatu, when the Technical Classrooms re-opened. Thank you so much to everyone who has supported this project.

Joining the recently completed Technical Workshop and Classroom, the boys toilet block has been completed and officially opened at the end of November.

You did it! You really made a difference within 7 months!





Many of you will have spoken with or emailed Leigh Holohan in her role as Communication and Marketing Coordinator over the past 18 months. All of you will have enjoyed the wonderful updates Leigh has prepared, bringing our work and partners into your offices, schools and homes through her vibrant and hope-filled social media updates and publications. AMS thanks Leigh for all of her hard work and wishes her all the best for her future endeavours.

AMS TEAM UPDATE

GOODBYE
AND
THANK
YOU

The AMS community thanks Ash and Leigh for their incredible contribution and wish them all the best for their next chapters.

After seven years we say goodbye to Ashley Bulgarelli

IMAGE: (L-R) FRANCIS MARAI AND BR MARK KENATSI, ON OUR LITTLE BOAT CROSSING THE BUKA PASSAGE.



Seven years at AMS have gone by in the blink of an eye. I have been lucky enough to visit many of the countries we work in and meet the people we work with. From India to Kiribati, the change taking place is inspiring.

My fondest memories are of my two visits to Bougainville to the Marist school St Joseph's College. Crossing the Buka Passage on a small boat; the stifling heat being crammed in the back of an old Landcruiser for the three-hour journey along dirt roads; waiting by the river for hours for the water levels to fall before we cross; all these sensations come rushing back to me whenever I think of Bougainville.

I cannot think of too many more impactful places than St Josephs, which was initially established to educate child soldiers from the Bougainville Crisis.

These beacons of hope shine brighter than ever in a world wading through a once in a generation challenge. I have received countless first-hand reports from our partners who are making immense sacrifices so that they can support vulnerable young people and their families, and this leaves me feeling humbled to be able to make a small contribution to their good work. I leave AMS with nothing but joyful memories and lifelong friends, knowing that we are truly making a difference.

THANK YOU FOR THE AMAZING SUPPORT!

From Nguyen Thai Hung
Training for the Visually Impaired - Vietnam

In Hanoi the Training and Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind (TRCB) offers courses in Therapeutic Massage, Computer Proficiency, English, Business Management and Communication Skills to blind students from the many provinces of Vietnam, thus greatly improving their employment opportunities and capacity to live productive and independent lives.

I was born and grew up in the land that is sunny and windy all year round. The hot sun, the salty winds from the hometown sea have raised and followed me all my life. From my childhood, all 3 of my brothers were born with cataracts. Although our parents took us everywhere for treatment, and we have had lenses replaced by doctors, our eyesight is still extremely limited. In order to be able to study, we always had to face books and just like that, we gradually lost our eyesight. When I finished high school, my eyesight could only distinguish between light and dark.

In 2005, I participated in a course for training teachers of Braille and mobility for the blind, then the traditional massage course in 2006. The two courses at the Center really changed my life, from a blind young man, in a sunny and windy central province, who always had a feeling of inferiority complex, I have become a confident person, actively help and share with my friends who have the same handicap and people around me.

In 2007, I got married with a girl who is also blind, and now we have a son in 7th grade. Besides the joys and happiness of my own family, I have been trusted and elected to be the President of Dong Hoi City association for the Blind. During the past time, It has always been in my heart that I must try my best to help the blind in my hometown reduce suffering. That effort was partly realized by a massage room with 17 massage technicians who are blind regularly working with an average income of 6 million VND/month.

To get the results and success of today, I always remember the merits of the teachers, of the Center for Training and Rehabilitation for the Blind - the common home of the blind in Vietnam. I always remember Mr Truong, a teacher, a brother who has always shared with me not only during my studies but in any difficult situation that I need help with.



IMAGE: NGUYEN THAI HUNG

I always hope that the Center will overcome all difficulties and challenges in the current period and continue to develop in the career of training human resources who are blind for local associations and communities. I also wish all organizations and individuals to know, accompany and share with the Center's career of educating. The Center for Training and Rehabilitation for the Blind is always the pride of Vietnamese blind in the field of training.

VISIT TO SANTA TERESINHA PRIMARY, QUELICAI

It is difficult to imagine that Eskola Santa Teresinha in Quelicai is a regional educational hub for twelve other remote primary schools in the eastern end of Timor Leste. Like all primary schools in Timor Leste, the staff of Santa Teresinha are at the forefront of providing the first line of education for the next generation of children in this developing country. Sadly, they are attempting to do this in less than satisfactory conditions.

The last major building project in the primary school appears to be have been around 1984. Foreign occupation and war, extreme poverty and a lack of basic infrastructure have seen the school fall into dilapidation. Thanks to Australian Marist Solidarity and its donors, Santa Teresinha is now on the road to recovery.

Over the past year, the school has been designated as an AMS development project, to be financially supported by the generosity of a number of donors and Australian Marist Schools including Assumption College Kilmore, Galen Catholic College Wangarratta, Catholic College Sale and Marist College Ashgrove.

Quelicai is a wonderful vibrant community. I had the pleasure of meeting their pastor, Salesian Fr Justiniano De Sousa sdb, and a dedicated team of lay teachers under the direction of principal, Fernando Soares.

On the day I visited, unbeknown to me, it was a national public holiday. However the whole school was assembled to welcome their visitor from Australian Marist Solidarity. The cultural welcome, dancing and singing and presentation of the Timorese tais made me feel very much at home among new friends.

A visit of the classrooms revealed a significant level of physical deterioration and the toll that the annual wet season has taken on the existing structure. Dirt floors and exposed roofing with broken beams and gaps in the metal sheeting have made teaching and learning very challenging, and at times – especially during a regular downpour, almost impossible.

The Santa Teresinha school community is delighted to know that AMS and its donors are now coming to the rescue with much needed financial assistance. Over time, these funds will enable the children and their teachers to thrive in a new learning environment.

I look forward to seeing the change that will help to transform the lives of the children in this great community.

Br Greg McDonald fms
Marist Brothers Timor Leste



VISIT TO ABAFALA

This was a terrific opportunity to see first-hand the extraordinary impact that Australian Marist Solidarity, their sponsors, and our Marist Schools in Australia are having on the lives of hundreds of students and teachers in Timor Leste.

The recently rebuilt Abafala school is a beautiful campus with a very proud principal, Jaime Belo, who cares for his kids and staff and is deeply grateful for the difference that Australian sponsors and school communities like Notre Dame College, Shepparton, Catholic College Sale and Galen Catholic College have provided in enabling a better educational learning environment for his students.

Thanks to Sebas Santos, AMS Project Officer for a great trip.

Br Greg McDonald fms



Marist Brothers Timor Leste



REX CAMBREY EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND



The Tony and Gwyneth Lennon Family Foundation have for many years been supporting bright young students from remote areas of Timor Leste to study at the ICFP Marist Teacher Training College in Baucau. The scholarship fund was created in honour of the former Business Manager of the Melbourne Marist Southern Province, Mr Rex Cambrey.

In 2020 the scholarship has supported two students, Esterlita and Totin. Esterlita is in her final and fourth year, having been supported by the scholarship since she started. Totin is a first year student. Brother Paul Gilchrest, Director of ICFP, notes that both students have shown an impressive dedication and commitment to their studies this year. He joins AMS in thanking the Lennon Family for their ongoing investment in teacher training for Timor Leste.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Marist College, Bendigo

Raising funds for new furniture

Kulugia Primary School has been identified by the then Director of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Baucau (FSJ), Madre Herminia, as the next school needing redevelopment in the district, after St. Terezinha's, Quelicai. This determination was made by considering the catchment area of students and the state of disrepair of the current structure. The school currently has 184 students aged from 6 to 11 years old.

The furniture in the current building has also been identified as an area of concern. In January 2020, staff from AMS visited Kulugia and confirmed the need for new furniture.

There is not enough furniture for the students resulting in some sitting and working on the floor. The furniture that there is, is in a state of disrepair. The tops of desks have holes and deep cuts, making it difficult to write on them. Some of the desks are warped due to being exposed to rain. Chairs are damaged through wear and tear.

In early 2020, Marist College Bendigo approached AMS with an idea to supply new furniture to Kulugia. Bendigo staff and students had spent time during their immersion in Kulugia and had recognised the need for furniture. In October 2020, the new furniture was delivered and ready for the students to use.

*Thank you Marist College
Bendigo!*



IMAGES: (T-B) THE OLD FURNITURE NEEDING REPLACING; THE NEW FURNITURE; MARIST COLLEGE BENDIGO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS RAISING FUNDS

2021 Schools Campaign The Spirit of Solidarity

The focus of our 2021 Schools Campaign will be the building of a new Marist school in Lautem, Timor Leste.

The people of Timor Leste are strong, resilient and value education for their children. Australian Marist Solidarity is excited to work with our Timorese partners to ensure that Timorese children can access a quality education and reach their brightest potential.

The Australian Marist Solidarity 2021 School Campaign Kit will be available early 2021.



Marist School's Australian Donation Dollar initiative



The Australian Mint has recently released a new \$1 coin, the 'Donation Dollar.'

On one side, the new Australian \$1 coin has an image of Queen Elizabeth II. On the back, it's stamped with a message: "Donation Dollar: Give to help others."

The coin, the first of its kind in the world, can be spent like any other money. But its intention is to be shared with people in need and we are asking our Marist friends and supporters to use this great new Aussie initiative to support the work of Australian Marist Solidarity.

If every Marist in Australia donates one dollar in Term 4, we can raise over \$50,000 before 31 December, 2020. Please consider a gold coin collection in your school, ministry or workplace and help us support vulnerable young people in our region to access education.

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHILE YOU ARE AT WORK?

Workplace giving (payroll deductions) is a simple and effective way to have your donation to AMS automatically deducted from your pay on a regular basis. Through Workplace Giving (also known as Payroll Donations or Deductions), employees can nominate an amount to donate each pay period through their company's payroll deduction system.

From as little as the cost of a cup of coffee each pay, you help vulnerable young people in our region reach their brightest potential. At the same time, you can reduce your tax. From Australian Marist Solidarity's perspective, it reduces the administration costs associated with processing donations and provides a regular and reliable income stream that helps us with planning the work that we can commit to each year.

Under a payroll deduction program all donations are made from your pre-taxable income. This is the easiest way to give as you do not need to worry about collecting receipts throughout the year. Please consider whether you might be able to make a regular contribution to ensure that young people in our region can access education and reach their brightest potential.

There are five easy steps for organising your payroll donation:

1. Check with your employer and confirm they support Workplace Giving.
2. Download the Workplace Giving Form and give the completed form to your payroll manager.
3. Instruct your payroll manager to deduct your nominated donation amount from your pre-tax salary each pay period.
4. Ensure your payroll manager has the correct bank account details for them to transfer your donation:
 - Account name: Australian Marist Solidarity
 - BSB: 062 000 Acct: 1628 5262
5. Request the payroll manager to forward the authorisation form to us.

To find how you can Workplace Give visit
www.australianmaristsolidarity.org.au

“Back in 2011 our daughter went on an immersion program to Timor-Leste. As part of this the whole family got involved in learning more about where she was going and what she was going to be doing while in Timor.

We often get asked to donate money to different wonderful causes but this allowed us to see firsthand through our daughter's stories and photos, and the ongoing photos since, how donating to Marist Solidarity was being used. By simply having a small amount of money taken out of my wage each week, I can contribute to Marist projects that benefit children around the world and to see happy faces on children as their new school is being built makes it all worthwhile. And the other bonus is it is tax deductible.”

Jenny
Teacher, Victoria

*Aaloka is 11 years old, she comes from the Tea Garden Estate in Bangladesh. Marists in this area are providing much needed access to education for young people like her. Aaloka's favourite subject is English.

Australian Marist Solidarity supports the St Marcellin School which provides free education and boarding to tea garden children that enables them to break the cycle of poverty and rise above the bonded life that they were born into.

Women working in the tea fields must work quickly and delicately to pick the top tea leaves from the bushes. The work is strenuous and poorly paid. St Marcellin School seeks to break this cycle of indentured labour and proves access to education for some of the most marginalised children.

**name changed to protect identity*



BOARD UPDATE

AMS is lucky to be governed by a committed and skilled group of Directors. We thought it might be helpful to share with you a brief update from the Board from time to time in this publication. In our last edition we introduced you to our newest Board Director, Mr Norman Chan. Later in this edition you'll find a profile of our Board Chair, Mr Peter Sheehan. A full list of our Board Directors is on our website.

The AMS Board of Directors held their last meeting for the year on the 18th November. They started with a half day retreat with Br Graham Neist, revisiting the purpose for AMS and exploring their connection to the mission and vision of the organisation. They then considered a number of matters, including the following:

- After checking in with current legislation and best practice, AMS completed the renewal of its Conflict of Interest, Complaints Management, Environmental Impact and Delegations of Authority Policies, with some minor updates to the format and content.
- The Board also approved a new policy, the Procurement and Supply Chain Policy, providing a set of principles to guide ethical purchasing practices in the organisation.
- The Board acknowledged the contribution of two departing staff members, Ashley Bulgarelli and Leigh Holohan, wishing them well for their next endeavors.
- The Board thanked the Marist Brothers Province and Association Councils for their contribution to AMS' work, particularly during a challenging economic climate.

- The Board approved a major proposal for investment in the facilities at St Joseph's College, Mabiri (Bougainville). This approval allows AMS to start seeking funds for the project, which will still take some time to confirm.
- The Board noted plans for fundraising activities in 2021, including the development of a multi-year Fundraising Strategy and was updated on progress for the recruitment of a new Fundraising and Grants Coordinator.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank three Board directors who retired earlier this year. Br Anthony Robinson, Mr David L'Estrange and Mr Richard Ward each contributed significantly to the organisation over many years. Br Anthony was a founding board director of AMS, David also contributed for many years on our Community Engagement and Fundraising Committee and Richard is still involved as a member of our Finance and Risk Committee. We thank each of them for their service.



OPERATIONS UPDATE

A lot goes on behind the scenes in our little office in Brisbane in order to support the wonderful partners and projects that you have come to know and love. Just a few things happening at the moment include:

- A review of all AMS procedures documents (and there are a lot!) and compilation into a comprehensive AMS Operational Procedures Manual. We would like to thank volunteer Anne-Marie Hunter for her coordination of this large project.
- The development of an implementation plan to guide the implementation of our new Safeguarding Policy and related procedures. This includes, for example, a new requirement for the completion of an online training module for all staff, volunteers, Board and Committee members. It also includes guidance on ensuring that we communicate the new policy in ways that are relevant and practical for our project partners.
- Preparation for our next accreditation process with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).
- Exciting preparation for the 2021 Schools Campaign Kit, providing activities and resources to schools who wish to learn more about the challenges for young people trying to access quality education in Timore Leste and support the development of the new Marist School in Lautem, Timor Leste.
- The finalization of a Theory of Change and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework for AMS. This will help us measure our impact better – and then be able to then share more detail about the impact of your support with you!

60 SECONDS WITH...

Peter Sheehan, AMS Board Chair

How did you come to know about/connect with AMS?

I am a very proud past student of Marist College Ashgrove (graduating class 1976). Over the years I have been involved in various roles with the Old Boys Association and more recently with the College itself as a parent. In 2013 I was approached by Br. Chris Wells to join the Advisory Council for Marist Asia Pacific Solidarity (MAPS) and later that year I was invited by Br. Jeff Crowe and Br Al Sherry to join the Board of AMS

What aspects of AMS' work are you most passionate about?

At AMS we believe that education holds the key to transforming lives and communities. I am most passionate about those projects that build resilience and provide care and support for the most vulnerable, empowering them to take their own path to development through other more formal education and training programs conducted by our in-country local partners.

What is your role with AMS?

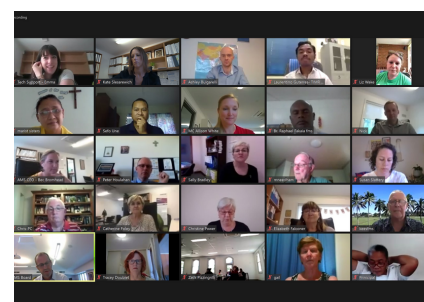
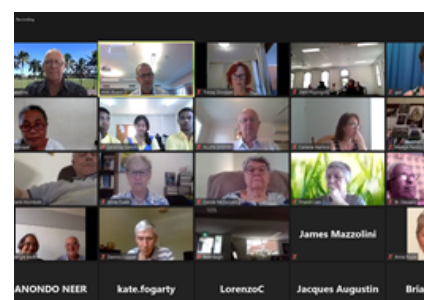
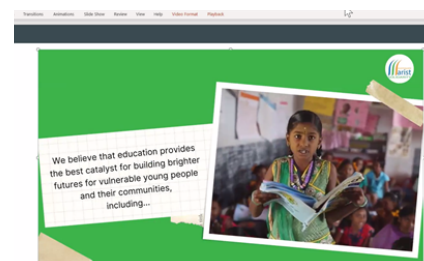
I am currently the Chair of AMS Board.



Why do you support AMS?

Our vision says it all for me "a world that reflects Marists' desire that vulnerable young people are brought towards the centre from the margins through access to education".

THANKS FOR
JOINING OUR
2020 NATIONAL
CHRISTMAS
GATHERING!



We can't wait to see you
in person in 2021!



OUR PROJECTS NEED ONGOING SUPPORT

Please consider making a monthly donation to AMS.
This enables us to better plan for the support we can
provide our projects.

DONATE TODAY



To make a cash, cheque or credit card
donation fill out the form below and mail
to:

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PO Box 273, Ashgrove West QLD 4060

Make direct deposit donations to:
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☐ I wish to make a one-off donation



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my nominated card each month.

*Regular donations are debited from your credit card or bank account
automatically on the 15th of every month, with a receipt for the total
annual contribution issued at the end of each financial year.*

To make a cash, cheque or credit card donation fill out this
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PO Box 273, Ashgrove West Q 4060

Make direct deposit donations to:
Account name:

Australian Marist Solidarity
BSB: 062 000 Acct: 1628 5262

Please email the details of your donation to:
ams@marists.org.au

Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode:

Email: _____

I wish to donate:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ Other _____

Credit card details:

Expiry date: /

Donations over \$2 are tax
deductible

Name on card: _____

☐ I would like to receive more information about including Australian Marist Solidarity in my will

Donate online at www.australianmaristsolidarity.org.au



"WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND IS NOT
WHAT IS ENGRAVED IN STONE
MONUMENTS, BUT WHAT IS
WOVEN INTO THE LIVES OF
OTHERS."
Pericles

Remember Australian Marist
Solidarity in your will.

For further information
please visit
www.australianmaristsolidarity.org.au

Solidarity Matters
December 2020

Cover Image
AMS 2020 Christmas Gift Card designed by
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EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE MARGINS THROUGH
EDUCATION AND TRAINING