



# SM bulletin

Thursday, 19 July 2018

## FATHER JOHN JAGO SM (1932-2018) SUPERIOR GENERAL 1985-1993



John Jago was born in Grafton, NSW, Australia, on 1 September 1932. After completing his schooling at St John's College, Lismore, he studied law at the University of Adelaide. He then practiced in Sydney for five years. In 1961 he entered the Marist Fathers' seminary, Toongabbie. His novitiate was at the Marist Novitiate, Armidale, where he was professed on 2 February 1964. He was ordained priest at St Patrick's, Church Hill, on 19 August 1967.

From 1968 to 1971 he pursued studies in moral theology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, from where in 1975 he was awarded an S.T.D. for his dissertation on J.H. Newman, "Freedom of Conscience and Vatican II". The paramount place of conscience in our lives and in God's dealings with the human person remained foundational for John. He joined the staff of Marist College, Burnie, in 1971 and was the principal there from 1973-78. In 1979

he lectured in moral theology at the Catholic Theological College, Sydney.

Twenty years in John's life as a Marist priest involved public leadership, in Australia and in Rome. He was provincial superior of Australia for six years from 1979 to 1985. The 1985 General Chapter elected him superior general. At the time of his becoming general the membership of the Society reached its highest number but John was acutely aware that the future would be one of significant change, including diminishment in many areas, and he urged the Society to plan for that future in a creative, realistic and proactive way. To John has been attributed the insight, repeated at recent general chapters, "*the status quo has no future*".

It was during his mandate the General Administration oversaw the final approval and publication of the 1987 Constitutions and the republishing of the 1872 Constitutions; established the mission districts of Africa and Peru-Venezuela; inaugurated a centre of Marist Studies and Renewal in Rome; and encouraged a burgeoning of Marist research and publications. John's letters to the Society expressed a central conviction of his for the Society: the Marian call for Marists to be instruments of mercy. Another of his convictions, reflected in his manner of leading, was that true leadership enables and encourages leadership in others – at the local, community and individual levels.

In 1994 he joined the community and pastoral team at St Patrick's, Church Hill, where he remained until 1999. The following year he joined the Ashgrove-Herston community where he undertook retreat, reconciliation and moral advice work. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2005. Because of the side effects from the cancer treatment and increasing hearing and balance problems, he retired from active ministry in 2006, taking up residence in the community of "Montbel" at Hunters Hill. John died peacefully at the Southern Cross Aged Care facility, Marsfield, on 17 July 2018.

As his confrere from Australia, Fr Tom Ryan, has written, "John Jago was a man with a strong character, insight, determination and a vision for the Church. This was coupled with a courtesy and graciousness in his relationships with others. John was a man of faith, whose persistent hope and a deep love for God and for the Society of Mary threaded through his life and his leadership."

*Well done, good and faithful servant, may you enter into the joy of your Lord.*