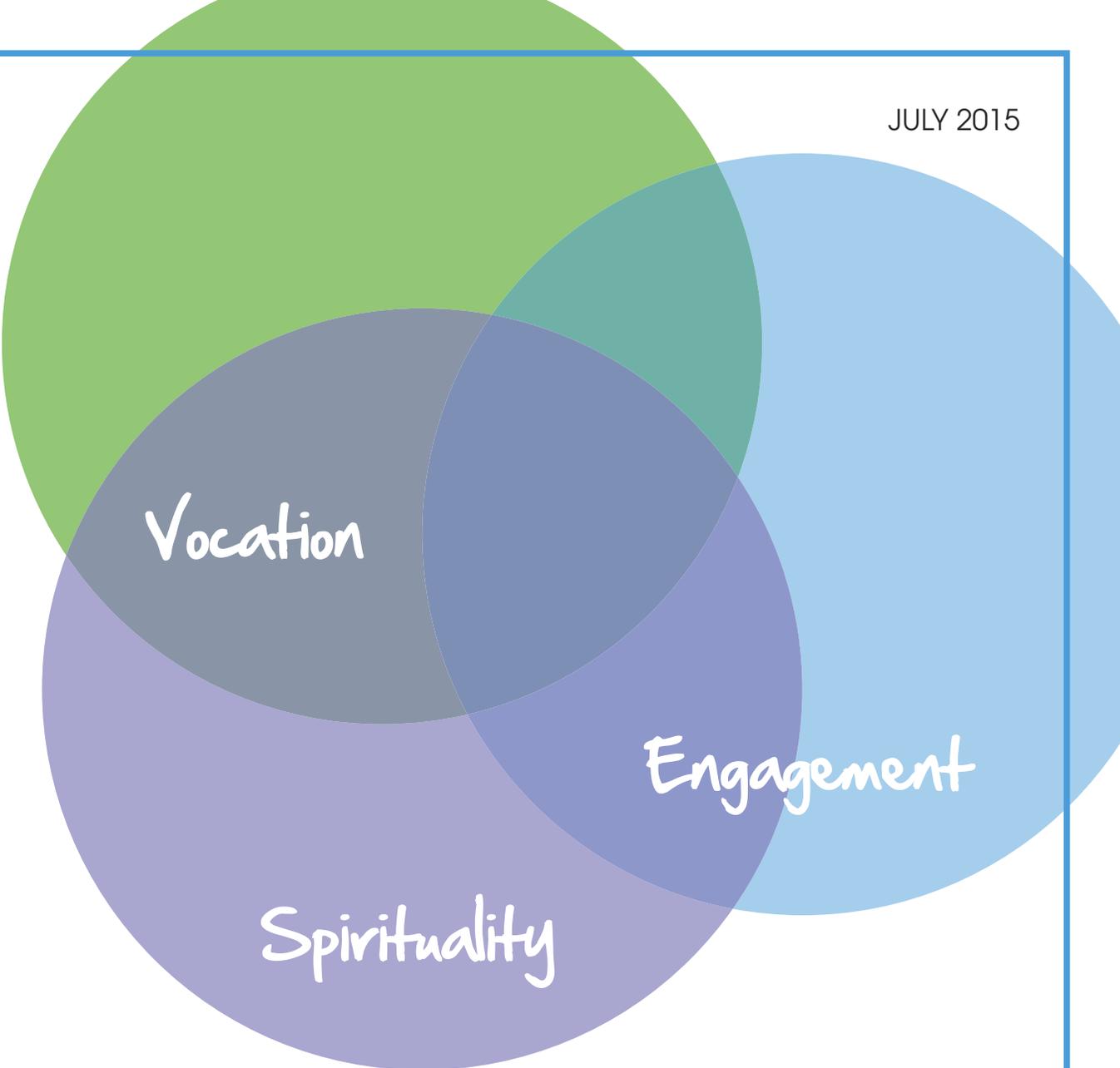


JULY 2015



Vocation

Engagement

Spirituality

# CHAMPAGNAT

AN INTERNATIONAL MARIST JOURNAL OF CHARISM IN EDUCATION

volume 17 | number 02 | 2015

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Inside:

- A North-South Conversation
- Responding to "Laudato Si"

*Champagnat: An International Marist Journal of Charism in Education*  
aims to assist its readers to integrate charism into education in a way that gives great life  
and hope. Marists provide one example of this mission.

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# Champagnat

An International Marist Journal of Charism in Education

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*in my view...*

## EDITORIAL:

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**I**t is July and most things in the garden here in the south are dormant. The cold settles in and plants rest. The garden beds, which fill with bright roses and lush vegetation later in the year when everything flourishes, for now are sleeping with the odd rose braving the weather. But take a closer look at the garden and there are pockets of lushness, tiny purple flowers with golden centres peeping out between rounded green leaves. They sit at ground level and don't command attention. Rather they act as a backdrop and accompaniment to the showier plants. They are violets, which in their smallness and inconspicuousness reflect the glory of God and his work in creation. It is no wonder that they are used as symbols by Marists who focus on doing good quietly.

Finding modesty, simplicity and humility in our world is very like finding the violets in the garden. You need to have the eyes to see them and an appreciation of the gentle power of their virtues. So many things and people clamour for our attention; arrogance and pretentiousness have great currency in our society. In the glare of celebrity or fame the subtleties of virtues can become almost invisible just like the small violets standing at the foot of dazzling roses. For Marists there is a double challenge; to both live the virtues and to see and value them in others when the rest of the world seems to push us towards meeting our own ego driven needs or makes celebrities of often vacuous and insubstantial people.

For Marists living the virtues is not an excuse to withdraw from life. After all Champagnat was not the founder of a contemplative order. His challenge to the earliest brothers and to us, is hold to the virtues with the tenacity of the violets which grow wild in his home the Loire Valley. To extend our reach into new places, offer growth in new patches so that the virtues will be found everywhere. There is a vigour about this which has us searching for new ways to live out Champagnat's vision, new ways of bringing Christ into the hearts and lives of those around us.

Recently we will have celebrated Champagnat day. Most Marist schools will have found ways to highlight those members of their communities who embody the virtues and model the Marist characteristics. These are the violets in the gardens of our schools. The often quiet ones, who allow others to shine, who contribute without seeking acclaim. Many such people are reflected in the pages of this journal; students and staff who offer themselves in uncomplicated ways to build strong communities and to bear witness to God's movement in our lives.

A single violet is of course pretty, but barely worthy of note, violets are best in bunches, sharing their beauty together.

**Lee McKenzie,  
Lavalla Catholic College,  
Traralgon, Victoria.**

# CONTRIBUTORS:

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## OVERVIEW:

**T**his edition of the Champagnat Journal seeks to develop the theme of people reflecting and writing in terms of the present moment. That is, reflecting and writing on a number of events that come into our lives each day. Our response as Christians, as Marists, as citizens of this universe calls us to be authentic, to respect the other, and to respond when the values and beliefs that we hold as central to our lives and to our mission are challenged. Such a response is for us, as Christians, directly tied to the characteristics of our Christian ministry. These characteristics have the potential to move mountains and focus on the following:

- Ministry is always centred on doing something positive: for God and neighbor just as the contributors for this edition of the Champagnat Journal have done through their reflection and writing skills.
- Our ministry is always undertaken for the advent and presence of the kingdom of God;
- Ministry is a public action on behalf of the Christian community;
- It is a gift received in faith, and through the Sacraments such as Baptism, Matrimony or Ordination; and
- It is an activity with its own limits and identity existing within a diversity of ministerial actions.

The Church is called to encourage real universality of ministry and not reduce it to symbols and metaphors or casual kindness. Despite the wide range of topics raised in the context of this journal, all of the writers seek to reflect and respond in the context of their calls to ministry, and we thank them for this important contribution. Such action on their part has the potential to nourish our Marist ministry in the context of the here and now; in the context of the present moment.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS:

**Lee McKenzie** is a member of the Leadership Team at Lavalla Catholic College in Traralgon in Victoria. Her reflection in our Editorial challenges us to reflect on how the environment speaks to us

about our own ministries in a Marist context.

**Peter Keegan** is a lecturer at Macquarie University in Sydney. He participated in the recent Australian Marist Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and France. He reflects on the impact of the visit to Champagnat territory in southern France and what it says to us today.

**Brother Robert O'Connor** is a Marist Brother and Spiritual Director based in Sydney. In his reflection he skillfully presents a story that is related to the whole question of scripture speaking to us, and being a source of hope in our own ministries.

**Debra Vermeer** is a free-lance journalist who writes for a number of religious groups including the Good Samaritan Sisters. Debra's short report is on the recent talk given by Professor Margaret Somerville at Notre Dame University in Sydney. The topic is tied to the current agenda and discussion taking place with regard to euthanasia and assisted suicide. Professor Somerville is an Australian, and regarded as an expert on the legal, medical and ethical implications of this issue. It is a debate that all of us, as Marists associated with the education of young people, should be aware of and competent to discuss this life issue with those we are responsible for.

Both **Bishop Gerard Holohan** and **Bishop Michael Kennedy** respond in two different papers to the recent encyclical of Pope Francis titled *'Laudato Si'*. This is an important statement by the Pope and one that encompasses our call to respond to the needs of the present moment.

Bishop Holohan is the Bishop of Bunbury in Western Australia, and an affiliated member of the Marist Brothers. His response to the encyclical is in the form of a Pastoral Letter to all the members of his diocese. It is a beautiful letter, and one that has the potential to challenge all of us, and those that we live and work with.

Bishop Kennedy's paper provides another response to the encyclical. Bishop Kennedy is the Bishop of Armidale in New South Wales. The paper has been offered for publication through the

Australian Catholic Press Association (ACPA). Bishop Kennedy is Chair of Catholic Earthcare Australia, and a member of the Australian Bishops Committee for Justice, Ecology and Development.

**Brother Richard Dunleavy** and **Brother Andre Lanfrey** are both Marist Brothers, the former is a New Zealander, and the latter is a Frenchman. Brother Richard is a former Provincial of New Zealand and a former General Councilor during the mandate of the late Brother Charles Howard. Br Andre has also had significant leadership roles primarily in Europe, and more recently has been associated with the International Patrimony Committee of the Marist Brothers.

In the first of a two-part series, these two men of great wisdom discuss the current revision of the Constitutions of the Marist Brothers. Obviously such a process needs to be tied to our patrimony, and one of the significant insights in this discussion is how both men can weave a thread through the past

to help address the present moment of our history as Marists: both as Brothers and as Lay-Marists.

**Christopher Maoudis** is a senior teacher at Marist College North Shore in Sydney. In 2014 he participated in the Australian Pilgrimage to the birth-place of the Marist Institute, and used the experience as part of the requirements to complete his Master's degree through the Australian Catholic University. The extract of his paper clearly suggests that not only was the pilgrimage important for him by way of completing his studies, but important because it helped him to articulate the key principles of being Marist and a leader in a school community that seeks to educate young people within the charism of St Marcellin Champagnat.

Our gratitude to these contributors and for their Christian ministry in the context of the theme and discussion within this publication.

**Br Tony Paterson**

## THANK YOU

Our gratitude to those who have contributed papers to this edition, and to the proof-readers and to those who have assisted with the peer-review process. The Management Committee.

PETER KEEGAN

# Embracing the Present Moment

## 1. AUSTRALIAN MARIST PILGRIMAGE

As Michael Green contextualised our pilgrimage thus far, the Marial and apostolic dimensions of Marcellin's spirituality situate their roots *not* in the General Chapter House (Rome EUR), not in the Chapel of the Virgin where the Fourviere pledge was sworn (Lyon), *not even* in the home of Champagnat and his fledgling community of men and boys (La Valla), but in Marcellin's heart. The Marist spirituality seems very much an expression of self, with others – “all for Jesus through Mary, all to Mary for Jesus.” It is hard not to recognise the in-working of the Spirit in the *naissance* of the Marist movement: how a group of young men – men nurtured by women of strength and simplicity and daunting capacity, women like Marie-Therese-Chirat, women in many ways very much like Mary for Jesus – came to seek out a way of being at one with self and of living in community under the nurturing gaze of Notre Dame, of the Mater Dei Genetrix, striving through hard labour (the wearing down of the Roche, the building of the Hermitage, the reclamation of the woodland bordering the Gier), through a redefined catechetical curriculum of instruction and service (devising and developing an authentic, innovative mode of education, formulating a set of principles and articulating a spectrum of practices that embodied a new Order of community), and through a dynamic outpouring of this labour and catechesis out of which emerged a missionary zeal for evangelisation. Here at Notre Dame de L'Hermitage we who travel in pilgrimage with the Marist charism – priestly, fraternal, sororal, and lay (married and single) – are privileged to partake of the selfsame spirituality. We can only hope that something of the spark that burned within Marcellin and Barthélemy and Bonaventure and Jean-Baptiste and Jean-Laurent and Louis and Stanislaus and Avit, within Francis de Sales and Jean-Baptiste De La Salle and Jean-Baptiste-

Marie Vianney, will catch in our hearts and tend the tinder of our own work and family and friendships and living in and of this oh-so-volatile and fragile and dangerous world: a renewal of Church in heart and soul and mind and spirit, an ongoing incarnation of intellect and belief in thought, word and deed. Indeed, we pilgrims find ourselves afforded the opportunity through personal and shared experiences of entering into the related modes of contemplation and action that lie at the heart of Marcellin's Marian apostolic intuition-charism-spirituality.

How appropriate that we find ourselves in the bountifully-watered, vitally verdant valley of the Gier – a revitalising and sustaining landscape feeding hungry spirits fatigued amid the weft and warp and gyre of *doing*; a place pregnant with promise, life-giving in defiance of the world of wire and steel hidden from view mere moments away, industrial St. Chamond; a garden mystical and *alive*, in full bloom, field and flower, root and branch, fed by waters that spring from the rock of Terra Mater, Gaia-Maria, she who gave birth to the New Age, she who *gives* birth to new ways of being through her children, through us, with the Father, in Jesus, through the Spirit. Here, in this peaceful plenitude, held still in space and time, we renew the *mystery* of holiness, wholeness, one and many – a secret truth revealed in the divinity of our humanness, a *ministry* of service in faith, with hope, through love. *This* is the heritage of the Hermitage: defining the nature of our ongoing spiritual journey toward meaning in our relationships with God and family and church and community, through prayer and reflection and *action*. Perhaps in the same way that the evangelising mission of the Little Brothers of Mary responded to the socio-political, cultural-economic, moral and intellectual climate of post-revolutionary France, so may the pilgrimage passion permeating our Hermitage experience speak to the complexities, contestations and

conflicting calls of the post-modern (some say, post-human) age. Gifted, graced, and (potentially? potently?) transformed, we are called to build *and* draw together the Body of Christ as a (re)new(ed) Church. Like the Pentecostal wind that stirs the trees of the valley, like the living waters that feed the springs of farm and townhouse, stable and

village square, so it may be that we will take with us from this place a little something, something *petit* and special and newly formed, something of the heart spring that birthed the Little Brothers, something of Marcellin for *our* world.

**Peter Keegan**

BR ROBERT O'CONNOR

## Embracing the Present Moment

### 2. 'COME AND SEE A MAN WHO HAS TOLD ME EVERYTHING I HAVE EVER DONE!' [John 4:29]

**I**rene, a remarkable Cenacle Sister, was my lecturer and guide during a period of renewal at Loyola University of Chicago some years ago now. Despite regular times of Spiritual Direction together, it was not until she guided me through an eight day Retreat as part of the programme, that she challenged me to “leave aside the books, even the reading of the scriptures” that filled my days, to simply sit in the garden or prayer room and ‘be still’; and when next we met for direction she posed the question that has stayed with me for many years now “Tell me about little Robbie!”

Bemused for a moment, at the time, but having pondered this experience many times since, I came to see where she was keen for me to go: out of my adult, controlling, somewhat arrogant duplicitousness, to try to recapture something of the innocence, simplicity, exuberance and passion of the journey from small boyhood to adolescence, to mature adult, that had brought me to the time and place we now shared.

Memories flooded in; memories I had not visited for a very long time; memories of family delights and sadness, of fears and anxieties in the years of my young life. I even recalled that fateful day in kindergarten when ashamed of asking to ‘go to the toilet’ I wet my pants – the embarrassment of the occasion revisited me even amidst the chuckles of memories shared. Then there was the early evidence of a degree of entrepreneurship as I marketed the tiny loaves of bread (scones!) my mother had prepared for me - aged 4 - to load

aboard my tiny wooden cart and to ply trade up and down our street – just a penny each!

On my return home from the USA, and some few years later, during the Great Exercises of St Ignatius, my director Sister Marnie Kennedy suggested I take the story of the Samaritan Woman [John 4:4-26] for my hour of meditation one very balmy afternoon.

Aridity was the name of the game that day! Discomfort and a desperate need for coolness were the preoccupying emotions that still come back to me. Despite constantly re-reading the story, desperately trying to ‘switch on’ to the sense of place and persons in the story – nothing, absolutely nothing was happening!

Until, out of nowhere, unannounced, unaccounted for, many of the ‘skeletons’ of my past began to rattle around in my memories – limitations, recklessness, infidelities, shallowness, and a great sense of shame descended on me! With the hour almost completed I decided that a good way to rid myself of these unwanted distractions would be, to one more time re-read the story – slowly and with feeling!

What astounded me then and has continued to be a gift of memory, was that when I opened the Scriptures to re-read the episode, the words that my eyes first lit upon, was the sentence from the Samaritan woman to her neighbours in the village: “come and see a man who has told me everything I have ever done!”

It was a moment of one of those gifts, that are

not all that uncommon in the Great Exercises – a moment of insight, illumination, and liberty. There were many emotions and not a few tears that afternoon and for some days to follow – a sense that this me, here and now, is the one that Jesus loves, not some cardboard cut-out, good ‘brother’ but a flawed, wounded, damaged seeker, for whom all these experiences that life had served up, had all been part of the shaping process; that the person Jesus loves unconditionally is not just the person of these latter years but indeed, the puling infant, the charming toddler, the emerging risky adolescent, the confused and weak young adult, the stumbling arrogant young religious – all of which each one of

us probably is and has been. “I have called you by your name, you are mine...I have carved you in the palm of my hand...and I love you!”

Yes, Irene’s question was and remains for me deeply relevant, as I continue to reflect on what the journey of my life has been, how at each stage it has meant to be, and how each stage has been relevant and gift!

Jesus invited each of us at a certain time in our lives to “Follow me!”

At no time did he suggest we had to be perfect, just willing to “come and see!”

**Br Robert O'Connor**

DEBRA VERMEER

## Embracing the Present Moment

### 3. A DANGEROUS SHIFT: Euthanasia a dangerous, radical shift in society’s foundational values

**E**uthanasia is not an incremental change to current end-of-life practices, but a radical and massive shift in our society’s and civilisation’s foundational values, says internationally renowned Australian ethicist, Margaret Somerville.

Dr Somerville, who is a Professor of Law, Professor in the Faculty of Medicine, and Founding Director of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, was speaking at the University of Notre Dame (Sydney), as part of a series of public lectures on ethical issues surrounding euthanasia and assisted suicide during her recent visit to Australia.

Her presentation focused on lessons to be learnt from the debate in Canada, where the Supreme Court earlier this year struck down a ban on doctor-assisted suicide for mentally competent Canadian patients with terminal illnesses.

She said one of the key arguments of pro-euthanasia advocates was that euthanasia is no different to medical treatments, such as palliative sedation, that are already widely practised.

“When used correctly as part of palliative care,

palliative sedation is not euthanasia,” she said. “In palliative sedation as part of standard palliative care, physicians often allow the patient to become conscious from time to time and use the lightest possible sedation consistent with relieving suffering. As well, it’s only used as a last resort, and not often.”

Dr Somerville said acting with an intention to kill is “different-in-kind” from allowing a natural death and that doctors are one of the groups most opposed to euthanasia.

She said in The Netherlands, where euthanasia is legal, there is so much resistance by physicians to carrying it out that the government has had to set up “mobile euthanasia units” to visit homes and attend to euthanasia requests.

“Euthanasia is not just an incremental expansion of current ethically and legally accepted end-of-life decisions, such as refusals of life-support treatment, as pro-euthanasia advocates argue,” she said.

“It seems that most politicians and many Canadians do not recognise the momentousness of a decision to legalise euthanasia. It’s not

incremental change, but rather a radical and massive shift in our society's and civilisation's foundational values."

Dr Somerville said another pro-euthanasia strategy to be resisted is the euphemising of euthanasia by calling it "medical treatment" and "medically assisted death".

"Euthanasia is not medical treatment. Defining it as such presents serious dangers to patients, the trust-based physician-patient relationship, and medicine," she said.

The medicalisation of assisted suicide establishes suicide as a legitimate response to suffering, thus endorsing suicide, Dr Somerville said. Studies have shown that more honest language such as "state-sanctioned suicide" or "physicians killing their patients" reduces public support for deliberately inflicted death.

"Words matter," she said. "Language affects emotions and intuitions, including moral intuitions, which are important to ethical decision-making."

Drawing on the Canadian experience, Dr

Somerville said the appeal to individual autonomy, to empathy and compassion, and the promotion of the idea that death is actually a benefit to someone whose life is affected by illness, were all pro-euthanasia arguments to be vigorously resisted.

She said the dangers of legalised killing to society as a whole must outweigh individual circumstances.

"Euthanasia is special (among ethical debates) because there's nothing new about it. We've always got old, suffered, become terminally ill, been dying and somebody could have killed us, and we said 'No, that is wrong. We don't do that.'

"So that's why euthanasia is so important. Because if we change that, we're changing the very roots of our society. I think we're changing the essence of what it means to be human if we start killing each other."

Dr Somerville's presentation at The University of Notre Dame was a joint initiative of the Faculties of Medicine and Law and the University's Institute for Ethics and Society.

**Debra Vermeer**

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BISHOP GERARD HOLOHAN – BISHOP OF BUNBURY

# Responding to *Laudato Si*

## Pastoral Letter

### LET US REFLECT ON OUR COMMON HOME

**O**ur Holy Father, Pope Francis, has written a new encyclical about the environment, our common home with all other human beings and creatures, entitled 'Praise be to you, Lord'. The Pope is calling for a new conversation involving the whole of humanity on 'care for our common home'.

I urge all Catholics to read the encyclical and to discuss its ideas whenever opportunities arise in their families and among their friends, neighbours,

clubs and places of work and sport. In essence, the encyclical gives an overview of the environmental problems we face and invites reflection from the perspective of basic Catholic moral teaching.

#### THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATE OF OUR COMMON HOME

Many, I know, have been as reserved as I have been about the environmental claims of political and ideological groups and parties. The first chapter of the encyclical, entitled 'What is happening to

our common home?’ gives the first non-political non-ideological description I have read about the extraordinary damage being done to our shared environment by humanity. It deals with world-wide

- pollution and climate change
- the diminishing quantity and quality of water
- the loss of biodiversity and its longer term adverse consequences
- the decline in the quality of human life and social breakdown
- global inequality.

Though it is based on a solid scientific consensus, the encyclical is not a scientific document, and does not take sides in scientific debate. However, the overall scale of its description of environmental problems is bracing.

### GOSPEL OF CREATION

The second chapter of the document reflects upon Catholic teaching on the human inter-relationship with the environment. The Pope’s emphasis on Catholic moral teaching about the dignity of the human person highlights where the encyclical parts company with those so-called ‘green’ movements and political parties which ignore human dignity. As the Pope writes [Laudato Si 90]

At times we see ... more zeal is shown in protecting other species than in defending the dignity which all human beings share in equal measure.

### WHAT THE POPE REJECTS

Pope Francis rejects environmental approaches which treat humanity as if it is harmful *per se* to the environment; fail to take into account genuine human needs (as distinct from ‘wants’), especially those of the poor; blame the world’s environmental problems on population growth and seek to justify the killing of the unborn.

The Pope points out that the benefits of scientific progress and technology have not been evenly spread. As a result, twenty percent of wealthier materialistic societies of the world today, over-consume well beyond their moral entitlement to the resources of the earth. These nations, which include Australia, owe an ‘ecological debt’ to the rest of the world. They are obliged to correct environmental damage for which they are responsible.

Advocating population reduction is simply advocating the reduction in the number of people

who are entitled to their fair share of the earth’s resources, as God intended for creation.

### BASIC HUMAN DIGNITY

The Pope stresses that the earth is our shared home. He insists that any discussion of the environment must include the dignity of the human person. He points to Catholic moral principles which flow from it, including the Principles of the Common Destination of Goods and the Common Good.

The Principle of the Common (or Universal) Destination of Goods insists that everyone on Planet Earth is entitled to the basic necessities of life from the earth’s resources. This precedes the principle of the right to private property.

The Principle of the Common Good insists that human individuals (and groups) share in common certain basic and inalienable rights to what they need for their personal integral development. The ‘common good’ is not giving precedence to the majority over the minority, but the ‘good’ to which individuals are entitled in common with all others.

These moral principles conflict with contemporary pervasive economic policies, such as rationalist economics, which put profits before people and see people’s value in economic terms. From a moral perspective, economic policies should seek to serve the dignity and rights of people and never view people as economic units.

A range of moral issues follow from these principles. They include the family, the right to employment, migration and the cultures of indigenous people. Moral economic thinking, for example, will not see it as just to penalise those on low incomes to address economic challenges and reverses.

### ISSUES IN OUR DIOCESE

There are many controversial issues in our Diocese, issues which have been and continue to be the subject of critical debate but which nevertheless need to be reflected upon from a human-environmental moral perspective. Examples include the excessive use of fertilisers, the local impact of the Wagerup alumina refinery, the logging of old growth forests, subsidies for farmers, the need for renewable energies, the best of good farming land being subdivided for housing - to name a few. I am not suggesting that I am taking sides in these controversies, but making the point

that the moral perspectives identified by Pope Francis need to be included in the debates.

The moral resolution of these controversies should not include solutions which are incompatible with human rights, including that to employment. Economic thinking which focusses upon human dignity and rights will lead to different solutions over time.

Then there are issues related to personal overconsumption and waste for each of us. While many in our society are 'doing it tough', do the wardrobes of others show perfectly good clothes not being used because they are no longer fashionable? Do our young give up perfectly good iPhones and other technologies to buy 'the latest'? Would we not be better to forgo fashions and 'the latest' and give the money spent on these to Project Compassion or Caritas for the benefit of the hungry and poor?

## A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

These are but a few examples of issues and questions the encyclical raises for people in our Diocese. There are many others. To promote further reflection, I have asked our diocesan Adult Faith Education Team to prepare discussion booklets for parishioners.

The Pope says much about how the environmental challenges we face need to be addressed – but my purpose here is simply to encourage Catholics to reflect on the implications of the encyclical for the south west of Australia.

The fundamental changes needed for the human causes of environmental damage and human poverty and inequality need to start in the hearts of individuals – that is, each of us.

**Bishop Gerard Holohan**

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BISHOP MICHAEL KENNEDY – BISHOP OF ARMIDALE

# Responding to *Laudato Si*

## “Everything is Interconnected”

**N**ot everyone is happy about what Pope Francis has had to say in *Laudato Si*, his encyclical letter on the environment. One critic described the document as “a mixture of junk science, junk economics and junk ethics” which, if followed, would prevent the world’s poor escaping poverty.

But there was widespread praise as well, from world leaders among others. President Obama said he deeply admired Francis’s “decision to make the case – clearly, powerfully, and with the full moral authority of his position – for action on global climate change”.

Unsurprisingly, Green parties here and overseas also welcomed the encyclical, although it is unclear whether they picked up the pope’s criticisms of some of their own approaches in the document.

Francis’s endorsement of the scientific consensus on climate change grabbed most of the headlines. This was widely anticipated and for the pope, support for the consensus from his own scientific advisory body, the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences, which has 21 Nobel Prize winners among its 74 eminent scientists, obviously gives the science some credibility.

Another media focus was the provocative language he used to argue that the earth is looking “more and more like an immense pile of filth”, that “the present world system is certainly unsustainable”, and that we need “a bold cultural revolution” if we are going to find a way forward.

Francis has also continued the modern papal tradition of calling for stronger international institutions to address global problems. “Because the stakes are so high, we need institutions empowered to impose

penalties for damage inflicted on the environment” and “enforceable international agreements”.

This was not to everyone’s liking either, and a number of responses made the point, politely or otherwise, that no one is required to agree with the pope’s opinions on science, economics or politics.

Francis says as much himself. “The Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics”, he writes. “But I am concerned to encourage an honest and open debate so that particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good”.

The concern for the common good is at the heart of this document, and on this question the pope speaks with real authority. Catholics and other people are free to agree or disagree with his analysis and the suggestions he offers for practical action, but this does not make *Laudato Si’* just another point of view. As an encyclical, it is one of the highest forms of papal teaching authority.

Because they apply enduring principles to contemporary problems, papal social encyclicals like *Laudato Si’* have to be read on two levels. They rely on the expert knowledge of the day to understand the problems they address, and so to some extent their successful application into the future depends on how knowledge and ideas about the best responses continue to develop.

All the same, papal social encyclicals have a pretty good track record of retaining their relevance and importance because of the principles they apply in analysing and rethinking a problem. The common good is one of these principles, and it refers to what is good for everyone, the duty we have to promote this, and the right we have to share in it. As Francis formulates this principle in *Laudato Si’*, the common good means “that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others”.

Francis speaks about the way ideologies or interests can prejudice the common good, and he identifies a number of them: out-of-control consumerism; “a magical conception of the market”; an approach to business (in itself “a noble vocation”) which avoids transparency and proper engagement with local communities; a belief in technology as the only way of solving problems; and an approach to the

environment which opposes trafficking endangered species but is unconcerned about the poor, the unwanted, or the child in the womb.

There is something in this list to annoy almost everyone, which is part of the point Francis wants to make. Whatever our particular approach to the environment, we can all cling so strongly to certain ways of thinking and behaving as right or normal, that we no longer really see the world around us or encounter the person in the people we meet. We can end up treating both the world and each other simply as things to use or problems that have to be dealt with.

Interconnectedness is a major principle of this encyclical. Because we are so used to living in a fragmented world, a world where so much of our life together and even our personal lives is separated into silos, Francis’s insistence throughout *Laudato Si’* “that everything is connected” may well be its most challenging and enduring contribution.

On the environment specifically he highlights two re-connections that need to be made. Firstly, human beings are part of the created world, not standing apart from it like aliens. This means our idea of ecology needs to incorporate social and human ecology if it is really going to be effective. As Francis puts it, “human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity”.

Secondly, for all the undoubted blessings which technology and markets have brought for development and growth, too often we fall into the trap of treating them as the solution to everything. We ignore the deeper causes of environmental and social problems and focus on managing the symptoms. This approach owes much to the blindness caused by an engorged consumerism and a destructive idea of individualism which equates freedom and creativity with the absence of any limit on the human will.

Francis believes strongly in human freedom and our capacity to change how we think, act and relate to the environment and each other. It is not a bad idea. We should put aside whatever initial irritations or objections people might have about *Laudato Si’* and take a deeper, calmer look. The cultural shift that Francis invites each of us to make is up to us.

**Bishop Michael Kennedy**

BR ANDRE LANFREY FMS AND BR RICHARD DUNLEAVY FMS

# A Marist North-South Conversation

“With Mary we go in haste to a new land” (Lk 1:39)

*As part of the dialogue and consultation for the revision of our Constitutions, the “North-South Conversation” below, in two parts, is a fraternal exchange of views between Br Andre Lanfrey FMS, the distinguished Marist historian in France, and Br Richard Dunleavy FMS in New Zealand.*

## PART ONE

**RD**

I have read with great interest, and indeed inspiration, the writings of Br Emili which stress our call to “build the Marian Face of the Church” (Circular 2 Jan. 2012). That theme also flows as a strong stream through the recent documents like *Water from the Rock* and *Gathered around the same Table*. Should we not, then, define this emphasis more explicitly as part of our Marist mission in our revised Constitutions?

**AL**

“To build a Church with a Marial Face” and then rewrite our constitutions in terms of that is something which definitely corresponds with what happened at the birth of our Institute. However, before we do that let me mention some issues I want to raise.

It is true that we do, in fact, need to “go in haste to a new land”, but does that therefore mean that we have to immediately revise our Constitutions? I recall that, although the Institute was founded in January 1817, the “definitive” Constitutions were not completed until 1852. The 1837 Rule was only a Book of Customs. And following that, there were forty years of discussions with Rome which demanded some changes to those Constitutions. They were seen as being too focussed on the central governance. So it was not until 1903, that the Institute was finally obliged to accept Rome’s form of the Constitutions. I skip over the Constitutions of 1922 which were later modified in 1958, and move on to the “ad experimentum” Constitutions of 1968 which, in turn, led to the “definitive” text of 1985.

So my question is why are we now rushing to compose another set of new Constitutions?

Actually, in my view, every institute usually evolves through three stages: the first is the “mystical” vision phase, the second is the “utopian” phase, and lastly we arrive at the stage of the institution. While the first and second stages grow along together at the start, it is the later stage of the institution that enshrines the original inspiration by distinguishing what remains truly “mystical” in the original foundation from what belonged only to the passing “utopian” phase.

Right from the start the movement to build a worldwide Marial church was envisioned differently by Colin, Courveille, Champagnat and even J.M Chavoin. That was why two quite distinct projects developed (L’Hermitage and Belley). Courveille, unable to let go of his utopian vision, had to move away. Champagnat never conceived the society of Brothers as being independent from the Fathers. Yet that’s what did happen between 1852 (at the general chapter) and 1860 (at the retreat led by Br Francois). Thus the legislation of 1852-54 was the completion of a process which had taken 35 years. And it was only the dominant leadership of Br Louis-Marie that could succeed in imposing the new emphases upon a group of Brothers who, in fact, remained deeply committed to an earlier quite different tradition.

After 1880 I believe that the Institute functioned as a religious order based on piety, regularity, fraternal charity, and the school. The institution took pre-eminence over the “mystical” and “utopian” elements. And that continued right up till 1967. At that point we experienced, in the Chapter of 1967-68, the full-on post-conciliar crisis which was an absolute explosion. That flood of change was “utopian” rather than “mystical”, but, in any case, strongly anti-institutional. It was for that reason that we needed time to finally arrive at the “definitive” constitutions in 1985. But no sooner

had our spirituality been fairly clearly defined, the issue of lay partnership introduced a new current, both “mystical” and “utopian”, which challenged the structure of those new constitutions. And now we have the focus on the Marial face of the church adding a further weighty challenge as well.

So I do completely agree with the analysis of Br Emili Turu who, in his circular of 2 January 2012, says, “The Institute has changed much since its foundation...Structurally, we have changed more and more profoundly in the last 50 years than in all the 140 previous ones.” But we also need to add that because this process of change is far from being over, it is a difficult environment to develop new constitutions which risk becoming quickly out of date.

But I also recognise that today the Institute suffers from a problem which is completely opposite to what it experienced in the period 1860 – 1967” that is the institution is much weaker in relation to the mystical and utopian elements. For that reason we do indeed require some sort of rewriting of our constitutions.

That having been said, I now speak in my capacity as a historian. The reason for this is because I believe that the Institute has always lacked a history solid enough for it to be able to define its identity. In my opinion, having come to a scientific understanding of history somewhat late, it has yet to succeed to actually integrate that approach into its work. Take for example the theme of the building of a Marial face for the church which goes right back to our origins. The Marist Fathers developed that theme strongly, drawing on the letters of Father Colin. But what precise knowledge of the Marial face of the church do we have in the writings of Champagnat, or from our own traditions? Well, in fact, there are many such references but there is no practical synthesis of them. I consider that Br Emili treats that subject from the theological and mystical point of view. But an overall historical framework would have been welcome. I add that within our tradition there is a Johannine aspect, not yet sufficiently averted to, in which certain texts from our origins have John as the “first Marist”. So it is my opinion that the Institute has less need for new Constitutions than for a systematic study of our spiritual tradition which would enable us to embed our traditions not only theologically and spiritually, but also historically.

I would now like to sketch out some of the principal stages of that history.

1. We discover the spirituality of Champagnat in his instructions and in those sayings like “All to Jesus through Mary”, “Mary, our Ordinary Resource”. The very first summary is that of the five talks given in the room at La Valla about 1818. And there are his first instructions of 1822 (Life pp.103 – 105), repeated and developed in the *Manual of Piety*. In addition there is the short written summary of 1824 (Life p.128-130), and the *Salve Regina* of 1830. The Letters of Champagnat, as interesting as they undoubtedly are, do not constitute a systematic summary of his doctrine but, on the other hand, his teaching, often retained by Br Jean-Baptiste and Br Francois, do leave us with an important patrimony. But for me the most interesting synthesis is what is displayed in the images from the 1836 chapel at the Hermitage.

Champagnat’s teaching, mainly oral in nature, we can describe as being based on a strong sense of the centrality of God (“presence of God”, “confidence in God”), and on a Christology closely linked to a Mariology flowing from the Marial privileges: Immaculate Conception, Assumption, Mary’s share in our redemption.

2. The second synthesis of our Marist spirituality is to be found in the notebooks, letters, and circulars of Br Francois, which we have not sufficiently studied. The circular on the spirit of faith, written in four parts between 1847 and 1853, must be recognised as being of exceptional importance. And I consider that the *Manual of Piety* (1855) is the forerunner of the *Principles of Perfection* which was largely the work of Br Francois either when he was Master of Novices or Superior.

3. Generally too much importance is given to Br Jean-Baptiste’s definition of the synthesis of the spirit of the Institute. It was certainly he who was the principal author of the *Common Rules* (1852), of the *Teachers’ Guide* (1853) and of the *Rules of Government* (1854). But Br Francois, Br Louis-Marie, and also, perhaps, Fr Matricon who was chaplain at the Hermitage, also played an important role. The same applies to the *Life of Father Champagnat* of 1856.

After 1860 Br Jean-Baptiste completed the official writings with several more personal works: the *Biographies of several Brothers*, *Avis*, *Lecons*, *Sentences*, and *The Good Superior*. There were also his

books of meditations, and the Directory of Piety.

4. Through his numerous circulars which were full of teachings, Br Louis-Marie gave his own interpretation of Marist spirituality. That was between 1860 and 1879 but it remained as a major reference until 1940.

In my opinion, after 1879 and before 1967, there is not another important synthesis about Marist spirituality even though Br Stratonique (1907-1920), Br Leonida (1946-1958), and Br Charles-Raphael (1958-1967) do give us some interesting insights. In addition to those summaries from the Superiors there were also the articles and reviews in the *Bulletin of the Institute*, and obituaries which by describing the practical lives of Brothers, revealed more about a general spirit of the Institute together with a huge number of individual spiritualities.

5. On the other hand, from 1967, syntheses multiply: Br Basilio wrote a very full doctrinal summary which is already somewhat forgotten.

6. Br Charles Howard, much more succinctly, did the same

7. Br Sean Sammon more recently published his own description.

So, in my opinion, the Institute, throughout its history, has experienced seven key doctrinal summaries. In them there is certainly a clear line of continuity but there are also some very deep ruptures. For example, until 1852 the Institute relied more on the oral teaching of Fr Champagnat passed down by the older Brothers than on a Rule which was still only being developed. Following that it was a more intangible Rule right through until 1967. Furthermore, in the preface to his *Life*, Br Jean-Baptiste presented Champagnat as Founder of a monastic order. And the Brothers were regarded less and less as a society of teachers who were laymen, and more and more as a religious order cut off from the laity. The rediscovery of the lay identity of the Institute did not emerge until after 1967. Between 1852 and 1967 the Institute had regarded the laity as those alongside whom they worked (other school teachers), students and their parents from whom vocations could be sought, and lastly as teachers collaborating with them in their own schools.

In regard to Marial devotion a number of very discernible changes can be seen: for example, devotion to the Sacred Heart becomes more

prominent so that with Br Stratonique we get the development of devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. In recent decades attention has been focussed on the Annunciation, Visitation and Pentecost, whereas previously the stress had been on the various Marial privileges. Furthermore, our Marist writings evoke relations with Mary through our imitation (devotion) and our identification (mystical approach).

Right from Champagnat's time the apostolate was primarily a question of preparing the children for their first holy communion; then the Institute evolved towards educating older children and indeed the youth. As for zeal, several chapters of the *Life of Father Champagnat* (XIX – XXIV) were devoted to that topic, but just one to his love of work (XIV). But if you check through the biographies of the Brothers you find the most important virtue is the love of work, and also integrates zeal within that context. And what of Mary: is she seen as a model of zeal? While being clearly admired for her time in the temple before her marriage, for her silence and her humility, is she often presented to us as a woman of zeal, as exemplified in the Story of the Visitation. Today we honour Mary who sets out in haste. But before that the Institute asked the Brothers to be present in their schools like Mary in the Temple.

#### CONCLUSION:

I am certainly far removed from that idea that the Institute, before our times, did not present the concept of the Church with a Marial face. For example, the Brothers have always shown an amazing spirit of service. But I would maintain that they were then manifesting only ONE Marial face of the Church within the wider context of Christianity and its hierarchical spirit. As I mentioned was the Brothers' devotion to Mary an attitude of imitation? Or of identification? And what was their link between their God-centred, Christ-centred, and Mary-centred spirituality? I consider that, little by little, the Institute has let slide the theocentric focus of its tradition (the presence of God) in favour of a Christology and Mariology which were over-valued or inadequately re-evaluated.

The thrust of the last General Chapter is "With Mary, to go in haste to a new land!" But isn't it necessary, in order not to lose our way *en route*, to

have a realistic idea of the strengths and weaknesses of that “land” we are heading for? It seems to me that this would require our undertaking a search for the truth in that respect.

**RD**

Many thanks for that incisive and most interesting survey of so many elements of our Marist history, particularly the seven great transitions which you identify. I find your reference to those deep “ruptures” thought-provoking, especially the difference between the spirit of the first Brothers passed down by their living example and their oral transmission, and the monastic institutionalisation that came about through the imposition of the first Rule after the long dialogue with Rome.

That observation recalls an important experience

in my own life. A group of Brothers on a course in Rome in 1973 were given a wonderful, liberating understanding of what I might call the “real Marcellin” when we visited l’Hermitage for some weeks in 1973, and had lectures from Br Balko and Br Gabriel Michel. They revealed to us the new “face” or portrait of Marcellin which you and other historians had unveiled through your research. It was so different from the image we had been given through our novitiate study of Br Jean-Baptiste’s *Life*. So much so the immediate reaction of the whole international group was: “But he was just like us!” Which meant, of course, that we felt ourselves much closer, and more happily identified with the real spirit and charisma of Marcellin than we had believed possible. It was indeed a true and lasting conversion for us.

CHRISTOPHER MAUDIS

## On being a Marist leader and teacher

A teacher reflects on his call to be ‘Marist’  
in a contemporary educational setting

### DEFINING SPIRITUALITY AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

**A**s human beings we all search for meaning in our lives. This search for meaning highlights that “we all have a spirituality whether we want one or not” (Rolheiser, 1999, p.7). Moreover, Rolheiser (1999) argues that Christian spirituality is the harnessing of a desire or “fire that burns within us” (p.7) and that spirituality is “about what we do with that desire” (p.5). Consequently, it is within this context that spirituality exists, and Dupuis (2002) argues that

Christians and others build together the reign of God whenever they commit themselves by common accord to the cause of human rights, and whenever they work for the integral

liberation of each and every human person, but especially the poor and the oppressed. They also build the Reign of God by promoting religious and spiritual values (p. 202).

Wheatley (2002) argues that in an ever-increasing chaotic and unpredictable world, questions and the search for meaning in life need to be addressed by harnessing spirituality. Therefore it is the “spiritual leader/teacher [who] moves in honest wonder and openness to discover and point to the signs of goodness, grace, courage and hope, which lie in many different environments and in many different people and which suggests the presences of a greater power for good and the universe” (McRae-McMahon, 2002, p. 5).

As educators in the twenty-first century we are called to provide spiritual leadership to our

students. Spiritual leadership is harnessing the power greater than our own to provide certainty, hope and stability (Wheatley, 2002) and is a “significant factor in lifting of collective energy and the carrying of a group of people into a new possibility” (McCrae-McMahon, 2002, p. 6).

### MARIST SPIRITUALITY

Marist Spirituality is defined through a key document: *Water from the Rock: Marist Spirituality Flowing in the Tradition of Marcellin Champagnat*. Working in Marist schools for more than fourteen years, I have had a particular interest in deepening my understanding of the Marist Charism. I was initially drawn to the forward comments by the former Superior General of the Marist Brothers, Br Sean Sammon, where he articulates the vision for this book to ‘make the Marist Apostolic Spirituality of Marcellin Champagnat more accessible to a wider audience...[and that] this spirituality has had an appeal not only to Marcellin’s brothers but to his Lay Marists as well’ (*Water from the Rock*, 2007, p.10).

The context that underpins Marist spirituality is based around St Marcellin Champagnat. It is his vision that lies at the very heart of this charism and spirituality. Living in post-revolutionary rural France, Marcellin was a young priest in the parish of the tiny hamlet of La Valla. There, Marcellin saw a need for educating the young, helping the poor and providing hope through the story of Jesus Christ. Through key incidents in his life; the death of a young boy, Jean-Baptiste Montagne and a life threatening snow storm where he sought the intercession of Mary, the young Marcellin called a group of Brothers together to begin work in educating the young in a Christian framework and a distinct Marist style: “All to Jesus through Mary, all to Mary through Jesus”. So it was through his Little Brothers of Mary in the Society of Mary (Marist) that this distinctive Marist spirituality took foundation.

### REFLECTIONS ON *WATER FROM THE ROCK*

#### Family Spirit

At the heart of my personal life is family. It is a sense of belonging which I believe is an inherent human need. The early Brothers and Marcellin were “united in heart and mind” and their relationships were marked by “warmth and

tenderness” (*Water from the Rock*, 2007, p. 31). These qualities encapsulate the essence of what family relationships are based upon and it is with this style in mind that has made family spirit a characteristic of “our way of being Marist” (*Water from the Rock*, 2007, p.32). Therefore, “from our family spirit develops a spirituality that is strongly relational and affective” and consequently “wherever the followers of Marcellin are present, working together in mission this ‘family spirit’ is the way of communal living” (*Water from the Rock*, 2007, p.32).

This sense of family spirit articulated as inherent in Marist spirituality underpins my professional life and underpins the relationships with both my colleagues and students; “Essentially, our relationships to one another is being brother and sister” (*Water from the Rock*, 2007, p. 32). A salient image from the Pilgrimage 2014 experience was the table that was made by Champagnat himself and serves as a “powerful symbol of family and service...[and] may be seen as the embodiment of his efforts to create a community dedicated to the Lord” (*Water from the Rock*, 2007, p. 56). The table provides tangible links to be made to our actions and relationships and is a powerful tool in evoking the ‘desire’ that fosters affective spirituality. Indeed, the table also reminds me that at the very heart of Marist spirituality is relationships. Aspects of respect and family cannot exist without relationships and as such, spirituality is a search for positive relationships.

### IN THE WAY OF MARY

Embedded within Marist spirituality is the relationship that Marcellin had with Mary. The close relationship between Mother and Son – Mary and Jesus – is the model relationship that was espoused by Marcellin; “All to Jesus through Mary, All to Mary for Jesus” (*Water from the Rock*, p.30). The Marist community sees Mary as a role model for our journey in faith. She responded to her call, entrusted in the Holy Spirit and completed her mission as mother and educator. Mary provided Jesus with love, trust in his youth, and strength throughout his mission. These are all qualities that can provide comfort, hope and reflection. Within an educational context, Mary is a guiding light in developing relationships with students.

For me, it is the nurturing qualities of Mary that are most striking in both my professional and personal

life: “We nurture that life in the ecclesial community, whose communion we strengthen through fervent prayer and service” (*Water from the Rock*, p.31). Again, this approach to relating with others ‘in the way of Mary’ is indicative of a distinctive Marist way of developing relationships. I believe that Mary as the maternal face of the church is an accessible model for young people to relate to the spirit of bringing the good news to others.

One key component of the pastoral care policy at Marist College North Shore is that of Restorative Justice. It promotes positive relationships, responsibility and respect as a way of dealing with behavioral issues. Indeed, it provides a way of relating which drifts away from punitive responses to issues and seeks to reaffirm and heal relationships which in some way have been undone. Recently, the pastoral team looked at this concept of Restorative Justice to move away from Saturday detentions as punishment for students breaching the behavioral expectations of the College. It was decided to move to a restorative service action to replace the highly punitive detention. Whilst still in its nucleus stage, this initiative seems to be successful. This model is based around high support for others and is a practical tool for all teachers in developing positive relationships with their students; “By relating to young people in a Marial manner, we become the face of Mary to them” (*Water from the Rock*, p. 32).

#### SIMPLICITY/PRESENCE

“At the heart of Marist Spirituality coming from Marcellin and the first brothers is humility” (*Water from the Rock*, p. 33). Two key values of Marist education are simplicity and presence. Again, these qualities are inextricably linked to ways of relating with others. Therefore, this aspect of spirituality calls me to be simple and present in my relationship with God and others: “We strive to be persons of integrity – truthful, open hearted and transparent in our relationships” (*Water from the Rock*, p. 33). I feel that this can be seen through the sharing of one’s story and the appreciation of others and their journey. As Marists, we are called to build relationships and communities and with young people who often shy away from spirituality and manifestations of religion in their lives. Therefore, it is a simple spirituality based on relationships that they are drawn to. I have been privileged to share

in the Year 12 Retreat experiences on an annual basis and as a group leader been struck by the enormous capacity for young people to share their stories and develop spirituality rooted in the traditions of Marcellin Champagnat. “The images of God we offer them, and the language, experiences and symbolism we use, are accessible and touch the heart” (*Water from the Rock*, p. 34). One such activity on Year 12 Retreat that exemplifies this simple and present way of relating is that of the ‘family story’. Students are invited to draw, symbolize and explain their family story in the context of a meal. The group leader models this process and then each student follows the same process. This simple task opens up conversation and relationships and shared experiences. I have been struck by the ability of young people to share their stories in an open and humble way. In the context of mutual support and trust they are able to share their stories with one another and find ways of connecting with themselves, their God and other important people in their lives.

For me this simple way of relating and development of spirituality in others is inexorably linked to the Marist quality of Presence. A living and true presence is needed in all relationships. As educators, we are asked to seek relationships with our students, which set an atmosphere for learning and the development of their values. In doing this, we are asked to place ourselves in their lives to foster openness, and trust.

#### SOLIDARITY

Marist spirituality is apostolic in nature: “We experience God also in the witness of people committed to peace, justice, and solidarity with the poor and those who act with generosity and self-sacrifice in the service of others” (*Water from the Rock*, p. 42). Moreover, Marist spirituality calls to make room in our lives for others. Indeed, “Our compassionate responses to the needs of the world wells up from our spirituality” (*Water from the Rock*, p. 71). Not to oversimplify this notion of solidarity and mission, however, I feel this aspect of spirituality which harnesses our individual desire, is this need to be ‘other-centered’ in our works for others and the wider community. As a Christian community we are called to transform the world, provide a dynamic response of faith and a mission to all people (Wessels, 2004). Therefore it is recognition

of a spirit within ourselves that needs to be subsequently released into the world for others.

A few years ago I was privileged to travel with a group of senior students on an immersion experience to India. I reflected at the time that I was undertaking a journey of hope. However, the experience opened my eyes to the impact of solidarity on me, my travel companions, and, the people we engaged with. The experience enabled me to seek out the meaning of spirituality in my life and that in developing these relationships with the communities we visited, my companions and I can become “sowers of hope” (*Water from the Rock*, p. 75). The impact of immersion on the young people I accompanied was profound. Upon returning home, their reflections were particularly poignant:

- “I rediscovered emotions that I have not felt for a while”
- “It led me to create new strong relationships with others”
- “It has raised my awareness of the importance of simplicity and appreciation in my own life”.
- “It showed me what it meant to be a part of not only a Marist family, but part of the same world”

Indeed, these reflections from a group of students indicate to me that this concept of being ‘other-centered’ is at the heart of what it is to be spiritual. Moreover, the immersion experience, in solidarity with others, epitomises the elements of Marist spirituality that I have been discussing. Indeed, we approach this aspect of Marist spirituality with humility and simplicity, fostering family spirit and that “like Mary, we not only magnify the Lord with our lips, but commit ourselves to serve God’s justice with our lives” (*Water from the Rock*, p. 79).

The act of “doing” and modelling like a servant leader has become pivotal in engaging students with, and harnessing their own spirituality. In addition to the Immersion experience described earlier, our College provides the following opportunities for students:

- *Year 11 Ministry Week Program:*

Students have the opportunities to work for a week in local community service areas including Nursing Homes, schools with students who have special needs and Aboriginal Communities. I have had the privilege of leading a group of twelve students to work on the farm property of the Marist Brothers. There, we spent a week assisting the

Brothers with manual labour to maintain their property. This is another opportunity to lead students on their faith development. I was able to lead reflections on a nightly basis to challenge the students to develop their view of what it is to be ‘other-centred’.

- *St Vincent de Paul Night Patrol:*

Our year 12 students have the opportunity to take out the Night Patrol van to feed Sydney’s homeless on a fortnightly basis. Indeed this program has been so successful that ex-students now engage with this activity on Saturday nights once a month. This is an obvious consequence of the impact that this activity had on the students when they were at school. Initiated by the former students it is demonstrative of their dynamic response to faith.

- *Marist Solidarity Group:*

The word ‘solidarity’ evokes a sense of being with others. This group of students aims to raise awareness of social justice issues and works with young refugees, the aged and other marginalised members of the community. They engage in fundraising and other service opportunities including serving at a street side cafe in Surry Hills on a Friday night.

Spiritual leadership at the College is dynamic and gives the teachers an opportunity to show their faith lived out through the experiences offered. As Tacey (2000) states “they must have a reason to believe, an impulse to send them forward into spiritual discovery” (p.260). Therefore it has become apparent in this ever-changing world that the call to faith based spiritual leadership lies in the experiences and opportunities offered that harness the desires and fires that burn within individuals to transform the world.

#### **WITH A DISTINCTIVE MARIST STYLE: THE MARIST CHARISM AS SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**

As a leader in a Marist school, the charism of St Marcellin Champagnat is at the heart of our pedagogical and spiritual approach. The core of Marcellin’s vision is “to make Jesus known and loved” (*In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat*, 1998, p.35) and it sets out to promote human growth and Marist educators contribute to building God’s Reign on earth. The International Council for Marist Education in its publication *In*

*the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat* (1998) outlines key aspects of what I believe are the hallmarks of a spiritual leader. It states “we give personal and community witness” (p.37), “We share our faith... [and] we educate in and for solidarity” (p.38). These key tenets are certainly manifest in the many offerings for our students to engage with their faith and compassion. However, I would argue that within the prism of the Marist Charism, a Marist educator takes this dynamic response to spirituality further. From the particular Marist style of educating flow the following characteristics: presence, simplicity, family spirit, love of work and following in the way of Mary (p. 43). As stated earlier, Marist Spirituality is apostolic in nature. Therefore, the Marist mission is to bring good news to the poor. Just as Mary was challenged to say “yes” to God at the annunciation, as did Jesus’ disciples along the Road to Emmaus, we are challenged as spiritual leaders in a Marist context to espouse those values which are the very heart of a Marist education.

A challenge for Catholic leaders is the disconnection of many in today’s society with spirituality and religion. Schneiders (2003) argues that they must be linked, as religion is a source of fulfilment. The Marist charism encourages spiritual connection. It is essentially a spirituality that develops the pastoral nature of all. It breaks down the notion of individualism where one looks at how they see themselves rather than how the community sees them. It again reinforces the concept of being ‘other-centred’. The spiritual means that “we recognise in ourselves and in our experience a depth beyond the surface appearances, a depth in which the meaning of who we are and what we are experiencing is connected to larger meanings, larger energy fields, larger networks of relationships” (Starratt and Guare, p. 191). Essentially, Marist spirituality provides a focus on the transcendent love of Mary through Jesus with the presence of the Holy Spirit working within us. Schools have an ever-increasing role in connecting the values of what it means to be Catholic. Many have moved away from Church and religion. Marist spirituality allows the Church to be seen as not their church, but my church. The challenge is to provide Marist communities with the inspiration, the need for the connection of our religion to our spirituality.

In contrast to the perils of individualism, the Marist spirituality attempts to strengthen relationships and build communities that are at the service of others. The challenges that are presented within the concept of spiritual leadership have certainly been manifest in the school in which I work. To harness the core aspects of a Marist education and make it relatable to our students, the Pastoral Team and Senior Student Leadership Team are engaged annually in the development of the College theme. The purpose of the theme is to provide direction and focus for the upcoming academic year. In devising this theme, students are reminded that a particular focus is the integrating elements of both Marist Charism and the Gospels. Over the last few years we have focussed on the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Marist value of ‘family spirit’, as well as the Road to Emmaus story and the Marist characteristic of ‘presence’. Students then develop a phrase that encompasses the values inherent in the Gospel story and combine this with key images that subsequently adorn a banner which will be on display for the entire year. Again, this is active engagement with spirituality and faith and grounded in the practicalities of engaging the youth of today with both aspects of religion and spirituality.

In our Catholic setting to be truly authentic in mission, teachers need to connect and understand the work of Jesus as a teacher who served others. “Spirituality is a way of living. By that, I mean that spiritual persons tend to bring that depth and sensitivity and reverence to all or most of what they do” (Starratt, Guare, 1995, p. 192). O’Leary (1999) states that “spirituality is about openness, risks and trust” (p. 93). Developing the view of taking risks to learn more about themselves, their spirit, and their call to serve can only add depth to a community that builds and sustains spiritualities. Starratt and Guare (1995) refer to the spirituality of leadership being about exercising this “risk belief”. Spiritual leaders need to create and challenge staff to realise the potential of their human spirit. This is one aspect in which I believe the Marist Schools Australia does exceptionally well. In order to tap into the potential of staff to become spiritual leaders many opportunities are offered in order to enhance the professional development of staff in the distinctive Marist style.

The College offers staff the opportunity to attend the 'Footsteps' programs. These programs are offered by Marist Schools Australia and staff participates in a three day retreat style program where elements of Marist charism and spirituality are examined in a practical and detailed manner. I have been involved in two of these programs and have been suitably motivated to delve further into the Marist charism. These experiences led me to embark on a pilgrimage to France in order retrace the footsteps of St Marcellin. These opportunities are highly sought after and contribute greatly in developing the spiritual leadership of staff within the College.

### LA VALLA – A MODEL FOR EVANGELISATION

A truly stirring experience as a pilgrim this year was the visit to the heart of the Marist story the Notre Dame L'Hermitage and the tiny hamlet of La Valla. A key question that has sat with me upon my return is how Marists today take that intangible leap into the future? As pilgrims we were asked to explore the challenges facing Marists across the world. How do we want to be perceived and what is it that will underpin the Marist project into the future?

An overarching theme that was reinforced on the pilgrimage was that as educators and particularly Marist educators 'we strive to be apostles for young people, evangelizing them through our lives and presence among them. Love for the young, especially the poor, is the distinguishing characteristic of our mission' (*Evangelizers in the midst of youth*, 2011, p. 51).

At the heart of what it is to be Marist in an ever-changing world is looking forward to new possibilities whilst simultaneously embracing the past. Our Marist foundations in France hold the key to the Marist mission into the future. As evangelizers in the twenty first century we face many challenges with the young people we engage with. The Marist document *Evangelizers in the midst of youth* (2011) brings forth these challenges for the Marist Institute: 'We are talking about profound transformation in our way of seeing, feeling, knowing, relating to and loving, all which can be observed...in the young' (p. 16). The document reinforces the past notions of doctrinal and practice-based ways of approaching evangelisation but also incorporates the modern approach of the

experiential which 'is orientated towards their earnestly taking on a project of self-fulfillment that incorporates the meaningfulness of faith' (p. 24).

The original house in the small hamlet of La Valla is a key symbol of our Marist past and Marist future. Recently renovated, the place where Marcellin Champagnat set about forming the Marist brothers has been symbolically transformed into the three key pillars that underpin the future of the Marist Institute:

- Level 1 – "**Interior**" – the embracing of our inner spirituality and the fire and desire that burns within each one of us. This is inexorably linked to Mary of the Annunciation;
- Level 2 – "**Community**" – the home of Champagnat's table – this can be seen as Mary of the Visitation – this is where we build community and share in the message of the gospels, providing inclusion for all;
- Level 3 – "**Mission**" – with large windows out onto the world – this is the place where we go out into the world and make Jesus Christ known and loved, just like Mary of Pentecost.

It seems to me as I reflected at the beautiful Notre Dame L'Hermitage, which is nestled at the bottom of the valley on the River Gier, that as Marist educators we should embrace what is at the heart of being Marist. As a centre of evangelization we are awakening the spirit (Interior) of our boys, who are welcomed around the same table (Community), which seeks to experience connections to the world in which they live (Mission and Solidarity). This is education for life, with a Marian face and is the essence of Marist mission which ultimately seeks to make Jesus Christ known and loved.

### CONCLUSION

In reflecting on my pilgrims' journey and subsequently a key Marist document in *Water from the Rock*, it has become apparent to me that at the heart of Marist spirituality is simplicity. This best describes my relationship with God and others and is a significant quality that underpins my professional life. Moreover, it is the simplicity that is found in the work of St Marcellin Champagnat that underpins the essence of Marist Spirituality and the manifestations of leadership within this paradigm. Overwhelmingly, the sense I get from the Marist spirituality articulated in the book is

that it is overtly relational. Through fostering positive relationships with our families, friends, colleagues, students and the wider community we are able to harness the desire within us to provide greater meaning in our lives:

Our present age is characterised by a thirst for spirituality. We disciples of Marcellin believe that our way to God is a gift to be shared with the Church and the world. We are invited to join with Mary in a journey of faith. If we are able to give witness in our daily lives to the vitality of this spirituality, people, – particularly youth and young and children – will feel themselves attracted and invited to take it up as their own way to become living water” (*Water from the Rock*, pp. 36-7).

This quotation sums up the essence of Marist spirituality and has particular poignancy in my life as I seek to harness the dynamics of education in the twenty-first century.

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