

# *The Social/Emotional Intelligence of Saint Marcellin Champagnat*

Br Ben CONSIGLI, FMS  
*Province of United States of America*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Some researchers in the field of psychology have defined intelligence as "a general mental capability, which among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas or situations, learn quickly, and learn from experience. Intelligence is not merely book learning or some narrow academic skill. Rather, intelligence seems to reflect a broader and deeper capability for comprehending one's surroundings—'catching on,' 'making sense' of things, or 'figuring out' what to do."<sup>1</sup> As understood today, "true" intelligence is generally unrelated to academic performance or the acquisition of knowledge through formal education.

Marcellin Champagnat, by his own account, was clearly not an intellectual master as defined by academic performance or formal education. We must remember that formal education in the rural areas of France in the years after the Revolution of 1789 barely existed. In 1803, when two diocesan representatives arrived in Marlihes looking for candidates for the seminary, Marcellin was fourteen years old and almost illiterate. Before he would be able

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<sup>1</sup> Linda S. Gottfredson, guest editor. "Foreword to 'Intelligence and Social Policy'". *Intelligence: A Multipdisciplinary Journal*, Volume 24(1) 1997. Ablex Publishing Company, Greenwich, CT., 1997, pp 1-12.

to commence the study of Latin, which was necessary for the priesthood, Marcellin would have to be able to read and write French. Even his father, Jean Baptiste, believed this educational obstacle would be hard to overcome for Marcellin. Yet, his mind was made up – from that moment on, he thought only of becoming a priest.<sup>2</sup> After two years of relatively intense study with Benoit Arnaud, his brother-in-law, his progress was so negligible, that Arnaud told Mrs. Champagnat that Marcellin “has too few talents to succeed” and did not show much capacity for formal learning.<sup>3</sup>

In November 1805, Marcellin went to the junior seminary at Verrières to begin his formal study for the priesthood. He was sixteen years old, big, uncomfortable with formal written and spoken French, and not the most academically intelligent in the class. For Marcellin, it was back to what we might today call the “beginners’ class.” At the end of the year, his results were so poor that he was advised not to return to the seminary. Nevertheless, he would eventually spend long years of seminary study and overcome many obstacles in order to become a priest. His fellow seminarians all agreed that he possessed neither the talents nor the necessary resources to attempt, with any hope of success, the foundation of a congregation. According to Father Denis Maîtrepierre, a confrère from his seminary days, Marcellin “*bad in fact all that was humanly necessary to prevent the success of his enterprise.*”<sup>4</sup> Yet, in spite of this, he is considered by many to be among the most significant founders in the history of the Church.<sup>5</sup>

So what allowed this simple boy from rural France to set his mind on providing for others the formal education which he himself lacked? Brother Jean-Baptiste states it clearly:

*“Father Champagnat owed much to the success of his ministry and in the foundation of his Institute, to his bright, open, friendly and consider-*

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<sup>2</sup> Keith Farrell, *Achievements from the Depths*, Marist Brothers, Drummoyne, NSW, Australia, 1984, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Zind, “*L’écolier rebelle*”, *Voyages et Missions*, No. 115, Lyon, France, October 1971, p.8.

<sup>4</sup> Attributed to Marcellin Champagnat...by D. Maîtrepierre — OM #537. (Coste, J. (S.M.), and Lessard, G. (S.M.). *Origines Maristes (OM): Extraits Concernant les Frères Maristes*. Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli Maristi; Rome, Italy, 1985.)

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Balko, “*Father Champagnat and Confidence.*” *Marist Notebooks*, #5, May 1994, Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli Maristi, Roma, pp.22-38.

*ate character with its ability to resolve situations of strife. An unassuming affability, a straight-forwardness and impression of kindness radiated from his face, gaining all hearts and disposing minds to accept without difficulty and even with pleasure, his opinions, his instructions, and his re-proofs.”<sup>6</sup>*

In studying some of his correspondence and reviewing some of the testimony of those of who knew him, it is my belief that Marcellin was gifted with social/emotional intelligence which, combined with his extraordinary faith and trust in God, allowed him to accomplish what many thought improbable if not impossible. In order to examine this premise further, it would best to begin with a general understanding and brief layman’s overview of social/emotional intelligence. I make no claim as a psychologist; my understanding of social/emotional intelligence comes from my experiences and studies in the field of education.

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## SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Understanding intelligence solely as the ability to succeed in “formal educational structures” (ie: schools) is a limited view of intelligence. Psychologists and educators sensed that true intelligence reflects a broader and deeper capability for comprehending one’s surroundings and behaving accordingly. One such theorist, Harvard professor Howard Gardner, determined that IQ (Intelligence Quotient), as a singular measure of competence, could not be supported. In his 1983 book, ***Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligence***, Gardner proposed a range of key competencies, which he calls *multiple intelligence*.<sup>7</sup> Daniel Goleman’s ***Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*** (1995) popularized Gardner’s notion and created widespread interest in the United States in the developmental possibilities of the multiple intelligence model in the realm of educational theory. In 2006’s ***Social Intelligence: The New Science of Success***, Karl Albrecht explored a dimension of multiple intelligences which he defined as both the ability to get

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<sup>6</sup> Jean-Baptiste Furet, *Life*, p. 266

<sup>7</sup> Howard Gardner, ***Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligence***, Basic Books, NY, 1983, pp 3-11.

along with others and a set of practical skills for interacting successfully in any setting.<sup>8</sup> “Social/Emotional Intelligence” is perhaps best understood as one of a whole range of interwoven competencies<sup>9</sup>. For over twenty years, Howard Gardner has been preaching the idea that human intelligence is not a single trait. According to Gardner, humans have seven or eight distinct intelligences, or primary dimensions of competence.<sup>10</sup>

The first step in understanding social/emotional intelligence is to place it into the context of Gardner’s multiple intelligence categories and Daniel Goleman’s four domains of emotional intelligence. While Gardner uses rather scientific sounding labels for his categories — verbal-logical, mathematical-symbolic, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and musical – Karl Albrecht, in his book *Social Intelligence*, re-coded and simplified them conceptually.<sup>11</sup> He then rearranged Gardner’s multiple intelligences into **six primary categories**<sup>12</sup>:

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Abstract Intelligence	Symbolic reasoning
<b>Social Intelligence</b>	<b>Dealing with people</b>
Practical Intelligence	Getting things done
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	<b>Self-awareness and self-management</b>
Aesthetic Intelligence	Sense of form, design, music, art and literature
Kinesthetic Intelligence	Whole-body skills like sports, dance or flying a jet fighter

Daniel Goleman, in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, understands emotional intelligence in four “domains.” The four domains have a number of categories<sup>13</sup>:

<sup>8</sup> Karl Albrecht, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Success*, Wiley Imprint, San Francisco, CA, 2006, pp 28-32.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, pp 8-11.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Albrecht, *Social Intelligence*, pp 8-9.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, page 9.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, Bantam Books, NY, 1995, page 253.

DOMAIN	CATEGORY
Self-Awareness	Emotional Self-Awareness. Accurate Self-Assessment. Self-Confidence
Self-Management	Emotional Self-Control. Transparency (Trustworthiness) & Communication. Adaptability: Initiative & Leadership. Optimism. Conscientiousness.
Social Awareness	Empathy. Organizational Awareness. Service Orientation
Relationship Management	Developing Others & Influence. Building Bonds. Team-work and Collaboration.

With these theories as a foundation, Albrecht constructed a model for describing, assessing and developing social intelligence. He characterized social intelligence as a combination of a basic understanding of oneself and of people - a kind of "strategic social awareness" - and a set of skills for interacting successfully with them. A simple description of social intelligence is *the ability to get along well with others and to get them to cooperate with you*.<sup>14</sup> Albrecht, using the work of Howard Gardner and Daniel Goleman, suggests five key dimensions as a descriptive framework for **social intelligence**<sup>15</sup>:

SKILL DIMENSION	INVOLVES
Situational Radar (Awareness)	The ability to "read" situations, to understand the social context that influences behavior, and to choose behavioral strategies that are most likely to be successful.
Presence	Also known as "bearing," presence is the external sense of one's self that others perceive: confidence, self-respect and self-worth.
Authenticity	The opposite of being "phony," authenticity is a way of behaving which engenders a perception that one is honest with one's self as well as others.
Clarity	The ability to express one's self clearly, use language effectively, explain concepts clearly and persuade/influence with ideas.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Albrecht, *Social Intelligence*, page 6.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. pp 28-32.

Empathy	More than just an internal sense of relatedness or appreciation for the experiences of others, empathy in this context represents the ability to create a sense of connectedness with others; to get them on your wavelength and invite them to move with and toward you rather than away and against you.
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Generally speaking, emotional intelligence improves an individual's social effectiveness. The higher the emotional intelligence, the better the social relations. The high emotional intelligent (EI) individual, most centrally, can better perceive emotions, use them in thought, understand their meanings, and manage emotions, than others can. Solving emotional problems likely requires less cognitive effort for this individual. The person also tends to be somewhat higher in verbal, social, and other intelligences. The individual tends to be more open and agreeable than others. The high EI person is drawn to occupations involving social interactions such as teaching and counseling more so than to occupations involving administrative tasks. We need to keep this in mind as we look at the social/emotional intelligence of Marcellin.

The high emotional intelligent individual, relative to others, is less apt to engage in problem behaviors, and avoids self-destructive, negative behaviors. This person understands himself—both his strengths and limitations. The high emotional intelligent person is more likely to have possessions of sentimental attachment around the home (think of Marcellin and the Hermitage) and to have more positive social interactions. Such individuals may also be more adept at describing motivational goals, aims, and mission.

In order to translate emotional intelligence in effective interactions, social skills (social intelligence) play a key role. Social Intelligence has to do with the skills needed to have appropriate interactions with others. Individuals who are socially intelligent are usually extraverts and are characterized by their sensitivity to others' moods, feelings, temperaments and motivations, and their ability to cooperate in order to work as part of a group. A socially intelligent person communicates effectively and empathizes easily with others, and typically enjoys working with others.

For the purpose of this paper and in evaluating the social/emotional intelligence of Marcellin through some of his correspondence and some of the testimony of those who knew him, I have integrated the competencies of emotional intelligence with some of the skill dimensions of social intelligence. So, with that having been said, let us begin...

**Marcellin's Self-Awareness Competencies:  
Self-Awareness, Self-Assessment, and Confidence**

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**Self Awareness & Self-Assessment**

*"For us who were at the beginnings, we are like the rough stones that are thrown into the foundations; you don't use polished stones for that."<sup>16</sup>*

Some people are not prepared to face the truth about themselves. When a person knows who he is, he may have to change; and some individuals just do not want to change because changing demands effort! Self-awareness requires honesty and courage ... to get in touch with what we are thinking and feeling and to face the truth about ourselves.

Marcellin, like many holy people, often believed he fell short of his ideals. We have a glimpse of this because he himself called attention to his faults – in particular, his pride and self-love. In 1812, while in the minor seminary at Verrières, Marcellin writes in one of his personal resolutions:

*"Holy Virgin...I turn primarily to you; even though I am your unworthy servant, ask the adorable Heart of Jesus to give me the grace to know myself, and once I know myself, to fight and to overcome my self-love and pride..."<sup>17</sup>*

Marcellin was keenly aware that his own "offenses" were just as "heinous" as those of others. He, in fact, concerned himself with his own sinfulness and "lamented" them, and through these lamentations took efforts to correct them.

In a very real way, Marcellin's awareness of his own lapses and failures encouraged him not to be so judgmental of others. This is seen in one of his early resolution during his seminary years:

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<sup>16</sup> Attributed to Marcellin Champagnat...by P. MAYET — OM #438. (Coste, J. (S.M.), and Lessard, G. (S.M.). *Origines Maristes (OM): Extraits Concernant les Frères Maristes*. Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli Maristi; Rome, Italy, 1985.)

<sup>17</sup> "M. Champagnat's Resolutions," *Marist Notebooks*, # 1, June 1990, Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli Maristi, Roma, pp 75-76.

*"I will talk with all my fellow-students without exception, no matter how repugnant I find some of them, since I recognize now that it is only pride that keeps me from doing so... Why do I despise them? Because of my talents? I am the last in my class. Because of my virtue? I am very proud. Because of the beauty of my body? God made it, and in any case it's badly enough put together, and I am nothing but a pinch of dust."<sup>18</sup>*

This self awareness was a key part of Marcellin's personality and was no doubt helpful in his future relationships with the many Brothers of the Institute whom he helped to form. His genuine, deep affection for his "Little Brothers of Mary" was evident in the paternal greetings which begin so many of his letters to the Brothers – "My very dear brother... My dear friend... My dear child..." The Brothers saw Marcellin's love and concern for them, and Marcellin was able to show this care and concern for them in all their struggles because he too struggled in his life. He understood their struggles.

In the testimonies of the witnesses for the beatification of Marcellin, Brother Aidan stated,

*"It was especially in the confessional that his (Marcellin's) zeal shone forth. His advice was always practical and adapted to each one's needs. There, one always found the representative of the divine Master... the loving doctor who knew how to pour on oil and balm, to restore to the discouraged or wounded soul its confidence, peace and happiness. We could feel that the Father had drawn his loving words not only from doctrine, but especially from the heart of the Master."<sup>19</sup>*

His years of seminary study obviously had been difficult for Marcellin, but his confidence in God adhered to his natural "toughness" and self-awareness, and these traits enabled him to persevere. He modeled this resoluteness and determination for his Brothers, but he also gave great witness to the idea that to know oneself well is a pathway to know God's will.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. pp 77-79.

<sup>19</sup> WITNESSES ON MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT: MINOR WITNESSES (Taken from, Bro. Leonard Voegtle, FMS, Postulator General, "Witness for the Beatification of Marcellin Champagnat"), Brother Aidan, Testimonies, page 4.

Marcellin knew his inner resources, his abilities, and limits—and he was willing and open to receive feedback and new perspectives about himself. By looking at his academic marks at the end of 1813, it is obvious that he had not improved scholastically, but his other marks (conduct, character, study) indicate an improvement in general attitude—an apparent early weakness which was no doubt pointed out by his seminary instructors.

The better a person understands himself, the better he is able to accept or change who he is. Being in the dark about oneself could lead an individual to get caught up in his own internal struggles and allow outside forces to mould and shape him. The clarity with which a person understands himself determines that person's capability to chart his own destiny and realize his potential.

Marcellin was motivated by a desire for continuous learning and self-development and had the ability to target areas for personal change for the greater glory of his God. This competency, also known as “achievement orientation,” shows a concern for a personal need to improve oneself. At the time of his death in 1840, Marcellin had a personal library consisting of approximately fifty-three books.<sup>20</sup> Many of his books, such as Liguori's *Théologie morale*, Boudon's *Dieu seul*, Surin's *Fondements de la vie spirituelle*, and Saint Francis de Salles' *Introduction à la vie dévote* gave guidance to him on how he should live his life for Christ. In his seminary years, the area which Marcellin focused on to improve was his pride. Once again, his resolutions give clear example of the steps he felt he would need to take in order for him to address this issue. At different times during his seminary days, Marcellin promised that he would:

*“...never...go back to the tavern without necessity... avoid bad companions and, in a word, not to do anything which would go against my serving you... (He promised) to give good example; to lead others, as far as I can, to practice virtue; to instruct others in your divine teachings...Talk with all my fellow-students without exception, no matter how repugnant I find some of them, since I recognize now that it is only pride that keeps me from doing so...”<sup>21</sup>*

<sup>20</sup> Brother Andre Lanfrey, Handout # 2, Bibliothèques Maristes, 20 May 2008, Patrimony 2008.

<sup>21</sup> “M. Champagnat's Resolutions”, *Marist Notebooks*, # 1, June 1990, Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli Maristi, Roma, pp 73-77.

In his resolutions for 1815, he revealed a generous perseverance to act where and when he thought God wanted him to and a greater emphasis on study and prayer. He was giving attention to the fault of telling lies and engaging in slander, and he strongly emphasized charity toward neighbor (both in the seminary and back in Marlies during his vacation). "Every time my evening examen makes me aware that I have criticized anyone," Marcellin wrote, "I will deprive myself of breakfast. ... Every time I become aware that I have been guilty of a lie or any exaggeration, I will say the Miserere to ask God's pardon."<sup>22</sup> Preparations for the priesthood led him to "deprivation of self, renunciation, life of prayer, of rule, of study..." and to achieve the goals he set for himself, he appealed strongly to the "holy Virgin," his Good Mother, since he was well aware of his weaknesses.

The desire to learn more about himself and thus do God's will led him once again to seek the advice of his former superior at the major seminary in Lyon, Father Philibert Gardette. In a letter from May of 1827, we see Marcellin writing to Gardette, somewhat of a "father figure," for "some advice and consolation"<sup>23</sup> concerning the present situation at the Hermitage.

In 1827, the Institute was only ten years old and its foundations were still rather weak. When the Brothers were sent out to the schools, they were often still very young and not well trained. Marcellin, therefore, felt it necessary to continue their formation at their communities and at their apostolate, which required him to visit them frequently. At the same time, while Marcellin did have a Brother to serve as novice director, he wished to have some priests (preferably Marist in inclination) to assist with the spiritual formation of the young men at the Hermitage and with the financial administration of the Institute. At this point in the history of the Institute, Courveille and Terraillon had left Marcellin and he had to deal with all the issues by himself. Marcellin knew that he simply could not "do all that unless I have someone to share the work."<sup>24</sup> He sought both consolation and advice.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. pp 89-91.

<sup>23</sup> Letter to Father Gardette, May 1827, PS 003. (PS is understood as "Letters of Marcellin Champagnat" taken from *Letters of Marcellin J.B. Champagnat, Volume 1, Texts*, Edited by Brother Paul Sester, Translated by Brother Leonard Voegtle, Casa Generalizia Dei Fratelli Maristi, Rome, 1991.)

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.N

We also have a glimpse of how Marcellin saw himself some fifteen years after leaving the seminary. While it is not a 'direct' self-assessment, Marcellin gives some insights into what type of priest should come to the Hermitage to assist him in his work with the Brothers. In a letter to Archbishop de Pins during Lent of 1835, Marcellin writes,

*"...what we still need is someone who can supervise, animate, and direct everything, who can meet and deal with those who come to the house; someone who loves, who realizes the importance and benefits of such a position, a director who is pious, enlightened, experienced, prudent, firm, and constant."*<sup>25</sup>

Here, Marcellin paints a portrait of the type of person needed to assist the Brothers at the Hermitage...and unknowingly Marcellin has painted a self-portrait! Marcellin was "pious, enlightened, experienced, prudent, firm, and constant" as well as "someone who loves." We will see more of this particular quality later in this paper, but first I would like to spend some time on Marcellin's self-confidence.

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## SELF-CONFIDENCE

In the *Life of Joseph Benedict Marcellin Champagnat*, Brother Jean Baptiste describes Marcellin as *"tall in stature, with an upright and dignified carriage; his forehead was broad and his facial features strongly marked; his complexion had a brownish tint; a grave countenance reflected a reserve and earnestness which inspired respect."*<sup>26</sup> From these traits, one easily imagines a man with an impressive stature.

Speaking of the *"imposing exterior of the venerated Father,"* Brother Sylvester, in his *Memoirs*, noted the impression Marcellin made on him *"with his height and majesty, his air of goodness and seriousness at the same time. His face commanded respect, his cheeks sunken, his lips a little prominent which*

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<sup>25</sup> Letter to Monseigneur Gaston de Pins, Administrateur apostolique de Lyon, Rhône; 1835 (Lent); PS 056

<sup>26</sup> Jean-Baptiste Furet, *Life*, page 265.

*made him appear to be smiling, his eyes both piercing and searching, his voice strong and sonorous, his speech markedly articulate, without being terse or tedious, everything in proportion.*"<sup>27</sup> Brother François often exclaimed that Marcellin was "*firm...yes, definitely, we would all have trembled at the sound of his voice, under just one of his looks...*"<sup>28</sup>

These three remembrances of Marcellin's physical presence offer us a little understanding of how others' viewed Marcellin. Each of these three men, Jean-Baptiste, Sylvestre, and Francois, witnessed up close the "presence" of Marcellin. But what is meant by the word 'presence?' Daniel Goleman understands 'presence' (also known as "bearing") as the external sense of one's self that others perceive: confidence, self-respect and self-worth. The descriptors used by these men give us some sense of the confidence that Marcellin exuded just by his physical presence.

On the other hand, confidence is generally described as a state of being certain, either that a hypothesis or prediction is correct, or that a chosen course of action is the best or most effective given the circumstances. True self confidence comes from an attitude where an individual promises himself, that no matter how difficult the problem life throws at him, he will try as hard as he can to help himself to succeed.

Marcellin's life was characterized by confidence—a confidence in God and in Mary, his Good Mother—which would translate into a self-confidence which would allow him to fulfill the mission which he believed God and Mary wanted: providing a Christian education for poor, rural children. This confidence is evident throughout certain situations and events in the early years of our Institute. Let us look at a few situations which become some of Marcellin's greatest trials, but also reveal his enormous confidence and trust in his God.

When Marcellin had begun his work, he was very conscious that the vocational pool of Lavalla was being exhausted. In addition, Marcellin was not known outside of his parish. The parish priest in Marlhes, who had never-

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<sup>27</sup> *The Memoirs of Little Brother Sylvestre*, edited by Brother Michael Green, Marist Brothers of the Schools, Drummoyne NSW, Australia, 2007, translated from the original French by Brother Douglas Welsh, page 74.

<sup>28</sup> "Testimonies on Marcellin Champagnat: Brother Francois Evokes Memories of the Founder in His Notebooks", *Marist Notebooks*, #14, November 1998, page 111.

theless requested Brothers for his school, “did not have a very high opinion of Marcellin and never sent him any young men who wished to become religious.”<sup>29</sup> This lack of vocations, which threatened the very existence of the Institute, was truly a trial for Marcellin, but this in no way discouraged him. Instead, it “stirred up his zeal and intensified his confidence in God.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, Marcellin put the whole future of his work in the hands of the Blessed Virgin, his “Ordinary Resource,” who always had her Divine Son either in her hands or her heart. At the beginning of 1822, with the novitiate empty, Marcellin took recourse to Our Lady of Pity:

*“If you abandon us, we shall perish; we shall go out like a lamp without oil. But if this work perishes, it will not be our work which perishes, but yours, as it is you who have done everything for us.”<sup>31</sup>*

Mary did not delay in answering Marcellin’s prayer. In February, Claude Fayolle, the future Brother Stanislas, arrived. In March, eight more postulants arrived, one of whom was the future Brother Jean Baptiste. Marcellin’s confidence in Providence was not for naught.

In January of 1826, Marcellin was seriously ill, but he felt he could rely on Fathers Courveille and Terraillon, both of whom were now living at the Hermitage, to assist the Brothers if he did not recover his health. Yet, less than a year later, Marcellin was alone at the Hermitage with his Brothers who now numbered eighty.

It turned out that the year 1826 was a “terrible year” for Marcellin and the Institute: His first recruit, Jean-Marie Granjon, was dismissed by Marcellin from the Institute, and Brother Jean François (Roumesy), a very competent Brother, left; “major debts were hanging over” Marcellin’s head<sup>32</sup>, his health was extremely poor, and Father Courveille was becoming more and more unacceptable to the Brothers at the Hermitage. Courveille’s dissatisfaction with the Brothers and their devotedness to Marcellin became too much for Courveille who saw himself as the real Superior of the Society of Mary. He

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<sup>29</sup> Brother Alain Delorme, *“We Should Marvel: Our First Brothers,”* Handout, Patrimony Course, 2008-04-14.

<sup>30</sup> Jean Baptiste Furet, *Life*, page 92.

<sup>31</sup> Jean Baptiste Furet, *Life*, page 93.

<sup>32</sup> Letter to Monsieur Jean Cholleton, Vicaire général de Lyon, Rhône; 1833 (08, 09); PS 030

left the Hermitage and sent of letter of complaint against Marcellin and his Institute to Archbishop de Pins, administrator of the Diocese of Lyon. The Archbishop's Council in turn sent Father Cattet, Vicar General for religious communities, to the Hermitage in February 1826. Cattet's inspection and report to the Archbishop were quite harsh, and Cattet planned to make Marcellin's Brothers form a union with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, an institute recently founded by Father Coindre. Added into this milieu was the eventual departure of Terrailon from the Hermitage. All of this must have been an incredibly severe trial for Marcellin.

Yet we see that in May of 1827, Marcellin wrote four letters stating that the various difficulties and feelings of abandonment of 1826 had not destroyed his goal to provide Christian education to poor children in the rural areas. Instead, these difficulties strengthened his conviction that this work of God and Mary must proceed. According to the recollections of Father Maîtreperre, Marcellin had said of the early opposition to his work, *"Until now I used to wonder if I was working according to God's designs; the attacks I have just received begin to give me hope."*<sup>33</sup> A number of years later, Marcellin, again facing difficulties and obstacles, believed more strongly that the work he was about was necessary. To Father Simon Cattet, Vicar General of Lyon and the individual who wrote the stinging inspection report, Marcellin writes that he *"still firmly believe that God wants this work<sup>34</sup> in this age when unbelief is making such frightful progress..."*<sup>35</sup> During this same time, he writes *"with a great deal of confidence"* to Father Joseph Barou, his formator in the Minor Seminary and now Vicar General for the Diocese of Lyon responsible for assignment of priests, and states that he *"still firmly believes that God wants this work."*<sup>36</sup> The same sentiments are revealed, almost word for word, in his May 1827 letter to Archbishop de Pins: *"God wants this undertaking in these perverse times; this is still my firm belief."*<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> OM #752

<sup>34</sup> The word 'work' here is used by Marcellin to mean both the work of the continuous formation of the Brothers so they could teach the rural poor and the administration of the fledgling Society of Mary in the Lyon Diocese. See Jean-Baptiste Furet's *Life*, page 192.

<sup>35</sup> Letter to Monsieur Simon Cattet, Vicaire général de Lyon, Rhône; 1827-05; PS 004

<sup>36</sup> Letter to Father Jean Joseph Barou ; 1827-05 ; PS 007

<sup>37</sup> Letter to Monseigneur Gaston de Pins, 1827-05 ; PS 006

In looking back over this time Marcellin, in a 1833 letter to Father Jean Cholleton, Vicar General in the Lyon diocese, wrote,

*“Though I found myself alone after the withdrawal of Fr. Courveille and the departure of Fr. Terraillon, Mary did not abandon us. We are gradually paying our debts, and other confrères have replaced the first ones. I have to find money for their upkeep all by myself. Mary is helping us, and that is enough...”*<sup>38</sup>

This evidence of Marcellin’s confidence is not only revealed to those he deems as his “ecclesial” superiors. He writes often to his Brothers, revealing this same confidence.

In his Circular of January 1828, Marcellin asked all the Brothers to pray for the success of the steps which Archbishop de Pins was taking to gain legal authorization of the Institute. His opening sentence reveals his confidence that “all will be well” because of God and the Blessed Virgin:

*“God has loved us from all eternity; he chose us and drew us out of the world. The Blessed Virgin has planted us in her garden, and she sees to it that we lack for nothing.”*<sup>39</sup>

In July 1830, the Revolution of the “Three Glorious Days” (27<sup>th</sup> July through the 29<sup>th</sup>), directed against the Church and its priests, and against everything which recalled the Old Regime which Charles X had tried to restore, forced the King to abdicate and to go into exile. The overthrow of Charles X was accompanied by an anticlerical flare-up, including attacks on churches throughout parts of France (In Paris, Notre Dame’s sacristies were desecrated.); religious communities and institutions were sacked, and a number of mission crosses in the provinces were torn down and desecrated. The clergy, especially in the cities, went out only in secular clothing from then on. Naturally, some of the Brothers were fearful of what might happen.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Letter to Monsieur Jean Cholleton, Vicaire général de Lyon, Rhône: 1833 (08, 09); PS 030

<sup>39</sup> Circular, January 1828; PS 010.

<sup>40</sup> *Letters of Marcellin J.B. Champagnat: Texts, Volume 1*, page 23.

Some Brothers wanted to take precautions and advocated wearing secular clothes. *"The right way to prepare,"* said Marcellin, *"is to have no fear, to be wise and circumspect in your relations with people and with children, to have nothing whatever to do with politics, to keep closely united with God, to re-double your zeal for your perfection and for the Christian instruction of the children, and finally, to place all your confidence in God. Your religious habit is a safeguard for you, and not a danger; don't resort to secular dress; it can no more preserve you from harm than a spider's web..."*<sup>41</sup>

Marcellin's Circular of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1830 addressed his Brothers' concerns with prudence and confidence:

*"Don't be frightened; Mary is our defender. The hairs of our head are all counted, and not one of them can fall without God's permission. Let us be totally convinced that we have no greater enemy than ourselves. Only we can hurt ourselves; no one else can. God has said to the wicked, 'You can go just so far and no farther.'"*<sup>42</sup>

Marcellin was so confident in his belief and so unmoved by the political turmoil that on the same day that he wrote the circular (15<sup>th</sup> August 1830), he received more postulants into the Institute and clothed them in the religious habit.<sup>43</sup>

He confidently reiterated this advice less than a month later when he wrote to Brother Antoine and the Brothers in Millery:

*"Do not be afraid of anything, dear friends; we have God to defend us. No one can harm us if God does not let him. Despite the rage which hell stirs up against it, the Church is founded on a rock and nothing can shake it. It is never more beautiful than when it is persecuted. So let us abandon our-selves to the wise and loving guidance of Divine Providence..."*<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Jean-Baptiste Furet, *Life*, Page 173.

<sup>42</sup> Circulaire; 1830-08-15; PS 016

<sup>43</sup> Brother Sylvestre's *Memoirs*, page 53.

<sup>44</sup> Letter to Antoine; MILLERY, Rhône; 1830-09-10; PS 017

Marcellin's confidence also manifested itself in his letters of encouragement to his Brothers. In one, he addresses Brother Barthélemy who is facing difficulties in Saint-Symphorien d'Ozon, Isère, and apparently is upset with the small number of children being taught:

*"...Be brave, good friend; it is enough that you and your co-worker are willing to teach many children... Don't get upset over the small number you have now. God holds the hearts of everyone in his hands; He will send you students when he sees fit; all you have to do is be sure that no infidelity of yours stands in the way. You are where God wanted you to be, since you are where your superiors wanted you to be. I have no doubt that the Lord is rewarding you with many graces."<sup>45</sup>*

In answering a letter from Brother Théophile, Marcellin must have been well-aware of the problems Théophile was facing. From what Brothers Paul Sester and Raymond Borne tell us about him, the teaching profession did not really suit Théophile because he did not have much education, his health was not very good, and going from tailoring to teaching at the age of twenty-four was certainly not an easy transition.<sup>46</sup> Yet, we hear Marcellin telling Théophile:

*"Courage, dear friend, everything will improve with time, and besides, God will definitely be our reward. So why worry? Let us act as if we were sure of total success, and give all the honor to Jesus and Mary."<sup>47</sup>*

Likewise, we see a confident Marcellin in Paris in 1838 attempting to gain legal approbation for the Institute *"seeing, visiting this one and that one, with no idea when... the exhausting errands will be at an end... (Yet) in spite of all that, I am still strongly convinced, dear brother, that we will get only what God wants, neither more nor less. However, I do not neglect any step that might further our cause."<sup>48</sup>*

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<sup>45</sup> Letter to Fr. Barthélemy; Saint-Symphorien d'Ozon, Isère; 1831-11-01; PS 024

<sup>46</sup> **Letters of Marcellin J.B. Champagnat, Volume 2, References**, Edited by Brother Raymond Borne & Brother Paul Sester, Translated by Brother Leonard Voegtle, Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli Maristi, Rome, 1992, p.478.

<sup>47</sup> Letter to Fr. Théophile, Marhles, Loire; 1835-07-12; PS 061

<sup>48</sup> Letter to Fr. Antoine Couturier; Millery, Rhône; 1838-03-24; PS 183

Brother Laurent, in his 1842 recollections of Marcellin, said,

*“He often spoke to us of the care that divine Providence takes of those who put their confidence in it, and especially of us; but when he spoke to us the goodness of God and of God’s love for us, he ignited in us the divine fire which filled him, so that the troubles and tasks and the miseries of life were not capable of unsettling us.”*<sup>49</sup>

Marcellin’s confidence in God was contagious... according to Laurent, “he ignited in us the divine fire...so that troubles were not capable of unsettling us.”

One cannot look at Marcellin’s confidence without also looking at his generally optimistic attitude toward life in general, his belief in the basic goodness of people, and his interactions with those he came in contact with. Let us now look at Marcellin’s other social/emotional competencies – his self management competencies.

***Marcellin’s Self Management Competencies:***

*Emotional Self-Control, Transparency & Clear Communication, Adaptability, Initiative & Leadership, Optimism, and Conscientiousness*

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Daniel Goleman, in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, states that our impulsive, emotional reactions can cause us to interact with others in ways that are counter-productive. We stop listening. We start to see the other person as wrong. We become rigid in our thinking and less open to influence. These responses compromise decision-making and execution. And when these patterns play out over and over again between the same people, the relationship itself

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<sup>49</sup> Brother Laurent, *Memoirs*, 1842, page 3. As Brother Michael Green, translator of this text from the original French said, “This memoir was penned by one of the first community at Lavalla, Brother Laurent. It seems to have been written in response to the invitation of Brother Jean-Baptiste in 1841 when he asked the first Brothers to put in writing their memories of Father Champagnat. Brother Jean-Baptiste, of course, had undertaken the commission to write the official biography of the Founder, this being eventually published in 1856. Fortunately, Laurent’s response to Jean-Baptiste has survived when all the others have not. The value of Laurent’s work – scribbled in poor French over five pages of an exercise-book – is the fact that it was written by one of the very first members of the Institute, someone who was there in Lavalla from 1817. Probably completed in 1842, it is the oldest account we have of the life of the Founder.” This text, at this point in time, has not been published in English.

can become the problem, eroding the morale and productivity of any group. Emotional self-management speaks of “managing” one’s emotions so social interactions can be productive. Emotional self-management covers a wide range of competencies, such as emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, initiative, optimism, and conscientiousness. For the purpose of this article, I will cover just one of these competencies – emotional self-control.

### **Emotional Self Control**

Emotional self-control is the ability to keep one’s impulsive feelings and emotions under control. It is being able to restrain negative reactions when provoked, when faced with opposition or hostility from others, or when working under pressure. One of Marcellin’s great strengths was his ability to deal calmly with stress and remain poised and positive, even in trying moments. We already have seen how Marcellin handled the “vocation crisis” of 1822. Let us look at some other situations and how Marcellin reacted to them.

In the year following the July Revolution, alarming stories were circulating among the people near Saint-Etienne that the Hermitage was an anti-revolutionary arsenal, with cellars full of arms. Brother Jean-Baptiste mentions that some in the local area believed that the Brothers had been doing military drills at night. In March and April of 1831, a rumor circulated that a marquis was hidden in the house and that he was the inspiration behind the Brothers’ plan for a counter revolution.<sup>50</sup> The local government ordered a house search, and a public prosecutor, accompanied by the police, went to the Hermitage. As the prosecutor entered the house, the police surrounded the building. Champagnat, through his personal transparency and self-control, immediately defused a possibly dangerous situation by greeting the public prosecutor and his men:

*“A great honor certainly for us! You are not alone, I see, sir. I know what you want. Well, you must make a thorough search to find out whether we are harboring nobles, suspected persons and arms. You have probably heard that we have cellars; let us begin with those.”<sup>51</sup>*

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. pages 174-175.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. page 175.

The prosecutor and two of his men visited the cellars, but by this time the prosecutor was becoming convinced by Marcellin's attitude and his willingness to accommodate his requests that the reports he and the local government had received were false. He wanted to cut short the inspection, but Marcellin wanted to make sure that the rumors would be squashed once and for all, and he insisted: *"No, sir, you must see everything! Otherwise the rumors will persist that we are out of order."*<sup>52</sup> Marcellin took the investigators through every room of the house. Once the inspection was complete, Marcellin graciously offered the prosecutor and his men some refreshments which they accepted. According to Jean Baptiste's account, the prosecutor apologized for the unpleasant duty and told Marcellin: *"Have no fear, your Reverence; I promise you that this visit will prove advantageous to you."*<sup>53</sup> Marcellin's calm and transparent manner helped save the day.

Marcellin also handled difficult and disappointing situations with calm, sometimes with resignation, but never with any hint of residual anger or bitterness. When the town council of Feurs in Loire voted in 1831 that the mutual teaching method would be used and that the Marist Brothers were too expensive for the town of limited resources to keep, Marcellin wrote to Mr. Jean-Baptiste Mondon, mayor of Feurs:

*"Thank you for informing me about the decision of your council. I accept the termination of our brothers' establishment in your town with resignation and calm... Please accept, Mr. Mayor, the respect of him who has the honor to be your most devoted servant..."*<sup>54</sup>

We also see this sense of calm in his letter to Brother François dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1838. By the time that this letter is written, Marcellin has spent the last few months attempting to get legal approbation for the Institute and is convinced that Mr. De Salvandy, Minister of Public Education, is constantly looking for new ways to drag out the process. In the final analysis, it seems that De Salvandy does not want to give Marcellin the requested authorization. So, Marcellin is preparing to leave Paris disappointed, but resigned:

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Letter to Monsieur Jean-Baptiste Mondon; Feurs, Loire; 1831-04; PS 021

*"I imagine you want to know how our business is going. Sad to say, I know practically nothing about it, or if you prefer, I know everything. What was simply my suspicion has today become certitude. I am very annoyed, but not upset; I still have great confidence in Jesus and Mary."*<sup>55</sup>

This sense of calm and resignation is also revealed in his 24<sup>th</sup> November 1838 letter to Mr. Jean-Jacques Baude, a deputy in the French government. Marcellin had written this letter to dispel the rumor that the Marist Brothers were opposed to the University and therefore the French government itself. By the end of 1838, it seems more and more probable that Marcellin has failed to gain legal authorization for the Institute, yet he writes,

*"What I have just learned from Mr. Jovin Deshayes and from one of our Brothers who was passing through Paris, really upsets me, but it does not discourage me."*<sup>56</sup>

In his letter of 28<sup>th</sup> December 1838 to Brother Dominique, we see Marcellin's calm yet firm response to this Brother who often complained about his fate. Marcellin could have reacted explosively to Dominique's relatively constant complaints, but instead, we see a letter of understanding and encouragement mingled with clear advice that is proportionately exacted:

*"As for you, dear friend, we will always be ready to please you and even to obey you. Show us a task at which you can remain constant and content, and we will entrust it to you right away. It is a very sad illness, to be happy only in places where one is not. It is also a terrible mistake to go looking for any other way to do good than the one which has been entrusted to us."*<sup>57</sup>

Marcellin's transparent and authentic manner in dealing others also gives further credence to his social/emotional intelligence.

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<sup>55</sup> Letter to Fr. François (Gabriel Rivat); Notre Dame de l'Hermitage; 1838-06-23; PS 197

<sup>56</sup> Letter to Monsieur Jean-Jacques Baude, député; Paris; 1838-11-24; PS 228

<sup>57</sup> Letter to Fr. Dominique; Charlieu, Loire; 1838-12-28; PS 234

**Marcellin's Social Awareness Competencies:**  
*Empathy, Organizational Awareness, and Service Orientation*

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**Social Awareness** refers to how people handle relationships and awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. The Social Awareness cluster contains three competencies:

- **Empathy:** Sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns
- **Organizational Awareness:** Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships
- **Service Orientation:** Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting the needs of others.

For the purpose of this article, let us focus on Marcellin's empathy.

### **Empathy**

More than just an internal sense of relatedness or appreciation for the experiences of others, empathy in this context represents the ability to create a sense of connectedness with others—to get them on your wavelength and invite them to move with and toward you rather than away and against you. People with empathy are able to constantly pick up emotional cues. They can appreciate not only what people are saying, but also why they are saying it. This competency is about understanding other people and the ability “to read” situations well. It is the ability to hear and understand accurately the thoughts, feelings, and concerns of others.

So, how is Marcellin empathetic? It is important to remember that Marcellin had suffered as a boy from the absence of any regular schooling and was determined to see that the opportunities for learning, which he did not have, were extended throughout rural France. He was deeply convinced of the importance of education. He set out to establish a system of primary schools in which rural children could receive a good elementary education—an education which he had no opportunity to receive — and, at the same time, receive instruction in the Christian faith. Marcellin knew first-hand what deprivation the young people were experiencing...and shared his remembrances of this deprivation in his letter to Queen Marie-Amelie of France:

*"What I saw with my own eyes in that new post, with reference to the education of young people, reminded me of the difficulties I had experienced myself at their age, for lack of teachers. I therefore quickly carried out the project I already had in mind to establish an association of teaching brothers for the rural towns, very many of which, for lack of financial resources, cannot afford the Brothers of the Christian Schools."*<sup>58</sup>

These same concerns were also shared with King Louis-Philippe:

*"...I learned to read and write only after making tremendous efforts, for lack of capable teachers. From that time on I understood the urgent necessity of having an institution which could, with less expense, provide for rural children the same good education which the Brothers of the Christian Schools provide for the poor in the cities."*<sup>59</sup>

Marcellin also understood his Brothers. As we have seen earlier, Marcellin knew Sylvestre "thoroughly and esteemed him highly for his frankness and docility" and defended him when the older members of the community alleged that Sylvestre's "only thought was to enjoy himself...and upset the good order of the community." The infamous wheelbarrow incident apparently caused significant rumblings in the community. How did Marcellin respond to these Brothers who complained? He said:

*"I prefer to see him enjoy himself in that way than mope about bored. I can't see what harm his barrow escapade caused. You used to enjoy yourselves too, when you were young... Instead of joining the young Brother in some harmless game or some diverting activities to help him pass the time, you leave him to himself; you are busy at study or talk over serious questions; are you surprised that he plays with the barrow? Please don't make a crime of it, still less abandon him to himself at the risk of souring his attitude to his work and his vocation."*<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Letter to Queen Marie-Amelie, 1835-05, PS 059

<sup>59</sup> Letter to King Louis-Philippe, 1834-01-28; PS 034

<sup>60</sup> Jean-Baptiste Furet, *Life*, pages 270-271.

Brother Sylvestre, in his *Memoirs*, describes several examples of Marcellin's kindness towards him, in particular when he pardoned him of twelve hundred lines given to him by the Master of Novices:

*"During spiritual reading I made a noise while moving a statue on my desk. The Master of Novices, somewhat annoyed by my carelessness in the past, gave me not less than 1200 lines. I believed this penance to be completely unjust and went to ask Fr. Champagnat to let me off with it. When I got to his room I told him in tears and in great detail why I had come to see him. After carefully listening to me he took a sheet of paper from his desk, dripped sealing wax on it and applied his seal. Then he wrote a single line on it, signed the sheet and gave it to me, telling me to be more careful. What did that line contain? Here it is word for word: 'Payment of 1200 lines'."*<sup>61</sup>

Marcellin's response reveals his natural and intuitive understanding of adolescence and of religious life. But this intuitive understanding was not only for Brother Sylvestre. According to Brother Jean-Baptiste, as soon as Marcellin noticed that a postulant was having troubles settling in or had doubts about his vocation or was home-sick, he either sent for him or found an opportunity of being alone with him.

*"This might be by taking him as companion on a journey, by an outing with him or by inviting his help in some manual work. In any case, he never lost touch with him until he had reinforced his determination to persevere in his holy state... Marcellin had a variety of approaches and he used every possible means to banish temptations against vocation and to instill courage into those who were taking fright at the trials or troubles of religious life. He would make one promise to stay a few days longer, assuring him that if the dissatisfaction did not pass he would let him leave. Another, might be given a position of trust with the reminder that he was counting on him and was confident that he would not be let down in the slightest. Or it might be that he called on the 'waverer'*

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<sup>61</sup> Brother Sylvestre's *Memoirs*, page 91-92.

*to make a novena, with the promise, that, if his dispositions remained unchanged, there would be no obstacle afterwards to his departure. A young man might be advised to stay on to further his studies and while he was busy doing this, the Founder would skillfully inspire him with a taste for religious life and lead him to a decision to embrace it.*<sup>62</sup>

Marcellin's empathy is all the more significant when it is seen in the context of the prevailing rigorism in moral theology, the expectations of religious life, and even of pastoral practice of the times. For the rigorist, human nature was corrupt and valid forgiveness from God was difficult to obtain. Jesus Christ was looked upon as a severe and inscrutable Redeemer.<sup>63</sup> Because of this, a large number of persons remained away from the Sacraments, especially in France, during the 17th and 18th centuries, or received them but seldom, under pretext of being too unworthy. Yet in the following testimony of Brother Callinique, we see Marcellin as a man of enormous empathy in the confessional. He was both firm and compassionate:

*"During my novitiate, I made a general confession of my whole life, as the Rule suggests. Nothing can describe the goodness of Father in the confessional. During my confession, he held me in his arms, as was his custom, and hugged me affectionately against his heart. He was truly the father of the prodigal, welcoming his son..."*<sup>64</sup>

His empathy helped him "to connect" with people. To create a sense of connectedness with his Brothers, Marcellin took the time to get to know them and understand them. To build this connectedness, Marcellin made sure that he was "in touch" with his Brothers.

It is interesting to note that the Rule of 1837 required all the Brothers to write to the Superior "every four months."<sup>65</sup> Clearly, this was one way Marcellin got to know his Brothers. It is also because of this rule that we have

<sup>62</sup> Jean Baptiste Furet, *Life*, Pages 465-466.

<sup>63</sup> Keith Farrell, *Achievements from the Depths*, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> WITNESSES ON MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT: MINOR WITNESSES (Taken from, Bro. Leonard Voegtle, FMS, Postulator General, "Witness for the Beatification of Marcellin Champagnat"), Brother Callinique, page 7.

<sup>65</sup> Rule of 1837, Chapter VII, paragraph 2.

a number of letters from Marcellin, responding to letters from his Brothers. Many of these letters reveal Marcellin's empathetic qualities, especially his ability to listen attentively to others. To Brother Barthélemy, Marcellin writes:

*"I was very glad to hear from you and to know that you are in good health. I also know that you have many children in your school; you will consequently have many copies of your virtues, because the children will model themselves on you, and will certainly follow your example."*<sup>66</sup>

In another letter, Marcellin is able to hear and understand Barthélemy's thoughts, feelings, and concerns:

*"I am very well aware of all the problems which all the illnesses of your co-workers can create for you. Take good care of yourself, so that you can carry out your difficult duties well... Be brave, dear friend; think how precious your occupation is in the eyes of God. Great saints and great men were happy to have a task which Jesus and Mary value so highly. Let these little children come to me, for heaven belongs to them."*<sup>67</sup>

Possibly from his own father's example, Marcellin had learned how to come to know people closely, how to mix with them, how to show concern for them, and how to develop bonds with them. Marcellin's natural tendency was to be relational. In support of this view, it is interesting to note that Brother Sylvestre says that Marcellin's many journeys to visit his parishioners in the remote hamlets, "... were not solely to visit the sick, but also to re-establish contact with the families, to reconcile their enemies, to help the poor, to console the afflicted and to bring back to their duties the people who had distanced themselves and who no longer spoke charitably of their priest. He had a natural gift for gaining confidence and correcting without ever hurting."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Letter to Brother Barthélemy; Ampuis, Rhône; 1830-01-21; PS 014

<sup>67</sup> Letter to Brother Barthélemy; Ampuis, Rhône; 1831-01-03; PS 019

<sup>68</sup> Brother Sylvestre's *Memoirs*, page 34.

**Marcellin's Relationship Management Competencies:**  
*Developing & Influencing Others, Building Bonds, and Teamwork and Collaboration.*

*"His (Marcellin's) lessons and example will not be lost; we shall find them in the Brothers whom he has founded."<sup>69</sup>*

Relationship Management competencies deal with an individual's ability to work with others, to mentor them, and to foster relationships which are related to activities or projects which are larger than any one individual. Let us specifically look at one of these competencies – Developing & Influencing Others.

**Developing & Influencing Others**

This competency is about the ability to foster the long-term learning or development of others. Its focus is on the developmental intent and effect rather than on the formal role of teaching or training. Those individuals who do this well spend time helping people find their own way through specific feedback. They mentor others by recognizing their strengths. They also have the ability to impact others in order to support a particular aim. In Marcellin's case, his aim was clear: to provide a Christian education for poor youth of small towns.

Of the many images used to describe Marcellin, the one of "mentor" is extremely apt. He mentored his early Brothers so that they could one day assume leadership roles within the community. He mentions this in his 1835 letter to Archbishop De Pins:

*"It is true that I have some brothers who help me with various tasks: a good master of novices, a capable brother to direct the brothers' class, another for the novices, and an economer..."<sup>70</sup>*

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<sup>69</sup> Jean Louis Duplay, Testimony as found in *Annals of the Institute* #205

<sup>70</sup> Letter to Monseigneur Gaston de Pins, Administrateur apostolique de Lyon, Rhône; 1835 (Lent); PS 056

We also know that Marcellin believed in developing his brothers. In his Circular of 1840-02-04, it is clear that Marcellin has trained others to lead the annual conference:

*"Therefore, in conformity with our last circular, the conference will be held at...for the establishments of...and will be presided over by our Brother First Assistant, and in his absence by Brother..."*<sup>71</sup>

He advised and mentored François on how to be a leader and how to make decisions. One example of this is seen in Marcellin's letter of 10<sup>th</sup> January 1838 to François. Marcellin, who is on his way to Paris to attempt to gain legal authorization for the Institute and is aware of François' reluctance in assuming a leadership role in his absence, tells François:

*"Whenever you have a problem, after consulting God and our common Mother, consult Fr. Matricon. Tell him that I told you to consult him. Work things out with him and Fr. Terrailon, when you can. On Sundays, at the usual time, meet in the secretariat with Fr. Matricon and the usual brothers..."*<sup>72</sup>

Marcellin modeled the type of decision-making he believed was necessary— Consultation with the priests at the Hermitage and "the usual Brothers." In his letter to Father Ferréol Douillet, we can see Marcellin's decision making process, which he no doubt passed on to his Brothers:

*"The decision which I shared with you about our establishment in La Côte was in no way one I made all by myself. After recommending the matter to the prayers of all our brothers, and saying Mass for that intention, I consulted my confrères, our brothers, and all were of the opinion that we should not continue directing the school in La Côte except under the conditions according to which it was established, and according to which we establish them everywhere else..."*<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Circular of 1840-02-04; PS 318

<sup>72</sup> Letter to Fr. François; N.D. De l'Hermitage; 1838-01-10; PS 169

<sup>73</sup> Letter to Monsieur Ferréol Douillet,; La Côte-St.André, Isère; 1838-10; PS 215

Also important to note is that before the Rule of 1837 was promulgated, Marcellin sent it around to the senior Brothers for consultation and for their comments on its content, and according to Brother Marie-Jubin, Marcellin also sought the advice and opinions of some of the younger Brothers:

*"Asking for advice never embarrassed him. More than once he came to me, a young brother of twenty, which both surprised and edified me."<sup>74</sup>*

Marcellin also spent time helping some of his Brothers "find their own way" through specific feedback. This was already seen in his two letters to Dominique (PS 049 & PS 234), his letter to Brother Cassien (PS 042), his letter to Brother Barthélemy (PS024), his letter to Brother Denis (PS 168), his letter to Brother Théophile (PS 061), and one of his letters to Brother François (PS 197). The following are just a few excerpts from those letters:

To Brother Dominique, Marcellin wrote,

*"...A little more humility and obedience would not hurt your situation any..."* and

*"...As for you, dear friend, we will always be ready to please you and even to obey you. Show us a task at which you can remain constant and content, and we will entrust it to you right away. It is a very sad illness, to be happy only in places where one is not. It is also a terrible mistake to go looking for any other way to do good than the one which has been entrusted to us."*

To Brother Cassien, Marcellin counsels:

*"...So then, dear brother, what have you got to be upset about? If the members of the Society of Mary are too imperfect to serve as models for you, dear Cassien, then look at her who can be the model of the perfect and the imperfect and who loves them all: the perfect because they*

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<sup>74</sup> WITNESSES ON MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT: MINOR WITNESSES (Taken from, Bro. Leonard Voegtle, FMS, Postulator General, "Witness for the Beatification of Marcellin Champagnat"), Brother Marie-Jubin, p. 12.

*practice virtue and lead others to do good, especially in community; and the imperfect because it is especially for their sake that Mary was raised to the sublime dignity of Mother of God."*

In his 1<sup>st</sup> November 1831 letter, Marcellin advises Brother Barthélemy on how to "win over his students":

*"... Tell them, 'God loves you, and I also love you, because Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints love you so much'. Then tell them, 'Do you know why God loves you so much? It is because you were purchased with his blood, and you can become great saints, and with very little difficulty, if you really want to.'"*<sup>75</sup>

To Denis, Marcellin writes,

*"If you want me to continue to admonish you for your failing, good friend, you must not consider my admonitions so strange..."*<sup>76</sup>

To Brother Théophile, who is anxious about a situation at the school in Marthes, Marcellin recommends:

*"... Why worry? Let us act as if we were sure of total success, and give all honor to Jesus and Mary."*

And to François, fearful that his talents and abilities are not up to the tasks at hand, Marcellin says,

*"Just try to do your duty well and God will do what you cannot..."*

Clearly, Marcellin had the ability to foster the development of his "Little Brothers" so that they too could meet the needs of the young children entrusted to their care.

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<sup>75</sup> Letter to Brother Barthélemy; Saint- Symphorien d'Ozon; 1831- 11- 01; PS 024

<sup>76</sup> Letter to Brother Denis, PS 168.

## CONCLUSION

We conclude where we began — with a reflection on Marcellin from Brother Jean-Baptiste:

*“Father Champagnat owed much to the success of his ministry and in the foundation of his Institute, to his bright, open, friendly and considerate character with its ability to resolve situations of strife. An unassuming affability, a straight-forwardness and impression of kindness radiated from his face, gaining all hearts and disposing minds to accept without difficulty and even with pleasure, his opinions, his instructions, and his reproofs...”*

Marcellin's intelligence was rooted in his *interactions* with others and his sensitivity to others' feelings, temperaments and motivations... In short, it lay in his ability to understand the very real details of human relationships. He was a person gifted with a strong social/emotional intelligence. He had the ability to “read” situations, to understand the social context that influences behavior, to form and develop others, and to inspire. Marcellin was able to choose strategies that would lead to the fulfillment of his primary goal: to provide a Christian education to poor children.

Through some of his correspondence and through the reminiscences of those who knew him well, we see Marcellin as calm, serene, open, constant, and courageous. Aware of his own limitations, he was gifted with a deep intelligence in the practical sense, and he was exceedingly confident in his convictions. Marcellin always hoped that the quality which would define his “Little Brothers of Mary” would be simplicity, and in many ways, this quality characterized Marcellin. For Marcellin, simplicity was straightforwardness in relationships with others, enthusiasm for the work at hand, and an uncomplicated confidence in his God. He shared this quality with his Brothers whom he hoped would become like a family.

We have seen that Marcellin was truly talented in human relationships; his common sense and his compassion made him a popular confessor throughout his life. He was able to communicate effectively and empathize easily with others. Yet, we know from our Marist history that Marcellin was not a man for writing spiritual treatises, but he was a man of determination and

action, a man of heart and affection. His emphasis was on the heart and on relationships – both with God and other people. It was, and is, key to our spiritual heritage and to our Marist pedagogy. It was through this heart and affection...for the youth of rural France and for those who would teach them...that Marcellin succeeded in doing what many thought impossible. These qualities of Marcellin's social/emotional intelligence — “his open, friendly and considerate character... his unassuming affability, a straightforwardness and impression of kindness” — allowed him to do great things.