

# Marist Leadership: then and now

*Marist leadership; its early origins in France and its development in Australia through the establishment of Marist schools. Development of lay Marist leadership and its enactment at Marcellin College, Bulleen.*

## INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the notion, origins and development of leadership in a Marist context. It presents who Marcellin Champagnat is and the early origins of the Marist movement and its charism in France. It traces the movement's expansion to Australia in terms of its leadership and establishment of Marist schools, predominantly in Sydney. The paper then focuses on the difficulties Marist leaders encountered in Australia and their responses. This paper continues by exploring how Marist leadership enabled Marist educators to be equipped for 21st century education in Australia. The paper explains the development of the lay Marist movement, as a response by Marist leaders to the pressures on the Brothers and the demands of the Australian population in social, economic and cultural contexts and also as a response to Vatican II. As a final consideration, this paper explores how lay Marist leadership is enacted at Marcellin College, a Catholic Marist secondary school for boys in Bulleen, Melbourne.

## MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT – IDENTITY AND HIS EARLY INFLUENCES AS A LEADER

To understand Marcellin Champagnat, one must consider the era in which he lived, his family origins and role models. Marcellin was born in the hamlet of Le Rosey on 20 May 1789 in France, during the French revolutionary period, which brought great political and social upheaval (Sammon, 1999, pp. 11 – 12). One of the greatest influences on Marcellin as a boy and a young man was his father, Jean Baptiste. A wealthy, well educated peasant landowner, who held various government positions (Sammon) today would be termed a 'political activist'. He believed in the

revolution's ideals of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" and was against the 'old regime' which denied such ideals to its citizens. He supported the opportunities which the revolution gave men of ability and education, such as rising in local society above their current station in life, but was not a supporter of the excesses to which such men availed themselves, and the corruption to which they were susceptible, all in the name of the revolution (McMahon, 1988, p.4). Instead, he felt that the revolution in a practical sense merely perpetuated the inequalities and selectiveness of the 'old regime'. Jean Baptiste was appalled at the frequent instances of Jacobin Terror, as local citizens fell victim to the excessive and unfair demands of the Jacobin leaders, who wanted for example to requisition their crops (McMahon, p.2). Moreover, given that the religious were associated with the 'old regime', revolutionary leaders were also anti clerical and many churches were seized during this period and converted to temples for the Goddess of Reason, the ceremonies of which Jean Baptiste, when in office, was required to officiate over. However, after the Jacobin fall, Jean Baptist's political career ended with the arrival of the Napoleonic era (Sammon, p.3). Being a very astute thinker, Jean Baptiste gleaned some value from the revolution's core ideals, that being his compassion for others' welfare. Whilst he was open to new ideas of reason, he did not seek to implement them without careful consideration, hence possessing great discernment (McMahon, p.7). These were talents which the young Marcellin witnessed regularly. Jean Baptiste was also a skilled labourer who worked on the family farm fashioning iron, building with stones and tending the mill (McMahon). It is evident therefore where Marcellin gained his own manual skills and his strong work ethic. Jean Baptiste also impacted Marcellin in his diplomacy. Since he had to use

much care in handling affairs of public office and local issues, he was an adept diplomat, an invaluable skill for the young Marcellin. He had much self-confidence and was adamant to instil it in others, especially his son (McMahon, p.8).

Marcellin's leadership qualities were also heavily influenced by his mother, Jean-Marie Chirat, a woman of "...utter integrity, sterling faith and love of work..." (McMahon, p.11). She was a firm character; thrifty, godly and always willing to help others. She was a devoted wife and mother and encouraged devotion to the Blessed Virgin (McMahon). It is evident the wonderful attributes Marcellin gained from his mother, who laid the foundations for his own spirituality. Furthermore, his mother's spiritual fervour was complemented by Marcellin's aunt, a sister of St Joseph, Louise who was instrumental in his spiritual development especially when she lived with the Champagnat family after her expulsion from the convent due to the anti clerical sentiment of the French Revolution (McMahon). She helped Marcellin merge a life of prayer with service to others; she was a true servant leader.

Another key person in shaping Marcellin's leadership was Fr Jean-Baptiste Soutrenon. When deciding to become a cleric, Marcellin assisted Fr Soutrenon on his pastoral visits in the local community and served at his masses. During this time, Marcellin learnt much about how to deal with people and their problems, how to minister pastorally to his local community and be compassionate. A cleric who lived humbly and in poverty, he attended dutifully to all parish needs by actively engaging in farm work with the local families (McMahon, p.15). Hence, he was yet another role model of service-oriented leadership.

A final role model for Marcellin was Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whom he considered a leader in the Church. Devotion to Mary was important in the dioceses of Lyons and Le Puys, hence she became for him a "Good Mother" and "Ordinary Resource" (McMahon). Thus Marcellin's leadership was clearly impacted by his parents and the revolutionary period into which he was born and raised. His aunt and later Fr Soutrenon and of course Our Lady all shaped who he was to become as the founder of the Marist movement. Thus in his early years at St Irenaeus, Marcellin took the examples of the aforementioned models and grew

spiritually into a man of self-discipline, prayer and faith, committed to visiting the ill and teaching the local youth. He was focussed on developing good family relationships with others and used sound judgement in all his dealings with people (Sammon, 199, p.21).

### **ORIGINS OF THE LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY IN FRANCE**

Despite his outstanding role models and ardent spirituality, Marcellin's one hindrance which made attaining his goals challenging was his lack of education, which suffered due to his birth being during the French revolutionary period. Education was not a priority in France during the Revolution. Twenty years of insurrection and external wars, itinerant teachers, lack of attendance by students who were needed for farm work instead and to support their families and the often brutal treatment of them by their educators, meant that Marcellin too was a victim of his circumstances. At age 11, he left school for farm work. With the emergence of the Napoleonic era, the Catholic Church was renewed; hence a significant recruitment campaign began in Marllhes parish to establish a seminary (McMahon, p.12). At this time, Marcellin was approached and he joined the seminary, also assisting Fr. Soutrenon in the parish. Despite struggling academically, he persisted, even after being told he would be ill-suited to study. Marcellin also showed courage to endure harsh conditions in the seminary, a lack of resources and low quality teachers (McMahon, p.20). Marcellin utilised his diplomatic skills upon his entry into the major seminary at St Irenaeus at Fourvieres when political turmoils threatened its closure (McMahon p.23).

The Marist movement was able to develop in the Napoleonic era with the re-emergence of religious congregations. At this time, Jean-Claude Courveille, who received a miracle from Our Lady of Le Puys, consecrated himself to the Blessed Virgin, including a number of seminarians, one of which was Marcellin (McMahon, pp.29 – 31). Courveille suggested the establishment of the Society of Mary to take religion to the poor of the countryside. An interesting inclusion in this Society, which later became a feature of the Marists, was priests, auxiliary Brothers and Sisters and most significantly for the purposes of this paper; lay tertiaries (Sammon, pp.29-31). Hence

the involvement of lay people in the Marist movement even in its earliest stages is a distinctive feature. Marcellin was in charge of teaching the Brothers to educate the children in the countryside. Given the favourable support religious congregations were receiving from the Archbishop, approval of the Society of Mary should have been forthcoming, however instead the Society of the Cross of Jesus was approved. Undeterred by this setback, Marcellin was ordained in 1816 (McMahon, p.33) and pledged his allegiance to Mary. Meanwhile, Marcellin worked tirelessly in the village of La Valla and remained persistent in the face of the parish priest's hostility and opposition to his parish activities (McMahon, p.28). His goal of tending to the spiritual and educational needs of the local youth was further strengthened by the Montagne experience (McMahon). Witnessing the dying boy, Jean-Baptiste Montagne's lack of knowledge of God and faith touched Marcellin deeply and he was thus further inspired to providing primary education for children and teaching them "...the truths of religion" (Sammon, p.31). He wanted children to have "...a Christian spirit and attitudes and to form them to religious habits and the virtues possessed by a good Christian and a good citizen." (Sammon, p.32). He then established a congregation of like minded Brothers to evangelise to youth. Despite financial difficulties, Marcellin persisted and eventually gained his first recruits; Jean-Claude Granjon, Jean-Baptiste Audras and Gabriel Rivat and with the help of Jean-Marie Courveille a house was purchased and the new recruits were instructed on how to teach the young (Sammon, p.34). Facing further obstacles, such as the imminent absorption of the Brothers into the Vicar General's own Society, Marcellin drew upon his leadership skills of discernment, diplomacy and self-confidence and he refused to allow this to happen (Sammon, p.39). Marcellin's response was to turn to Mary and keep praying, to utilize his political acumen, optimism and resourcefulness (Sammon, pp.46-47). Eventually a Superior was required at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage, a ballot was taken and despite opposition from Courveille, Marcellin was elected (Sammon, p.53). Even after his election as Superior, further attempts were made by Courveille to discredit Marcellin, including complaints filed to the Vicar General against him and financial

constraints from creditors. However, Marcellin remained firm and despite departures from some of his Brothers due to these pressures, he opened schools with the support of Jean-Marie Colin (Sammon, pp.53-60).

The 1830's Revolution in France caused a resurgence of political and social unrest and an increase in tensions between the Church and the State, thus making it difficult for the Brothers to obtain official recognition (Sammon, p.63). There was much mistrust and anti-clerical sentiment was high, such that State inspections were a regular occurrence in churches, parish buildings and seminaries. Marcellin's responded with transparency, diplomacy and faith to all this and opened the door of the Hermitage for the authorities to search for arms, welcoming the soldiers with good humour and tact (Sammon, p.64). In an attempt to make the Society more official, Marcellin also took the initiative of writing the "Rule"; the framework for the Brothers' religious life.

Thus as a leader, Marcellin had to respond to numerous challenges. His responses were always in solidarity with his Brothers, with whom he lived humbly. He possessed deep authenticity and oneness with ordinary people and had the self confidence and courage to do things differently. He lived in simplicity as a religious, which was at odds with the ostentatious dress and demeanour of most religious of the era (McMahon, p.135). Hence, the early evidence of "service oriented" leadership can be seen in Marcellin. He worked closely in familial relationships with students and their parents and had a positive approach to teaching the youth of the French country side; again this went against contemporary attitudes to young people. In so many ways, Marcellin was an innovator (McMahon, pp.134-136), whose leadership was fearless in the face of great opposition.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF MARIST LEADERSHIP IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION**

Marist education in Australia began in Sydney in 1872 (Doyle, 1972, p.5) and over its history the Brothers encountered various problems One of the most obvious difficulties for the Brothers was the distance between France and Australia. On many occasions, communication took a long time coming from the Superior General in Genis-Laval to Australia. The three Marist Brothers who initially

arrived in Australia also had a struggle for independence as they arrived under the direction of the Marist Fathers, but they believed they belonged to the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary (Doyle, p.4) thus the tensions commenced. They arrived in an environment without any other Marist Brothers, where there was no tradition of wearing of the religious habit and where there were natives living in outer suburban and country communities. They were unfamiliar with the language, culture and lifestyle of the pioneering families they were to assist (Doyle, p.5). A response to such problems was achieved by the novitiate in Beauchamps in France, which established special English classes in order to prepare the Brothers for English-speaking missions (Doyle, p.16).

Upon establishing schools in Australia, initially Sydney, the Brothers encountered the larrikinism of the Australian students, to which they were unaccustomed in French schools, hence another cultural problem. The Brothers who opened St Patrick's, Sydney's first Marist school in 1872, had to deal with unruly and undisciplined behaviour of students, particularly during testing and the mixed abilities of pupils. These first students originated from low socio-economic families, whose parents were mainly unskilled Irish, hence the school's reputation suffered. Brother Ludovic, who was responsible for the first Brothers and the school, noted that two out of three children could not make the sign of the Cross and were unable to pray the Rosary properly (Doyle, pp.40-54). Thus, like Marcellin himself, Brother Ludovic found children with little spiritual guidance. In true Marist spirit however, Brother Ludovic remained undeterred and set about establishing children's masses in the parish, dividing the classes according to abilities and monthly Marian devotions (Doyle, pp.54-55) and this led to a sharp improvement in student behaviour and faith development. Furthermore, many of the early Brothers found the climate debilitating and even adapting to the choice of sports in Australian schools was challenging, since cricket was foreign to the French Brothers (Doyle, pp.363-366).

Despite Brother Ludovic's achievements, large class numbers still made teaching difficult and the discipline metered out by the Brothers, especially those originating from England, where corporal punishment was the norm, was a problem he had to face. Brother Ludovic maintained his stance on

such forms of punishment and warned against excessive use of the cane and reminded the Brothers that it went against the Brothers' own Teachers' Guide, where it should only be used by principals for "grave offences" (Doyle, p.68). Thus he returned to the Marist charism of the educators maintaining discipline and reproaching children in a benevolent way, gently yet firmly and to use sanctions fairly and sparingly (Guide, 1853 in *In the Footsteps of St Marcellin Champagnat*, pp.51-52).

Another issue the Brothers faced was sectarianism. Initially, there existed anti-French sentiments in local Australian communities due to the French being associated with the United Kingdom, which was at odds with the communities' Irish origins. Later during Brother Ludovic's leadership, he himself faced the accusation of exhibiting anti-Irish sentiments when tensions arose between himself and Archbishop Vaughan who had heard rumours from some Brothers against Brother Ludovic being pro-French in his encounters with local families (Doyle, p.91). However, Brother Ludovic maintained his position and pointed to clear evidence from local Irish families of how well he was accepted and he invited the Archbishop to visit Marist schools to demonstrate that he was far from anti-Irish (Doyle, p.92). Brother Ludovic's transparent and decisive leadership, his integrity and fervent support of his Brothers are all evident in these incidents. His actions can be likened to when Marcellin opened the Hermitage to the National Guard for inspection, due to rumours of hoarding of arms.

Upon arrival in Australia, the Brothers were also faced with the educational context of a pioneering country, with penal origins. Denominational schools existed alongside state schools, thanks to the Council of Education. However, as time progressed, the Council reduced its support of denominational schools, reducing enrolments. There existed a severe lack of funds and teachers, hence many denominational schools closed down and students went to public schools. This is the situation with which Brother Ludovic was faced. Catholic schools were seen as second-rate education, which was constantly trying to catch up to public school standards, thus Brother Ludovic's task was to significantly raise Catholic educational standards. As previously mentioned, he was successful in this regard from the outset of the first Brothers' run school, St Patrick's, where he had

established a clear religious education program. These advances supported a call for more Brothers to be sent to Australia. He established annual prize-giving ceremonies and concerts to further showcase the school and the students' talents, which led to Archbishop Polding calling for more Brothers to establish another school, that being St Francis in Haymarket (Doyle, pp.61-62). Brother Ludovic's future-oriented approach also enabled him to establish a confraternity of the Blessed Virgin as a means for supporting students who showed a disposition to enter the vocation. This allowed for the confraternity members to complete charity work after school as a way for them to enter the new Novitiate, central to the preservation and further development of the Marist Brothers in Australia (Doyle, pp.63-65).

Another persistent problem was the lack of numbers of Brothers. Once student enrolments began to increase in the Brothers' schools, Brother Ludovic made use of pupil-teachers to help the Brothers in their teaching. These monitors were chosen from the most intelligent first class students and received private lessons from the Brothers, yet were not paid for their efforts. Parents began to complain and the boys often struggled with the responsibility. Some parents even withdrew their sons from schools because of this system (Doyle, p.56). The Brothers were also criticized at St Patrick's by parents for their lack of teaching credentials and the low academic standards presumably set in classes compared to the amount of time given to religious instruction and worship. Archbishop Vaughan requested a reduction in mass attendance time and suspension of the Rosary, but Brother Ludovic maintained his links to the Marian focus of his school and refused. This led to the Archbishop ordering an assessment of the Brothers' classes. Brother Ludovic planned an examination for students in view of the public and the visiting clergy, which yielded exceptional results (Doyle, pp. 69-70). Once again, Brother Ludovic's transparency, his willingness to respond confidently and swiftly to the Archbishop's concerns and the faith he showed in his Brothers, enabled the problem to be effectively addressed. His efforts of establishing a confraternity of Brothers also proved successful as two novices and three postulants emerged in this period of time (Doyle). To further improve the education of Catholic boys and to make a statement about the quality of Catholic

education offered in Marist schools, Brother Ludovic established a "select school" to cater for students outside local parish zones, in distant areas, from wealthier families. There existed many well-to-do Catholic families with high achieving sons who did not want their children mingling with rougher boys from low socio-economic families just to achieve a Catholic education, so some sent their sons to public schools (Doyle, pp.99-100). Hence the "select school" addressed this need. The fees from the "select school" helped pay for staff in parish schools who were not self supporting, and paid for training of young aspirants. Therefore, Brother Ludovic was responding to new circumstances in a proactive manner. Forces of liberalism and secularism were also impacting education at this time. Moreover, during 1850's and 1860's in New South Wales, the influence of commercial middle class was increasing and this forced pressure for educational change in Protestant schools, hence also in Catholic schools. By 1852, the introduction of Matriculation meant secondary studies developed, thus syllabuses, standards and examinations were required. Socially and economically, unlike Europe, Australians could advance their social and economic status via education. This was largely due to the lack of a rigid class system like in Europe. Thus adults, who had achieved this, wanted the same for their children. To further equip the Brothers for teaching and to raise the standards of Catholic education to that of the state or denominational level, Brother Ludovic also mandated his Brothers to take the Council of Education Certificate. This provided them with the same qualifications as those teachers in state or denominational schools. Unfortunately Brother Ludovic's efforts were foiled by the government which refused the request on account of them being answerable to a foreign authority and also due to the government's preference for lay teachers, not Brothers. In response, whilst Archbishop Vaughan removed all lay council teachers from Marist schools, the Church was required to support the rejected Brothers. This was seen as a government attack on all Catholics, hence the call for religious in Catholic schools was strengthened (Doyle, pp.111-116) and further justified Brother Ludovic's request to increase Brothers in Australia. Brother Ludovic's successor, Brother John, encountered similar problems of scarcity of Brothers. To draw more students to high schools,

Brother John decided to take the initiative and open boarding schools. This decision led to further developments and expansion of Marist education.

During the 1880's, issues regarding the standards of Catholic schools re-emerged with the Catholic School Board mandating Marist schools to follow the Inspector's requirements, despite being contrary to the Brothers' Rule. Thus standards and governance became a contentious issue for Marist leadership and Brother John's response was to again open Marist schools for inspection, even though he was adamant that the School Board should concern itself with academic results not the teaching methods. He had the courage and self-confidence to uphold the Brothers' position on governance and teaching, claiming that the Board would treat the Brothers as lay people who are paid for their work at market value, "...not like man carrying on the good work for higher motives" (Doyle, p.251). Brother John was successful in ensuring the Board withdrew their requirements of the Brothers. The Public Instruction Act of 1880 which set standards of proficiency for each subject put further pressures on all Catholic schools to raise their standards and this included Marist schools (Doyle, p.254). It also outlined a need for more secondary schools and some were eventually opened due to the economic boom of the 1880's. However, the ensuing economic crash of the 1890's place huge pressures on families, financial institutions, public works and private buildings. Strikes and the following economic depression impacted many farming communities which were supported by the Marist Brothers, hence enrolments suffered, particularly in the boarding schools (Doyle, pp.323-328). Meanwhile, the standards of proficiency continued to create problems for the Brothers, as work programs and uniformity of texts became an issue (Doyle, p. 343). Furthermore, Diocesan standards and inspectors were introduced and the Brothers' schools had to embrace these changes, thankfully their results were of a high standard in this regard (Doyle, p.348). Another governmental policy later in the history of the Marist Brothers in Australia also impacted Marist schools occurred with the Bishop's committee, which also set standards in Catholic schools. Use of pupil-teachers was criticised, including the heavy syllabus and strong emphasis on examinations, thus the movement to reform education overall by the early 1900's was

strong again (Doyle, pp.437-438). After Federation, state governments could focus on their individual states, secondary industry had progressed and there was a significant increase in commercial activity in the middle class. The professions were also developing because more people were becoming university trained. A decrease in the birth rate meant smaller families and greater parental involvement in their children's education, hence the debate on the aims and functions of education commenced. An important report impacted all Catholic schools and indeed Marist Brothers' schools, was the Knibbs-Turner Commission in 1903. This report caused syllabus changes, the removal of pupil-teachers and a greater say for religious congregations in the subjects taught in Catholic schools. The Marist brothers decided to adopt the state syllabus for their schools, which was highly successful as it meant intelligent students who may have been impeded from secondary education for financial reasons, could attain the same standard of secondary education as that in a well-regarded state school (Doyle, pp.439-443).

Between 1905 and 1923, Marist leadership and schools were challenged by Peter Board (Director of Education) and the McGowan Labour government, which wanted more equality in education overall. Bursaries were introduced and fees for state schools were abolished. If private schools were registered with the Board of Education, they could accept bursary winners, hence the Brothers, again reading the signs of the times, accepted the competitive bursaries in Marist primary and secondary schools, which attracted clever students who may have been financially disadvantaged. It meant that Marist schools were up to state standards and the Brothers continued to welcome state inspectors to judge their schools and gain registration for them with the Board (Doyle, pp.523-530). To further respond to government pressure and to ensure Marist schools kept up with state standards, Brother Andrew (Brother John's successor) opened the scholasticate to inspectors for attainment of certificates in teacher training for his Brothers. He also better equipped the Brothers by encouraging them to attend university and enhance their qualifications, increasing the numbers of Brothers registered to teach by state and university standards (Doyle, pp.531-533). His ten year leadership was further

enhanced by the fact that he undertook much curriculum development, increased examinations and initiated their external correction. He also cooperated fully with Catholic education authorities in establishing religious syllabuses. He sent six Brothers to Europe to undertake a second novitiate in preparation for Provincial leadership (Doyle, pp.533-535), thus he attended to succession planning. His ten years as Provincial were characterised by dedicated service (Doyle, p.543) and strategic leadership.

By World War Two, the then Provincial, Brother Arcadius faced challenges of a different nature, to which he responded in a Marist fashion. Some Marist schools undertook digging of air-raid trenches and bomb shelters. He sanctioned the cadet corps and attendance of Brothers at military training camps for cadets and officers. The Brothers also had to be flexible and take on alternative duties to teaching such as cooking and house-keeping with many workers either enlisted in the army or involved in war-effort enterprises (Doyle, pp.552-553). Hence, he demonstrated adaptability to the changed Australian environment.

Post-World War Two, the Marist leadership and Provincials faced a rapidly increasing birth rate and an influx of migrants, both of which placed great pressure on education. Expanding urbanisation also created issues as many post-war immigrants chose to settle in main cities and especially inner suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney. This was supported by a sharp increase in manufacturing employment in these areas. Many immigrants were also Catholics, placing further demands on Catholic schools. With retention rates increasing in secondary schools and an increasing emphasis on the value of education, including the New South Wales Wyndham Committee which completely revised education in that state, it was a period of intense and rapid changes. Such changes were followed swiftly by technological, scientific and social revolutions (Doyle, p.577-580). In the light of all this, Brother Quentin (Sydney Provincial in 1958) completely reorganised the administration of Marist schools. He established twin groupings of schools to rationalise resources, closed some schools and opened others. He developed a more professional interaction between the Marist schools and government and diocesan authorities (Doyle, pp 583-583) and most significant of all, he appointed

school supervisors to oversee general school administration, whilst he focused on working with the Brothers of the Province. He established the Institute of the Holy Spirit, which conducted theology courses for the teaching congregations and published a teaching journal (Doyle, pp. 584-585). His replacement, Brother Othmar continued Brother Quentin's close work with the diocesan authorities and he expanded the role of the school supervisors to work with school staff and principals on examinations, curriculum and buildings (Doyle, p.587).

From beginnings in Sydney in 1872, the Marist Brothers have made a significant impact on Catholic education in Australia. The Brothers faced numerous challenges to which they responded in varied ways, but remaining faithful to the ways of Marcellin and in clear service to the communities they were supporting. Each Marist leader acted with discernment and in a way which enabled Catholic, particularly Marist, values to grow in schools in Australia.

#### **LAY MARISTS AND THEIR LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE MARIST INSTITUTE**

Vatican II facilitated many changes in the Catholic Church, one of them pertinent to this paper and the Marist Brothers' leadership, indeed relevant to all religious orders, was the universal call to holiness and its implications for the laity. "Lumen Gentium" promulgated during the Vatican II period by Pope Paul VI makes it clear that "...upon the laity rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation..." (Paul VI, Lumen Gentium, 33). It continues by specifying that "...the laity go forth as powerful proclaimers of a faith in things to be hoped for..." (Paul VI, 35). His Holiness Pope Paul VI also decreed of the laity that "[They]...are made to share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, they have therefore... their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God" (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, 1965 in Braniff, 2006, p. 219). The encyclical "Gaudium et Spes" also established the role of the laity in the Church's future by clarifying that lay Christians share in the joy and hopes, sorrows and anguish of the people of the time and wish to share in the Good News of the Gospel (Gaudium et Spes, in Gathered Around the Same Table, 2009, 3, p.23) "Vita Consecrata" furthers this concept when it states

that one's Christian identity reaches its fullness through the charisms of the religious orders or institutes (*Vita Consacrata in Gathered Around the Same Table*, 3, p.23.) Thus, via Baptism, each person is called to the mission of the Church and has a responsibility to proclaim the Kingdom of God and its immanence (*Gathered Around the Same Table*, p.8) and religious institutes such as the Marist Brothers embraced these concepts, developing a clear role within the institute for the laity. Therefore, those laity who wished to live in the manner of Mary and work in a shared life with the Brothers, would be given the opportunity to involve themselves in spirituality, mission and formation through the Marist institute (XX General Chapter: *Choose Life* 26 in *Gathered Around the Same Table* 7 & 17, p.26). As educators in schools, lay Marists' mission is to therefore live and work with young people and to evangelise through education with a particular concern for the poor and marginalised youth (*Gathered Around the Same Table*, 42, p.41).

Prior to Vatican II, lay people in Marist schools were considered co-workers who shared the scholastic tasks with the Brothers but had little role with the Marist mission to evangelise. The laity carried out the less spiritual aspects of education, however post-Vatican II the focus of their role changed, as has been made evident (*Secretariat of the Laity*, 2012, p.2). Whilst this idea is clearly reflected in the Marist's Constitution that "...we share our spirituality...with parents, lay teachers and other members of the educating community" (*Constitution of the Marist Brothers*, 88) it became even more evident after Vatican II.

The concept of the 'Marist family' by the XVII General Chapter in 1976 had been broadened, the roles and lives of the Brothers had become less insular and by 1998 evangelisation had become more of a joint effort between the laity and the Brothers and in the same spirit as "*Vita Consecrata*", the laity brought new interpretations to the charism with spiritual, unexpected and rich insights and a new dynamism in apostolic activities (*Secretariat of the Laity*, p.4). Lay people were welcomed in the 1993 General Chapter by the Superior General and encouraged to work closely with the Brothers. They were also thanked for their efforts in contributing to the Marist works (*In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat: A Vision for*

*Marist Education Today*, 1998, 32-33, p.25). This text in fact reinforces the "shared mission" between the laity and the Brothers in Marist education. By 2001 at the XX General Chapter it was even further reaffirmed that Brothers and lay people were working together to "widen the space of our tent" (XX General Chapter, 2001, in *Secretariat of the Laity*, p.5). This was explicitly established when the Superior General stated "we see new signs of life in our partnership with the laity. Real co-responsibility and mutuality are increasingly common" (XX General Chapter, 2001, 27 in *Secretariat of the Laity*). This co-responsibility in Marist schools however, was not only in the area of teaching, but extended to governance, finance and leadership. Each of these areas are considered by the Marists as a form of vocation, where each person brings their own personal commitment, professionalism and life experiences and as Christians, these lay people bring a special meaning to life by living in accordance with the Gospel values. All of which are combined with the prophetic character of the Brothers' lives, which "widen the tent" (*Secretariat of the Laity*, p.6). This sharing of Marist leadership even went so far as consideration of opening Marist schools without a direct community of Brothers. Such a focus for lay Marist leadership means that no one group of people has a monopoly on the Marist charism. Thus Marist institute's leadership was required to develop a commonality for all, a shared spirituality and formation process, which allowed each person either lay or consecrated to establish their own way of expressing the Marist charism and mission in a school (*Secretariat of the Laity*). From 2005 therefore the focus for the Marist institute was less on the institute itself and more on the actual charism. In Marist schools therefore, lay people share the Marist leadership and are co-responsible for administrative decision making and living some aspects of the institute's spirituality, mission and formation (*Secretariat of the Laity*, p.8). By 2009, the XXI General Chapter envisaged a "new tent", housing Marist Brothers and fellow Marist laity, consistent with post-Vatican II ideas. For school leaders therefore there is the call to articulate and live by the core Marist values and lead others by living them. This means leading with confidence and optimism and modelling Marist apostolic spirituality (Br Jeff Crowe, *Living Portraits of*



Marcellin Champagnat, MSA Conference, July 2013). In no other place is the role of the laity in Marist schools therefore clearer than in the vision statement of Marist education, “Disciples of Marcellin Champagnat, Brothers and Laypeople, together in mission...” A lay leader in a Marist school is thus encouraged to be led by the Spirit, to lead from the front and be a focal point for others and challenge longstanding habits or assumptions. A Marist lay leader needs to be bold enough to question things and to envision new ways and processes to connect with their emerging environment. Prayer, discussion and discernment with leadership teams are vital to sound decision making. A lay Marist leader should be a role-model to younger teachers and assist them to develop vocationally and professionally. The same can be said for students in a Marist school, where leaders should provide opportunities for them and the staff to grow in their Marist ministry. Pedagogy should not be ignored though and is central to Marist education, (Br Jeff Crowe, MSA Conference, p.7). This was evident in the Marists early history in Australia, when establishing schools with high academic standards. A lay Marist leader should also exhibit compassion and develop school initiatives to enhance inclusivity and educate in and for solidarity, reaching out to the marginalised and the religiously illiterate youth, just as Marcellin did in France. Thus service oriented and spiritual leadership is a crucial element to a lay Marist leader, not only because of the responsibility on all lay Catholics to evangelise, but in Brother Jeff Crowe’s words “There is only spiritual leadership; all else is management...” (Br Jeff Crowe, MSA Conference, p.7).

### **LAY MARIST LEADERSHIP AT MARCELLIN COLLEGE, BULLEEN**

Leadership at Marcellin College, Bulleen should reflect the Marist charism in all aspects and at all levels of school life. Marcellin College is under the guidance of Marist Schools Australia in the Province of Australia. Its Principal, Mr Mark Murphy works in collaboration with the College Leadership team comprising of the Deputy Principal, the Assistant Principal (Learning), the Assistant Principal (College Operations), the Finance Manager, the Director of Mission and the Heads of Schools (Junior and Senior). It is

incumbent on the various leadership teams (the College Executive Leadership Team, the Ministry and Faith Team, the Pastoral Care Team, the Teaching and Learning Team and the Finance Team including College Grounds and Maintenance Teams) to uphold the Marist charism and indeed encourage all staff to assist them in this endeavour. Mission, spirituality and formation, the three key areas of lay Marist activity, are central to Marcellin College. Many opportunities exist for staff, students and parent participation in liturgies. Varied mission-enhancing activities exist with each House through the social justice activities and House charity fundraising for Marist Missions overseas. The last two years has also seen the commencement of the Cambodia Immersion program for staff and students, including the strong presence of Remar programs at Years 10, 11 and 12. Staff and students also have the opportunity to travel with Remar to assist the Indigenous communities in Bourke, especially St. Ignatius Primary School. Marist formation opportunities are also embedded into the culture of the school with new staff attending a compulsory one day formation program titled “In the Champagnat Way” and then future opportunities are available via the Footsteps 1 and 2 programs in Mittagong and then in “Living Champagnat’s Vision”.

Marcellin Champagnat’s call to Marist educators to “love them all equally” (Life, XXVIII, p. 538; Opinions, XLI, pp.438-440 in Footsteps, p. 43) is evident at Marcellin College in it being an open entry school, with a well developed and supported Centre for Individual Difference, catering for students with disabilities and special learning needs. At the Centre, such students, funded or non-funded, have support necessary for their emotional, spiritual, social, personal and academic development. The provision of teaching aides for funded students and Individual Learning Plans, flexible timetables (with the Language Assistance Program) and regular Parent Support Group meetings is further evidence of the College leadership making a conscious decision to make Jesus Christ known and loved to all, with education accessible to all, just like Marcellin’s own educational philosophy.

The College curriculum is also inclusive and caters for different learning styles and varied academic abilities. The curriculum content and

teaching methods are linked to the College's vision statement which states that "the school...and is the centre of a community of learning, life and faith...and...In partnership with families...students are nurtured to... grow from boys to fine young men...and boys are encouraged to embrace all opportunities spiritually, academically, physically, culturally and socially with a determination to strive for the highest with virtue and courage" (Marcellin College Vision Statement). We utilize the best educational and pedagogical tools available, with programs being culturally and socially relevant to the students' lives. Hence for instance, the College is strongly committed to developing an integrated curriculum for Years 7 and 8 students which fosters creativity, high student discernment in their learning, innovative use of educational technologies, team teaching and learning how- to -learn skills in project based activities for 21st century learners. The College leadership is also committed to developing differentiated pathways for students commencing at Year 9 and continuing to Year 12. The provision of a VET (Vocational Education and Training) and a VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning) coordinators and the expansion of the VET subjects offered since 2012 has become a focus for the College's School Improvement Framework and yearly School Improvement Plans, such catering for individual difference also supports the Marist charism

Another element of school improvement which is in accordance with a Marist approach to discipline is the implementation of the College's Restorative Practices. This has significantly enhanced the manner in which student wellbeing and behaviour is managed and fosters a sense of respect for all involved. House Coordinators, along with the Pastoral Leaders and Heads of School, were pivotal in establishing this way of managing student behaviour and all staff engaged in professional development in this regard. The structure of the College's pastoral care system, facilitated predominantly by the Heads of School, House Coordinators and Pastoral Leaders, a vertical system of pastoral groupings for each House from Years 7 – 12 is also a representation of the Marist charism. It develops a strong Family Spirit amongst the staff, students and families in which the boys are nurtured for six years in the

same pastoral group. This pastoral system also allows for the senior boys to be a strong Presence to the younger boys and allows for mentoring and peer support, with senior boys being 'buddies' for the incoming Year 7 students. Students are also encouraged to take up positions of leadership via the Student Representative Council and as "Old Boys" many return to assist staff on Year 11 and 12 Retreats, Years 7 – 9 Camps and Reflection Days. In fact, a recent development at Marcellin College is the "Old Collegians' Foundation", which again reconnects former students with the College and provides them with an opportunity to make a financial contribution to the provision of education for prospective students from underprivileged and marginalised families.

The College's sport and extracurricular program is also indicative of the inclusive Marist approach. All sports have varied levels and teams to cater for differing abilities and the extracurricular program similarly encompasses many interests from debating to public speaking to gifted and talented programs, to chess club and technology focused groups.

The College's lay leadership is thus active in enhancing the Marist mission, spirituality and formation through all these means. The College Principal, Mr Mark Murphy has also assisted his staff to attain a greater understanding of the Marist charism by developing a Marcellin Staff Charter, along with a group of staff members. This document provides staff with clear, practical examples of how they can be models of Champagnat in their everyday dealings with each other, students, parents and the wider school community. This document is utilized as part of the staff's Annual Review meetings and is a point of reference to clarify to staff their lay Marist role at the College. It is a deliberate attempt by the lay Marist leadership of the College to enhance the spirituality, mission and formation of all staff.

It is evident therefore that at Marcellin College Bulleen, the responsibility of sharing the Marist charism rests on lay people, particularly the lay leadership. All levels of leadership and indeed all staff are urged to partake in fostering Marist spirituality amongst each other and with students and parents, thus with the Brothers they are "...sowers of the Good News, with a distinctive Marist style in schools..." (Br Jeff Crowe, Secretariat, p. 4)

## CONCLUSION

From the early origins of the Marist Brothers in France, the manner in which the charism developed and spread in Australian education rested upon its founder's leadership; that of Marcellin Champagnat himself and then successive Marist leaders in Catholic schools, primarily in Sydney and later in other Australian states. The transmission of the charism in the Australian educational landscape was characterised by courage, authenticity, tenacity in the face of obstacles, solidarity with ordinary people and especially those most in need, discernment and adaptability. Each Marist leader in Australia faced varied challenges particular to the era. Cultural differences between France and Australia, financial constraints, the scarcity of Brothers, along with sectarian conflicts and the need to reconcile diocesan and parish needs with those of the Brothers and the local communities were all persistent issues. As Australia developed, Marist leadership was faced with a Catholic education system which was growing rapidly and was continuously being compared to its State counterpart. Commissions and government regulations also compounded the work of the Brothers. To their great credit however, Marist leaders continued to establish and develop Catholic education with their distinctive Marist style, which continues today. The Catholic Church's response to changes in society, which enabled Vatican II to emerge and numerous encyclicals which, amongst other ecclesiastical changes, clarified the role of the laity in furthering the Church's mission across all religious orders and Marist Brothers were not exempt from this movement. With the clear mandate and indeed expectation of the laity in the Church, the Marist Institute again responded with courage and open-mindedness, whilst still remaining faithful to the founder's charism and welcomed lay Marists as part of their family. With leadership in a Marist sense now including lay people, Marist school lay leaders now have as much responsibility as the Brothers in sharing and spreading the charism. Such responsibility is evident at Marcellin College Bulleen, which has clearly empowered its lay leadership to model the Marist charism in their daily dealings and via school policies and activities. Therefore all staff at the College have many opportunities to engage

with Marist spirituality, mission and formation, in conjunction with the Brothers.

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