

“THE TEACHER’S GUIDE”

An historico-critical study by Br Danilo L. Farneda C.

1. PREAMBLE.

The Teacher's Guide is a theoretico-practical manual which guided the teacher training and educational activity of the Marist Brothers from 1853 until the middle of this century.

Studied and approved during the 2nd Session of the Second General Chapter¹, it went through six editions in the original language; the last appeared in 1942.

In spite of this long tradition and the fact that it constituted the official expression of Marist educational thinking, the document has remained a practically unexplored field of historical research.

In general the studies undertaken in the field of Marist education, which do not abound, refer to *The Teacher's Guide* merely when they wish to emphasise some aspect of it relevant to their particular subject.²

¹ The Second General Chapter of the Marist Brothers was held at the Mother House at the Hermitage (Saint-Chamond, France). It extended over three Sessions in the years 1852, 1853 and 1854. The Second Session took place from 16th to 31st May 1853.

² Cf. DORATO SOTO M., *El pensamiento educativo de la Institución Marista*. Ed. Nau Llibres, Valencia; LEONE Hno., *Valor actual de la pedagogía del Beato Marcelino Champagnat*, Ed. Hermanos Maristas, Bogotá 1956; COTTA G., *Educare, principi pedagogia di Marcellino Champagnat*, Ed. Fratelli Maristi, Roma 1991; ALESSANDRO Fr., *Marcellino Champagnat e la sua opera educativa*, Ed. Fratelli Maristi, Roma 1950; COLIN M., *L'éducation d'après le Bienheureux Marcellin Champagnat*, vol. I et II, Ed. policopiée, Lyon 1968.

A book of quite a different character has recently appeared. It does not deal with the lack of references to sources in the Guide thus avoiding any controversy to which this omission might give rise. I refer to the posthumous work of Pierre Zind entitled *Blessed Marcellin Champagnat, his scholastic work in its historical context*.³

This study does not manage to bridge all the great gaps which exist. The author himself declares as much when he writes:

“The pedagogy of the congregation of the Little Brothers of Mary (...) remains a vast field to explore, under its various aspects (...)”⁴.

The fact that no historico-critical study of *The Teacher's Guide* has ever been produced is concrete evidence of the deficiencies to which I have alluded.

I do not think it wise to leave in oblivion a document which formed generations of educators and which may reveal the sources of the educational thought of the Institute of the Marist Brothers.

2. HYPOTHESES AND AIMS.

Pierre Zind, in the study already mentioned affirms:

“In general, and until about 1853, the Little Brothers of Mary strove (...) to teach according to the famous *Conduite des Écoles Chrétiennes* (Conducting of Christian Schools)”⁵

This affirmation gave rise to several enquiries and working hypotheses. Above all I was interested in clarifying the reasons which led the Marist Brothers to compile their own document. Why had they ceased to use the *Conduite*? How did *The Teacher's Guide* come into existence? Who was/were the editor/s of the document.

³ ZIND P., Bx. Marcellin Champagnat, son oeuvre scolaire dans son contexte historique. Session “Marcellin Chapagnat” de Mendes, Brésil, January 1988, published General House, Rome 1991

⁴ Cf. ZIND P., Bx. M. Champagnat, p. 350

⁵ ZIND P., Bx. M. Champagnat, p. 350. The first edition of the “Conduite” was published in 1720. Cf. LA SALLE J.-B., et al., “Conduite des Écoles Chrétiennes divisée en deux parties. Publ. Joseph Charles Chastanier, Avignon 1720.

In my initial hypothesis, *The Teacher’s Guide* was the result of the integration of educational principles and methods favoured in the socio-ecclesial context of Restoration France, with necessary adaptations to the concrete situations in which the Marist Brothers worked.

This process suggests that the document was not the result of a passive assimilation of the norms of the *Conduite*. After 35 years of experience in the schools, the Marist Brothers had acquired a style and some educational insights of their own; so that at a certain time the need was felt to clarify in a document this specifically Marist form of education.

The following questions arose in the process: “What kind of influence did the *Conduite* have on the drawing up of *The Teacher’s Guide*? Were other sources involved? What was the influence of the educative experience of the first Brothers? What part was played by the Founder’s educational approach?” And as for the contents, which aspects of *The Teacher’s Guide* are the most significant for defining Marist education?

Taking into consideration the present stage of research, the questions and hypotheses formulated, I decided to make an historico-critical study of the first edition of the *Guide* as this would be an essential first step to any future study directed to investigating its evolution, its importance and its relevance to the present day.

The time-frame indicated, 1817-1853, means that our attention is also directed towards the period during which the ideas in the *Guide* took shape, beginning with the foundation of the Institute of the Marist Brothers of the Schools.

3. APPROACH

The main object of my research was to identify certain sources which shed light on the origins of the Institute. The first step was to consult some studies of Marist pedagogy. I was able to establish that no specific researches existed on this subject. It seemed to me important to find a few documents reflecting the educative thought of the first Brothers. To this end I consulted various archives both in Rome and in France.⁶ This quest led me to identify a series of

⁶ Central Archives of the Marist Brothers, AFM-Rome; Archives of the Marist Fathers, APM-Rome; Archives of the Archdiocese of Lyons, AAL-Lyons; Departmental Archives of the Loire, ADL-St Étienne; National Archives of France, ANF-Paris, and the personal archives of Pierre Zind, St Genis-Laval, France.

documents until now unknown or very little studied. I am referring to numerous documents kept in the Archives of the Loire dealing with the official contact between the Congregation and the French Academic authorities.

However the most significant contribution came from the discovery of four unpublished manuscripts of *The Teacher's Guide*, pre-dating the first edition, preserved in the Archives of the Marist Brothers in Rome. This lucky find, made when my study was already well advanced, served to enrich it in a significant manner, necessitating the "Comparative Edition" of the document, an aspect which I had at first not even considered.⁷

The unpublished manuscripts of the Acts of the Second General Chapter, like the unpublished *Annals* of Brother Avit, also preserved in the Archives of the Marist Brothers in Rome, have provided a complementary resource in the study of the context and the process of drawing up the document.⁸

In the libraries attached to the archives where I worked and in the Pedagogy section in the National Library of Paris, and the Library of the National Institute of Pedagogical Research, also in Paris, I was able to consult the most significant works of the period. This consultation proved fundamental in the identification of the literary sources of *The Teacher's Guide*.

Particularly enriching has been the dialogue with some other researchers into Marist origins, who have not only provided me with abundant material, but have also directed my work with opportune advice.⁹

After an attentive study of the educative context of post-revolutionary France and of the Institute of the Marist Brothers I concentrated on the analysis of *The Teacher's Guide* and on the compiling of the "Comparative Edition".

⁷ By "Comparative Edition" I mean a study comparing the discovered manuscripts with *The Teacher's Guide*. A "comparative edition" is not the same as a "critical edition" since I have not included the critical apparatus of the sources and I have limited the historico-explanatory notes to the process of elaboration.

⁸ It is only during the last few years that there has been great interest in the historical study of the first years of the Institute, based on sources other than the writings of Br Jean-Baptiste Furet. The unpublished *Annals* of Br Avit represent one of the alternative and complementary sources which have allowed me to understand in a different way some aspects of the history of the Institute of the Marist Brothers of the Schools. The same is true of the letters of/to the Founder, as well as the letters of Br François Rivat, his first successor.

⁹ I have dialogued on the subject of my study with Marist Brothers Pierre Zind, André Landfrey, Alexandre Balko, Juan Moral, Aureliano Brambila, Gabriel Michel, Paul Sester and with the Marist Fathers Jean Coste and Gaston Lessard.

Next I analyzed the principal pedagogical writings of the authors whose names appear in *The Teacher’s Guide*. I succeeded in tracing, in many cases, the origin of the passages cited between quotation marks. By subsequent research I was able to discover other literary provenances, or at least, certain conceptual parallels.

Consultation of contemporary writings which tackle the problem of method in the primary school - even though their authors are not quoted in *The Teacher’s Guide* - allowed me to broaden the research of new literary sources.

Arrangement of the Work

The research is divided into four parts:

The first part approaches the question of the relationship of *The Teacher’s Guide* with its socio-cultural milieu. I have outlined the broad coordinates of the context in which the document took shape. The situation of French primary education and of the school master, the influence of the politics of the State, the role of the Church and, in particular, of the Congregations of teaching Brothers, form a vast contextual fan, essential background for historical research.

In this same section we study the specific theme of the educative method used in schools, a component which deals directly with the content of *The Teacher’s Guide*

In the second part, the immediate circumstances which led the Institute of the Marist Brothers to compile *The Teacher’s Guide* are presented. The “Comparative Edition” is set out and we conclude with a critical study of the process of drawing up the document.

The third part is devoted to the study of the sources. We study with particular attention the connection between the Marist Brothers and the De La Salle Brothers who, according to Champagnat “ought to set an invariable standard for us in everything”,¹⁰ at the same time identifying any other literary and pragmatic sources.

¹⁰ LMC I, p. 294 (SESTER P., Letters of Marcellin J.B. Champagnat 1789-1840. Founder of the Institute of the Marist Brothers, Vol I, Publ. General House of the Marist Brothers, Rome 1991).

The fourth and last part is reserved for the exposition of the educative thought developed in *The Teacher's Guide*.

First of all the theoretical principles are studied by analyzing the aims and finalities, as well as the basic means by which they are to be attained. Next we study the profile of the kind of educator that the Marist school needs, concluding with a critical analysis of the logical sequence of the text.

4. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

I present briefly the general conclusions of the completed study.

4.1 - The Teacher's Guide *and its context*.

Beginning with the broad lines of the social, political, ecclesial, pedagogical and institutional context I think I have reached an adequate historical understanding of the finalities and educative insights of the Marist Brothers.

The need for schools

The social forces of post-revolutionary France discovered in the school an ideal means of constructing a new national order. Napoleon undertook to give the country an ethical and intellectual stamp based on the precepts of the Catholic religion.¹¹

Because of this situation the disciples of de la Salle were once again legally recognised in December 1803. "Les Grands Frères", as they were generally called, were thus officially invited to participate in public education.

There is no doubt that the enormous disproportion between needs and available means rendered the response of the de la Salle Brothers insufficient.

The Restoration was to prepare the juridical framework favourable to the birth, in the whole of France, of new Congregations of religious teachers which were able to respond to the new calls of society¹². Thus was born the

¹¹ "The new master of the nation did not envisage any popular education other than religious, formed by the Imperial Catechism." Cf. ZIND P., *Les nouvelles congrégations de Frères enseignants en France de 1800 à 1830, Thèse de Doctorat es Lettres, Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Lyon*, Publ. Marist Brothers, St. Genis-Laval 1969, p.465.

“Petit Frères” as the men of the moment, who were to play a very efficacious role in restoring Christian faith and morality in the country.¹²

Among the founders of the new Congregations of teaching Brothers figures the young curate of Lavalla, Marcellin Champagnat. He had personally experienced the consequences of the deplorable state of the national education system. At 16 years of age he scarcely knew how to read or write! The memory of what he had suffered during his childhood, together with his zeal for evangelisation, urged him to begin, in 1817, the foundation of the Institute of the Marist Brothers.

Various politico-pedagogical projects

The French elementary school developed in this climate and as an indirect result of two opposing political conceptions: the one liberal and tending to be revolutionary, the other conservative and monarchic, at which extreme the “ultras” were found. In fact, the two positions had much in common and their differences are often exaggerated. We need to bear this in mind in reinterpreting the position of the Catholic Church. Rather than trying to preserve its social standing, or to return to the «Ancien Regime», as the liberals accused it of doing, we see the constant preoccupation with securing the opportunity of fulfilling its mission: announcing the message of Christ to the whole human race and creating a society conforming to this message.

The Church possessed in the schools an efficacious instrument of rechristianization. Civil society, for its part, considered religion to be the corner-stone of ethics and civil order. From these closely linked interests would arise the agreements and the conflicts which were passionately experienced throughout the whole of the nineteenth century.

One of the most bitter ideologico-political disputes was over the educative method. The supplanting of the individual method by the

¹² In the preamble which introduces the law it is stated: “Persuaded that one of the greatest advantages that we can procure for our subjects is an appropriate instruction (...) based on the true principles of religion and morality (...)”. Article N° 36 establishes: “... every religious and charitable association, such as that of the Christian Schools, will be able to supply, under suitable conditions, masters to the communes (...)” MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, *Ordonnances du Roi concernant l’instruction primaire*, Publ. Imprimerie Royale, Paris 1828, pp.14, 21.

¹³ We cannot pass over the reaction of the French clergy, in the face of the Protestant menace, and their efforts to occupy all the primary schools by the rapid diffusion of the mutual method. It was vital to find a rapid and economic solution which guaranteed the presence of Catholicism, especially in rural France which was most exposed to the danger.

simultaneous one, and it in turn by the mixed method, was initiated by the introduction in 1815 of the mutual method. This latter became an ideology and a political instrument.

The “simultaneous-mutual” or “mixed” method selected what was good from these two pedagogical streams. *The Teacher's Guide* was to reap the fruit of this period of political and pedagogical change.

The particular context of the Marist Congregation.

Nevertheless, *The Teacher's Guide* is not merely the product of a political and educational context on a national scale, but it is an attempt to respond to concrete and complex needs experienced within the Congregation of the Marist Brothers itself.

The rapid increase in the number of Brothers and of establishments, the legal recognition of the Institute accorded by the national authorities a short time before, the acquiring of complete autonomy by the ending of the guardianship exercised by the Marist Fathers, the inadequacy of the Rules which had directed the Congregation up to that point; these were the immediate circumstances which necessitated the drawing up of new guidelines to respond to the challenges of the time.

From a strictly educative viewpoint, the multiplicity of methods used by the Brothers up to that time was not regarded positively, it involved too many risks¹⁴.

The Teacher's Guide becomes part of the new normative framework of the Institute as a concrete means of establishing unity by pedagogical uniformity and of obtaining in return the qualification for the service rendered by the Brothers in the schools of the communes.¹⁵

¹⁴ “In his class, more than anywhere else, a Brother needed rules which outlined his duties and the manner of fulfilling them, because if he were free to choose them himself the possible shortcomings of his teaching and his method would be prejudicial not only to himself but also to his pupils and to his confreres.” PETITS FRERES DE MARIE, *Guide des Ecoles*, Publ. Emmanuel Vitte, Lyon-Paris 1853.

¹⁵ The reduced period of teacher-training of the Brothers, brought about by the need to respond to the urgent demands of new foundations, did not guarantee a sufficient pedagogical formation. *The Teacher's Guide* could be considered as a way of forming teachers by actually teaching.

4.2 - The Teacher’s Guide, *product of a process of collaboration.*

I believe that I have largely cleared up the matter of the process of the compiling of *The Teacher’s Guide*, and also the problem of identifying its author, aspects which have not been sufficiently studied until now.

Three stages

It is possible to identify three stages in the drawing up of *The Teacher’s Guide*:

First stage: Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet, second Assistant General, drew up the draft of the document and submitted it for examination to Father Langniet, a Marist priest, and to the General Administration of the Institute of the Marist Brothers. This phase seems to have started around 1845¹⁶.

Second stage: the “Commission of the Guide” studied and introduced a number of amendments to the initial draft. The “Commission of the Guide”, proposed and created by the Chapter Assembly itself, carried out its mandate between 19th June 1852 and 16th May 1853.

Third stage: The Chapter Assembly studied, revised and finally approved the document during the 2nd Session of the Second General Chapter.

Contentious participation

The participation in the drawing up of *The Teacher’s Guide* was not without a certain degree of conflict. The General Administration intended to submit to the Chapter Assembly for consideration, the drafts of the three sections which would make up the new Rules, expecting rapid approval¹⁷. The Chapter Assembly claimed a more direct participation in the editorial process and asked for more time to analyze, at their leisure, the contents of the three documents, so that they would be thoroughly conversant with the matter on which they were required to make a decision. This proposal was accepted and the Chapter proceeded to *three* sessions instead of the *one* that had been planned.

In the light of this, the idea of an unconditional acceptance of the draft presented by the General Administration, as Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet seems to claim, does not appear to be accurate.¹⁸

¹⁶ Cf. AAM, p.411. (Unpublished Annals of Br Avit: 1775-1884. AFM s/c)

¹⁷ *The Common Rules* indicating the means of being a good religious, *The Teacher’s Guide* clarifying the method of giving children a Christian education, and the *Rules of Government* creating the structures of animation to ensure that the directions contained in the preceding documents were really followed by the members of the Institute. Cf. PONTY L., *Vie de Frère François, première Supérieur de l’Institut des Petits Frères de Marie 1808-1881*, Publ. Emmanuel Vitte, Lyon 1899, p. 169.

4.3 *The Sources of The Teacher's Guide*

I have identified a few direct literary sources and some other complementary ones which were used in the drawing up of *The Teacher's Guide*.

La Conduite as primary literary source

The study of sources reveals, above all, that a diversity of factors have influenced the pedagogical orientations of the document. As for the literary sources, two origins must be distinguished: In first place the pedagogical heritage of the De La Salle Brothers by way of the *Conduite*; in second place, the various pedagogical treatises consulted by the author of the draft, the members of the General Administration and of the "Commission of the Guide" from among the capitulants.

These literary sources seem to have influenced the various stages of the compiling of the document. Brother Jean-Baptiste suggests as much when he affirms that it was proposed to "improve and render more complete"¹⁹ the basic text of the works consulted.

After the comparative study of *The Teacher's Guide* and the *Conduite*, I think I can affirm that the work of St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle was the principle and fundamental literary source. This affirmation is based also on the fact that for 35 years the *Conduite* had been the pedagogical reference manual used by the Marist Brothers. The rules regarding boarders confirm this explicitly.²⁰

The same comparative study reveals that the influence of the pedagogical manual of the De La Salle Brothers, even though fundamental, has not precluded the contribution of the Marist Brothers. This becomes apparent in the numerous variations revealed by the comparative analysis of the two documents.

¹⁸ Cf. FURET J.-B., *Life of Joseph-Benedict-Marcellin Champagnat, 1789-1840, Marist Priest, Founder of the Society of the Little Brothers of Mary, by one of his first disciples*. Bicentennial Edition, General House of the Marist Brothers, Rome 1989, p. 260.

¹⁹ *Guide* 5920.

²⁰ Cf. CHAMPAGNAT M., *Regles des Petits Frères de Marie*, Publ. Guyot, Lyon 1837, p. 46.

Other literary sources

The Teacher’s Guide and the *Conduite* belong to a pedagogical current of Catholic orientation which reaches the Founder and the first Brothers enriched by the contribution of various pedagogues.²¹

On the basis of the rare references to sources in *The Teacher’s Guide* and of an extensive reading of the pedagogical bibliography of the period, one can gain access to the study of the complementary literary sources, a contribution that I consider especially important since it brings to light a series of sources which until now have remained unknown.

The authors of the following textual sources used in the compiling of *The Teacher’s Guide* have been identified: *Traité de l’éducation des filles* by Fénelon; *Traité des études* by Rollin; *Les douze vertues d’un bon Maître* by Brother Agathon FEC; *De l’Éducation* by Monseigneur Dupanloup, the catechism of the Diocese of Lyons and *Homélie ou explications des évangiles* by Cardinal de la Luzerne.²²

4.4 - Originality of The Teacher’s Guide

In addition to typical styles of pedagogy, I have identified certain “insights” which might define a Marist style of education.

No claim is made of propounding an original pedagogical theory

The Teacher’s Guide does not set out to offer an original pedagogical treatise, but to respond to the needs of the Institute concerning its scholastic mission. The necessity of promoting methodological unity and of providing a

²¹ The *Ratio Studiorum* of the Jesuits, the educational work of St. Peter Fourier, the famous book *L’Ecole Paroissiale* of Jacques de Bathencourt, the educational organisation of Charles Demia in Lyons, the experiment of the schools of Port-Royal, the catechetical method of Saint-Sulpice constitute the elements of a pedagogical and ecclesiastical movement into which the Marist Brothers gained entry by way of the *Conduit*.

²² FENELON, *Treatise on the Education of Girls*, published with introduction and notes by courtesy of Rousselet, Publ. Librairie Ch. Delagrave, Paris s.d. ; ROLLIN, *Treatise on Studies. On the method of teaching and studying literature, in relation to the mind and the heart*. Four volumes, Publ. Dabo-Butschert, Paris 1833; AGATHON Br., *The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher*, Publ. Moronval, Paris 1945; DUPANLOUP Mgr., *On Education*. Three Volumes, Publ. Lecoffre, Paris 1851; DIOCESE OF LYON, *Catechism printed by the authority of His Eminence Cardinal Fesch*, Publ. Bélagaud, Lyons 1867; LUZERNE G de la, *Homilies or Explanations of the Gospels of the Sundays and Principal Feasts of the Year*. Five volumes, Publ. Laurent-Bournot, Langres 1804.

formation manual for new teachers were the principal motives behind the compiling of a document adapted to the particular situations and traditions of the Brothers.

It is precisely in the process of adaptation, faithful to the teachings of the Founder and profiting from 35 years experience in education in a rural milieu that the particular manner of assimilating contemporary pedagogical orientations was established.

The De La Salle Brothers were, according to the expression of the Founder, “our invariable standard in everything”.²³ To act as they acted meant becoming part of an educative trend which was socially and politically acceptable. To depart from these directions was, on the contrary, to run the risk of disapprobation and pedagogical setback. In the light of this the departures from the normative model identified in *The Teacher's Guide* take on a particular importance.

4.5 - *Educative contents of The Teacher's Guide*

The study of the educative contents has enabled us to identify the board essential themes of the document and its pedagogico-pragmatic character.

Aims and conclusions

The ultimate end of the educative service of the Marist Brothers is to create the necessary conditions for the children to reach eternal salvation. This transcendent end is attained historically by the formation of the “good Christian and virtuous citizen”.²⁴ which involves, according to *The Teacher's Guide* the formation of “the whole child”.

Following from this general objective of an integral education that the document prescribes the formation of the religious, ethical, intellectual, emotional and physical aspects of the person.

In this educative concern for the whole person one can perceive a definite hierarchy. What is essential, fundamental, is the ethical and religious formation because it assists the man to attain his destiny: salvation in the love of God, happiness.

²³ LPC I, p.314.

²⁴ Cf. *The Teacher's Guide*, 2095, 2649; FURET, J.-B., *Life*, p. 535.

A profile of the educator

The profile of the educator, whose fundamental characteristics are set out in the final part of the study, lead us to find in *The Teacher’s Guide* a guide to the formation of a professional frame of reference for the Marist Brothers.

One can see clearly the double concern of the General Administration to clarify, on the one hand, the methodology of teaching and, on the other, the model of the teacher who had to put it into practice.

5. LIMITS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES OF STUDY

The historico-critical study that I have just presented in its basic outline does not claim to have exhausted the subject. From various points of view it still remains open to further research.

The difficulties arising from the limited time available to develop the research have led me to centre the critical study of the document on the historical and logical aspects of the text, by analyzing its origin, its literary sources, its educative content and its coherence.

Concerning the educative contents of *The Teacher’s Guide*, it is indispensable to pursue the study of their value and of their relevance. The wealth of pedagogical suggestions, which I have uncovered during my work, convinces me that it would be very profitable to study this aspect at greater depth in order to achieve an hermeneutic reading of the educative insights of the first Brothers.

A complete critical edition of *The Teacher’s Guide* is also imperative, including necessary explanatory historical notes and reference to sources, aspects which may arise from this study.

Finally, I believe that it would be necessary to carry out a specific research on the evolution of the pedagogy practised by the Marist Brothers. I have limited my work to the period of the foundation and of the first institutional organisation after the death of the Founder.