

The Identity and Ethos of a Catholic Marist School

1 What is a Catholic School?



Jesus Christ is the centre of the Catholic School

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise of a Catholic school.

The Catholic School, # 34.

The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church; it is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony. Through it, the local Church evangelises, educates, and contributes to the formation of a healthy and morally sound life-style among its members.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, # 34.

1.1 Why do Catholic Schools exist?

Catholic schools exist to assist parents to pass on the faith to their children. Their purpose is to provide an environment where children will see, experience, share, and come to understand a Catholic way of life and to learn what being Catholic means through the life of the school and the Religious Education curriculum.

The Catholic school is a work of the Church and reflects the deepest nature of the Church. This is expressed through:

- Proclaiming the word of God (*kerygma-martyria*)
- Celebrating the sacraments (*leitourgia*)
- Exercising charity (*diakonia*)

1.2 Defining Special Character

Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (1975) is the legislation which safeguards Special Character. As a part of updating the Education Act in 2017, the PSCI Act has now been incorporated into the Education Act 1989.



The Special Character of an integrated school is defined in the **Integration Agreement** between the Proprietor of the school and the Crown.

The school is a Roman Catholic school in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its religious instructions and observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ.

These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese.

1.3 Expressing Catholic Character

- People
- School Climate
- Policies and Practices
- Curriculum
- Symbols, Rites, Rituals and Celebrations
- Religious Education
- Extra-Curricular Activities

A very important part of being Catholic is understanding the meaning and place of the Church's symbols, rites, rituals and celebrations. All these aspects of Catholic life lead people to have a deeper awareness of, and a closer relationship with God.

Name various rites, rituals and celebrations that you have experienced in your school and discuss how they enrich the life of the school community.

What is happening in the classrooms?

What rituals do you see there?

What are some other things that you can use or do to continue to use the rites and rituals of the Catholic tradition?

1.4 Teachers

In the Catholic school, 'prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community.

Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of humanity's most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings. The personal relations between teacher and the students, therefore, assume an enormous importance and are not limited simply to giving and taking.

Moreover, we must remember that teachers and educators fulfil a specific Christian vocation and share an equally specific participation in the mission of the Church, to the extent that 'it depends chiefly on them whether the school achieves its purposes.

The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium, #23

2 Catholic Identity

Distinguishing Feature	Evidence from Your School
<p>1. Positive understanding of the person</p> <p>Catholic theology insists that the human person is essentially good – more graced than sinful.</p> <p>Because all people reflect the image and likeness of God, the Catholic Church insists on the dignity of every person and values all human life from conception to death.</p>	
<p>2. Committed to community</p> <p>God creates us as communal beings, making us responsible for and to each other. By nature and faith, we are relational, "made for each other."</p> <p>We must care for the common well-being as well as for our own.</p>	
<p>3. Sacramental outlook</p> <p>Catholic faith sees all of God's creation as essentially good.</p> <p>God reaches out to us and that we respond through the ordinary things and events of life.</p>	

<p>4. Cherishing of Scripture and Tradition</p> <p>Catholics believe that God is revealed through sacred Scripture – “the norm of norms” for Christian faith. Scripture must be interpreted within the community of faith, the Church.</p>	
<p>5. Holistic Faith</p> <p>Catholics believe that Christian faith demands our whole being – head, heart and hands. Our faith must touch every aspect of our lives.</p>	
<p>6. Commitment to justice</p> <p>God desires peace and justice and fullness of life for all humankind (John 10:10) and the integrity of creation. Christian faith demands that we care for our neighbours in need. Jesus brings good news to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind and lets the oppressed go free. (Luke 4:16-21)</p>	
<p>7. Universal spirituality</p> <p>A search for God’s will. Catholic spirituality is kept alive by active membership of a Christian faith community and through the disciplines of prayer, worship and reflection.</p>	
<p>8. Catholics are ‘catholic’</p> <p>The word Catholic comes from the Greek term <i>katha holos</i>, which literally means, “to include everyone.”</p>	
<p>9. Devotion to Mary</p> <p>Mary is the mother of Jesus – the one who bore him, raised him to adulthood and stood at the foot of the cross.</p> <p>Through Jesus’ words to St John, “Behold, your mother” (John 19:26-27) Jesus gave Mary to be the mother of all his disciples and to the whole Church.</p>	

3 Mary’s Work - Mary’s Way

From the very beginning the aims and objectives of the Society of Mary were clear: ‘the Marists understood their Project to be a sharing in Mary’s work of bringing Christ-life to birth and being with the Church as it came to be born.’ (WFR, n11) St Marcellin Champagnat had a deep love and devotion for Mary. He was fond of saying, ‘*Where you find Mary, there you find Jesus*’ and this is expressed in the motto he chose for the Brothers, ‘*All to Jesus through Mary, and all to Mary for Jesus*’.

The Marist story begins when a group - eight newly ordained priests and four seminarians - came together at the Chapel of Our Lady of Fourvière in Lyon on 23rd July 1816 and promised

to work at creating a new religious order in the Church: the “Mary-ists”, whose work in the church would be dedicated to Mary.

This Society of Mary tried to emulate and model themselves on the life and work of Mary. For them this way of living the Gospel answered some of the spiritual needs of their post-Revolution world and was a definite response to a hierarchical and patriarchal Church.

Mary inspired in the first Marists a new vision of being Church which was modelled on that of the first Christians. This Marian Church has the heart of a mother: no one is abandoned. A mother believes in the goodness at the core of a person and forgives readily. We are respectful of each one’s personal journey. There is a place for those with doubts and spiritual uncertainty. There is listening and dialogue. (*Water from the Rock*, n114).

It is these traits which form the core characteristics of our Marist spirituality and mission. The Society of Mary was established to help renew the Church in a particular Marian way where she is always seen in relationship to Jesus, to the church and to the contemporary world.

As Champagnat Marists ‘our Marist charism prompts us to be attentive to the calls of our time, to the longings and preoccupations of people, especially the young. Surpassing religious and cultural borders we seek the same dignity for all: human rights, justice, peace, and equitable and responsible sharing of the planet’s wealth.’ (*Water from the Rock*, n128).

Just as she did for Marcellin Champagnat and the first brothers, Mary inspires the model of the Church that we offer to youth, a Church modeled on that of the first Christians, “This Marian Church has the heart of a mother: no one is abandoned. A mother believes in the goodness at the core of a person, and forgives readily. We are respectful of each one’s personal journey. There is a place for those with doubts and spiritual uncertainty, a place for all. There is listening and dialogue. Challenge and confrontation are done with honesty and openness.” (*Evangelizers in the Midst of Youth*, n97).

Marcellin Champagnat, one of the priests who made the pledge at Fourvière insisted that Brothers were to be a branch of the new Society. This came to pass on 2 January 1817 when he established the first community at La Valla.

4 The Marist School - Catholic - Champagnat Marist

What makes a Champagnat Marist school different from a Catholic school?

The point of difference is the charism of St Marcellin Champagnat.

4.1 What is a Charism?

A charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit given to build up a more spiritual Church and a better world. The Champagnat Marist charism emerged from the lived experience of Marcellin and the early Brothers.

This is the legacy gifted to us by Marcellin Champagnat and the first Brothers. The Charism is what makes Champagnat Marists unique. Within the Charism are the six Elements of Champagnat Marist Spirituality and the five Pillars of the Champagnat Marist Identity

4.2 The Six Elements of Champagnat Marist Spirituality - The Why

Champagnat Marist Spirituality is centered in the God of Jesus Christ, born into the circumstances of our world, enlivened by mission, and following in Mary's way. The Elements form the basis of all Marist life and mission – they are why.

God's Presence and Love - This presence of God is a profound experience of being personally loved by God, and the conviction that he is close to us in our daily human experiences.

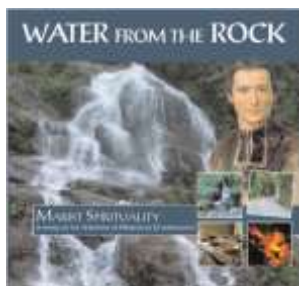
Trust in God - Marcellin's relationship with God, combined with knowledge of his limitations, explains his unbounded confidence in God.

Love of Jesus and His Gospel – Marcellin taught the first Brothers: *To make Jesus known and loved is the aim of our vocation and the whole purpose of the Institute.*

In the Way of Mary – The relationship of Marcellin to Mary was deeply marked by an affective and total trust in her, as the "Good Mother,"* because it was her work that he undertook.

Family Spirit – Marcellin and the first Brothers were united in heart and mind. Their relationships were marked by warmth and tenderness.

A Spirituality of Simplicity – At the heart of Marist spirituality coming from Marcellin and the first Brothers is humility. It expresses itself in simplicity of behaviour, most especially in our way of relating to God and to others.



Water from the Rock is an explanation of our Marist spirituality flowing in the tradition of St Marcellin Champagnat SM.

http://www.champagnat.org/shared/documenti_maristi/AcquaRoccia_EN.pdf

4.3 The Five Pillars of Champagnat Marist Identity - The How

The Pillars describe the ideals to which all Champagnat Marists, students and adults alike, should commit to - they are the how.

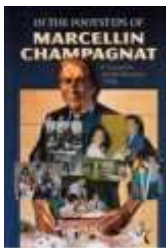
Presence – caring for each other, seeking relationships founded on love, being attentive and welcoming with a sense of openness.

Simplicity – being straightforward and genuine, humble and modest, ‘doing good quietly’.

Family Spirit – relating to each other as members of a loving family, building community, offering the warmth of welcoming, acceptance and belonging, sharing our successes and failures, setting clear standards of honesty, mutual respect, and tolerance.

Love of Work – being generous of heart, constant, and persevering in our daily work, confident, visionary, decisive in meeting the needs of our community and encouraging each other to discover the dignity of our work with young people and with each other. Marists view work as a way to bring purpose and meaning to life.

In the Way of Mary – seeing Mary as a perfect model of being Marist, tender, strong, constant in faith, open to God’s calling us to our own journey of discipleship. Mary for Marists is an exemplar of the Christian life, as mother, as one who praised God. She is a woman on a journey of faith, who had ‘dust on her feet’.



In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat documents our vision for Marist Education today, especially as it pertains to schools and other educational initiatives.

http://www.champagnat.org/e_maristas/Documentos/missaoEducativaMarista_EN.pdf

4.4 Dimensions of School Life

From this vision of the Catholic School centered on the person of Jesus Christ, come values and actions which are articulated in the four main areas of school life: Academic Studies, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Life and Personal Formation.

Over time, students in Catholic schools encounter the person of Jesus Christ, encountered in the many ways described below, so that they develop a personal relationship of faith with him, which is then proclaimed in the way they live their lives.

Academic	Pastoral Care	Spiritual Life	Personal Formation
<p>Marist schools give their students rich and varied ways of exploring the world God has created and peopled.</p> <p>Students learn that God has given us this planet and its resources for our good and that we are to use it responsibly.</p> <p>Marist schools propose that God is to be found in all things and therefore, all things are worthy of our interest and study.</p> <p>The Marist school is a place where a spirit of enquiry and the intellectual life flourish.</p> <p>Marist schools propose that belief in God is compatible with rationality.</p> <p>Marist schools draw upon and pass on to their students the long and rich tradition of Christian learning and creativity.</p> <p>The Marist school is committed to educational excellence.</p>	<p>Marist schools promote the emotional and spiritual growth of their students.</p> <p>Teachers in Marist schools build strong and appropriate relationships with students that go beyond teaching: they take an interest in their development, they listen to their cares and concerns about the meaning of life, they share their hopes and fears, their successes and failures, and accompany them through their childhood and teenage years.</p> <p>Forgiveness is a hallmark of the way Marist schools deal with students. They provide a stable and welcoming community to which children can belong.</p> <p>Marist schools recognizes and celebrate the varied successes and achievements of students.</p>	<p>Marist schools are schools of prayer.</p> <p>Marist schools encourage religious devotion in simple and regular practices.</p> <p>Marist schools celebrate the liturgy of the Church following the seasons and feast days of the Church's year.</p> <p>Marist schools teach about justice, act justly and seek to promote the common good.</p> <p>Marist schools reach out to suffering and marginalised locally and globally.</p> <p>Marist schools are open and welcoming to people of other faiths and of no faith.</p> <p>In the Marist school, the practice of the Christian faith is not separate from the rest of daily life.</p>	<p>Marist schools seek to develop the God-given gifts and talents of each student.</p> <p>Marist schools seek to form attitudes and values in their students which are based on the gospel teaching and actions of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Marist schools lay foundations for life-long learning.</p> <p>Marist schools seek to foster in their students an attitude of compassion and generosity.</p> <p>Marist schools provide a range of extra-curricular activities which promote the physical, creative, spiritual, and intellectual development of students.</p> <p>Marist schools encourage students to adopt a way of looking at the world which is positive and engaged, and which seeks to change the world for the better.</p>

5 Foundational Gospel Values

<p>The Two Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your mind, and with all your strength. You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

<p>The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)</p>	<p>The Law of Love (John 15:12)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always treat others as you would like them to treat you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love one another as I have loved you.

<p>The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12, Luke 6:2-26 and CCC 1716)</p> <p>There are two accounts in Scripture. The more familiar are the 8 Beatitudes found in the Gospel of Matthew (below), which form part of the Sermon on the Mount. The Gospel of Luke has 4 blessings and 4 woes, as part of the Sermon on the Plain. Each Beatitude consists of 2 phrases: a condition and a result.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure of heart, they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Corporal Works of Mercy
(Matthew 25:31-46 and CCC 2447)

The corporal works of mercy are derived from Matthew 25:31-46, '... just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

- Feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Clothe the naked.
- Care for the sick.
- Help the imprisoned.
- Bury the dead.

<p>Theological Virtues (1 Corinthians 13:13 and CCC 1812-1829)</p> <p>The theological virtues relate directly to God. They form the foundation of Christian moral behaviour.</p>	<p>Cardinal Virtues (Wisdom 8:7 and CCC 1805)</p> <p>The cardinal virtues are the moral values on which all other values are based.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith • Hope • Love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudence • Justice • Fortitude • Temperance

Gifts of the Holy Spirit
(Isaiah 11:1-2 and CCC 1831)

Traditionally there are seven spiritual graces or gifts of the Holy Spirit, see Isaiah 11:1-2. St. Paul identifies nine gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

Traditional	Contemporary	1 Corinthians 12:8-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisdom • Understanding • Counsel • Fortitude • Knowledge • Piety • Fear of the Lord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisdom • Understanding • Right Judgement • Courage • Knowledge • Reverence • Awe and Wonder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisdom • Knowledge • Faith • Healing • Miracles • Prophecy • Discernment of spirits • Speaking in tongues • Interpretation of tongues

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

(Galatians 5:22-23 and CCC 1832)

Traditionally there are twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. The fruits are the effect of the Holy Spirit in people's lives. To the nine fruits listed by St. Paul in Galatians 5:22-13, the Church has added three more.

Traditional	Contemporary
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love• Joy• Peace• Patience• Kindness• Goodness• Generosity• Gentleness• Faithfulness• Modesty• Self-control• Chastity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love• Joy• Peace• Patience• Kindness• Goodness• Faithfulness• Gentleness• Self-control

6 Documents Related to Catholic Education

Vatican

Declaration on Christian Education: *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html

The Catholic School (1977)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (1982)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (1988)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html

Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools (2002)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/index.htm

Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (2007)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20070908_educare-insieme_en.html

Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences - On Religious Education in Schools (2009)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20090505_circ-insegn-relig_en.html

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love (2013)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20131028_dialogo-interculturale_en.html

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (2014)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html

New Zealand

The Catholic Education of School-Age Children (2014)

<https://www.catholic.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Catholic-education-of-school-age-children-electronic-version-ISBN-978-0-473-27170-1.pdf>