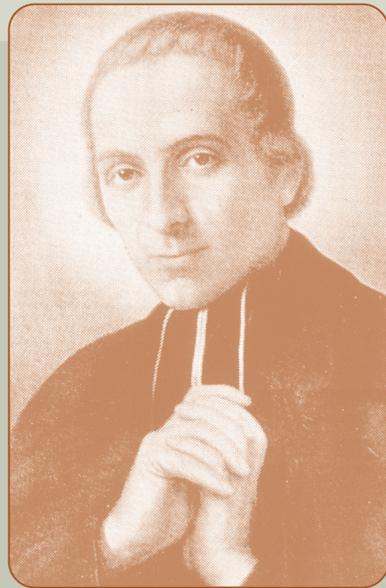


# FOUNDATIONS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

## *Marist Brothers*



Left: St Marcellin Champagnat, Founder of the Marist Brothers  
Right: The statue of St Marcellin Champagnat in the grounds of Newman College

### *The Marist Brothers*

*St Marcellin Champagnat founded the Marist Brothers on 2 January 1817 at La Valla in the Archdiocese of Lyon, southern France.*

While in the seminary, Marcellin joined a group whose dream was to form a 'Society of Mary' of Priests, Sisters and lay people who could re-evangelise the Church in France after the ravages of the French Revolution, paralleling the foundation of the 'Society of Jesus' after the Reformation.

Because of his own poor experience of schooling, Marcellin kept insisting that the plan should include Brothers for the education of the country children. His companions were happy for him to take charge of that aspect.

In a rural parish, just six months after his ordination, Marcellin had to prepare for death a country boy who was quite ignorant of God. This encouraged him to put his plan into action.

The Society of Mary (comprising Priests and coadjutor Brothers) was approved in 1836, particularly in view of their offer to staff missions in the southwest Pacific region. Some of Marcellin's Brothers accompanied the Priests – in fact, Br Marie-Nizier was the companion of St Peter Chanel. As fate would have it, he was on the other side of Futuna Island on the day that Peter Chanel was martyred.

### *Approved by Rome*

Marcellin's Marist Brothers were approved by Rome as a separate congregation in 1863. Together with a number of other Orders, they were invited to Sydney to promote Catholic education in the colony that found itself embroiled in Catholic Protestant controversy following Sir Henry Parkes' Public School Act of 1866.

Nine years after their approval, in 1872, they arrived in the colony, opening a school soon after near St Patrick's Church that was located in The Rocks area of Sydney.

### *Arrival in WA*

The Marist Brothers came to Western Australia at the invitation of the Abbot of New Norcia where they established St Ildephonsus' College that opened in 1913.

A host of contributing factors including isolation, poor transport networks and a general lack of water, electricity and refrigeration presented the Brothers and their students with a number of unique challenges and difficulties.

Even in the face of such difficulty, the culture and liturgical atmosphere of the Benedictine settlement had a profound effect on the students who later formed a very loyal group of Old Boys.

Half a century after it opened its doors, the Brothers' association with St Ildephonsus came to an end when, in 1965, the Order, along with their senior boarders, relocated from New Norcia to Churchlands. Meanwhile, the Benedictines inaugurated Salvado College on the St Ildephonsus site.

The new Marist College was established at Churchlands. The College would eventually become Newman College, following a gradual process of amalgamation with Siena College in Doubleview and the Brigidine Colleges of Subiaco and Floreat.

### *A growing tradition*

The education of young people in the Marist tradition was not limited to that of St Ildephonsus and Newman College.

In 1954, Marist College Subiaco was opened next to St Joseph's Church, a college that operated until its gradual transfer to Churchlands.

Six years earlier, in 1948, St Paul's High School, Northam was inaugurated by Brother Bertinus and Brother Godric in the parish hall. Far from being suitable as a classroom, the 42 foundation students coped admirably until the school relocated to Fermoy House following the departure of the last maternity patients (Fermoy House was formerly Fermoy Maternity Hospital).

St Paul's was never a big school. Even after the influx of migrants in the early 1950s, enrolments peaked at 170 in 1962. By 1968, the school was at the crossroads and the Brothers, in collaboration with the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition, willingly agreed with the Parish Council to establish the co-educational St Joseph's Parish School. The Brothers' association with the school continued until the end of 1982 when they withdrew.

### *Spanning dioceses*

In the same year that Marist College Subiaco was established, the Brothers opened St Francis Xavier's, at 'Sandridge Park' in South Bunbury.

The school's foundation Principal, Br Valentine Flynn, a vigorous worker with undoubted charm, soon organised a very energetic Parents and Friends group to establish the playing fields and provide amenities. It was a great loss for the school community when, late in 1958, Br Valentine's health deteriorated rapidly and he passed away.

Fourteen years after his death in 1973, St Francis Xavier's amalgamated with Mercy College to form the dynamic Bunbury Catholic College.

The work of the Marist Brothers also took them into the northwest of the State and specifically Port Hedland where, in 1991, they ministered at St Cecilia's School, working with Cambodian refugees in the Detention Centre.

Eventually, two Brothers working in the school also became active in Parish Ministries – liturgical, sacramental and musical. The Brothers' contribution to the school came to an end in 1998 after the Order made the painful decision to withdraw from the school.

### THE ORDER IN THE 21ST CENTURY

*In 2004, there were 4500 Marist Brothers working in 77 countries around the world, supported by many lay Marists. The majority of work undertaken by the Marists is in education (secondary/tertiary) and social projects.*

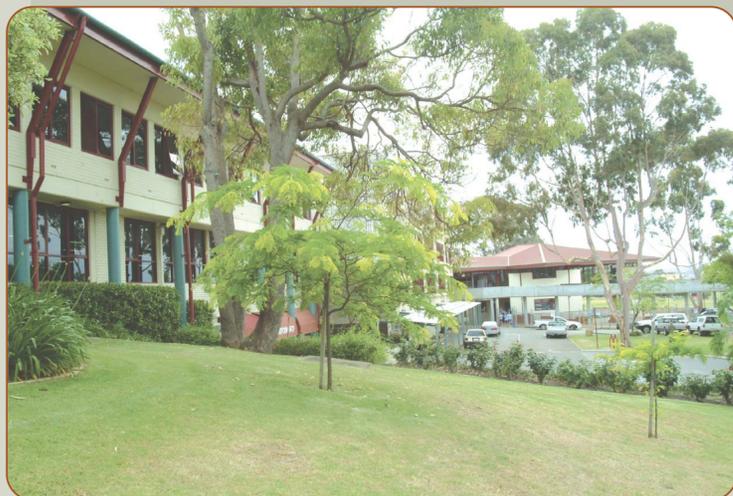
*Here in WA, Brothers at Newman College continue to be involved in the areas of chaplaincy, counselling and special education (volunteers), while Brothers currently lecture at both Notre Dame and Edith Cowan Universities.*

*Australian Brothers are actively involved in religious formation and the training of local people as teachers in India, Pakistan, East Timor, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Fiji.*

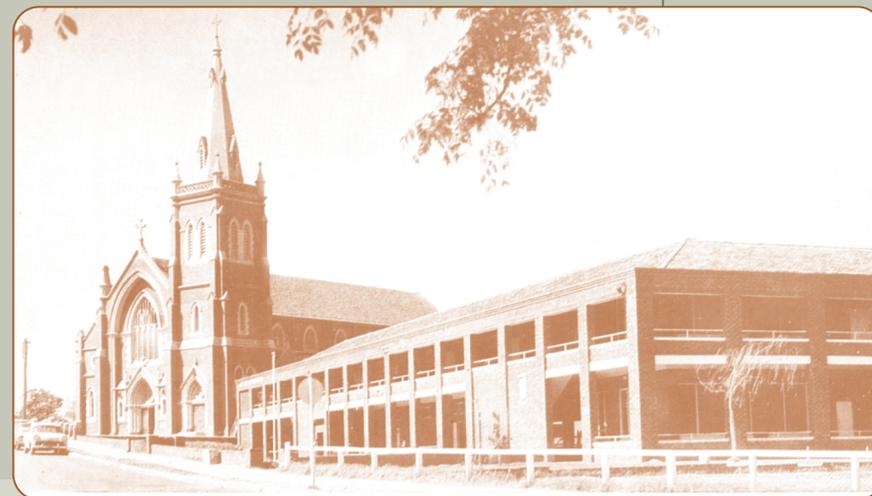
*The Order's charism in education is born out of the Marist spirituality that has Mary as its model and guide in the following of Jesus.*

*The Marist Brothers of today continue to follow in the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat who encouraged a love of work, a simple approach, a family spirit and, wherever possible, a presence for those whom the Order serves.*

*Like many other religious groups the Marist Brothers are welcoming many lay Marists to be part of St Marcellin Champagnat's ongoing mission.*



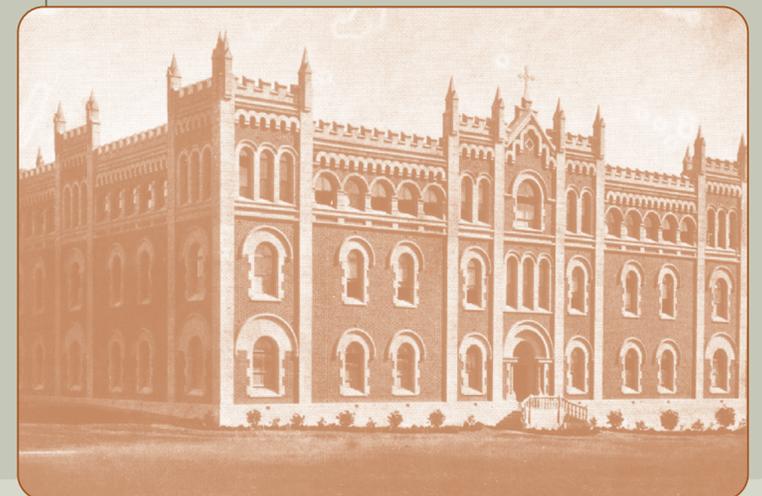
Newman College, Churchlands



Marist College, Subiaco



Rev. Dom Fulgentius Torres, Founder & Patron of St Ildephonsus' College



St Ildephonsus' College, New Norcia