



Champagnat

an International Marist Journal of Education and Charism

Volume 11 Number 3

December 2009



Then and now

Constance Lewis Jeff Crowe Frederick McMahon
Madeleine Laming Lee McKenzie Gil Maclean

IN THIS ISSUE ...
Join our conversation on
Then and now
Featuring

Constance Lewis *on Mary Ward's legacy*

Jeff Crowe *on mission and flexibility*

Lee McKenzie *on Yr 12 farewells*

Frederick McMahon *on Marcellin's luck*

AUSTRALASIAN CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

In September 2009 *Champagnat* received two ACPA awards:

the inaugural **Best Mission Coverage Award**

(for Mark Walls' article 'Turning Mission into Ministry')

and the **Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize – Best Magazine Award.**



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Champagnat: An International Marist Journal of Education and Charism aims to present information on research, educational practice and policy-making in the field of Champagnat Education and other associated areas in a format that is accessible to both researcher and practitioner, within and beyond the international Marist network. Qualitative and quantitative data, case studies, historical analyses and more theoretical, analytical and philosophical material are welcomed. The journal aims to assist in the human formation and exploration of ideas of those who feel inspired by a charism, its nature and purpose. In this context, charism is seen as a gift to an individual, in our case Marcellin Champagnat, who in turn inspires a movement of people, often internationally, across generations. Such an educational charism encourages people to gather, to share faith, to explore meaning, to display generosity of spirit and to propose a way forward for education, particularly of the less advantaged. Consequently, this Journal endeavours to discuss the relationship between charism more generally, and education.

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Beginnings

I HAVE JUST returned from the 21st General Chapter of the Marist Brothers which was held in Rome from September 8 to October 10, 2009. There, 84 Brother delegates and nine lay Marist participants gathered to reflect on the Marist Brothers' Institute of today and how it contributes to developing our contemporary world. We focused especially on the charism of Marcellin Champagnat and how it can be a source of inspiration to young people and poor children.

On my way home from the Chapter I visited London, and obtained the first editions of a new

publication edited by Professor Gerald Grace, titled *International Studies in Catholic Education*. Articles in these early editions cover the experience of Catholic Education in both developed and developing countries. It's an exciting venture.

When I returned to Melbourne, I found with great delight that we have received two awards from the judges for the Australasian Catholic Press Association at the Association's 2009 annual presentation. Our awards are for Best Magazine and Best Mission Coverage article in 2008. As an editorial team, we are greatly encouraged by this affirmation. We thank in particular Fr Mark Walls, SM from New Zealand for his article titled 'Turning Mission into Ministry' which won the Best Mission coverage award. Naturally, in winning the Best Magazine Award, we want to thank the authors of all our articles and reviews, as well as our columnists, for the high quality of their contributions. Thank you also to those who work so diligently in the Journal's production team, especially Juliette Hughes, Lucille Hughes, Madeleine Laming and Berise Heasley.

As I talk to readers of our Journal, I see that you are inspired often by

what you read in our pages. Some tell me they always find an article or two they want to read immediately, others inform me that they initially put the Journal aside, so that they can read it from cover to cover later. Your feedback is always important to us.

The film *Mao's Last Dancer* opened recently in Australian cinemas. Based on the book of the same name, author Li Cunxin describes his early years in rural Qingdao, China where he grew up with his mother, father and six brothers in a very poor, yet loving environment. Li remembers how in some years 'the peasants in his village even ate tree bark to survive'.

When a delegation from Madame Mao's Beijing Dance Company visited his commune school, he was invited to study ballet and, in this way, serve in Chairman Mao Zedong's revolution. Li left home at eleven years of age. Accepting this invitation changed his life. In worshipping Chairman Mao, he could give expression to this by nurturing his passion, undertaking the rigorous training provided by the Beijing Dance Company for the next seven years.

As opportunities came his way, Li responded with courage and

determination. Captivated by the adventure and opportunities of life, he accepted a scholarship to Houston where, the Artistic Director of the Houston Ballet, Ben Stevenson, could say eventually to Li 'You came here as a student and leave as a star'.

A highlight of Li's life occurred when his mother and father were able to travel to Houston to see their sixth son perform. Unaware of their presence, Li's first response on seeing them after the performance, was to drop to his knees to thank them. This reminded me of the way the leper, exiled from his community, and who had just been cured by Jesus, came back to thank Him.

Li Cunxin's dancing attracted others to him. He inspired people to follow his way of pursuing a goal and accepting the sacrifice, and even suffering, to achieve that goal. I could not help but think, while watching the film and seeing Li fly through the air both on the Houston stage and back in his parent's village in China, how enlivened he appeared as he pursued his passion and charisma to give people enjoyment.

We have the opportunity to do likewise. We can be the face of God in our own settings as we live life to the full, by giving service to

others, especially to young people and the poor. Reflecting on this brings me to the theme of this issue: 'Then and Now'.

The 'then' we are invited to consider is embodied in our lead article by Dr Constance Lewis. Written as part of her monumental doctoral thesis in 1988, the extract that we are privileged to publish concerns the life of Mary Ward and how her spirit informed the charism of the Loreto Sisters particularly here in Australia in the energetic and optimistic '80s.

The 'now' seems considerably less certain as we must continually act in faith regarding the future. In this 400th Anniversary of Mary Ward's death, it is sometimes poignant to look at Dr Lewis' often-optimistic perspective on what the 1980s held and what the future was felt by many to hold. Yet much of the article carries a feeling of prophecy, even if some of the developments referred to as expected possibilities did not come to pass.

For the Marists, the 1980s proved to be a decade of growth and optimism. School communities continually focused on articulating their vision and setting goals. Students became more interested in social issues, leading them to enter generously into community service activities.

By the 1990s, fewer members of Religious Congregations were serving on school staffs. Consequently, school principals became more conscious, when leading professional development programmes, of the importance of topics like ethos and charism. Responsibility for nurturing the religious charism in schools had shifted from members of Religious Congregations to lay leaders.

My instinct tells me that whatever we do (in the way of analysing and re-imagining Marist Religious Life on the one hand and the Church on the other) will not advance our understanding and appropriation of our unique life task – unless at the same time we address the reality of the world today. This may involve putting on hold our assumptions, our set views and our received judgements so that we may be open to apprehend (partially and provisionally for a start) the new human society and human culture, the new axioms and the new consciousness associated with the new world which is still coming to birth around us.

To this end, we encourage young lay writers, in particular our film reviewers, (in this issue Amelia Hughes-Lobert and Gil Maclean) to share their perspectives with our readers, who must

understand the wider culture that educates our students sometimes more effectively than any school. Inculturation from popular media is a fact; negotiating how to pass on a charisma without denying its essential nature, and in a way that the students can receive it, is our constant concern.

We can then, be surprised sometimes at the ethical and spiritual analysis that comes from the consideration of mass media that one would not at first regard as a fertile field. Nineteen-year-old Amelia Hughes-Lobert's take on the *Twilight* phenomenon is illuminating: we see both the dangers in the attraction to 'vampire' culture and also her interesting perception of why young girls and women are so entranced by it. Interestingly enough, she claims that her peers are fed up with being objectified, that they yearn for a relationship with a young man whose regard for them is not based on lust, but on love and respect and restraint. Food for thought and discussion is here abundantly in her writings. Her sensitive reviews of Studio Ghibli's *Ponyo* and of Disney's *A Christmas Carol* take into account much of what teachers may miss in the generation gap.

Gil Maclean's terse response to Michael Moore's *Capitalism:*

A Love Story will confront some readers and comfort others. In either case, his intelligent and literate response to this very important film reminds us of the message we took away from this year's Chapter: if the poor are not 'always with us', if we ignore the cry of the poor, we ignore the basic message of Champagnat.

As Jeff Crowe says compellingly, in his article 'The dance: missionaries now', 'Can we find one space for one modern-day Montagne?'

Lee McKenzie is one teacher who understands deeply the struggles of the young, and in her latest column she discusses the power of proper goodbyes: how we send our senior students out into the world with a sense of being cared for at the stage they have reached is of great importance. She writes of liturgies that celebrate and cherish and empower.

We also welcome Peter Houlahan to our pages for the first time as he recounts his response to the 20-year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is significant that Constance Lewis' piece was contemporary with this time. So much has happened since then that it is difficult to encompass how different the world of the 1980s was from now.

It grounds us, therefore, to be

reminded of some of the hardships undergone by the founders of religious congregations.

Marcellin could have empathised with so many of the vicissitudes and hardships undergone by Mary Ward, and in that spirit we welcome back Brother Frederick McMahon to these pages to tell us of the role that chance, or 'Hap and Mishap' played in the formation of the Marists and their Founder. We are also fortunate to have his scholarly and perceptive commentary on the life of Br John Dullea, first Provincial of Australasia, who arrived here in 1876 when there were only four Marists in Australia.

Our indefatigable book reviewer Madeleine Laming reviews two books for us: for our entertainment, Steig Larsson's last book *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* and for our professional edification, a slim but useful volume, *Expert Educators – a Handbook for New and Inexperienced Teachers* by Susan Nikakis.

And our Assistant Editor, Juliette Hughes, reviews the excellent historical series on ABC3 *My Place*; it provides a fitting postscript to all this by exploring the changing worlds of 13 children over 13 decades in the same house.

We have just received the sad news of the death of Br Des Crowe, a key contributor to our Journal since its foundation in October 1998. Des' contributions helped us, among other things, to deepen our theological understanding of the outcomes of the Second Vatican Council.

As a member of our Journal's Editorial Board, Des helped shape our processes to ensure our articles are both rigorous in structure and relevant in content. Des Crowe spoke eloquently about how Religious Congregations might adjust to new times. The same approach applies to our educational communities.

May he rest in peace. ■

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The Berlin Wall

PETER HOULAHAN

This week, the world marked the 20th Anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is important to commemorate such pivotal occasions in our history. We continue to live with some of the legacy of the Cold War. Many of our students are unaware of the profound impact the ongoing tensions between Marxism and capitalism had as they were played out on the global stage in the years following WWII. This is hardly surprising since it occurred before their lifetime and it is hard to convey such things without a lived experience.

I remember feeling deeply moved by witnessing this event via electronic media and seeing the euphoria of the German people as the barrier which had separated families for generations was literally torn apart by citizens from both sides. Families and friends were reunited after decades as communism symbolically toppled. This ideology, which was intended to unite the masses for their common good and to provide for

each person according to his/her need, had failed. Why? The ideology did not afford genuine respect to people and denied them basic human freedoms, including religious freedom, self-expression and the opportunity to benefit directly from their own labours. As a result, many citizens gave much less than their best efforts.

Freedom to pursue one's own goals, aspirations and earnings is not itself the antidote for all problems, since human nature has a selfish element which needs to be tempered. The vacuum left by communism has mainly been filled by capitalism, yet the world's ills have not disappeared, sadly. Governments of all persuasions around the globe have the difficult challenge of trying to balance individuals' needs and rights with their responsibilities to the broader community. The Russian government continues to struggle against corruption and organised crime despite two decades of democratic leadership and capitalism in this country, and some Russians look

Champagnat wins ACPA Award Bishop Kennedy Memorial Prize 2009 Best Magazine Award



'Each of the three 104-page issues submitted for consideration had a different theme, explored in every case by thoughtful and well-written articles. These were accompanied by reviews, opinion pieces and artistically displayed photographs and illustration. This competently edited and presentable magazine from the Marist family deserves high praise and recognition.'

Dr Michael Costigan, Judge

back on the Soviet era with nostalgic and longing eyes.

We can apply some of the lessons from this page of history in our own lives: success within a community or a nation depends on the combined personal commitment of the individuals. By working together for common goals, we can all enjoy greater happiness and success.

Individuals need recognition, reward, opportunity to express themselves and freedom to pursue their goals.

However, the quest for our own benefit should not be at the expense of the common good. We need to

remember our greater purpose: it's not all about 'me' – it is everyone's job to break down the walls that divide us. We are stronger and better when we are united.

It is said that 'we get the government that we deserve'. We need to work with and inform our leaders as they strive to balance between the needs of individuals and the common good. To fail to communicate clearly and directly with our leaders is to contribute to the problem. In Australia, this means seeking to influence government through our local members, who are there to serve us. ■

Contributors

CONGRATULATIONS TO FR MARK WALLS SM – whose article titled ‘Turning mission into ministry’ won the ACPA inaugural Best Mission Coverage Award 2009.

JEFF CROWE FMS After working in Bougainville and Solomon Islands (1970-78), he became the first District Leader of Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands (1981-87). After post-graduate studies he worked in Province administration (1989-2003). He was a member of the General Council of the Marist Brothers (1993-2001), during which time he held responsibilities in Africa and was the final editor of *In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat*. In 2002-2003, he worked in formation in India and established a project for children affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2004-2007, he served as Rector of the Marist Brothers’ Asia-Pacific post-novitiate centre in Manila, Philippines. In late 2007 he became Provincial in Sydney.

PETER HOULAHAN is Principal at Marist-Sion College, Warragul.

He has worked in Marist-affiliated schools for the past 11 years and is a member of the Champagnat Education Council.

JULIETTE HUGHES is the Assistant Editor and TV columnist for *Champagnat: an International Marist Journal of Education and Charism*.

AMELIA HUGHES-LOBERT completed her Year 12 at Mater Christi College, Belgrave last year and is currently freelancing as a writer and musician before she takes up in 2010 the place she was awarded in Humanities at La Trobe University.

MADELEINE LAMING holds a doctorate in education policy and studies. She lectures in education at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne. A member of the council of AFUW Victoria, she is also a member of the Northern Metropolitan Regional Council for Adult Community and Further Education.

CONSTANCE LEWIS was Principal of Fairfield State School in inner suburban Melbourne for 12 years before retiring to be a successful mixed farmer on the outskirts of Neerim South in Gippsland, in the eastern region of the state of Victoria. An accomplished musician with a Bachelor of Music from the University of Melbourne, and also a dynamic first defender in what was then called ‘ladies’ basketball’, in the Melbourne Catholic Parishes Basketball Association, Dr Lewis was educated at Santa Maria College, Preston. Her thesis, ‘Provision for the Education of Catholic Women in Australia since 1840’ was supervised by Dr Donald Cave; her examiners were from Sydney and Dublin.

GIL MACLEAN graduated from RMIT with a diploma in Professional Writing and Editing. He is a video game designer, writer and occasional film reviewer.

LEE MCKENZIE holds a Education Master’s degree in Leadership and is a member of the Melbourne

AMSA conference committee. She is the Head of St Paul’s Campus of Lavalla Catholic College in Latrobe City.

FREDERICK MCMAHON FMS of the Province of Sydney, has completed several studies of Marcellin Champagnat. In addition to *Strong Mind, Gentle Heart* (Champagnat), *Travellers in Hope* (the origins of the four Marist congregations), *Marist Milestones* (a Champagnat Pilgrimage), he has completed short articles on Champagnat’s relationship with salient characters in his life – Courveille, Colin, Pompallier, De Pins, Devie, Mazelier, Douillet and Cattet. Some of these articles have appeared in *Cahiers Maristes*, a Marist Brothers’ publication from Rome. He has also written *Not Shaken by the Wind*, a life of Victorian-born Br Andrew Power, a long-serving and much-loved Provincial of the Australian Province.



Launching

LEE MCKENZIE

Late October every year is an interesting time in a Victorian school. Year 12 students are coming to the end of their school life; as teachers we watch as they move between fear, elation, excitement and myriad other emotions. They want to assert their independence and organise 'schoolie' activities and all manner of celebrations for the end of the exams. Yet they are also often frightened of taking on adult responsibilities; spending a lot of time reminiscing about school days, even regressing at times to childlike behaviour, particularly in the yard. It can be a time of exquisite sorrow and frightening joy.

Newspapers delight in stories of ‘muck up’ days gone wrong and are quick to point damning fingers at schools who have some students who misbehave publicly. Principals live in fear of their schools being named and shamed in this way and put considerable planning into the final days so that students end their school days with dignity. It is a delicate balance, allowing students some activities that allow them to celebrate closure while also honouring their school and themselves. It is undoubtedly an important rite of passage for young people. The media’s focus on a minority’s high jinks trivialises something that is a significant stage in their development.

This year our senior students did themselves and us proud. The school captains worked with the campus administrative team to develop a program of lunch-time activities that included the students playing games against each other and the staff. On their last official school day, the senior students were given pride of place at the front of a whole school assembly where the 2009 school captains passed the flame of leadership over to their successors. These symbolic actions and blessings were followed by an amusing speech of reminiscence given by two of the students.

This final school assembly was a genuine celebration of these young people and had a great impact on the entire school community. All year levels shared the solemnity and joy, heard the ‘survivor stories’ of past years and laughed at common experiences of teachers. The Yr 12s were the centre of attention and they loved it, feeling valued and secure.

That evening the Yr 12 students gathered in uniform with their families at the parish church for their final College Mass. With the College choir and the beautiful liturgy it was a fitting formal ending. At the close of Mass, each student was called by name to the front of the church and honoured for having completed their schooling at the College. Many schools make similar efforts. The power of these farewells speaks straight to the hearts of young people, responding to their hunger to be loved, to be supported and to belong. Being named and known before God in the church as well as family and friends adds depth to this experience.

They have been part of our College family, we have experienced each other’s differences and fragilities, each other’s strengths and weaknesses. We’ve shared the gift of community.

During the final weeks of school we had a memorial garden blessed by our bishop. It had been a VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied

Learning) project: the work had been completed largely by boys whose abilities were not served in academic classrooms. One boy in particular had worked on the construction of a wrought iron and wooden gate with a cross as its centre piece. His beautiful gate sits at the entrance to a quiet space which is dedicated to the memory of staff members who have died; it is a sacred space, slightly removed from the hurlyburly of College life. The garden is designed to focus on the resurrection, offering hope in the midst of loss. His gate, with the outline of a cross, serves as a marker to the sacred space. It is a special gift when a student is able to leave such a creative mark on the school.

When a student has found the space to flourish, and had enough support from teachers to keep him or her engaged in our community, it leaves a mark on the teachers too. Students may sometimes test our patience. But they grow and develop when they are treated with love, with patience. When we are able to encompass differences, our community can be made richer.

Students from every kind of background, with all ranges of ability, were there on the last day. When our Year 12s came dressed in silly costumes, riding bikes and skate boards, it was like a final burst of childhood as they breakfasted with teachers, chatted and played. As the morning drew to a close, they gathered and released balloons, watching them fade to specks on the prevailing westerly wind.

It was a gesture to mark their departure from school, casting themselves upon the world. Finally, a decorated archway was brought out. They were encouraged to pass through it, when they were ready, in their own style. There was some hesitation, some reluctance to make a move – and then singly, in pairs, in small groups, they skipped, danced, walked and even skated through. Amid laughter and clapping, their teachers stood and watched them finally move off to be carried away like the balloons to the wider world.

Days such as this give purpose to teachers, who in the face of many students' 'individualism, self-pre-occupation and diminishing generosity'¹, struggle with these issues themselves. Teachers – who can often get caught up in issues of discipline or curriculum without really seeing the young person in front of them – are reminded of the emotional and spiritual aspects of their work. It reminds them that 'education is a privileged place for evangelisation and human promotion'². It is through

presence, constancy and love that they live the family spirit within which young people prosper. And on the days when we falter, when we may doubt what we do, I will only have to look at the Class of 2009's gate to be reminded of the power of our simple, uncomplicated way of being with young people. ■

ENDNOTES

1. *Water from the Rock* p 61
2. CF Choose Life – the message of the General Chapter No 33 (Rome 2001)

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Hap and mishap

FREDERICK McMAHON

*Reflections on certain aspects of the life of St Marcellin:
the role of chance in his priestly life to 1830*

Having taken up his appointment in the La Valla parish in 1816, Champagnat was probably initially unaware of the good fortune that lay in his way in regard to the apostolic work that he was about to undertake. In February of that year, a government ordinance

set up committees to encourage and supervise primary instruction. One of the ex officio members was to be the district parish priest. The ordinance required each commune to open a school: such demands favoured in a practical way the congregations of teaching Sisters and Brothers. The schools begun by Champagnat in the early years were, in the main, the result of requests from these committees groups. Champagnat was brave enough to undertake such school openings – and as the saying goes, fortune favours the brave.

Early in 1822, Champagnat survived a serious crisis, that of a dearth of vocations to his infant congregation. In the February of that year, Claude Fayolle (Br Stanislaus) became the tenth to enter the novitiate since 1817 – only ten in five years. Champagnat was desperate for young men to undertake the work he had started: his recourse was to prayer and to special pilgrimages to Notre Dame de Pitié, a shrine on the outskirts of La Valla. In the month of March, the sudden arrival of eight postulants from the faraway mountains of Velay startled him. He had given written permission for such recruiting to an unimpressive but persistent applicant. The recruiter turned out to be a regular Pied Piper. What is more, most of the new recruits persevered – but alas, not the Pied Piper! To the skeptic this episode would be merely a visitation by Lady Chance. To the believer, another Lady was involved.

Lady Chance (or the Blessed Virgin) showed herself in another light in February 1823: on this occasion in the form of a lantern in the hand of a farmer who, for some unknown reason had elected to go outdoors in a severe snowstorm to reach another section of the building, a section that could easily have been reached through an internal communicating doorway. The lighted lantern proved to be a saviour of Champagnat and the exhausted Br Stanislaus. For the pious, in this event it seems that Lady Chance gave way to another lady – she who was addressed in the ‘Memorare in the Snow’.

When in 1816 the newly-ordained Marcellin Champagnat emerged from the seminary of St Irenaeus, he came into an archdiocese that was without a leader. It was still in that condition when the events recounted above took place. In 1815, Napoleon’s uncle, Cardinal Fesch, Archbishop of Lyons, had fled France and had taken up residence in Rome. He refused to resign, leaving Pope Pius VII in a dilemma and Lyons without an archbishop, a situation which endured for nearly eight years. A new pope,

Leo XII, 'bit the bullet' and in 1823 replaced Fesch with an Apostolic Administrator, Gaston de Pins. This move not only restored an episcopal leader to Lyon: it also saved Champagnat from the machinations of the Vicar General Bochard. In the absence of an archdiocesan leader, the powerful Bochard had for several years been pressuring Champagnat to join his tiny congregation of Marist Brothers with that of his own. In protest against the displacement of Fesch, Bochard quit the archdiocese; Champagnat could breathe more easily again. Good fortune had smiled on him once more.

Another instance of Chance, one that clearly did not involve divine or Marial intervention, occurred in April 1824: control of primary education was placed in the hands of the bishops of France. This was done by the government which, under the new king (Charles X) was well-disposed to the role of religion in education. What good fortune it was for Archbishop Le Pins to find in Champagnat a young founder of a congregation dedicated to the Christian education of youth! Already this congregation of Marist Brothers was undertaking primary education in about six places and was more than willing to co-operate with the new archbishop who was, in turn, willing to provide backing for Champagnat and his followers. In terms of finance alone, this backing took the form of 8000 francs (a contribution to the cost of Champagnat's 'skyscraper' – the five-storey Mother House, the 'Hermitage of Our Lady').

Chance favoured Champagnat yet again in the crisis of 1826, when Courveille's lapse and the financial situation of the Marist Brothers brought about an inspection of Hermitage affairs by Cattet, the 'new-broom' Vicar General. The result of the inspection was a strong recommendation that Champagnat unite his congregation to that of Fr Coindre. Coindre's sensible opposition to such a move gave pause to the process. Then Coindre's own unexpected and tragic death, plus several other factors, put paid to the proposed amalgamation. Champagnat was 'lucky' once more.

However, in the next several years, Lady Chance showed just how capricious and unhelpful she could be. Having favoured Champagnat so much in the government decrees of 1816 and 1824, she showed a severe countenance in 1828 and 1830. By 1828, the anti-clerical element had become strong in Charles X's government. Although he was a great supporter of the Catholic Church, the King could not prevent his gov-



ernment from passing, in April 1828, an ordinance that gave the civil authorities precedence over the ecclesiastical in the supervision of primary education. The ordinance spelt trouble for Champagnat in that strictures were imposed concerning teachers without certificates of competence (the *brevet*). Further trouble came in June of the same year when ‘unauthorised’ congregations were forbidden to teach – Champagnat’s Brothers were not authorised. From that time forward, much of Champagnat’s time was absorbed in a fruitless quest for the legal authorisation of his congregation.

The nadir of Champagnat’s fortunes vis à vis the government came in 1830. Thanks to the efforts of friends in high places, the legalisation of the Marist Brothers was on the point of government approval. Already having been passed by the Council of State, the document merely awaited the signature of Charles X. Alas! That signature was never to appear, for King Charles X, the last of the Bourbon kings, was unceremoniously bundled out of France after the three days of revolution in July 1830. Once again Champagnat was in the wilderness.

‘When troubles come, they come not as single spies but in battalions’. In regard to Champagnat these words were apt; for the next ten years he was incessantly seeking legal authorisation for his Brothers of Mary – an end achieved only after the death of the Founder-Saint.

CHAMPAGNAT FROM 1831 TO 1840

The anti-clericalism that swept through France after the July Revolution of 1830 affected both Marist camps – those of Colin at Belley and of Champagnat at the Hermitage.

At the seminary-college of which Colin was the newly appointed head, many of the College professors of the early 1830s favoured the Catholic liberalism preached by the priest-philosopher Félicité de Lamennais. This meant that Colin had a problem on his hands, for he was opposed to the ideas of Lamennais, a thinker who was trying to dissociate Catholicism from close ties with monarchists and to identify it with some of the tenets of liberalism, including democratic government with broad franchise. Colin, loyal to his bishop as ever, followed Devie in rejecting the Lamennais ideology.

Lamennais' ideas were, for those times, quite avant-garde. In the Church milieu of this period, under the arch-conservative Pope Gregory XVI, Catholic liberalism could not survive in Europe. As a consequence of Colin's attitude, Lamennais' newspaper, the famous *L'Avenir* (The Future) was banned from the College.

The tragedy of the situation was that most Church leaders in France, in persisting in their support of the royalist cause, 'backed the wrong horse'. As a consequence, when the anti-clericals eventually gained control of government, the Church was severely punished, religious congregations being disbanded after 1903. Although Champagnat was not directly involved in the sorry Lamennais affair, fellow Marist priests were (and Champagnat's men were eventually) in large measure, effectively expelled from France. Although it was certainly another 'mishap' at the time, the fact is that the expelled Brothers, with characteristic French zeal for missionary work, spread Champagnat's Brothers throughout the whole world – a 'hap'-py outcome.

In regard to Champagnat's 'camp' at the Hermitage in the period immediately after the July Revolution, there was a protracted delay before the anti-clericals acted. As is their wont, rumours were rife about this cleric who, in his isolated valley 'stronghold', was supposedly allowing a nobleman to give military training to a group of vigorous young men who could readily be enlisted in a revolt against the new government. It was not until 24 July 1831, however, that a Police Magistrate arrived, accompanied by a band of gendarmes.

Understandably, the young Brother who opened the door to this formidable force could not be expected to know the ranks of the French nobility, so when the magistrate asked whether there was a marquis in the house, the puzzled Brother replied that, if there were one, Fr Champagnat would know about it. Suspicions augmented, the official descended on Champagnat, who handled the situation in a way that won the grudging admiration of the magistrate. He who made his entrance like a lion made his departure like a lamb.

This incident, seemingly shaping as a ‘mishap’ for Champagnat, turned out to have a most happy outcome, for not only were suspicions allayed about Champagnat’s loyalty to the government, but he also won solid support from the governmental heads of two Départements – the Loire and the Rhône. Such support was so necessary in what could be claimed to be Champagnat’s longest and most mortifying struggle – the quest for government authorisation of his Institute.

On 18 April 1831 there was an issued Royal Ordinance which regulated the conditions of teaching for members of religious associations. This Ordinance established the obligation of military service for subjects of an unauthorised congregation. Under the terms of the Law, teachers could be dispensed from military service by undertaking to be engaged in the work of public instruction for a period of ten years. Subjects of non-authorised congregations had to undertake the engagement before the Royal Council, just like teachers of state schools.

This government regulation was a misfortune for Champagnat, whose congregation was as yet unauthorised. Action was imperative, so Marist eyes turned towards Bordeaux, where the authorised congregation of Fr Chaminade, the Marianists, was situated. Hopes were high that some form of affiliation could be worked out that would enable Champagnat’s Brothers to avoid conscription.

On the invitation of Fr Colin, who said that he could not make the journey, Champagnat readied himself for the journey to Agen, there to meet up with Chaminade, the founder whose congregation had been authorised in 1825. This occurred during the ‘happy years’ before the arrival of the ‘Citizen King’, Louis-Philippe’s unfriendly government. Suddenly, all Champagnat’s hopes re the Marianists were dashed, for the archdiocesan authorities applied a ban that had been ‘on the books’ of the archdiocesan since Vicar-General Bochard’s time – clerics were



not allowed to leave the archdiocese without express permission of the Archbishop.

It is obvious that the archdiocesan ‘heavies’ were not anxious to have Champagnat’s valued congregation tied to a group from the Archdiocese of Bordeaux. They then set Champagnat on a course which proved to be agonising for him – linking him with Fr Querbes’ ‘Clerks of St Viator’, a group which had little in common with the Marist Brothers, but which, in archdiocesan eyes, had the supreme merit of lying within the confines of the archdiocese. Although Fr Querbes was a reluctant participant, the archdiocesan authorities were convinced that this was the way to go. The pressure was applied to both founders. For the founder of the Marist Brothers, this was indeed a major ‘mishap’.

There’s balm in Gilead: Eventually, after the agony of the Querbes affair, an agony attested to by the famous tear-stained letter, Champagnat was able to arrange with Fr Mazelier an agreement which saved his Brothers from years of military service which could threaten their vocation; it had

a salving effect – it was ‘happy’ healing. As for the Marianists and the Marists, both congregations having been founded in the same year, they have maintained ties of friendship. One instance of this is to be seen today in the blending of Marianists and Marists in the spiritual renewal course of the Troisième Age at Manziana, Italy.

Mention was made earlier of the good repute earned by Champagnat as a result of the visit of the Police Magistrate and his underlings in 1831. Prefects of two significant Départements (the Rhône and the Loire) wrote favourable reports in favour of Champagnat’s application for authorisation. That was a stroke of good fortune; the reports were used during Champagnat’s 1838 ‘campaign’ in Paris. Unfortunately, however, it was all to no avail. There was a veritable repetition of the Bible story: ‘Pharaoh hardened his heart’. Officials of the Education department of Louis-Philippe’s government were set against the authorisation of male religious teaching congregations. Consequently, despite six separate attempts, there was to be no authorisation of the Marist Brothers in Champagnat’s lifetime. For Champagnat, this was a major mishap.

There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood,
leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their lives is bound
in shallows and in miseries. (*Julius Caesar* IV, iii, 217).

In steering a course through life, Champagnat encountered both favourable and contrary winds – both hap and mishap. He proved to be a ‘captain’ who steered his barque on a course which eventually brought his followers to a safe, secure haven. ■



The dance: missionaries now

JEFF CROWE

Marist educators have a special role as spiritual models, as agents of transformation and as bridge builders between youth and the Christian community. Mission, God's mission, is at the heart of our identity. Being missionary is a way of living and relating, a way of engaging and being actively engaged, a way of being humble and prophetic. We are called to be 'living signs of the Father's tenderness' for all, especially to those on the frontiers and margins. 'For our time and place' points to the changing context of Australian society and culture, of what it is to be Church today, and the consequent need to revisit missionary priorities and approaches. AMSA Conference, Sydney, August 2009

This address could have been entitled, '*Footsteps: 10 years on*'¹. Has the text had a lasting impact? Rather than look backward, however, I want to propose elements of a vision that is in line with the text but may lead to new life for Australian Marists. The Introduction to *Footsteps* spoke of a 'desire to tap into our roots, there to re-discover the passion and vision for our mission for today's younger generation'. In the words of Stephen Bevan, missiologist,

Do you want to dance? Do you want to join in the great Conga line that has moved through the world since the beginning of time and which is also the heartbeat of God's deepest self?²

Let me begin with some stories of Marist people who have 'danced'.

BRAZIL

Picture the end of the city rail line in São Paulo, the largest city in Brazil. Being the end of the line, it is where the poor live in very humble dwellings and from where they commute each day to find work. Many family units are those of single mothers, so balancing work and children is a real struggle.

©Shaun Usher



The social foundation run by the Brothers and their associates in São Paulo leased the upper half of train station and converted into a crèche for hundreds of children, open from dawn till late. The Foundation operates this crèche, with medical and dental services, at negotiated costs to the families. Marcellin's picture is on the wall of each room.

WESTERN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Forty years ago, two Brothers headed to the island of Kolombangara in the Western Solomon Islands to join a Dominican priest and two Dominican Sisters in starting a centre for rural vocational training. Now, 40 years later, Vanga Point continues as a thriving centre, recognised as the model of all such centres in the south Pacific.

©CJA World Factbook 1989



Hard work, trial and error, innovation, appropriate technology, frugal living have been part of the story: but what strikes any visitor most is the personal development of each young man there. It is not so much training as formation.

Relationships are central to this: relationships between staff and students; between students from different language groups; between students from different denominations.

Leadership has now passed to Philemon, a lay man, an ex-student, with

his team of local instructors. The community of Brothers remains the hub of this 'community of mission'.

CAMBODIA

This kind of interactive mission is happening all over the globe: the story of Sala Lavalla in Cambodia is well-known in Marist circles, a project that grew out of a discernment of the Brothers of needy youth in that country. But few have heard of Yodifee, in the same country.³



©www.yodifee.org

This acronym stands for 'Youth with Disabilities Foundation for Education and Employment'. Nimul, who leads this dynamic program, learned to 'dance' as the assistant leader of Sala Lavalla; Yodifee was the natural next step.

He remains very close to the Brothers. Currently over 50 disabled youth stay in a hostel at the centre while attending high school locally; some 400 others are assisted to attend secondary and higher education. Others receive craft and small business training. They also operate three farms. All the students and most staff, also disabled, are Buddhist.

PHILIPPINES



©ccAthos11

In the south Philippines, the Champagnat Community College is the community extension unit of Notre Dame University of Marbel. It extends non-formal education to the marginalised poor and the less privileged sectors of the community, including the Mindanao Tribal groups. It has been operated by Lay Marists since its beginning.

ALGERIA

In Algeria in 1994, Br Henri Vergès and an Assumption Sister were murdered in Algiers in the study centre they operated. Now, in Algeria in 2009, six Brothers continue his mission among the Algerian people, almost all of whom are Muslim. Henri well understood that it was not our place to proselytise or catechise.

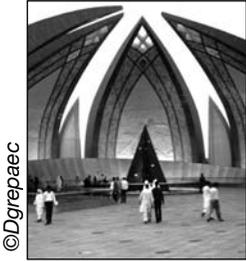
So what was the point of his being there or these six Brothers, including Br Michael Sexton from Melbourne Province? Henri's answer was:



©Mehmalik

To live in the manner of Mary, humble, hidden so as to reveal to those who are looking for It the presence of the Totally-Other. To be near, neighbours – not above but beside – at the service, humbly, of those who receive us, respecting them, serving them right up to the moment when they ask the question : 'But why are they doing this for us? Who drives them to give their life thus for the Algerian people?'

PAKISTAN

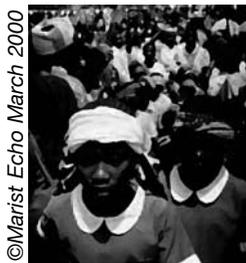


©Dgrepaec

Marists in Pakistan have a very different presence because there the Church is allowed to run schools. In fact, 'mission' schools as they are known have a very high reputation among most of the population which is 98 per cent Muslim. Our school at Sargodha is special in its service to the kids of the surrounding countryside and the urban poor, primary and secondary. It is 50 per cent Christian and 50 per cent Muslim – staff and students. It was the happiest school I ever visited.

TANZANIA

Masonga is an isolated village in the north of Tanzania on Lake Victoria.



©Marist Echo March 2000

A group of Mexican Marist Brothers developed a junior high school there. That sounds like an ordinary missionary activity. In Africa, however, to have a school where every class has a teacher every day is sadly extraordinary.

An experienced African Brother compared the circumstances in most of post-colonial Africa to the Dark Ages. Yet in Masonga I met a teenage girl who rides a bike two hours each way to school, sun or rain. She was determined to pursue some higher education.

The other special feature of this venture is that the Brothers were accompanied by a young married couple from Mexico. They formed one community, but living in adjacent houses.

The stories could go on and on. I could have spoken of the vision and commitment of the John Berne School (Sydney), DOXA schools (Melbourne), education centres for kids 'at risk' in Fiji, Samoa, Auckland, the extension of Marist Youth Care, the Marist Fathers' school for Burmese refugees on the Thai border, the new missionary community of Marist Sisters in Bereina, PNG. The dance goes on and on ...

The international sweep of Marists at work can help to inspire and give us a perspective on ourselves. The Spirit is at work, 'blowing where She wills'.

Some would say that our God is Mission, not a noun but a verb. All the love and creativity that men and women of all races and all time engage in are the fruits of the God who lives in us. The mission of the Church and of Marists as a small part of the Church is 'the very mission of God: to go into the world and be God's saving, healing, challenging presence'.

Imagine what our church would be like if Christians really understood this and took this seriously. What it means is, first, that the church is not about the church. It is about what Jesus called the Reign of God.

We are most church not when we are building up the church, but when we are outside of it: being good parents, being loving spouses, being diligent and honest in our workplace ... going the extra mile with our students if we are teachers, living lives responsible to the environment, being responsible citizens, sharing our resources with the needy, standing up for social justice, consciously using inclusive language, treating immigrants fairly, trying to understand people of other faiths, etc.⁴

This is the first meaning of our being missionary in our place and time. In the language used earlier, we join the dance. Or in the language of *Water from the Rock*, we become 'living signs of the Father's tenderness' for all, especially to those on the frontiers and margins.

EVANGELISING THROUGH EDUCATION

A second meaning of being ‘missionary’ is that we invite others to join the dance. In the *Footsteps* document we re-assert our conviction that educational settings provide a privileged context for working with young people in all aspects of their lives. Is it possible these days to really evangelise – or are we kidding ourselves, wasting our time?

There is no doubt that in Western countries especially a very large proportion of children and their families are ‘unchurched’. But the anti-institutional rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s has been shown to be hollow. The testimony from all over is that schools of a strong faith tradition are having a religious and social impact on students, independent of their family and in spite of the secularised and pluralistic environment.

It is commonplace today to speak of a resurgence of an interest in spirituality.

In the two-thirds of the world that are not Western, the challenges related to evangelisation are equally complex: extreme poverty, employment frustration, migration to urban centres, chronic violence, corrupt leaders, social injustice, poor medical services, AIDS, dread of the power of evil, cultural nationalism and so on.

Proclamation of the Gospel in such contexts is not enough; although the raging success of Pentecostal groups indicates that the Word of God remains powerful in its own right when people are desperate and downtrodden. But missionary presence is more than proclamation: we become engaged in the people’s lives and struggles.

The underlying Christian anthropology that we adopted in *Footsteps* in such a religiously and culturally diverse context is that of the four key relationships of every human person: to self; to others; to the world and nature; to God.

The theology of mission that relates to this is a theology of the Spirit, constructed around the activities of Presence, Proclamation, Pastoral life and Propagation.

From this basic theoretical position, we tried to elaborate what faith-based educational institutions and programs do or try to do, particularly the ‘Presence / Proclamation’ moments in the above list. Other ministers in the Church such as priests envisage their apostolic mission differently and devote their energies to other programs and initiatives, particularly the ‘Proclamation / Pastoral life’ moments. As St Paul reminds us, there is

only one Spirit – and so we are talking here of complementary activities with the one ultimate aim of sharing and nurturing faith.

In this regard, Marcellin left us two foundational statements: as a missionary of his day, his purpose was ‘to make Jesus Christ known and loved’. As an educator, he aimed to lead young people to the experience of personal faith and of their vocation ‘as good Christians and virtuous citizens’.(#69)

In this last sentence, you can see how at the dawn of this new century we have spoken in fresh terms of ‘the experience of personal faith’ as a key phrase guiding choices to be made. Marcellin wanted us to touch the hearts of the children. Our ‘definition’ of mission is contained in the following *Footsteps* articles:

70. As his followers, we assume this same mission, firstly, by helping young people, whatever their faith tradition and wherever they are in their spiritual search, to grow to become people of hope and personal integrity, with a deep sense of social responsibility to transform the world around them. This work of promoting human growth is integral to the process of evangelisation. In promoting Gospel values, all Marist educators contribute to the mission of every Marist project to build God’s Reign on earth.

71. But we go further. Inspired by the words of Marcellin, ‘I cannot see a child without wanting to teach him catechism, to make him realise how much Jesus Christ has loved him’, we present Jesus to the young as a real person they can come to know, love and follow.

For us educators, both are moments of evangelisation. You can see, as well, how we have tried to include all the educators and all the young people we are working with in our definition. This is a major challenge today where so many staff of our educational institutions are not practising Catholics or, in some countries, non-Christian – the children as well. Indeed, in Asia where I have given workshops on the document, I did not use the term ‘evangelisation’ but spoke of ‘spiritual and moral growth’. How to give a common sense of mission to everybody, not just the few who are fully committed?

35. Inspired by the one Spirit of God, Christians and those of other Faiths, we are united around a common set of life-giving values that are fundamental to our vision and practice of education: respect for the dignity of each human person, honesty, justice, solidarity, peace and a sense of the Transcendent. Together, we give the best of ourselves to provide the young people in our care with the means of achieving their full human potential in life, including their growing in faith and their responsible participation in society.

A point to ponder: a real religious pluralism exists among us educators, especially in some parts of the world, just as it does among the young people we serve. It is up to each of us, then, to see in what way we can identify with the 'we' of the text.

In Chapter 4 we present the core of the mission of each Marist educating community in terms of 'evangelising through education'. We recognise that our personal contribution to the full realisation of this mission will differ. Each of us, however, inasmuch as we share certain fundamental values, helps young people to grow as human persons and, by that very fact, participates in building up the reign of God in our human communities.

It is the work of the Spirit. People (of all faiths and none) 'dance' to the tune of the Spirit. Quite consciously, then, we have tried to motivate all staff to develop a strong sense of identification with the values and ideals of the school or project. Indeed, we want to develop a strong sense of vocation. Further, we want them to feel Marist in being co-responsible with the Brothers for the charism of Marcellin. Our Marist projects are inclusive of all.

SPIRITUAL MODELS AND GUIDES

Integral to our work as educators is leading the young to a personal experience of faith. A Principal was telling me recently of how a girl approached him after his maths class to talk about a friend who had committed suicide. Such an approach can and does happen in our schools. We are in an extraordinary position of trust where students will share their deepest feelings. Of course, part of the response we make is simply listening and empathising, maybe leading them gently to see hope when

all is dark; to be courageous enough to take their concerns to a counsellor where necessary.

But the life questions that come up spontaneously or even in planned lessons or assemblies are not just psychological, but often have moral or spiritual dimensions. They confront us as much as they confront the students. We desperately hunt in our heads and hearts for the 'right' answers to give. For example, in the face of suffering, evil, injustice, the question is often posed: Why did God allow this? We empathise with their searching but are conscious of our own shortcomings.

Such moments are the ordinary instances of what missiologists call prophetic dialogue.⁵

In Australia's multi-cultural and multi-faith society, education in mission and mission in education have extraordinary power to further the kind of dialogue which can enhance both societal and ecclesial cohesion at several levels. For example, in undertaking with parents the education of a child, a school has a privileged role in the conversations which inevitably take place in the course of that project. Another name for conversation between equal partners is dialogue. In such dialogue an understanding of the Christian view of the world and a responsiveness to God and God's Kingdom project, can be fostered. Young people have a chance to see their Christian faith as contributing to the great human projects of our time, as well as anchoring them in a loving relationship with God.⁶

We start from their existential questions. We also ask 'Can you see God in this? Can you feel God in this?'

Two further observations can be made here. First, we are all Wounded Healers⁷, to use the image of Henri Nouwen, the great contemporary spiritual writer. The motivation for anyone to get involved in a healing profession is not that we 'know' or have 'succeeded' but just the opposite. The conversations we will have, the feelings aroused, will be healing for us as well. The wisdom we share is just as challenging to us! Fundamentally we engage out of love, not as the 'ones with the answers'.

Second, school leaders these days are 'pathfinders', to use the image of Therese D'Orsa, an Australian missiologist. When students and families

are not grounded in the scriptures and faith language of the Church, when media values are so ambiguous, when mainstream cultural thinking throws so much weight on the individual person designing herself or himself, then the leader of a Christian school helps the young to find life-giving paths amidst the thorny thickets of life. Sometimes this means taking a public stand on some issue. All the prophets from Moses to Jeremiah spoke to God of God's having picked the wrong person! It is no different with us as we prepare the next school bulletin or assembly address. Where else will these young people and their families hear the Word of God?

REVISING MISSIONARY APPROACHES AND PRIORITIES

Go forward, Brothers and Lay persons together, in a clear and decisive way, drawing closer to the poorest and most marginalised of young people, through new ways of education, evangelisation and solidarity.

This was the call of the last General Chapter of the Brothers in 2001. It is more or less the same as what issued from the Chapter of 1993. Chapters tell us where the goalposts are in being faithful to the charism of St Marcellin.

It is not my intention here to do a public review of how our Provinces line up against this call. Some of you will hear echoes in it of the concern raised in the NSW Bishops' statement *Catholic Schools at the Crossroads*: that the materially poor of our society are not in Catholic schools.

In our Australian context, this means that the poor are not being served by Catholic schools – the one agency that is, for most young Australians, their only contact with the Church. This is despite the welcome offered by most CEOs to families who are battling financially to negotiate the little they can afford. A question for us: how pro-active can we be in this matter, granted that applications always exceed places available? Can we find one space for one modern-day Montagne?

At the Auckland meeting of Province leaders of Oceania with our leaders from Rome in 2008, a commitment was made to develop new structures and processes, both local and regional, to express co-responsibility of Brothers and Lay Marists. The Sydney Province Mission Assembly took this a step further, as has the Melbourne Province through

its Ministry Council. This will change the way we do things as the mission of the Province is seen through new and younger eyes, working together co-responsibly to imagine and create a new future.

Integral to this active inclusion and empowerment of lay Marists to shape and lead Marist ministries is their ongoing formation. Our Provinces have committed themselves to this. A recent international experience of joint formation after the Mendes Mission Assembly concluded:

* The Marist vocation is a gift God offers to persons committed to various forms of life who wish to live the Gospel according to the Marist charism. There is no Marist vocation without mission, spirituality and sense of community.

* The joint formation process seeks to express that we, Laity and Brothers, feel we need each other in order to develop our common Marist identity as well as our specific identities.

* This implies a process: itinerary, pace, steps, systematisation... more than convenient actions or programs without vision.

* Community process, since the Marist identity which we desire to recreate is to be lived in community, whether by Brothers, Lay people, or Brothers and Lay people. But real community processes can only come from personal processes. It starts with the person and is completed in the community.

* It is, mainly, living experience, and must be prepared by sharing life, faith, mission, charism, community experiences, discernment in common ...

* The aim of all joint formation is to promote the vitality of the Marist charism: mission, spirituality, shared life...

* Every Marist community will have to be formative and feel called to share this same formation with other people.

* We have, then, to become aware of the necessity of a new type of Marist formation which, without denying the need for the specific formation of Brothers and Lay people, takes account of the richness of the complementarity of joint formation. Thus, as mission and spirituality ought to be shared, so also with Marist formation.

* The lived experiences allow us to affirm that joint formation does not lead to a confusion of the specific identities, but to their enrichment.

The Spirit appears to be telling us that we do not find the true identities of Marist religious life and Marist lay life separately: they have need of each other. The signs of the Spirit common to all these meetings have been joy, deep prayer, and commitment to the Marist vocation. They are the guarantee of the whole way of revitalizing the charism.

By any measure, the school Principal is the key person in determining the spirit of a school at any point in time. Supporting them as spiritual leaders, assisting in their vocational growth, attending to their formation as mission leaders are all crucial for the future of Catholic education in our country. Education is bigger than teaching. It opens onto formation.

At Province level, we have to continually look at where Brothers' communities and individual Brothers will be placed. In previous generations the Brothers assisted CEOs in the foundation of new schools in developing or country areas. As a matter of fact, we do not get invited these days. One of the signs of vitality of a co-responsible partnership between Brothers and Lay Marists will be when we Marists together are able to discern and initiate some new educational service for the poor and marginalised. The network of schools to be joined under Marist Schools Australia is meant to grow.

In the final Chapter of *Footsteps* one of the emerging priorities named is that Marists 'link internationally'. That is happening for us through school immersions and through a few staff members who spend sabbaticals or holiday times with Marist communities in the Asia Pacific region. The numbers involved in these will grow. It is probably timely for such an option for Brothers and lay people to be more advertised. In recent years we have welcomed Brothers from Melanesia into our communities and schools for brief periods. It is probably timely for us to extend this invitation to Brothers from other countries from the Asia Pacific region. Both groups of Brothers, here and our guests, and schools would have a lot to gain from such experiences.

The last Sydney Provincial Chapter committed us to assist 'today's

young people to engage productively in the life of the Church'. There is no doubt in my mind that our schools today are forming young people who will contribute to the well-being and harmony of our society in years to come – just as Sir William Deane and Dr Chris O'Brien and so many others have done.

What is in question is whether in us and in our school staff do students meet people who will cause them at some point in their lives to ask, 'But why are they doing this for us? Who drives them to give their life thus?' How can we best be the bridge-builders between young people and the institutional Church? How can we help the institutional Church in its ministry to young people? How do we help young people to connect with their faith tradition?

I suggest that one way is to give example as leaders of a loving, praying, forgiving, hopeful community; another way is through young people meeting their peers of other faiths and then processing 'difference'. Where the course offered to senior students is Religious Studies, is this complemented by other religious activities of prayer and worship that engage the students at the level of faith?

CONCLUSION

I spent an important two years of my life in India. An Indian archbishop has described the country as 'intoxicated by religion'.⁸ I often felt that way when I was there. In fact, I would go further and describe the experience as like being in a fermentation vat!

My senses were in a permanent state of riot, mostly religion-related: religious songs blasting from loudspeakers from 4.30 am; the drummers and pipers for every occasion; the garish colours of festival saris and garlands, the flash of sparkling jewels; the chalk prayer designs in front of every home each morning; erotic temple figures; the spices that add savour and tease; the land where a touch can defile as well as bless; the ever-present, often pungent incense in homes, offices and temples. It was all a long way from Australia.

And yet, strange and disturbing as it could be, it became home. I made friends. I was touched by the spirit of welcome. I was moved by the plight of the poor and ignorant. I raged at the injustice and powerlessness experienced by so many.

With my Brothers, I took a small step and, making an act of faith in

Providence, launched a new project for the care and support of children affected by AIDS, called Operation Rainbow. We had no guaranteed funds. There were no Brothers trained in social work. But we went ahead. We identified two wonderful people to take on the project. It made a difference in the lives of many. It still does, six years on.

My experience is but one case of continuing to dream and act as a Marist in Marcellin's footsteps: innovating, being actively present in young peoples' lives and forming others for mission.

In every corner of the world, there are thousands of young people whose lives are being touched by us. As educators we know the joys and pains of working with them. We know the good we can do. We believe in their future.

With my fellow Marists everywhere, I recall Marcellin's prayer to Mary,

If you do not come to our aid, we shall surely fail. But it is not our work that fails but yours, for you have done everything for us.⁹

Are you dancing yet? ■

ENDNOTES

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The Loretos: from Mary Ward to the 1980s

CONSTANCE LEWIS

Written and researched in the mid 1980s and published as part of her Ph.D. from the University of Melbourne in 1988, Constance Lewis' article, reproduced here as it appeared in that time, now provides an invaluable record of the perspectives and goals of that era.

Mary Ward attempted to establish a religious Order of women which was to operate without enclosure, and was to be governed not by the local bishops but by a Mother-General directly responsible to Rome. The concept of non-enclosure was contrary to the decrees of the Council of Trent which advocated strict seclusion for

all female Religious. While for many years the Church possessed abbesses with as great a degree of authority as abbots², such a phenomenon would have been unthinkable during the counter-Reformation period when nuns were, in almost every case, in spiritual matters subject to the monks of the same Order, and in external matters, directly under the local bishop. Mary Ward began her life's work in the post-Reformation era of English Catholicism³ where male supremacy dominated and the powers of women generally were depreciated, ignored or denied.

Seen in historical perspective, Mary Ward becomes a figure of immense significance – a pioneer with all the loneliness that the word implies, the leader in that first brilliant and apparently unsuccessful engagement which so often initiates a triumphant campaign. Against her were arrayed not only bishops and secular clergy and Jesuits but all the face of custom, precedent and male supremacy.⁴

Mary Ward was the eldest child of Marmaduke and Ursula Ward. She was born on January 23rd, 1585 near Ripon in Yorkshire, and was brought up in an English Catholic family of the old squirearchy during the period of Post-Reformation religious persecution of Catholicism – persecution which lasted so long and demanded such great sacrifices that it produced a deepening of the religious life in families that remained loyal to the Faith. Secret masses and priests' hiding-holes were the fabric of daily life for Catholic families such as that of Marmaduke and Ursula Ward.

In spite of the religious struggle this was a time of rapid political and economic advance in England. Englishwomen, and not merely in the wealthy aristocratic families, enjoyed a good intellectual education and much greater freedom and independence than was the lot of women in most Catholic countries. Mary Ward belonged to this new breed of liberated womanhood which arose from the cultural and intellectual advances of the age. She had developed a keen appreciation of the beauties of nature. Music and art appealed to her and she enjoyed society and engaging in conversation with educated men. She had received a deep and comprehensive education. She knew several languages, including Latin, and had a remarkable knowledge of medicine. She behaved everywhere with perfect assurance whether in the midst of looting soldiers or at the brilliant courts in this age of absolute princes.⁵

When Mary was about 15 years old she determined to become a nun, having rejected several eligible suitors whom her father and her Jesuit confessor urged her to marry for the sake of the Catholic cause. During the next few years, although there was no support for her plan, the whole of the Ward household was aware that Mary intended going abroad to enter a convent, all English religious houses having been closed in the wake of the Reformation. It was not until Mary was 21 that a favourable moment presented itself for her to cross to the small Pas de Calais town of St. Omer. St. Omer boasted a magnificent Gothic cathedral, a fine Benedictine abbey and a large flourishing boarding school and seminary conducted by the English Jesuits. 'On arriving at St. Omer, Mary went straight to the Jesuits where, by a strange dispensation of Providence, she was misdirected to be an out-Sister, extern of the Poor Clares,⁶ a vocation utterly unsuited to her character, education and religious desires.⁷ Although her Jesuit confessor urged her to persevere with this vocation, within a year of her arrival in St. Omer, Mary left the convent of the Poor Clares and was once again an English lady of means in a foreign country. She returned to England in 1609, determined either to find some special work within the Church, or to return to St. Omer to become a Carmelite⁸ nun. At this time, she began to gather around her others who were moved by similar desires:

In her small house in London, Mary received not only companions willing to share her life, but daughters of English Catholic families and local girls for the purpose of education. As Mary devoted herself to charitable works, she saw opening before her horizons hitherto undreamt of by women, though even earlier she had resented the penuriousness of those who thought that women did not know how to do good except for themselves.⁹

Mary gradually conceived the idea of founding a new religious Order which would cater for the special needs of her time. To accommodate the ideas that Mary Ward and her increasing number of companions were developing, a quite revolutionary type of religious life was required. It would be necessary to establish an Order that was more supple, inconspicuous, in closer contact with the people and better adapted to the needs and developments of modern times. By 1611, Mary had clarified her ideas to the point where she realised that the Rules of existing orders of Religious women would not be suitable for the tasks she had in mind.

Church law at that time insisted on new Orders adopting one of the already approved Rules. The Rules, however, were, as far as women were concerned, only for enclosed Religious. Mary Ward's ideal of secret apostolic work among the persecuted Catholics of England required freedom to come and go, to assume different modes of dress, to live among heretics if need be. Only one Rule met their needs – that of St. Ignatius. However, the Constitutions of St. Ignatius expressly laid down that the Jesuit fathers were not to accept the care of an Order of Women.¹⁰

Mary Ward decided it was her task to bring into existence a counterpart of the Order of St. Ignatius. As far as was possible for women, but because of Jesuit constitutional restrictions, her Order would necessarily be independent of the male branch of the Order.

The Jesuit Rule was adapted to unhampered external activity; it had not only removed all hindrances such as the habit, the office in choir and the independence of each house of the Order, but provided a framework for apostolic activity of a world-wide scale.... It united personal initiative with firm leadership, easy mobility with strict centralisation, modern education with deep faith, and unremitting work with a life of prayer and intimate converse with God.¹¹

In embracing an adaptation of the Jesuit Rule for her Order, Mary Ward incurred in the eyes of the secular clergy, all the odium emanating from the disharmony between them and the Jesuits in the English church of the time.¹² Furthermore, although some of her supporters and friends were Jesuits, the General of the Society was most of the time in opposition and the greater part of the Order felt that Mary complicated their already difficult position and were eager to disclaim her, some even to persecute her.¹³ Thus, while Mary Ward's choice of the Rule of Ignatius seemed an ideal vehicle for her apostolic mission, it alienated her from many who would have been able to assist her. Nevertheless, she could see no alternative to her revolutionary plan since, to attempt to operate under an enclosure in post-Reformation England would have been impossible, for, once recognised as nuns, flight would have been the only course open to the members, for the alternative was imprisonment or even death. Mary Ward desired through her Order to influence women

generally to realise in their lives the full potential of the ideals of their Christian faith.

Though she was zealous for the Church, Mary kept herself free from fanaticism. This combined with her dignified manner, gained her the admiration and friendship of fair-minded Protestants. Both in her dealings with them and in her educational work, she followed the principal of not attacking the belief of others but of offering something better.¹⁴

When James Stuart, son of the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, ascended the English throne, there was widespread anticipation of relief for English Catholicism, but the disappointment was to be acute and the disillusionment bitter. In 1617, at a time when the government of James I was distrusted by many and seen to be undermining further the Catholic cause, and when the Jesuits and secular clergy were acrimoniously engaged in tragic confrontation over the restoration of the English hierarchy, Mary Ward presented Pope Paul V a Memorial of the spirit and object of her projected Order. Although an inconceivable thing for a woman, given the climate of Catholicism at the time, Mary was fearlessly to face the Congregation of Cardinals on numerous occasions in defence of her work. The Memorial stated the ideals of the would-be foundress:

1. To follow a mixed kind of life, such as Christ and his Blessed Mother lived upon earth. That is (1) to work at the perfection of our own souls, and (2) to devote ourselves to the salvation of our neighbours by means of the education of girls, 'or by any other means that are congruous to the times, or in which it is judged that we can by our labours promote the greater glory of God, and in any place further the propagation of our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church.'
2. To be subject to the Chief Pontiff alone, and that 'no religious Order whatsoever, or any person whatsoever ... should ... exercise over us authority, power or jurisdiction.
3. To exercise our duties without enclosure.
4. To be bound to no Religious habit, but be allowed to conform our style of dress to that in general use in the countries in which we live.

5. To be allowed the power of dismissing persons even after profession, who are found unfitted for religious life, or 'who are in any way troublesome or seditious'.¹⁵

Initially, Mary was encouraged by the response of Pope Paul V to her proposal. The Pope commended her Order and desired the bishops to help its members, concluding, 'if, as we trust, it shall so come to pass, then the Apostolic See will also deliberate about confirming their Institute'.¹⁶ Without delay Mary founded a college for girls at Liège and two years later in 1618, established there a novitiate for the training of members of her Order. In quick succession foundations were made at St Omer, at Cologne and at Trèves. Mary aimed to extend the work of her Order to the children of the poor no less than to the daughters of wealthy families entrusted to her care.

At St Omer, besides English boarders and girls sent from all the centres in Belgium where English exiles were living with their families, a free day school for girls was a new concept.¹⁷ Throughout Europe at this time, the education of girls at convents in general was restricted to the daughters of those parents who were able and willing to send their children to live within the convents during their school years. The work of Mary Ward and her companions flourished and their way of life under the rule of St. Ignatius seemed eminently suited to their apostolic mission. However, while a great number of female religious Orders were in time to operate under adaptations of the rule of St. Ignatius 'in the 17th century the idea was new and repugnant to the anti-feminist world'.¹⁸ Reaction to Mary's work at times became both petty and prejudiced. Thus,

I. In St Omer, secular priests living in exile from England complained to the ecclesiastic authorities that the English ladies influenced and prevailed on girls to enter their novitiate, even though the girls wanted to go to the Benedictines and others.¹⁹

II. One of the Jesuit priests at St Omer when told that the Vatican thought well of Mary's plan made the cynical observation: 'It is true whilst they are in their first fervour; but fervour will decay, and when all is done they are but women'.²⁰

When Mary Ward heard of the Jesuit's remark, she delivered to her companions a most dignified and inspiring rebuttal, the logic of which

contrasted sharply with the prejudice of her assailants' observation. On the charge regarding fervour she insisted:

Fervour is a will to do good, that is, a preventing grace of God, and a gift given by God which we do not merit. It is true fervour doth many times grow cold; But what is the cause? Is it because we are women? No; but because we are imperfect women. There is no such difference between men and women. ... Fervour is not placed in feelings, but in a will to do well, which women may have as well as men. Women may do great things, as we have seen by example of many saints who have done great things. And I hope in God it will be seen that women in time to come will do much. ... This is truth, this is verity; to do what we have to do well. Many think it nothing to do ordinary things. But for us it is. To do ordinary things well, to keep our constitutions ... this is for us, and this by God's grace will maintain fervour.²¹

Mary Ward soon realised that Rome was less willing to confirm her Institute than the Pope had implied at her initial reception. Thus, in 1621, she once again set out from England to make the 1000-mile journey to Rome with the purpose of establishing her Order on a sound canonical basis. In Rome, she again faced the Congregation of Cardinals in order to defend her work, but her cause was doomed to failure:

Many Jesuits, including the General, Father Mutius Vitelleschi, who were personally acquainted with Mary Ward, revered her and her work. Nevertheless, the General was forced by the Jesuit Constitutions to take a severe line against any congregation of women who might possibly be thought to be dependent on the Society of Jesus.²²

Mary also faced overwhelming opposition from the English secular clergy. She was a victim caught in the conflicting forces of Catholicism in its tragic post-Reformation plight in England. When confirmation of her Order was withheld Mary requested that she and her companions be granted permission to remain in Rome and open schools which could be assessed on their own merits, but trials and frustrations continued to plague them.

Mary and her companions were constantly spied on by those who opposed her cause. By early 1625, she realised that not only was

the confirmation of her Institute to be refused, but her schools were to be closed. So great was the dread which she inspired in the agents of the English secular clergy²³ that they set a strong movement on foot to urge the Pope to expel her and hers from Rome.²⁴

In the light of the strong objections to her cause presented to the Pope and Cardinals, her safest course seemed to be the closure of her schools, at least in Rome where conflicting opinions were exasperating even the most patient churchman. Nevertheless, Mary Ward continued the expansion of her work, making new foundations in Hungary, Bavaria and Germany.

In Vienna, the Emperor Ferdinand II gave her a beautiful house and she soon had between four and five hundred pupils. The Elector Maximilian gave her the magnificent Paradeiserhaus where she opened her Bavarian school. In 1627, the Archbishop of Hungary endowed her with a property for her first Hungarian school.²⁵

Throughout this period, although Vatican support was withdrawn, Mary and her companions made many influential friends through the zeal of their commitment to the education of Catholic girls. The quality of their work could not be challenged; the essence of the grievance behind all accusations levelled against them came down to the fact that they wished to be recognised as Religious women while working freely in the world without the restrictions of enclosure.

The idea that women should co-operate with the priests in religious teaching and the apostolate was considered as arrogance, or was at least held to involve great risks. Such views had also affected the work of reform after the Council of Trent. What abuses existed in women's convents were probably too exclusively attributed to the alleged intellectual and moral inferiority of women, and their remedy was sought in greater external restraint.²⁶

Given the prevailing climate, Mary Ward's idea of establishing an Order that rejected enclosure, demanded self-government, wanted direct responsibility to Rome, and demanded freedom for its educational operations and a share in pastoral work seemed outrageous, and was as such conveniently misrepresented. Despite their opponents' claims,

The English Ladies did not desire to teach with priestly authority or to direct consciences, but they wanted to instruct people in the faith and in the spiritual life; they hoped to educate women to greater independence and give them an intellectual and religious formation and thus extend their interests beyond their homes, generally considered their only vocation in those days.²⁷

The male Church authorities would not sanction the type of Order which Mary proposed. Her accusers constantly reproached her for wanting to 'break down the barriers of her sex, to set aside all the decrees of the Church regarding the Congregations of Women, and that she demanded for herself and her foundation a freedom which given the feminine nature must necessarily lead to licence and unbelief'²⁸.

Mary fought for her ideal with courage and perseverance, and despite persistent attacks from her powerful opponents, succeeded in fending off the final destruction of her work for some years. But by 1629, the Vatican had decided to suppress the Order and issued orders for the dissolution of its houses in Flanders and Germany. Mary again travelled to Rome to plead her cause, but to no avail. The end was close.

On 7th February 1630, Mary was arrested by order of the Holy Office "as a heretic and schismatic"... Although Pope Urban VIII intervened to secure Mary's release from prison, her Institute was abolished and forbidden by the Papal Bull of Suppression *Pastoralis Romane Pontifices* of 13th January 1631.²⁹

Continuation of the Order in its existing form was impossible. Mary accepted the destruction of her life's work with great fortitude and dignity, rising above the harsh accusations levelled against her. 'Such was her personal standing that even though imprisoned and condemned, Mary was yet allowed to appear before the Pope and compelled his respect.'³⁰ Urban VIII permitted Mary and her immediate companions to live under his protection in Rome. He permitted her to take in as boarders daughters of English emigrants who crowded into Rome before the civil war broke over them. But spies of the Inquisition were never far away.

Agents of the Inquisition were obsessed with the idea that the overthrow of papal authority effective in England may be

attempted elsewhere ... In her final years in Italy, Inquisitorial agents intercepted Mary's mail and reported to the Pope that all kinds of peculiar English visitors were constantly with her.³¹

Mary Ward returned to England in 1639, at a time of intense apprehension before the outbreak of civil war in 1642. Undeterred by the situation that was threatening, Mary soon had in her care several daughters of wealthy Catholics as well as some poor children, and was soon training young nuns to be teachers.

Mary herself, an expert Latin scholar and literate in several languages, was determined that the members of her Institute should be well educated. Mary Ward's educational programme was influenced by familiarity with the Jesuit Ratio ... When women's education consisted chiefly of needlework and musical accomplishments, Mary could not find any reason why knowledge should be damageable, but many that it might be advantageous. In her schools, besides the womanly accomplishments, Latin, languages and a sound general education were features of her programme.³²

With the advent of civil war in England, Mary Ward and her companions left London for York, which was at the time held by the Royalists. Mary was to survive the siege of York, but by the time the war was over, she was dead. She died in 1645 at the age of 60, her life's work seemingly shattered. She is arguably the most remarkable Englishwoman of the 17th century.

Among her friends she numbered Cardinals and Princes as well as mystics and famous Jesuits; at one time she was imprisoned, at innumerable others the welcome guest of Royalty; like some great missionary she traversed thousands of miles, mostly on foot, through a Europe infested with warring armies.³³

While there seemed to be some recognition of the value of Mary's revolutionary idea of a religious Order for women, there was also intense opposition generated, mainly because she took over the Constitutions of the Jesuits. The malice of her opponents represented Mary's fight for her work as an insolent revolt against the Church. Mary Ward's ideas were far in advance of her time. She had a greater concept of Catholic women and the part they could take in the work of the Church than did her

contemporaries, and she knew that women would have to be educated and formed for this task. Mary Ward set about providing the means to achieve this, but it remained for a later era to prove her right. In the contemporary context of the education of Catholic women, Mary Ward's aims have been realised by many religious Orders³⁴ and by a multitude of apostolic Catholic women, with incalculable advantage to the Church.

Mary Ward fought the battle for all unenclosed women Religious of future ages, for nurses and missionaries, teachers and social workers. She initiated the direction for a new epoch of women zealous for the mission of the Church. Although persecuted by ecclesiastical authority in her own time, the Church today holds Mary Ward and her work in high esteem. Pius XII conferred on her the honour of naming her, along with St. Vincent de Paul, as an outstanding pioneer of the lay apostolate among women.

2. THE INSTITUTE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY: FROM RATHFARNHAM TO BALLARAT.

After the execution of Charles I in 1649, Cromwell's parliamentary **A**rdule rendered the plight of English Catholics as tragic as at any period in history. Nevertheless, Mary Ward's followers were given a house within the walled city of York and in time, with their constitution changed to bring the Order in line with the requirements of the Council of Trent, they were to survive, ever striving to uphold the ideal of the foundress, as far as was possible within the imposed restraints.

In 1686, at the house in York was founded the Bar Convent which was to become a renowned school for girls. The Bar Convent continues its good work holding to its traditions and preserving the spirit of Mary Ward, even while it holds its place among the foremost convent schools in England, where it was the first to be founded after the Reformation.³⁵

The reconstituted York community became known as the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It flourished, not only in England, but in Germany and Italy as well. In the 19th century the Institute undertook vast missionary expansion, and the followers of Mary Ward throughout the world strove to attain her ideals of Christian womanhood.

By 1877, when the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary was approved by Pius IX, there were some 150 foundations and some



Mother Teresa Ball

5,000 members in England, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, India, Canada, America, Australia and Mauritius.³⁶

The Irish branch of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded by Teresa Ball, a gifted lady whom Archbishop Murray encouraged to enter the Bar Convent so that the Institute might open a convent in Dublin.

In 1821, Teresa Ball made the Dublin foundation, calling the house Loreto after the Holy House in Italy beloved by Mary Ward.³⁷ The house in Rathfarnham, Dublin, came to be called Loreto Abbey, and its numerous affiliations have kept the name Loreto.³⁸

The members of the Institute in Ireland came to be called the Loreto nuns. Within 12 months of the establishment of the See of Ballarat in 1874, the new bishop, Michael O'Connor, was to introduce into Australia a branch of the Loreto foundation from Rathfarnham. Bishop O'Connor knew that education was one of the chief issues he would have to deal with in assuming the responsibility for the Ballarat diocese so soon after the coming of the Victorian Education Act of 1872. As parish priest of Rathfarnham before coming to Australia, he had for a long time been familiar with the educational work of the Loreto nuns. Although foundations from Rathfarnham had been established in Canada, Mauritius,



*Mary's Mount Ballarat
Chapel interior*

Gibraltar and India, by the time the bishop's request was made, the missionary spirit of the Rathfarnham community was far from exhausted and 10 volunteers were selected for the Australian enterprise.

Mother Gonzaga Barry, who was to become an influential figure in Victorian Catholic education over the next forty years, was chosen to lead the first foundation of the Loreto nuns in Australia. Gonzaga Barry had been educated at Rathfarnham where she later took up her religious vocation. During her school days, the nuns at Rathfarnham had been educated either at the Bar Abbey, York, or in French convents.³⁹ The Superior during Gonzaga Barry's time at Rathfarnham was Mother Teresa Ball.

The curriculum taught at Rathfarnham Abbey under the direction of Mother Teresa Ball included English, Arithmetic, the rudiments of Natural Sciences, History, Heraldry, Geography, French, Italian, Spanish, Painting and plain and ornamental needlework. Visiting masters provided instruction in vocal and instrumental music, dancing, reading and drawing. But the aim was to provide more than an education in the necessary accomplishments; there was emphasis on thoroughness of teaching, and on the development of character and strong Religious principles.⁴⁰

Pedagogical theories of the Loreto nuns of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary were based on the practical experience of the nuns and the Catholic tradition of the concept of education for girls. The importance

of the individuality of the child, and the emphasis on religious and moral training were common currency of convent schools from the time of Angela Merici. Teachers at the Loreto convent at Rathfarnham followed closely the idea expressed by Monseigneur Dupanloup, the French Bishop-Educator of Orleans, 'in education God is the source and ground of authority and respect; of the essential duties and rights of all'.⁴¹

As well as their boarding school, the nuns at Rathfarnham also established in 1823, a poor school in which the Lancastrian monitorial⁴² system was used. The great merit of the monitorial system lay in the fact that it was cost-efficient and reduced classroom problems.

In the place of earlier idleness, inattention and disorder the monitorial system introduced activity, emulation, order and a kind of military discipline. One teacher assisted by a number of brighter pupils who were designated as monitors, could teach from two hundred to a thousand pupils in one school. ... A common number for each monitor to look after was ten. The teacher first taught these monitors a lesson from a printed card and then each monitor took his row to a "station" about the wall and proceeded to teach the other pupils what he had just learned. At first used only for teaching reading and the Catechism, the plan was soon extended to the teaching of writing, arithmetic and spelling, and later on to instruction in higher branches. The Manuals of Instruction gave complete directions for organisation and management of monitorial schools, the details of recitation work, use of apparatus, order, position of pupils at their desk. By carefully studying and following these directions any reasonably intelligent person could soon learn to become a successful teacher in a monitorial school.⁴³

In the Poor School conducted by the Loreto nuns at Rathfarnham, the monitorial system was used extensively.

The organisation of the system as implemented at Rathfarnham differed in one vital aspect from that of the typical Lancastrian school. The nuns placed great emphasis on religious instruction, which was taught by the nuns themselves.⁴⁴

Mother Gonzaga Barry and the pioneer group of Loreto nuns from Rathfarnham departed from Plymouth on 24 May, 1872 and arrived in Melbourne on 19 July, proceeding the next day to Ballarat, escorted by



Mary's Mount school, Ballarat c.1905

the Bishop and Dean Moore, who vacated their Presbytery to provide a home for the nuns for two months until they moved to their convent at Mary's Mount. The first five boarders soon arrived for the opening of their school on 8 September. Reflecting the opulence of the golden age of Ballarat, Mary's Mount, previously the statement mansion of Mr. Wynne, Member of Parliament for Ballarat, was opened in an attractive, secluded part of Sturt Street facing Lake Wendouree. The original mansion soon became too small as large numbers of boarders flocked to Mary's Mount in an era when the new wealthy class desired a 'superior' education for their daughters. The problem of overcrowding was increased by the many day pupils who sought enrolment. In response to this situation, Mother Gonzaga lost no time in purchasing a house in Dawson Street, Ballarat, which opened as a day school in November, 1875. The Loreto nuns also took over the Parochial Girls' School. In order to teach at the parish school conducted in the Cathedral precincts, and their day school at Dawson Street, the nuns travelled out from their convent enclosure.

At Mary's Mount, the Convent boarding school was organised in three tiers – junior, senior, first School, reflecting Jesuit school structure. The junior school catered for the under 12s, the senior school for 12-to-16 year olds, subdividing them into five classes and the first school catered for the young ladies.

In the First school the girls were free to spend their time perfecting themselves in various accomplishments. Later, when girls who had been longer at school came up from the better organised classes below, this Young Ladies division became a culture class. Grammar was replaced by Logic, and a study of the world's his-

tory and representative authors pursued with the purpose of awakening philosophic enquiry and clarifying literary ideas.⁴⁵

As an impetus to studies, the Loreto nuns adopted a practice already used in some boys' schools by the 1890s. Mother Gonzaga annually secured the services of outside examiners from the University of Melbourne. With the introduction of the public examination system and the admission of women to university, the Loreto nuns formed a matriculation class for girls whose parents desired university examinations for their daughters.

However, the nuns were by no means enthusiastic that this class should be large. Those raised in the more leisurely traditions of former times, had real doubts as to the value of this innovation:

It is not so much the public examinations that are deplored but what has to be jettisoned in order to make room for them. The Loreto Sisters aimed to educate the pupils, by forming their tastes strengthening their judgement, and encouraging the habit of serious reading. All this would be impossible, if the children were obliged to keep exclusively, or at too early an age, to the textbooks prescribed for public examinations. If a girl had no other education than that she had obtained by the mere study of textbooks, she was not likely to have acquired a taste for intellectual pursuits.⁴⁶

In spite of such fears, the Loreto nuns did not regard public examinations as entirely incompatible with their work and maintained a creditable roll of matriculation students.⁴⁷ For a number of years, the First School programme for young ladies continued parallel to matriculation classes with some intermingling of activities between the two groups of students. A distinctive feature of the young ladies' program was the *soirée*, an activity cultivated in a number of convent schools.

Soirées at Mary's Mount were informal occasions held frequently, and often they were intimate occasions, and essentially educational activities.⁴⁸

There was concern for the values of grace and reserve in the execution of the *soirée* program. The organisation of the school to cater for the skills and accomplishments featured on such occasions, required a flexible timetable of work and activity in which there was no sharp distinction

between the work of the classroom and the general life of the school. During these early years, Mary's Mount became an important Catholic educational centre. Recruits came from Ireland; a number of Australian girls entered the Order; pupils came not only from Melbourne and the country districts of Victoria, but from other states. Primarily, students were prepared for their future roles as makers of Christian homes through a program where religion held pride of place and the liberal arts were encouraged.

They studied languages, history, geography, mathematics, science, the arts, with great interest in music and drama. There were physical culture and ambulance classes, riding archery, Sloyd room and printing press, various forms of sport including tennis and hockey; they even went on excursions. They had university extension lectures and talks from other visiting specialists. Astronomy, with a wonderful telescope and orrery⁴⁹, was a delight. For the future home-makers the domestic economy class was held in high esteem.⁵⁰

The progressive nature of Mother Gonzaga's educational philosophy can be evidenced from the fact that 'School councillors, with a voice in the policy of the school and entrusted with much responsibility, were elected'.⁵¹ A school magazine was commenced, past pupils were formed into an association, and the Loreto Free Kindergarten inaugurated as their special field of social work. To help her nuns keep up to date in methods of teaching, Mother Gonzaga obtained the services of Miss Bell,⁵² a graduate from Cambridge, who for many years was connected with the Loreto nuns. Envisaging the future demand for Catholic teachers, both Religious and lay,

Mother Gonzaga with Mother Hilda Benson, a graduate from Trinity College, Liverpool, planned a five year course of studies combining the art of teaching in theory and practice, and the preparation for matriculation examinations. Over the years about one hundred students of the course became nuns in various religious Orders. Others did splendid work in small Catholic country schools throughout the state.⁵³

Students entered the Loreto Training College either as pupil-teachers at the age of 14, or as senior entrants at the age of 17. The younger

entrants undertook a five-year course, of which the first three years were spent as pupil-teachers, and the final two years as students, when they were joined by senior entrants.

Pupil-teachers are employed for some hours every day in learning the art of teaching in the primary schools, but the greater part of the day is spent in study. The course of instruction comprises Religious Knowledge, English, Arithmetic, Euclid, Algebra, Geography, History, French, Drawing, Theory of Music, School Management, Domestic Economy, Class Singing, needlework, Callisthenics and Drill.

The Matriculation examination is taken during the final two years, but even if this examination is completed before the end of the course, the period of five years must be completed as this is deemed necessary to train efficient teachers.⁵⁴

The range of studies at the Loreto Training College was somewhat broader than those required for the Victorian Education Department's Certificate of Competency, although both used the matriculation examination as a suitable academic standard.⁵⁵

It was not, however, simply in Ballarat that the activities of the Loreto nuns were being developed by Mother Gonzaga, as we shall see below.

3. THE EXPANSION OF THE LORETO EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE IN AUSTRALIA

In 1888, at the invitation of Dean O'Driscoll, Mother Gonzaga made the first Loreto foundation in the Melbourne diocese. The nuns moved into Albert Park in the South Melbourne area where they opened a small convent day school immediately, and later also took over the parish school which opened in 1891. Three nuns travelled daily from Albert Park, obliging modification of the Rule of enclosure as had been the case in Ballarat. The staff of the parish school always included young nuns for whom the school provided valuable teaching experience. The teacher-training role of the Loreto schools took on greater proportions when the Central Catholic Teachers' College was established at Albert Park by the Bishops of Victoria with the advent of the Teacher Registration Act of 1905.⁵⁶

The Loreto nuns were invited to conduct the college, and their schools became practising-schools for the students in training. During 1924, the

Loreto convent school was moved from Albert Park to Toorak, but the nuns maintained a commitment to the South Melbourne parish school. Always sensitive to the needs of the local community, in 1961, the Loreto nuns added a commercial centre for girls to the primary classes at the parish school.

The founding of a Free Catholic Kindergarten for under-privileged children in the Albert Park area was the fulfilment of one of Mother Gonzaga's most cherished dreams.

For long had Mother Gonzaga been extremely interested in Kindergarten work, introducing it into her school in Dawson Street, Ballarat, at a time when she had to send overseas for materials, there being none available in Australia. ...When the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition was held in 1884, one of Loreto's exhibits was a Kindergarten section. Being a novelty in those days it attracted great attention. The newly arrived Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Carr, was delighted as he was anxious to show the people of Melbourne the high standard of Catholic education despite the lack of State assistance.⁵⁷

The kindergarten concept in vogue was that of Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), a German teacher who followed the teaching of Pestalozzi.⁵⁸ Kindergarten ideas were receiving increased attention in European educational circles in the years immediately prior to the arrival of the Loreto nuns in Australia. Mother Gonzaga arranged that the Loreto Past Pupils Association would assist with the kindergarten at Albert Park. The young ladies acted as voluntary helpers, and visited the homes of the pupils to aid their mothers. By the fourth year of the operation, there were 63 children on the roll.⁵⁹ The Loreto kindergarten continued until 1961, when numbers dwindled to the extent that it was decided to convert the building into a commercial school for girls which would be attached to the South Melbourne parish school.

Because Mother Gonzaga had been successfully meeting the challenge of training teachers for Catholic schools for nearly 30 years at her teacher training college at Ballarat, she was well qualified when invited in 1906 to take charge of what came to be called the Central Catholic Training College at Albert Park. The Central Training College offered

two courses for prospective teachers, one for primary registration, and another for students preparing for the Diploma of Secondary Education. In its early years the college also offered preparatory courses to bring students up to entrance standards.

The college was for two classes of students, first for those who proposed devoting their lives to teaching either in some religious institute or as seculars, and second for those who desired to pursue a university course in the easiest and most helpful circumstances.⁶⁰

Some provision of residential accommodation for Catholic university students existed at Albert Park until St Mary's Hall, Parkville, was opened in 1918, when Diploma of Education and other university students were transferred there, leaving only primary registration students at Albert Park. Not only was the Catholic Training College a pioneer of teacher training for independent schools in Victoria, but it was notable for the highly qualified lay lecturers who complemented the work of the nuns.

Besides Miss Barbara Bell, graduate of the Secondary Teachers' College, in Cambridge, who was the first Mistress of Method at the Catholic Teachers' College, a number of other notable educationalists attended the college on a part-time basis. There was Mr. L. Wrigley, who later became Professor of Education at the University of Melbourne, Dr. E. Bolger, graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and Mr. W. L. Bowditch, M.A. gave regular lectures. The Jesuit Fathers provided a weekly lecture for the study of the Gospels, or the expounding of the Catholic view on questions in philosophy, history and current topics. Occasional lectures on various subjects were also given, such as that by Professor Tucker on the 'Future of Poetry'.⁶¹

Demonstration lessons conducted by the college on Saturday mornings for students and practising teachers were extremely popular. Concurrently with these lessons and lectures, students had practical experience in the art of teaching through weekly visits to the training schools.

At the end of each year, Inspectors of the Victorian Council of Education visited the Catholic Training College. All records were examined, and each student had to give a Lesson.⁶²



Mandeville Hall, Toorak, in 1924.

Provision was also made for the cultural and recreational needs of the students, with concerts to attend, clubs to join and a variety of sporting activities. The Catholic Training College continued at Albert Park until the end of 1924, when the Loreto nuns closed the college and moved their major educational initiatives to other areas.

During 1924, Mandeville Hall, a property suitable for a large secondary school, became available in Toorak. The Albert Park convent day school was closed and the pupils formed the nucleus of the new school which opened at Toorak in September, 1924. Among the pupils enrolled was Laura Hayden, who was to become Mother Provincial of the Loreto nuns. Mandeville Hall has witnessed continuous growth of the years, catering for the needs of pupils from kindergarten to university entrance.

Like other Loreto foundations in the Melbourne diocese at the time, St Mary's Catholic University College owes its origin to Mother Gonzaga Barry.

When she was overseas in 1894, she heard about the opening of a Catholic hostel for women university students in Cambridge, and she was inspired with the idea of a similar establishment for Melbourne. In 1895, Mother Gonzaga corresponded on the subject with Dr Carr, Archbishop of Melbourne suggesting to him an attempt to establish a Catholic Ladies' Hostel for girls who desire to pursue their university studies under the safe protection of the Church, and in a Catholic house atmosphere.⁶³

While Archbishop Carr approved the idea, failure to find a suitable house, and other practical difficulties, delayed the project until 1917, two years after Mother Gonzaga's death. Mother Stanislaus Mulhall, who succeeded Mother Gonzaga as Provincial, inherited her interest in establishing a house of studies for university students and worked with Dr. Mannix to secure a house near the university for the purpose.

A property in Parkville was purchased and opened in 1918 as St. Mary's Hall, a college affiliated through Newman College with the University of Melbourne. Generations of students passed through the Hall during the time of the first principal, Mother Patrick Callanan, who spent many years at St. Mary's and these gratefully recall her years of devotion to their interests. In 1946, St. Mary's Past Students' Association was inaugurated and has been of considerable importance in the history of St. Mary's with a deep affection existing between the nuns and the ex-students.

Over the years, the friendship, interest and advice of the Jesuits of Newman College who acted as Chaplains to St. Mary's was invaluable and deeply appreciated. The rector of Newman College or of the community gave a weekly spiritual lecture for the students. Newman College also contributed to the social life of St. Mary's with musical and dramatic talents being shared in formal evenings. Opportunities for co-operative sharing of college life increased when St. Mary's moved to the university campus.

Accommodation at St. Mary's became quite inadequate for the increased number of university women students, and its distance from the university restricted participation in the activities available on campus. The distance from the Campus of St. Mary's deprived its students of many advantages enjoyed by Janet Clarke Hall, University Women's College and St. Hilda's.⁶⁴

When the Australian Universities' Commission recommended a substantial grant for the building of a college nearer to the university campus, Dr. Mannix and the members of the college council decided to build the new St. Mary's College in the grounds next to Newman College. The foundation stone of the new college was laid on 29th May, 1965 by Archbishop Simonds, and in 1966 St. Mary's came into being as a college in its own right, affiliated directly with the University of Melbourne.⁶⁵

Since 1976, St. Mary's has been co-educational. Economic considerations associated with the cost of conducting a modern residential college were a factor in the decision to make it co-educational, but there was also growing commitment within the wider Catholic community to a belief in the all-round development of the individual to be gained from co-educational colleges.

St. Mary's today provides the opportunity for a full academic life as well as participation in the many activities which the university and the college have to offer. Resident tutorships are available at St. Mary's and involve:

Preparation and presentation of formal tutorials

Reasonable availability to students for academic and general assistance

Availability for administrative duties

Taking an active part in the college community, including membership of the Senior Common Room⁶⁶ and pastoral, social and academic contact with the Junior Common Room⁶⁷

Attendance at formal dinners during the term and at special college functions

Availability to assist the Principal and college staff in providing for the well-being of the students in accord with the ideals and values of a Christian college community⁶⁸

All tutors, resident and non-resident, have a close association with the college, and are committed to the development of the students within the college environment. All students are expected to attend regularly the tutorials provided. Attendance profiles and a short written report are submitted to the tutorial co-ordinator who monitors the participation and progress of all students.

The aim of tutorials is to supplement university classes and to provide a sound academic basis to college life. The tutorials given depend on which will be most useful, on the number of resident and non-resident members of college needing a particular subject, and on the availability of tutors.

In some cases, arrangements are made for attendance at tutorials at another college, and students enrolled in inter-college tutorials are required to attend regularly.⁶⁹

The duties of the tutors extend over the vacation periods when the college is open to senior students whose courses require vacation work, to students involved in examinations and to conference groups.

For the convenience of students, St. Mary's College library provides a collection of books which aims to include those books in demand for courses taken by members of the college. In an effort to maintain college fees at a reasonable level, a two-hour-a-week Student Work Scheme operates. The vacation conference trade also helps to defray college expenses, thus aiding the maintenance of reasonable fees. Before all else, the Loreto nuns aim to provide for the students at St Mary's a Christian college community in a world where these ideals and values may be often challenged and questioned.

St. Mary's college provides a centre within the university where Christian ideals are seen to be prized, and where those who live there are enabled to grow in truth, freedom and sincerity.⁶⁷

A spirit of friendship, mutual concern and respect for the rights of others have always been part of the special tradition of St Mary's and it is seen as the responsibility of all who live in the college to help in the promotion and preservation of this spirit. The college represents, in its present form, one of those adaptations to the needs of the times, legislated for by the foundress, Mary Ward. [Such successes owe everything to the energies of the first group of Loreto nuns to arrive in Australia.]

Within two years of the initial foundation of Loreto nuns at Ballarat, Mother Gonzaga Barry established a foundation at Portland in Victoria's south-west. At the invitation of Bishop O'Connor, a community of nuns arrived in Portland on 30th December, 1884 and took over the parish school. Former pupils of Mary's Mount welcomed the nuns and helped them prepare for the commencement of the school year.

The Loreto school, All Saints', was conducted in an historic building. Unpretentious in appearance, it had been the first Catholic church in Portland, opened and blessed by Bishop Goold on 11th February, 1849. When All Saints' church was opened in 1862, the building was used as a school, and here Mary McKillop,⁷¹ the foundress of the Josephites, and her sister Annie taught. Mary McKillop and Gonzaga Barry eventually met, they had much in common and became good friends.⁷²



Image from the 1988 episode of the ABC television drama My Place – reviewed on page 100 of this issue.

Besides their work in the parish schools, the nuns conducted a preparatory school for girls, later admitting small boys as boarders as there was no Catholic boys' boarding school in the district to cater for their needs. In time, provision was made for the education of girls to matriculation standard. Besides their work in the schools, for many years the Loreto nuns conducted catechetical classes in country parishes in the Portland area, a further 'adaptation' of their life to local needs. The Loreto convent at Portland very early developed a reputation as a cultural centre for the district, and to the present time adults participate in musical and artistic activities conducted at the school.

A further Victorian foundation was made in 1905 when, at the request of Dean Michael Shanahan, Mother Gonzaga founded a community of nuns at Hamilton. In a pattern now established in meeting the needs of the local community, the nuns took charge of the parish school and established a small convent school. The Loreto nuns continued in

Hamilton until the end of 1923, when their schools were handed over to the Good Samaritans. At the time of the foundation of the Hamilton convent, Mary McKillop urged Mother Gonzaga to accept a further invitation to work in Adelaide. A community of Loreto nuns was established at Norwood, where day and boarding schools have been conducted to the present time.



Mother Gonzaga

The first Loreto foundation in New South Wales was made in 1892, when Mother Gonzaga accepted the invitation of Cardinal Moran to open a school for boarders and day pupils at Randwick. After some years, it was considered desirable to have a separate boarding school, preferably in rural surroundings. On 28 February, 1897, the foundation stone of the new school in the Hornsby district was laid by Cardinal Moran. The Hornsby school remained exclusively for boarders until the time of the Second World War, when substantial expansion in the district resulted in the formation of the new suburb of Normanhurst. Day pupils were admitted and soon far outnumbered the boarders. With the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme,⁷³ in New South Wales during the 1950s, the demand for more classrooms and all the facilities of a large modern secondary school were accelerated at Normanhurst.

At this time also, the Victorian Council of Education approved the training centre at the Normanhurst convent for Loreto nuns working in Victoria. A further foundation from Randwick was made when it was decided that the Loreto school at Randwick was to be exclusively for day pupils. The boarders were moved across the harbour to Kirribilli, where the first Loreto foundation on the North Shore was established in 1902. Unlike Normanhurst, this school, in the more established area of Kirribilli, accepted both day scholars and boarders from the time of its commencement.

In January, 1897, at the request of Bishop Gilroy of Perth, Mother Gonzaga sent a community of seven nuns from Mary's Mount to establish a day-and-boarding school at Adelaide Terrace in Western Australia. When the University of Perth moved to a site near Nedlands, the Loreto

nuns were invited to staff a future university college for Catholic women. They purchased property in the area, and while the university college never eventuated, they opened a convent school there in 1931. Senior classes were discontinued at Nedlands in 1968, the pupils transferring to the Loreto school, 'Osborne', which was at no great distance. In 1974, Mother Antoinette Hayden, a former Provincial, signed a document which enabled the Loreto convent school at 'Osborne' and the local Jesuit college, St. Louis, to begin co-education classes whenever the schools were ready for this.

It was not until 1927, at the request of Archbishop Sir James Duhig, that the only Queensland foundation of Loreto nuns was made at Coorparoo. During the war years, this school was evacuated to Glen Innes in New South Wales.

At all these Loreto Convent schools, as at many other exclusive Catholic girls' schools at the turn of the century, the Senior School pupils learnt English, French, Mathematics, Latin, Geography, Botany, some Art but no Science as we know it. Extra lessons in accomplishments such as needlework and music were popular. There were dancing lessons for the boarders and tennis was the most popular sport. As Public examinations were introduced in the various states, there was a steadily increasing number of girls at Loreto schools being prepared for external examinations at Junior and Senior level.⁷⁴

Although education for Catholic girls has changed significantly since Mary Ward taught the daughters of persecuted and exiled Catholics in 17th-century Europe, the noble ideals of Christian womanhood which she sought to promote are not forgotten in the modern day Loreto school.

Mary Ward hoped for great things from well-educated women, great for the Church, great for the society in which they lived. Today, camps for Christian living, visits from representatives of varied walks of life to speak to the girls, excursions and actual work experience in different occupations, are all an important part of modern Loreto school life, enabling the students to realise better, the world of today and its problems.⁷⁵

The decline in vocations and vast increase in secondary school population in the era following the Second Vatican Council has meant a dramatic decline in the proportion of nuns to lay staff in all Loreto schools. Indeed, lay staff have substantially taken over the responsibility of education in Loreto schools. However, in the spirit of Mary Ward which they applied to the Vatican Council's call for renewal and adaptation to contemporary needs, the Loreto nuns have sought a wider involvement in the pastoral work of the parishes in which they still operate.

For instance, during the post-war population boom in Melbourne's outer suburbs, two Loreto nuns took over the parish schools of St. Thomas the Apostle, Blackburn and St. Philip's, North Blackburn, and one of the nuns worked in an advisory capacity at St. Luke the Evangelist, Blackburn South. Besides their work in the schools, the nuns associated themselves closely with the people of the parish, conducting adult education groups and taking an active part in the life and liturgy of the parish. They also undertook catechetical work with children attending state schools.

In another invitation to extend their pastoral work, in 1967 the Sisters established 'Loreto House' in Albert Park which combined the Provincialate and House of Formation. From here the novices carried out catechetical work at Sts Peter and Paul's Girls' School, as well as in the local government schools. Adult discussion groups were conducted and visits made to the aged and infirm. Again, in 1974, when the Loreto nuns took over the primary school at Mt Carmel parish in Brisbane, they also conducted catechist classes at the state schools and adult education courses in Renewal of Faith. In that year also, when two nuns flew to Broome to take over the school for Aboriginal children, they involved themselves closely with the wider needs of the local community.

Having already spent some time with Aboriginal women and children at Nurrung, South Australia, and having followed an Inservice Course for Aboriginal teaching before leaving for Broome, they arrived somewhat prepared for their mission. In Broome, besides teaching in the Catholic school, the nuns gave catechetical instruction in the State school, taught guitar, singing, craftwork and sewing to adults and children, got to know the people at the camps, and visited Aboriginal women in prison.⁷⁶

Like Mary Ward, Mother Gonzaga Barry and her successors in Australia had great faith in the ability of Christian womanhood which they manifested in their broad vision for the education of Catholic women. These courageous women modelled their ideal of womanhood on the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose qualities girls in their schools were constantly challenged to emulate.

Today [1988] the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a global enterprise, operating under three Generalates. The Roman Generalate has houses throughout Europe and South America as well as missions in Zimbabwe and Korea. The Canadian Generalate spreads over Canada and parts of the United States where the Sisters lecture in Universities, conduct many different types of schools and are actively engaged in apostolic work. The Irish Generalate, to which the Australian Loreto Sisters belong, conducts schools in the British Isles, Spain, India, Africa and Mauritius. In 1986, an Australian Sister Noni Mitchell, took over the leadership of the Irish Generalate.

Sister Noni Mitchell who attended four of Australia's Loreto colleges, from Ballarat to Perth ... is about to leave Toorak to become General Superior of the Irish branch of the Loreto Sisters, which includes 1,200 women in India, England, Spain, Kenya, South Africa and Australia. ... Sister Noni has a professional grounding in education and medicine. She was a doctor 'and is still registered' before she entered the convent in 1954. In the 1960s, she took a science degree and a diploma of education and became science mistress at Sydney's two Loreto colleges. For various periods she has been a member of the National Catholic Education Commission, Principal of Christ College at Oakleigh, Head of the Loreto Sisters in Australia, and, from the start of 1986, Superior of the convent at Toorak.⁷⁷

Noni Mitchell is a latter-day manifestation of the ideal of Christian womanhood in which Mary Ward believed and for which she fought. Respected in church and educational circles around Australia, she assumed her high office at a time when Religious women are not only exploring new apostolic horizons, but are seeking new roles and responsibilities within the Church.

In contemporary Catholicism, Noni Mitchell is keenly aware that

‘although the role of women in the Church today has expanded, Religious women have influence rather than decision-making power in the Catholic Church.’⁷⁸

Whether women should be ordained and so break the traditional barrier to equality is an issue about which she remains undecided. The elimination of ecclesiastical restrictions on women in the domain of the Church hierarchy is, without doubt, the battle for pioneers, and is certain to generate all the theological controversy, arguments and prejudice experienced by Mary Ward. While the ‘Mary Wards’ of today battle on, there is, in the influence of the apostolate of contemporary female religious, a fulfilment of the vision of Religious life for women for which Mary Ward sacrificed her life.

Mary Ward’s concept of Religious life for women has a close identification with that which has emerged in the post-Vatican II era. A contemporary unenclosed Religious vocation where women move freely within society in pursuit of an apostolic goal centred on a better world for all was the vision of Mary Ward over three centuries ago. ■

ENDNOTES

1 quoted M. Oliver, I.B.V.M., *Mary Ward 1585-1645*, Burns Oates, London, 1959, p. xi.

2 c.f above Chapter 1.3; also E. Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, C.U.P., Cambridge 1922; J.C. Dickson, *Monastic Life in Medieval England*, Black & Co., London, 1961; S. Hilpisch, *History of Benedictine Nuns*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1958.

3 c.f J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1579-1850*, London, 1975.

4 M. Oliver, op. cit., p. xvii.

5 J. Grisnor, S.J., ‘Mary Ward, 1585-1645’, reprinted from *The Month*, – a review conducted by the Jesuits of Farm Street, London. Martin’s Printing Works Ltd., Great Britain, n.d., pp. 5-6

6 The Poor Clares are an Order of contemplative nuns founded at Assisi in 1212. They comprised the Second Order of St. Francis and took their inspiration from him under the leadership of St. Clare of Assisi. Poor Clare nuns devoted themselves to the Divine Office, contemplative prayer and mental and manual labour. They took solemn vows and observed papal enclosure,

leading lives of reparative prayer and penance for the salvation of the world. Each monastery included extern Sisters who, although an integral part of the community, did not make solemn vows, but attended to the public chapel and outside business of the monastery. See H.F. Aschman, 'Poor Clares' *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, op. cit., vol. 11, pp.566-568

7 c.f. M. Littlehales, I.B.V.M., *Mary Ward - A Woman for all Seasons, Foundress of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Catholic Truth Society, 1974, p. 5

8 c.f. Chapter III.2 above, footnote p.107

9 M. Littlehales, op.cit., p. 7

10 c.f. J. Grisar, op.cit., pp.2-3

11 Ibid., pp.3-4. See Appendix No. 13, Chapter Headings of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, Part IV, 'The Organisation of Jesuit Schools'.

12 Bitter quarrels broke out among a small but persistent faction of the English clergy and the Jesuits. The opposition and hostilities against the Jesuit Order expressed themselves especially in the attacks of the Jansenists, and in confrontation over the establishment of the English hierarchy. C.f. Ibid., pp.10ff.; O. Chadwick, *An Ecclesiastical History of England, Part 1*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1966; H. Daniel Rops, *The Church in the 17th Century*, Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1963.

13 c.f. M. Littlehales, op.cit., p.18ff.

14 K. Oliver op.cit., p. xv

15 M. Ward, *A Memorial of the Projected Institute*. For the complete text c.f. M. Littlehales, loc. cit.

16 Text quoted, loc.cit.

17 In Bordeaux in France there was a similar school founded by Madame Lestonac whose nuns were enclosed. But at St Omer the English ladies went with their pupils to the cathedral to Mass every morning. c.f. M. Oliver, op.cit., pp. 75ff.

18 c.f. ibid, p.99

19 Text quoted ibid, p.92

20 Text quoted ibid, p.86

21 c.f. ibid, p.99

22 M. Littlehales, op.cit., p. 18

23 Mary's enemies spread harmful stories against her and her companions: 'the Ladies preach in the pulpits'. 'They are much talked about for petulance and undecorum'. The Congregation of Bishops was supplied with a letter signed by the leading clergy in England, and Fr. Kellison of Douay joined in

the attack. c.f. 'Epilogue' by Marsie Ward in M. Oliver, op.cit., pp. 218ff.

24 Ibid., p. 108

25 c.f. M Littlehales, op. cit., p.20

26 c.f. J. Grisar, op. cit., p.11

27 Ibid., p.12.

28 Loc. cit.

For the official Church decrees regarding the Congregations of Women at the time c.f. H.J. Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, B. Hender, St. Louis and London, 1941.

- The regulations for enclosure, which had been observed rather loosely, were not only given new emphasis, but were stiffened to the limits of what was bearable. The relevant papal decrees, which were worked out in minutest detail and contained heavy penalties for transgressors, were enforced with utmost severity. The contemporary 'Acts of the Congregation of Religious' proclaimed by the Council of Trent show clearly that the complete separation of nuns from their environment was meant to be enforced with rigid consistency.

29 c.f. M. Littlehales, op. cit., p.23

30 c.f. J. Grisar, op. cit., p.6

31 M. Oliver, op. cit., p.170.

32 M. Littlehales, op. cit., p.28

33 Loc. Cit.

34 Mary MacKillop fought the same battle for the unenclosed status she desired for the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1867. Thus two and a half centuries later, Mary Ward's struggle was successful. Since the Second Vatican Council non-enclosure is the norm for apostolic Orders of Religious women.

35 M. Oliver, op. cit., p. 213

36 A. R. McGrath, *Some Convent School Traditions in Victoria, 1860-1910*, M.Ed Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1964, p. 53.

37 In 1621, when Mary Ward's cause in Rome was doomed to failure because of the bitter and futile strife between the Jesuits and secular clergy, Mary asked that she and her companions be allowed to remain in Rome and open schools where their work could be judged on its merits. Gregory XV granted her a house known as the Holy House of Nazareth in the town of Loreto. Mary had a special devotion to this house which was said to have been carried miraculously and translocated there. c.f. M. Littlehales, op.cit. pp. 17ff.

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38 M. Oliver, op.cit., p. 213

39 M. Oliver, *Love is a Light Burden, the Life of Mother Gonzaga Barry*, Burns Oates, London, 1950, pp. 29-30

40 Sisters of Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, typescript, no pagination, Loreto Archives Rathfarnham, Dublin. Copy Loreto Archives, Mary's Mount, Ballarat

41 Quoted in B. Hoare History of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1925, no pagination. Archives Loreto Abbey, Ballarat.

42 *The Monitorial System* – Andrew Bell published in 1797 the results of his experiment in the use of monitors in India. The idea attracted attention and the plan was successfully introduced into a number of charity schools. About the same time (1798), Joseph Lancaster was led independently to a similar discussion of the advantages of the use of monitors. In 1803, he published an account of his plan. The two plans, which were quite similar, attracted attention from the outset, and schools formed after one or the other were soon organised all over England. c.f. A. Bell, *An Education made in the Male Asylum at Madras, Suggesting a System by which a School or a Family may teach itself under Superintendence of the Master or Parent*, London, 1797; J. Lancaster, *Improvements in Education as Respects the Industrial Classes of the Community*, London, 1803.

43 E. P. Cubberley, *The History of Education*, Constable & Co., London, 1920, pp.627-628

44 Sisters of Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, typescript, no pagination, Loreto Archives Rathfarnham, Dublin. Copy Loreto Archives, Mary's Mount, Ballarat

45 Loreto Nuns, Mary's Mount, *Annual Magazine - Eucalyptus Blossoms*, 1901, p.20 Loreto Archives, Mary's Mount, Ballarat

46 *Mother Gonzaga Barry, A Retrospect*, an address given at the time of the *Programme of Concert and Prize List*, 1885, pp. 9-10, Loreto Archives, Mary's Mount, Ballarat.

47 Loreto Nuns, Mary's Mount, *Annual Magazine - Eucalyptus Blossoms*, 1901, p.18 Loreto Archives, Mary's Mount, Ballarat

48 Loreto Nuns, Mary's Mount, *Loreto Eucalyptus Blossoms*, Dec., 1888, p. 28

There was no set programme formula for the Soirées held at Mary's Mount. They were informal occasions when the pupils, the nuns and a few friends of the school entertained each other. The Soirée was usually held from 7pm to 9pm. Appropriate dress, the art of conversation, poise, good taste and all the social graces were judged according to accepted standards. As such meetings were regular, girls absorbed the acceptance of a certain code of behaviour. For

- reports of Soirees at Mary's Mount, see *Loreto Eucalyptus Blossoms*, 1892 p. 48; 1893, p.40; 1894, p. 45.
- 49 Mary's Mount possessed an orrery, a clockwork model of the planetary system named after Charles Boyle, the Fourth Earl of Orrery, c. 1700. The orrery is still in a glass case on display at the entrance to the school library.
- 50 M. Dew, I.B.V.M. *From Ballarat to Broome, One Hundred Years of Loreto in Australia*, printed privately, Victoria, 1975. p7.
- 51 Loc. Cit. The pupils elected the school Councillors from the First Division School which catered for the Young Ladies of greatest maturity. One Councillor was allowed for every 10 pupils.
- 52 Barbara Barry came to Australia at the invitation of Mother Gonzaga Barry. She became the first Mistress of Method at the Catholic Teachers' College at Albert Park which was conducted by the Loreto Sisters. She also spent time at various other convent schools advising on curriculum.
- 53 M. Dew, op. cit., pp10–11.
- 54 *Prospectus of the Catholic Training College for Teachers, Loreto Convent, Dawson Street, Ballarat* 1885, Loreto Archives, Mary's Mount, Ballarat.
- 55 See *Circular Book of the Education Department of Victoria, 1872-1888*, Regulation under the Act of 1872. *Circular of Regulations*, issued in July, 1875, pp.6-8 in E. L. French, *Secondary Education in the Australian Social Order, 1788-1898*, p. 276
- 56 *The Victorian Teacher Registration Act of 1905*, set down minimum standards of qualifications for all teachers in Victorian schools whether operating in State schools, Church affiliated schools or private institutions. In order to gain registration, religious teachers had to have their training institutes approved by the Victorian Education authorities. The Central Catholic Teachers' College was established by Archbishop Carr as an efficient means of training Catholic teachers, both Religious and lay.
- 57 M. Dew, op cit., pp. 20.
- 58 *Pestalozzi* reduced the educational process to a well-organised routine based on natural and orderly development of the instruments, capacities and powers of the growing child. The dominant characteristics of Froebel's Kindergarten based on Pestalozzian ideas were games, songs and occupations with an emphasis on self-activity. His *Muller-und Kose-Lieder*, a book of 50 songs and games, was published in 1843 and translated into many languages. In the 1850s, Baroness von Bülow lectured on Froebel's ideas in London. In 1870, she established a Kindergarten Training College at Dresden. c.f. Woodbridge, *An*

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Estimate of Pestalozzi's work; B. von Blow, *Froebel's Educational Idea*, quoted in E. P. Cubberley, op. cit., pp.541, 765

59 *Loreto Kindergarten Roll, 1916*, quoted in M. Dew, op. cit., pp. 20

60 Archbishop Carr speaking at the official opening of the College, 1 May, 1906. c.f. *The Advocate*, 7 May, 1906

61 M. Dew, op. cit., p. 19

62 loc. cit.

63 M. Dew, op. cit., p. 23. c.f. Letter, Mother Gonzaga Barry to Archbishop Carr, 1895, Loreto Archives, Mary's Mount, Ballarat.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 25

65 Loc. cit.

66 *The Senior Common Room* includes those members of the College Community who contribute in a special way to the academic and administrative life of the College.

67 *The Junior Common Room* comprises College members, whether graduates or undergraduates.

68 *St. Mary's College Tutors' Handbook*, University of Melbourne, 1984, p1

69 *St. Mary's College Handbook for Students*, University of Melbourne, 1984, p3

70 *Ibid.*, p. 2

71 c.f. Chapter XII.2 below.

72 M. Dew, op. cit., p.13

73 See Appendix No. 15: Major Recommendations of the Wyndham Scheme.

74 M. Dew, op. cit., p.39

75 *Ibid.*, p. 36

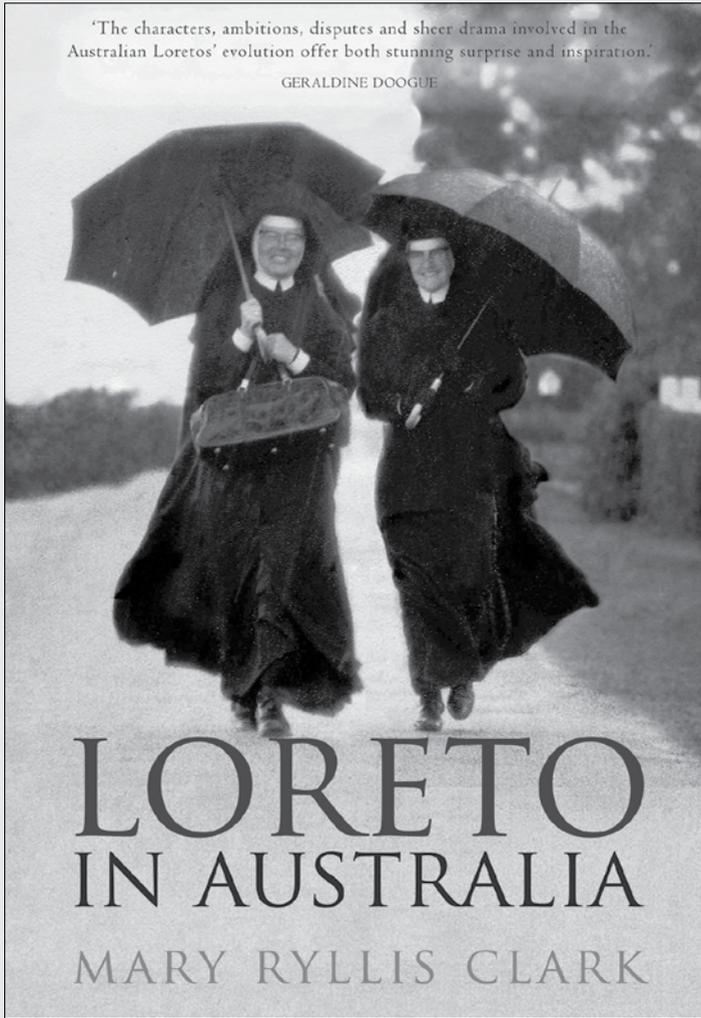
76 *Ibid.*, p. 55

77 Edmund Doogue, 'Piety has its place, but it's not in Rome with Sister Noni', *The Age*, 16th August, 1986, p. 19

78 Quote in loc. cit.

'The characters, ambitions, disputes and sheer drama involved in the Australian Loretos' evolution offer both stunning surprise and inspiration.'

GERALDINE DOOGUE

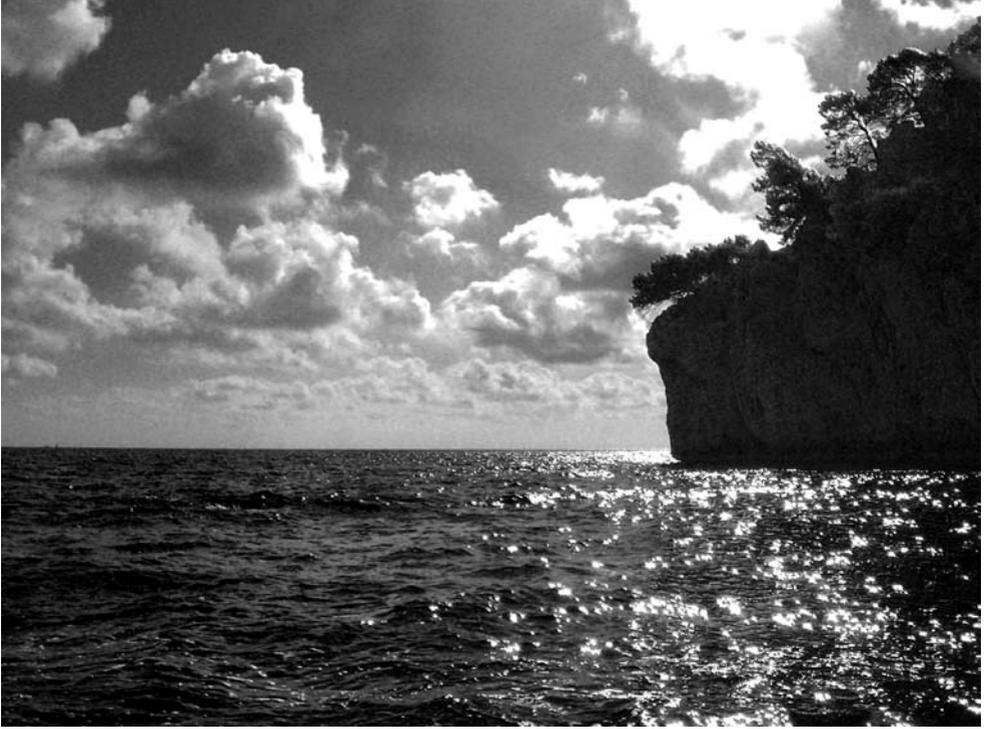


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Australasia's first Provincial

FREDERICK McMAHON

Brother John Dullea (1841 – 1914)

Wonderful are the ways of the Lord and, as far as the Marist Brothers are concerned, the Lord went out of His ways to be very wonderful in providing the Marist Institute with a man of the quality of Brother John Dullea.

Brother John was born in Drummaway, Cork, on 16 March, 1841. Educated in Belgium, he made his novitiate at Beaucamps, France, in 1858. After teaching for a few years in France, he was transferred in 1863 to the founding community of St. Mary's, Glasgow. He then went to St. Andrew's, Glasgow, in 1868, where he was Director for eight years. He took the vow of stability in 1847.

When he was called to the General House in St. Genis-Laval, a suburb of Lyon, Br John Dullea was the man designated by the then Superior General, Br Louis-Marie, to be the first Provincial of Australasia. Unfortunately, John's health had been quite bad in Glasgow, from which city he was called. For a considerable time he was prostrate with illness at the General House. His lungs were badly affected and haemorrhages were frequent. The doctor stated that it was useless for him to undertake the voyage since he could not hope to survive it, nor could he hope to live for a few more months. Under these circumstances John made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the venerable Founder. Kneeling at the grave, he prayed for strength to do the work that the Superiors wished to confide to him, telling the Founder that it was his work that was concerned, and that therefore he had to come to John's aid. Since the Founder had composed a very similar prayer to Mary, it seems that it was a case of 'noblesse oblige' for the Founder, who must have seen to it that the prayer was heard. The bleeding from the lungs stopped and John took to the seas, Sydney-bound. On 21 November 1875 Brother John embarked at Marseille to make a visitation of the missions of Oceania and to reside at Sydney. He arrived by *The Mongolia* on 9 January 1876, still in the process of recovering from his wasting sickness. Thus he came to Australia as the first Provincial in 1876 at the age of 34. His lung trouble had left him; he was good for another 40 years. And good he was.

The Frenchman Br Ludovic, leader of the first four (two Irishmen, one Scotsman and Ludovic) to set up a Marist school in Sydney, was at the wharf to greet Br John on his arrival. A little disconcerted that his Gallic gush was met with a somewhat reserved response from John, the ebullient Ludovic, nothing daunted, led the new arrival to St. Patrick's where he met the assembled Brothers, novices and postulants. What is significant here is that there were already vocations in training; Ludovic's enthusiasm for workers in the Lord's field was producing good results.

Ludovic continued to think his visitor too reserved. He writes: 'Australians do not have the English temperament.' I suppose that is the price one must pay for being a quiet Irishman! We soon find Ludovic paying tribute to his taciturn Superior:

Br John acted very prudently. He refrained from criticising anything, from changing the least thing of the daily routine or even employments. Especially did he show himself full of consideration

to the Br Director, [Ludovic) and left him full liberty to continue the direction of the school and novitiate. He consulted him on all his projects and acted towards him more as an inferior than as a superior.

Ludovic was now 'on side'. John's Province included Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa. Like St. Paul, he was in journeyings often ... in danger at sea ... in toil and hardship ... And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches. (2Corinthians 1.26.28).

We need to bear in mind that Br John had to travel by ship to those many parts of his Province—from Sydney to Samoa, with other countries and colonies in between. Here are his own words, corroborating those of St. Paul, quoted above:

It is the season of rain and hurricanes in this neighbourhood, but there has been nothing disastrous as yet this year, although we were in a state of anxiety last week because of the great winds and the rapid descent of the barometer. There has not passed a single day since my arrival that it has not rained, and sometimes it fell in torrents. Generally, there are great squalls, followed by brilliant sunshine, which dries everything very quickly. The extreme humidity makes the heat more oppressive, although the temperature generally indicates about 30 Degrees in the shade. Nevertheless; apart from exceptional days, it is hotter in Fiji.

Br John performed his task as Superior with outstanding success, displaying to an admirable degree the qualities of judgement, understanding, sympathy, tact and wisdom which were required in the delicate tasks of ecclesiastical negotiations and the administration and government of men. For 20 years (1876–1893; 1897–1900) John bore the responsibilities of Provincialship before becoming an Assistant General in 1900 – a position he held for 17 years until his death.

With archdiocesan authorities, John displayed consummate prudence and common sense. Archbishop Vaughan was pacified concerning worries that he had about 'large sums of money being sent to Europe', about 'mission countries being bled to death to enrich a country less necessitous'. John was able to point out that no monies had been sent and that, indeed, the Sydney establishment owed a considerable amount to

the Procure at St Genis-Laval for the personal clothing of the Brothers.

The Archbishop had earlier met him on two occasions about financial matters, so John was able to bring ‘balm to hurt minds’. He even agreed to the archbishop’s proposal that the Brothers would be better off in every way by taking schools at their own risk, instead of the parish having to guarantee a fixed salary. Of course, this was a ‘cop out’ for the archdiocese, but John saw fit to agree as a general rule, noting however, that, with building debts to be faced, the Brothers would have to advance very cautiously.

Approbation for a novitiate having been given by the Holy See on 6 February 1876, John brought the archbishop and Father Joly SM into consultation. They agreed on Villa Maria as the appropriate site, mainly because of the availability there of spiritual help for the trainees from the religious priests. John therefore requested permission to purchase the Joubert property. The delayed reply underscores one of the greatest handicaps of early Marist life in Australia – the tyranny of distance. A great cross for Br John was the extreme centralisation of control: permissions, especially in money matters, had to be obtained from France and there were long delays in correspondence.



Br John Dullea

Another problem area concerned the Marist Fathers. The first Marist Brothers arrived in New Caledonia in 1873. The Marist Fathers, used to treating the Brothers as members of their own Society (they had their own original group of lay Brothers), began to place these new Brothers, and even their Brothers’ Director, where they believed they were needed. These were points of discussion between Brother John and the Marist Fathers during his first visit to this French colony as Provincial (April–May 1876). Evidently, the Fathers in New Caledonia had not adjusted to the new situation of Brothers responsible not to them, but to their own higher Superior through a Brother Provincial.

The problem was not resolved for several years, but Br John diplomatically and firmly stayed in control of a situation which could easily have developed into a rupture of relationship. It was an achievement, since

owing to difficulties in communication (again the 'tyranny of distance') he was for some time uncertain of his own limits of power and of the arrangements between his superiors and the Marist Fathers of New Caledonia.

The thoroughness of Brother John as Provincial is exemplified in his reports to the Superior General and the Assistant General – his monumental *Lettres de L'Océanie* which cover 12 volumes of closely written (now typed) A4 pages – at least 100 pages for each volume. He gives an account of affairs in each house that he visited; his concern for each Brother is indicated by his brief mentioning of every Brother of the community. As was customary in those times, he wrote to the major Superiors about both the religious life and the apostolic life of the Brothers under his charge. For example:

Saint Leon (New Caledonia): Brother Joseph Ed. Appears to have succeeded well as Director, whether with the Brothers, the children or the parents. He is gentle and conciliatory and avoids conflicts. His character is not of the strongest, but he generally achieves his ends by kind words, which he does not spare to use. Like very many here, he talks a lot and has difficulty in finishing once he has commenced. It is his little weakness. He maintains regularity rather well, and also the economy of the house, although the meal table is not too well cared for.

A second comment concerns the school apostolate:

A Sydney school: Br Ignatius: 5th Class. His class is making quite fair progress. The exercises are better. Rather hard on pupils not doing as well as he wants.

There was also the matter of difference in nationalities. The young Brothers were, first and foremost, Australians. The French were foreigners, but among the communities, except for the occasional short squall, it was fine weather. They were Brothers – that was enough. A particular problem lay at St Joseph's College, where an Australian (Br Stanislaus) was succeeded by a Frenchman (Br Emilian) in 1890. Opposition to Stanislaus was fomented among some of the French Brothers. There was also trouble from the French 'connection' on the question of participation in sport, especially in competitive sport with other Colleges. It is interesting to note Br John's attitude to all this. John wrote:

I have always thought that the best way to deal with national susceptibilities was not to take too much notice of them, for schemers always take advantage of the rows and misunderstandings to pursue their own ends, and rarely know how to exercise patience in the presence of serenity. This ends up by revealing their schemes in their haste.

Brother John showed remarkable capacity in the handling of financial affairs. We have no better example of this than in the construction of St Joseph's College. Accusations had been brought home to the Superior General that Br John had been using an account in a manner contrary to the Constitutions of the Institute. John replies:

to refer with more precision to the passage of your letter, Reverend, which seems to contain the gravest imputations directed at me. Without doubt this accusation is serious and even very serious, but I can affirm, without wishing to be lacking in the least degree to the respect which I owe you, Reverend, that it is a grave error.

After demolishing those charges, John gives a masterly presentation, covering four pages, of the management of Income and Expenditure. Some extracts are offered, including a sly 'dig' at one of the 'money' men:

We are not in debt in regard to any bank, provider, or any person whatsoever. All the work done at the new construction and all the materials employed have been paid for, including all the costs of excavations, the foundations in concrete, a good third of the masonry required for completing the building, now in process of being constructed, mounting to more than 2,000 perches (a perch is 25 cubic feet) including also the iron beams, or, rather, steel beams for all the floors. All this amounts to nearly 1,600 Pounds. This also comprises nearly all the casement windows, which await only the final touch, and all the appliances, scaffolding, cranes etc. The walls have been completed on almost half the new buildings to the height of about 30 feet. (We are counting on them all being around that height by the end of the month). As for the monthly report on the constructions, I thought that I could never be more exact than by sending the details of the expenditure and the quantity of materials, signed by Brother Theodore, who keeps an account of everything and whom one would never suspect of making representations that are too favourable.

In the early days of the Catholic Church in Australia's 'going it alone' in Education, Brother John became a member of the Catholic School Board for the archdioceses. At first things went well, but, when it came to appointing an Inspector of Schools, John was wary. He writes:

The choice fell on a Mr Rogers who had been engaged in teaching in Melbourne, but whose experiences (as Inspector) seemed to me to be almost nil, and I believe that it is the same for his experience of primary teaching.

This Rogers helped devise Regulations for the Board, Regulations which 'were opposed to our usages and Constitutions'.

We can note the wisdom of Br John in his decision to resign from the Board:

I thought my presence on this Board would only lead us into disagreements; that, in certain moments of surprise, I might make concessions which would harm our work in this country, as well as our religious and Marist spirit, which seem an enigma for many; that it would be wise to screen ourselves under the authority of our First Superior: then these lengthy reports, to which we are not accustomed, would finish up by being publicly known, to the great disedification of many.

When John was sent a copy of the Regulations by the Board, he replied (in part):

I wish to state that those Regulations appear to substitute for the authority and supervision of the Superiors the authority and supervision of the Inspector and certain committees, many of whose members cannot be expected to understand the position of Religious and the requirements of the religious state. They would only too often be disposed to treat the Brothers like those who are paid for their labour at the market value, and not like men carrying on the good work for higher motives, contenting themselves with an allowance barely sufficient to provide for the strictest necessities.

Brother John's two letters to the Board suffice to show that he was not criticising the system, but only some aspects of its implementation or administration. Whenever he was called to Europe (for General Chapters etc) Br John did much to try to have Brothers sent to Australia to sup-

plement the men in the field on the 'Great South Land'. In recruiting in Australia he was supportive of the work done by Br Ludovic and others in this sphere. With a good flow of local vocations, there was diminishing need for 'imports' from France and the British isles.

Australian Marists will, however, never forget the French connection. The 'Eldest Daughter of the Church' sent us some magnificent men.

The above are but few facets of the character and capacity of Br John Dullea, a man who was yet another great gift of Ireland to Australia. To give a homely twist to a passage from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*:

Here was a [Marist]. Whence comes such another? ■

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BOOK REVIEW



A beginner's guide

MADELEINE LAMING

Expert Educators – a Handbook for New and Inexperienced Teachers.

Susan Nikakis. Data Publishing. 88 pages.

THE AUTHOR DESCRIBES this as a very simple little book – and it is. Deceptively simple. That is one of its strengths. Another strength is its extensive reference list for those who want to read the theoretical work that underpins the sensible and practical advice it provides.

The book opens with an overview of the characteristics of expert teachers and reminds us that the quality of teaching is enormously important: schools can't fix society's problems, but they can ensure that students receive the best possible education to offset any disadvantages they may face at

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home or in their communities. The burden of educators' responsibility to students' untapped potential is enormous and teachers can be overwhelmed. Exactly how to go about meeting such crucial needs is an ongoing struggle faced by educators of gifted children; Nikakis offers some credible solutions.

There is a chapter full of practical advice about ways to make lessons more interesting: there are strategies and techniques that appeal to students with different learning styles, problem-solving activities that encourage deep learning and some that are just fun to use now and again. There is another chapter that provides useful advice on classroom management and contains a number of problem-solving exercises designed to encourage teachers to reflect on their performance; possible solutions are included later in the book to prompt discussion. There is even a chapter full of proverbs, sayings, poetry and short readings that can be used as the basis of discussion or as a reflection to set the mood at a staff meeting. However, I suspect it is the chapter on teaching gifted children that is closest to the author's heart.

Prior to taking up her current role as the Gifted Education Programs Officer at the Catholic

Education Office in Melbourne, Susan Nikakis was a teacher for many years and she uses her considerable experience of teaching gifted children to offer sound advice to new and experienced teachers about what to do with students whose talents and abilities are clearly out of the ordinary.

This isn't the place to debate the nature of intelligence or the validity of intelligence-testing, but evidence suggests that intellectual giftedness is more prevalent than many of us have been led to believe. The odds of finding in your class a 'super-bright' child (such as mathematician Terry Tao, who at 24 became the youngest professor appointed to UCLA) are less than a million to one – but around one child in 40 has an IQ of 130, putting them in the moderately gifted group while one in six is mildly gifted.

Figures like these suggest that teachers need all the advice they can get about differentiating their teaching styles and making their lessons more interesting. In the end one has to wonder how many of our misbehaving students are really just bored and quite possibly really bright – only needing the right key to unlock their potential. ■

BOOK REVIEW



The last of Larsson

MADELEINE LAMING

**Stieg Larsson. *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest.*
Maclehose Press. 602 pages**

LISBETH SALANDER IS back and she is angry! Readers who enjoyed the first two volumes of Stieg Larsson's Millennium trilogy will have been

waiting eagerly for months to find out what happened. This volume opens approximately one hour after the cataclysmic finale of *The Girl Who Played With Fire* – Salander

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has been shot in the head; if she survives with her faculties intact (and that's no sure thing as Larsson is not writing to the usual formula) she is set to face trial for murder. Only her former friend Mikael Blomkvist is certain that she is innocent and uses all his skills as an investigative journalist to prove it, but to do this he must expose a conspiracy extending to the highest levels of government.

Despite the enthusiasm of Larsson/Salander fans (and I am one) new readers may find the story perplexing. It's worth repeating that *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* is the third in a series. The opening is abrupt which means that readers who have not read the two earlier volumes will find it hard to pick up the story. The plot develops slowly to begin with as Larsson strives to fit the action to events in the preceding volume and introduce new characters that will further the action – some critics have found the change of pace confusing and the book disappointing, but I disagree. Following the astonishing success of *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* and *The Girl Who Played With Fire*, Larsson's story is almost as well known as his characters: he had delivered the first three volumes to his publisher when he died suddenly of heart

attack in 2004. The whole series was intended to consist of eight to ten volumes and many of the so-called flaws in the composition of this book reflect its place in that larger scheme. The first novel was primarily a crime novel in which Blomkvist and Salander worked to find a murderer, the second a spy thriller that uncovered corruption with the security services and explained Salander's background; this volume would have brought those events to a conclusion while acting as transition to a new plot. Like any unfinished artwork, the Millennium series does have some weaknesses, but rather than focus on these, we should admire what Larsson did achieve and regret his premature death.

In reality, he was one of the most recent examples of a long-standing tradition – the social commentator who use their novels to examine community values and behaviour. Emile Zola, Victor Hugo, Charles Dickens, Alan Paton, Doris Lessing and Andre Brink all used their considerable talents to prick the public conscience, as did Larsson. He was a well-known journalist and the editor of the left-wing journal *Expo*; an expert on fascism and extremist, Nazi-type organisations who had lectured at Scotland Yard on ways of

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dealing with organised racist violence; Blomkvist is clearly his alter ego in some respects at least. The Millennium Trilogy was prompted by his uneasiness over the growing influence of right-wing political groups and corruption in the security forces, but Larsson was also disturbed by the residue of a deeply conservative strain in Swedish society that distrusts foreigners, is dismissive of women's rights and regards a refusal to conform as a form of madness.

Larsson's work is deeply influenced by feminism – a poor attitude to women is the key factor that distinguishes his truly evil characters from the misguided or foolish. His protagonist, Lisbeth Salander, is a memorable woman – tiny, covered in tattoos and fond of punk fashion; she is a brilliant computer hacker, with an eidetic memory; she works on Fermat's Last Theorem for fun, but will drink and dance till she collapses when the mood takes her; she is never the aggressor, but will use extreme violence when provoked. At times Salander is just too close to an anime superhero to be credible, but she is engaging and in spite of her exaggerated qualities, we want her to triumph. Like her antecedents Tank Girl and Batman, Salander is essentially a

moral character even though she is a vigilante who does not hesitate to break the law in her pursuit of justice. She has good reason to mistrust any form of authority (I don't want to spoil the plot for readers who have just discovered the series). Other female characters are complex, assertive and capable.

Larsson's attitude to women makes the events which took place after his death deeply ironic. Larsson died without making a will and his companion of thirty-two years, Eva Gabrielsson, was thereby disinherited in favour of his estranged father and brother. The size of Larsson's estate is unknown, but the fact that they have offered her 20 million kroner (US\$2.82 million) to give up all claims to his work is an indication of its probable worth; the real question, and one that could serve as the plot of one of Larsson's novels, is could there be another, or several, unfinished manuscripts in Gabrielsson's care. ■

FILM REVIEW



A complicated relationship

GIL MACLEAN

Capitalism: A Love Story. Dir. Michael Moore

IS CAPITALISM A sin? Filmmaker Michael Moore (*Roger and Me*, *Bowling For Columbine*, *Sicko*) asks this and presents a rousing, clever, heartfelt work in his new documentary feature, *Capitalism: A Love Story*.

Moore, with his characteristically bland drawl, humour and humble baseball cap, presents a view of the evils of capitalism in America, told through the stories of normal people made destitute, homeless, and dehumanised by the brazen

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destruction of the nation's wealth by the rich, corrupt and powerful. The devastating human cost of the global financial crisis (that bland, blame-free euphemism for the heinously massive white collar theft that continues to ravage the United States) is the vehicle through which history is told.

First, we see how the wealthy and powerful financial institutions infiltrated the White House, beginning with Ronald Reagan, whom we see grinning in his role as harbinger of financial de-regulation. Shown pointedly with a Goldman Sachs controller whispering in his ear, Reagan is depicted as the first in a long line of US Presidents doing Wall Street's bidding – as treasury secretaries, as Senators, and so on – Republicans and Democrats both, from market de-regulation to last year's \$700 billion bailout. Moore's method is to show interviews with an impressive array of ex-federal regulators, the current head of the Congressional Oversight Panel, and some refreshingly fearless state representatives who challenge the status quo.

We learn that sub-prime mortgages and default credit swaps are not the only arcane financial tools of burglary being used. Another poignant example is 'Dead Peasant Insurance' – the practice whereby

blue-chip American corporations take out secret life insurance policies on their rank and file workers, naming themselves (the company) as the primary beneficiary and profiting forthwith.

Back on the human side, several priests are interviewed and asked what they think of capitalism. 'Evil', they reply, citing directly the words of Jesus, the gospel of Luke against the sadly logical products of corrupt politicians, hand-in-manicured-hand with rich, powerful, pillaging hordes of raptor banks and investment vultures. Catholic dedication to social justice is given more than a nod in this documentary – the image of the Bishop of Chicago standing in solidarity with the sacked workers of a manufacturing firm springs to mind.

Moore's on target. These evils, operating in a modern democracy (including standing armies, as noted by Thomas Jefferson) appear to be subverting the wealth of the people in toxic and near-opaque conspiracies, directed, driven and powered by greed. It's a credit to his abilities and technique as a film-maker that he manages to wring both laughs and tears from the audience. ■

FILM REVIEW



Dickensian chiaroscuro

AMELIA HUGHES-LOBERT

A Christmas Carol Dir. Robert Zemeckis

OPENING ONTO THE pages of Charles Dickens' timeless *A Christmas Carol* in spectacular 3D the audience is transported into a bleak and sinister London, Scrooge's scowl is seen from a mile off, people cower from

his grimness and it is Christmas Eve. Scrooge is introduced muttering 'Tuppence is tuppence' and we are shown a shrivelled and dead man, Jacob Marley, Scrooge's former partner. The epic tale is used respectfully in this adapta-

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tion, directed by Robert Zemeckis, whose previous works have included *Back to the Future* and *The Polar Express*.

After such basic popular fare it is a surprise to see such literary taste, for Zemeckis wrote the screenplay himself. After watching the film I picked up a copy of *A Christmas Carol* and read it, and was amazed to find how faithful the adaptation is: the film and the novella sometimes match almost word for word. This is quite exceptional, especially considering that the famous Disney tag is stapled to *A Christmas Carol*. Seeing this, I expected a certain amount of corny lines and sequences and dumbing down – but this creation has endeavoured to be different. It seems as though the writers and animators were given a certain amount of creative freedom so often lacking in Disney films.

Gary Oldman voices both Bob Cratchit and his son, Tiny Tim, as well as Jacob Marley's Ghost; he is versatile enough to give life to all three characterisations. Oldman's face is recognisable beneath the mask of his characters. Colin Firth is quite jolly as Scrooge's nephew but his character felt almost dreary as well, arguing something of a family tendency perhaps. But he is not as hardened as his uncle;

rather he is portrayed as naïve and a bit daft. Bob Hoskins voices Mr. Fezziwig very heartily and Robin Wright Penn is notable as Scrooge's lost love Belle.

The ever-so-adaptable Jim Carrey has stepped forward once again in his career by nailing this role. His versatility is exemplary; the accents of each character he plays are flawless. Carrey's face can be seen through the face of Scrooge, as though he is not so much an animation as wearing makeup for the role. It's pretty much the same with Oldman: the actors' faces can be recognised just as Tom Hanks' face was in *Polar Express*.

As for the story, we have the immortal tagline satisfyingly soon in the film: Scrooge utters the famous 'Bah humbug!'. But soon his redemption begins and we are able to witness his transformation into a person capable of compassion and empathy. At this point the movie becomes really absorbing.

Scrooge's awful behaviour at the start demonstrates how easily avarice can destroy the spirit. This is why *A Christmas Carol* is even more relevant today, when there is such immense materialism in the world and where greed can consume and corrupt even good, well-meaning

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people. There is something of an inherent irony here, however: *A Christmas Carol* is a strong parable about giving to the less fortunate, accepting forgiveness and facing your inner demons – yet it is a commercialisation of Christmas for there will be a lot of money

That said, the images of London are so beautifully created that there is a sense of intimacy with the story, we are drawn into the Dickensian world, to experience this redemptive journey with Scrooge. So often with children's films there is a sense of distance from reality – they



generated by this film. One could wish that some of its profits could go to help the less fortunate in life, (particularly those in America, where the film was made) who have been losing their homes and their health insurance through the financial crisis. There will be many whose Christmas will be as bleak as the Cratchits' before the intervention of the newly redeemed Scrooge.

are either too corny like Hannah Montana or too slickly Hollywood. This is a breath of fresh, frosty Christmas air among all the glitz. It bears mentioning that Alan Silverstein's score accompanies the story marvellously and keeps it alive with wonderful traditional Christmas carols.

The ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come – all played by Carrey – are often at

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times frighteningly good; the ghost of Christmas Past in particular is on the verge of creepy but fits well with the tale. These elements contribute to the bleak and haunting feeling in the film; it is allowed to be as dark as the book instead of simplistically jolly. Some may find Marley's ghost frightening, as also some scenes with the ghost of Christmas Yet To Come.

I must point out that this, while making a brilliant film, makes it not suitable for younger children, particularly sensitive ones. But for the rest of us, it's not all darkness: there some very funny moments which didn't detract at all; the light and shade are all part of a complex and fascinating experience.

There were some flaws: a lengthy and unnecessary scene with the ghost of Christmas Yet To Come seemed to cut the time needed to develop the character of Tiny Tim. The ending seemed a bit rushed. And the scene when Scrooge is running away from Death got a bit tedious; wherever it departed from the story it faltered. However it is streets ahead of any other adaptation I have seen.

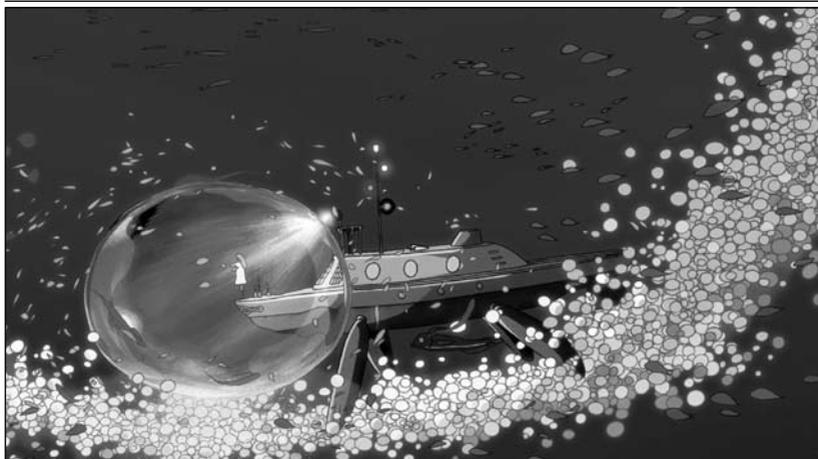
The laughable (rather than funny) musical version of *A Christmas Carol* starring Kelsey Grammer of *Frasier* fame bears little resemblance to this excellent

version or indeed to Dickens' novel. Zemeckis and Carrey between them have almost matched the brilliant characterisation Alistair Sim gave in the 1951 *Scrooge*. Even Bill Murray was notable in *Scrooged* – and for kids there was always Michael Caine as Scrooge in *The Muppet Christmas Carol*. But Carrey, for me, takes the cake.

A Christmas Carol has been kept alive by this interpretation, bringing the story to a whole new generation. Carrey's performance is incomparable as Ebenezer Scrooge; he is capable of cartoon expressions in real life, and these enable his animated performance to be completely recognisable.

Technically the film was brilliant: it was animation at its best, at a level which can make you forget that it's not 'real'. The graphical complexity doesn't distract from the story, only enhancing its beauty and darkness. There is life in Dickens yet. ■

FILM REVIEW



Sea of wonder

AMELIA HUGHES-LOBERT

Ponyo On The Cliff By The Sea Dir. Hayao Miyazaki

ACADEMY AWARD-WINNING director and renowned animation genius Hayao Miyazaki (*Spirited Away*, *My Neighbour Totoro* and *Princess Mononoke*) has created yet another captivating story, drawn from Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tale, *The Little Mermaid*. Miyazaki has shaped a world within a world

(and not surprisingly with an environmental message or two, as is the staple with his films). *Ponyo* is a poignant fable that will inspire the heart and capture your inner child.

Ponyo's father Fujimoto, voiced stirringly by Liam Neeson, is an underwater sorcerer, once a human, who rides around in an underwater *Yellow Submarine*-esque yacht. He

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is intent on keeping Ponyo as she is: a vivacious and free-spirited fish raised away from the 'evils' of the human world. She on the other hand is intent on escaping: she pulls away free from his grasp, she ends up floating on the back of a jellyfish, gets her head stuck in a jar and the one to find her washed

Miyazaki manages to be original with every one of his movies, to create characters that are complex and interesting. This is a welcome thing among the predictable world of US-made children's movies, dominated by Disney. Ironically, however, Disney distributes this film, which is not to



up on the shore is five-year-old Sosuke. His mother, Lisa (voiced by Tina Fey) is strong-willed, environmentally conscious and a bit of a risk-taker. Fey provides some humour to the role when her 'husband' Koichi (Matt Damon) can't make it back home after being on a freighter: on this occasion we see Sosuke behaving much more maturely than his mother.

say that this is necessarily a bad thing. Miyazaki's friendship with John Lasseter, director of Pixar, is the reason that Disney makes Studio Ghibli films available to English-speaking countries. More ironic though is the fact that the dubbed version voices of Ponyo and Sosuke are a product of the Disney clan. With Noah Cyrus as Ponyo (yes you heard correct-

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ly, Miley Cyrus' little sister) and Frankie Jonas as Sosuke, (yes, you guessed it – the Jonas Brothers' little brother) it's a match made in Disney heaven. You'd think that knowing the actors would cheapen the anime into a Disney product but thankfully it doesn't.

Betty White, Lily Tomlin and Cloris Leachman voice three older ladies who live in the senior centre where Sosuke's mother Lisa works. There is a level of reverence given to these characters. Miyazaki portrays them with respect and affection: they are very sweet and harmless, and Sosuke is friends with them. Even better is Lily Tomlin who voices the feisty, wisecracking and questioning Toki. Also endearing are Ponyo's hundreds of sisters, all very tiny and the spitting image of her, who give her much-needed help when she's in strife. Cate Blanchett voices the role of Ponyo's mother Grand Mamare, a big redheaded Mother of the Sea: she is very believable as a goddess able to control magical forces with a certain amount of calm. Blanchett's voice sounds similar to her portrayal of Galadriel in *Lord Of The Rings* but it works well. Ponyo exclaims, 'I love my mother. She's really scary'.

It's refreshing to have a film dedicated to spurring the imagi-

nation of the young; thanks to the spareness of dialogue (not so much Disney-style chat and back-chat) you appreciate the images right before you: as Lasseter says, Miyazaki is 'brave enough to let it just quiet down'. What really sets apart Miyazaki films is that there is nothing superficial or shallow and most of all there is no violence. Miyazaki always conveys overtones of adult themes of the industrial pollution of the natural world and so therefore *Ponyo On The Cliff By The Sea*, (though not so much as *Princess Mononoke*), is more of an environmental allegory. Fujimoto exclaims that humans 'are disgusting' because of how much waste they're producing because even Miyazaki's villains aren't usually even really villainous. I guess you could say Fujimoto is a 'villain' but even he has his reasons and this makes this (as all of Miyazaki's films) quite significant, because of his compassionate insight into the motivation of his more negative characters' actions and attitudes.

For a movie so short (only an hour and forty minutes) it enables its audience to be completely captivated by the emotions of the characters. As always, Joe Hisaishi, Miyazaki's long-time composer, blends his score into the narrative with ease and beauty. As with

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all Miyazaki's creations you must see it to believe it, to appreciate the sheer scope and beauty of his vision. His imagination spans further with every new film he makes. Every frame is a whirlwind of colour, intricately detailed, and all hand-drawn. The story and images fit together perfectly, drawing the audience into an absorbed, trance-like state.

The thing that I love about Miyazaki films is that no single character is demonised. They all have the ability and the opportunity to explain themselves, which allows complexity and nuances that one doesn't often find in kids' movies. Indeed, such subtlety is much more enriching for children and satisfying for adults, which makes it truly a 'family' movie. His works are parables of real human emotion: so although his films are classed as 'fantasy', in essence they are not stereotypically so, because they convey deeper emotional and spiritual realities. In particular, *Ponyo On The Cliff By The Sea* conveys forgiveness – and by implication, the possibility of redemption.

Having seen both the dubbed and the subtitled version of *Ponyo* I can say that the film works excellently through both. Miyazaki has a way of transporting his audiences

back to a time when they were able to look at everything with fascination and newness, finding wonder in even the most seemingly mundane of circumstances. Miyazaki's protagonists are memorable because they are usually very strong and positive females, yet their inherent innocence enables them to look at the world with truth. *Ponyo* is one of many, such as *Nausicäa (Nausicäa of the Valley of the Wind, 1984)* and *Chihiro (Spirited Away, 2001)*, and many more. Indeed there is an emphasis on female leads in his films – Miyazaki has said that he is unafraid of being political and is thought of as being quite a feminist. But more than anything *Ponyo* is about the innocence and trust of the young. Miyazaki has yet again crafted a little masterpiece. ■

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'These violent delights'

AMELIA HUGHES-LOBERT

New Moon Dir. Chris Weitz

AFTER THE OUTSTANDING success of *Twilight* (2008) directed by Catherine Hardwicke, Chris Weitz has now taken the reins for the sequel *New Moon*. Unless you've been living under a rock for a year (and if you have then you're lucky) you will probably have heard that the

Twilight series is a set of four novels, written by a devout American Mormon woman, Stephenie Meyer.

Here's *Twilight* described in one sentence: Girl falls in love with unusually handsome boy who turns out to be a vampire who no longer hurts humans and loves her

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enough to restrain himself from harming her.

I can safely say *New Moon* pleased the overwhelmingly young female audience. Edward's (Robert Pattinson) and Jacob's (Taylor Lautner) shirt removals got many girlish squeals and applause in the audience when I saw the film.

But loving even a reformed and restrained vampire has its dangers. The film begins with an ominous quote from *Romeo and Juliet*:

These violent delights have violent ends.

And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,

Which, as they kiss, consume.

When Edward, believing it is for her own good, renounces Bella (Kristen Stewart) she becomes almost catatonic with grief. Enter Jacob, a childhood friend, a boy from an Indian Reservation (near the town of Forks where Bella lives). Jacob has a bit of a secret, (but it's no secret to anyone in the audience, bombarded with trailers for the last eight months). Like most of his family, he is a kind of werewolf, activated by strong emotion and is a deadly enemy of, you guessed it, vampires.

Often I wonder why this saga has erupted so amazingly across the world. Maybe it's something to do with the fact that this series

began as very chaste romantic fantasy by the devoutly Mormon author, Stephenie Meyer. She has said that this tale evolved from one of her dreams. And if much popular culture is to be believed, you would think that all young women want and dream about is sex and maybe Jimmy Choo shoes.

But the really interesting thing about this series is that there is no sex, and the heroine is uninterested in clothes. Indeed, it's the lack of sex, and the loving self-restraint of Edward that seems to attract millions and millions of girls around the world. Girls are now so used to being objectified, that it becomes a wondrous idea to be cherished and protected by a strong male rather than used or exploited.

The books are entirely from a female's perspective and millions of female fans are driving the *Twilight* phenomenon. It's not just about high-minded wishes to be loved though; these vampires are so attractive to teenage girls because well, they're attractive.

But more than that I think there is a deeper love for these books and films because Edward is utterly devoted to Bella: he would literally die for her and lives to save and protect her. Teenage girls are drawn to this fidelity and chivalry. And Bella represents every teen-

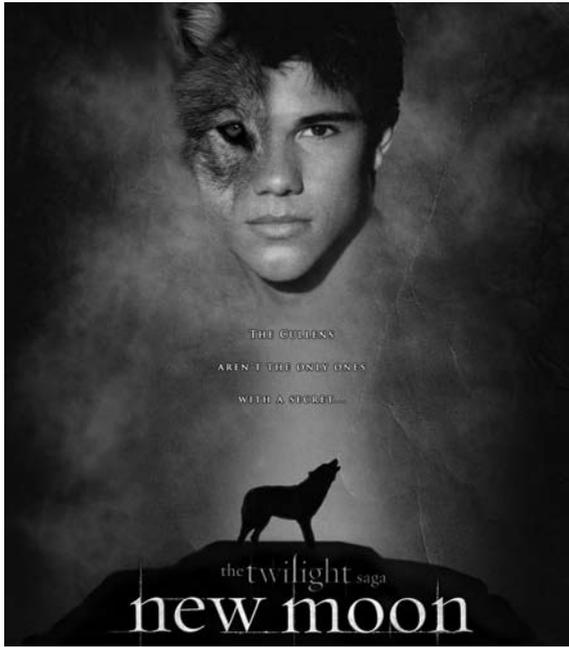
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age girl who's ever felt ordinary, awkward and out of place. There is a sense of belonging, of self-identification for the audience.

But in the end I didn't enjoy *New Moon* as much as I enjoyed Hardwicke's edgy, low-tech

CGI, too many special effects, not enough mystery. The indie feel and passion of the first film is gone; now it's just a Hollywood teen blockbuster flick.

It looked as though they were now milking the phenomenon for



Twilight, the first film in the series. Christopher Weitz, the new director, commits the kind of 'sequelitis' crimes that you find in those awful *Highlander* and *Matrix* sequels. After giving away every single plot point in the first five minutes you wonder whether Weitz even liked the story. There's too much

everything it's got, even using lame and obvious product placement with cameras, cars and planes.

But I may be in a minority in thinking this, if the audience reaction in the packed cinema was anything to go by. ■



Then and now

JULIETTE HUGHES

My Place, ABC3. Producer: Penny Chapman

HAVE YOU EVER wondered, as you drive down a suburban street, what it looked like a century ago? Two? Three? Sometimes, for the lover of nature, such reflections can be lacerating to the point of masochism: grieving for lost beauties should not be a cul de sac, but instead spur us to try to renew and restore wherever we can.

Writer Nadia Wheatley and illustrator Donna Rawlings, creators of the multi-award-winning 1988 novel *My Place*, must have had some such ideas in mind when they centred the story around a single house inhabited by a series of families over the years. Penny Chapman (once

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the head of ABC drama in the halcyon days of *Brides of Christ*, *The Leaving of Liverpool* and *Blue Murder* and now freelancing from Sydney) has developed the novel's themes with a team of writers and directors to produce a brilliant 13-part series that takes us back decade by decade. At times it is truly moving: a mini-masterpiece.

Starting in the comfort zone, in the easy familiarities of 2008 ways, cultures and fashions, *My Place* (8pm weekdays on ABC3) takes us back half a generation at a time. The first episode shows us a welcome 21st century phenomenon, the middle-class urban family of Aboriginal origin: connected fully with both their ancient heritage and contemporary multicultural Australia. Laura, a 10-year-old, is faced with a personal and ethical dilemma when a childish game causes loss and damage to others. She sits and contemplates her options in the massive tree, which along with the house, is one of the recurring constants throughout the series. This mini-morality play, redolent with significance, is written by Aboriginal actor and writer Leah Purcell. Counterpointing this and resonating through the story is the historic moment of the long-overdue Apology, Kevin Rudd's finest moment in Parliament. It helps us to remember the other young girl from long ago, Barangaroo, whose people belonged in the place where the big tree stands. Her face recurs at certain moments: as we see her it causes us to ponder about place, memory and dispossession. The fear of some kind of displacement, alienation and loss loom large in the lives of all 13 of the children who live in the terraced house that we see being built in 1888, in the final episode.

It was fitting that the series should begin with the



1938: Thommo and Colum in the Big Tree

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descendants of Australia's first people. Yet the problems suffered by migrants also becomes a strong theme: 1998 gives us young Mohammed living in the house, climbing the tree, playing (or trying to play) cricket with the local boys' team. He is a brilliant bowler but is treated with contempt and cheated out of a place in the team by a bigoted Anglo-Australian cricket coach. It is refreshing to see a Muslim family portrayed as normal, decent, tolerant people. That vast majority of the Muslim community doesn't get much of a profile in the mass media; this addresses a cultural gap that sorely needs filling.

In the 1988 episode, the Bicentennial Year, Phoung, a young Vietnamese girl, lives in the house, meditates in the huge wonderful tree



*Laura and her family watch *The Apology* in 2008*

(is it a Moreton Bay fig?) and struggles with the mixed emotions evoked by a cunning and manipulative cousin who comes to live with them. It will be a revelation to some that the broader community was more welcoming to refugees than than now.

In 1978, Mike, a young Anglo-Australian boy, lives in the house. But his father knows about prejudice: in 1958, as the young Michaelis, Mike's future father must deal with the fact that as a Greek, he is considered

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unacceptable by the rigid, Edna-Everage-type neighbours, whose two brutish blond boys mirror their parents' racist attitudes. Michaelis' longing for his family to own a TV so he can see *Robin Hood*, is poignant and funny; he pushes the boundaries of common sense and must face the consequences. It reminded me of my own childhood and the advent of ITV, the commercial channel, in Britain. Our telly, bought in 1953 to watch the Coronation, only got the BBC and so we couldn't watch *Popeye* at home when he came to ITV in 1956. So we were dependent on the good graces of a friend's mum ... If Mrs Johnson were in a snippety mood, we didn't get to see *Popeye*. We felt deprived every week that we missed it: Michaelis' hunger to see his hero is completely believable.

If the series has a fault, it is that there are no really strong, benign Anglo-Australian males among the characters in the first six episodes: 2008 to 1958. A couple of Anglo girls are unprejudiced, and indeed become girlfriends, wives etc. But Mrs Benson, the main white female from 1958 to 2008 is a caricature of thin-lipped joylessness and spite. I suppose of course that we must remember that this is set in Sydney, still the land of shock jocks and Bra Boys. As a Melbournian, I wonder if racial tensions between residents of differing backgrounds are quite so high as they are north of the Murray. (No doubt some affronted Sydneysider will set me straight in the Letters page next issue!)

But it needs to be said that not all white Australians were bigoted at that time; indeed, 1968 was the year that followed the 1967 historic referendum in which a majority of white Australians voted to count Aboriginal people as Australian citizens. That doesn't get attention in the 1968 episode, which is concerned with Michaelis' being called up to fight in Vietnam, while trying to make his family accept his Anglo-Australian girlfriend. Obviously 1968's episode couldn't include all the events that occurred in that momentous year, (the crushing of the Prague Spring; the My Lai massacre; the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy; the Paris riots; the publishing of *Humanae Vitae*; the Mexico Olympics ...) No, one couldn't reasonably expect a 25-minute kids' drama episode to cover all that. And as a snapshot of ordinary decent people trying to live life in that time it worked well. The episode is livened by the central character, Sofia, Michaelis' 10-year-old sister (born at the end of the 1958 episode). The young actor, Anastasia Feneri, manages to be bratty and vulnerable in a memorable performance. She is a sparky, vivid

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little thing, full of energy as she manipulates those around her beloved big brother.

Despite these small quibbles, *My Place* is going to be a valuable resource for teachers of lower-level History, SOSE – even R.E. Ethical problems and crises continually arise and would give rise to much fruitful discussion. The series has obviously been extensively researched for period detail, and the major historical events that are the background (the Apology, the Vietnam War, etc) are made more real by seeming to see real people living through them. The production values are excellent: the hair, the clothes, furniture, vehicles and dialogue all feel authentic.

For adults who remember those years, it can evoke nostalgia. (I certainly would love to see that 1950s' *Robin Hood* with Richard Greene again ...) As *My Place* winds time backward decade by decade, we see the struggles of ordinary battlers. The 1938 episode shows neighbours supporting each other as a suited and hatted jobsworth snoops around their backyards looking for 'undeclared' chooks. Such a misdemeanour could see a jobless father of a family knocked off the dole. Whole families were evicted in this way and, like young Thommo, had to go and live in the sprawling tent cities that were the only housing for the homeless.

In the final episode (1888) we see issues of class and inequality between a squatter's daughter and young Victoria, the daughter of the kind but cash-strapped man who is having the house built. Both families end up impoverished by the financial crisis of the time. We also see young Barangaroo with her mother, searching for bush tucker in the creek – the place that gradually became a built-out bitumened suburb was then on the edge of the countryside. Her face is wide-eyed, wary; it reminds us that her mob had little reason to trust the invaders, for however much an Anglo-Celtic individual might have problems surviving, there was never a sense that their wider culture or spiritual way of life was being eroded. 2008's Laura has occasional visions of Barangaroo by the tree and the creek: seeing her more fully in 1888 brings the plot full circle.

There are so many riches in this series: teachers are going to stampede for the DVDs, an Aladdin's cave of resources. At least these days one can catch it on ABC's wonderful resource IView. And there is a website with virtual tours of the house and surrounds: abc.net.au/abc3/myplace

Whatever you do, don't miss it. ■

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