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Editorial

I have been thinking about what is the most important thing that makes leadership in a Catholic school different. Recently Damien Brennan wrote a blog for CathNews Australia, in which discussed the four Cardinal Virtues and their place in decision making.

He wrote that the four Cardinal Virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance (Wisdom, 8:7), can support how we operate, not just in significant decision making but when engaging in conversation where different viewpoints are being advanced. The Cardinal Virtues can assist us to discern and achieve good, in our professional and personal lives. They could be used as a rubric to apply when we make decisions in school and in education:

- Prudence: what good are we trying to achieve, what do we wish to improve on, and what impacts will our decision have, how realistic is our timeframe, how wise is our decision?
- Justice: who might benefit or suffer by our decision, what are the potential consequences of our decision, is there a moral purpose in this decision?
- Fortitude: how strongly required is this decision, how strong are our own feelings and those of others about it, will those implementing it be strong enough, how will others interpret it, what might we need to watch out for?
- Temperance: what attracts me to this decision and what pushes me away from it, what will it mean to my role and responsibilities, what resourcing does it require and is this responsible use of the resources available? Who or what might be harmed by the decision?

Brennan suggests these are a valuable alternative or addition to using the thinking hats (De Bono) when discerning and decision making, and I think he could be right.

But the above was written before the election of Pope Francis - he has immediately shown that those in poverty, particularly those in extreme poverty, should always be of primary importance in the minds and hearts of those in leadership. And while prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, will help us to run an excellent school, we need to go well beyond these virtues, to take steps in courage and faith into an as yet unknown future, in order to sustain and promote the educational, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing of those we are called serve. We need to keep justice for the anawim always in mind.

Our articles in this issue show leaders working to support those they serve. We thank the writers for their willingness to contribute insights that will enable us to take steps into our unknown future. We are forming, in Bishop Drennan's words, "a new generation of believers, disciples and evangelisers." We will have varying degrees of success, but our goal remains the same to support our young people and their families and to form them into people who will bring the Good News to the poor and change the world.

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Young and Catholic

Dr Chris Duthie Jung, The Catholic Institute, Wellington

It has been hard to miss the significant decline in the number of young people participating in Sunday Mass in NZ over the last two decades. Despite earnest, if often fragmented, efforts to address this situation the on-going reduction in young Catholic presence in local parish communities has continued unrelentingly. This is particularly so among young New Zealanders of European descent; our 'Pakeha' young people. With this in mind it was the religious identity of a sample of Gen Y (ages 18-28 years) Catholics that I set out to study in my recent doctoral research exploring the extent to which these young people identified with a traditional Catholic worldview and how they may have reshaped Catholic faith in their own lives.

Spiritual boom or bust?

One school of thought emergent from contemporary studies of spirituality among Gen Y indicates that the level of interest in spirituality is as high today as it has ever been. Australians Gary Bouma and David Tacey separately reach this conclusion, identifying religious decline as an experience of the traditional churches rather than any real loss of spiritual interest among the young. Bouma believes that it is Pentecostalism that is best positioned to benefit from the changes we are seeing while Tacey asserts that what the young find simply incredible today is not spirituality but the dogged defence of an outdated worldview by the institutional churches. He goes further in asserting that, when this worldview is put aside, what is discovered among the general population is an interest in spirituality that has never been greater.

But others disagree finding in their studies varying degrees of what we might call the 'dilution of religiosity'. In the U.S., Smith and Denton identified the now well known notion of Moral Therapeutic Deism - a de facto system of transcendent belief that they found prevalent among their study's young participants. Its generalised creed centres on belief in a God who somewhat distantly watches over human life on earth, while expecting people to be 'good, nice, and fair' to each other. Closer to home, Mason, Singleton and Webber largely concur finding that only about 41% of Gen Y Australians really engaged with spirituality and just 17% with any form of Christianity.

Whether spirituality is on the up, sliding or holding steady, the impact on traditional religious behaviour seems undeniably negative.

A Catholic worldview

My own qualitative research in New Zealand involved a geographically spread, gender balanced sample including a range of Catholic young people from the keenly involved to the disconnected. Key among the findings was an overwhelming religious illiteracy, i.e. having significant difficulty describing or explaining the Church, sacraments, salvation, ecclesial roles, etc. More positively, the participants generally did recognise that Catholicism is characterised by the 'sacramental' and their

responses indicated an inherent sense of the grace-filled nature of the God-human relationship, of human nature itself, and of the world in general. But awareness of the importance of sacrament did not run to any significant knowledge of the seven official sacraments nor any substantial understanding of everyday sacramentality.

A surprising number of otherwise well-educated young Catholics felt that there was a substantial unresolved tension between faith and science. Many thought that Catholic faith still required literal belief in a seven-day-creation while for others ethical problems were rightly identified as the big challenge in the scientific enterprise today. While almost all were comfortable with a concept of mystery at the heart of faith, it appeared that a clash between this mystery and their own upbringing in an evidence-based scientific culture led to an on-going tension.

Salvation was a seemingly impenetrable concept to most participants and, when asked what it meant to them, 'being saved from hell' was the common reflex answer beyond which many struggled to go. With regard to 'sin', while one or two objected to the very idea, most could explain a balanced concept of wrongdoing though this remained initially very individual-focussed. When pressed, however, the importance for Catholics of issues of social justice (ecology, life issues, sexual morality and poverty) was well recognised. Finally all participants agreed that gathering as community was essential for Christians, an assertion that paradoxically posed little problem for the majority of my interviewees who themselves participated only irregularly or not at all. Overwhelmingly, the participants were proud and pleased to self-identify as Catholic, an identity that appeared, however, to have much more to do with cultural affiliation to school and home than with any currently active association to Christian community.

Catholic identity

You may remember Andrew Greeley's (1976) concept of 'communal Catholics' - those who identify with Catholicism, enjoy being Catholic, but participate minimally, hold low expectations of the Church and do not take Church teaching and guidance seriously. Although at first this appears to be an accurate description of what almost all of the research is finding among Gen Y today, deeper analysis suggests that the term is in fact becoming less applicable to a younger generation who decreasingly experience the church as a distinct community and cultural tradition of which they are a part. Rather than being 'communal Catholics' themselves, they are the children of 'communal Catholics' and almost every indicator points to far less Catholic connection and commitment than their parents.

As my research confirmed, their knowledge of the language and symbolism of the tradition is relatively sparse - as is their experience of Catholicism as a tight-knit culture system. Although they share with Greeley's 'communal Catholics' a remarkable belief in the uniqueness of Catholicism, they struggle to articulate any grounds for this uniqueness. While they may desire to remain identified as Catholic they are less and less sure what it actually means to be so. The sense of uniqueness of Catholic identity felt among young adults appears to be more related to assertions

such as, 'I can't imagine being anything else!' than with any sense of institutional Catholicism having a unique role in salvation history.

Secularity

Rather than viewing institutional church decline as the harbinger of the end of religion, Canadian philosopher and secularisation specialist Charles Taylor sees the present era as an 'age of authenticity' in which people have become focussed on identifying and realising their own individual humanity. External and older models are strongly resisted and society-wide individualism is manifest in the consumer revolution within which there is a deliberate targeting of the young. Raised to believe in the importance of their own self-directed journey, the young judge the place of religion and spirituality in their lives on the same consumer criteria as everything else. Active involvement in church life is usually found undesirable and simply unnecessary.

As the research shows, one can taper off one's involvement while maintaining the conviction (at least initially) that such commitment is not really essential to being Christian or Catholic. God becomes the somewhat distant figure of Moral Therapeutic Deism and Catholicism becomes (in Dean Hoge's words) "a cultural tool kit of symbolic religion (&) spiritual wares from which it is possible to construct a personal religious identity." This conviction that today one must craft one's own religious identity appears to be part of the DNA of the young Catholic and it is certainly evident in my own research as illustrated in the way more traditional Catholic indicators (devotions, sacramental participation, and even attendance) give way to a more detached Catholicism of childhood and educational memories coupled with occasional visitation. It would appear that Gen Y Catholics in New Zealand still do willingly embrace a Catholic identity but it is an increasingly customized version thereof.

2013 Working with ESOL and New Migrant Families

Trish Sleeman, Principal, Sacred Heart School, Addington, Christchurch

Sacred Heart Addington is an inner city primary school in a neighbourhood of Christchurch where new migrant families settle.

In the early 1900's, 900 men were employed in the railway workshops in Addington. Many in this early wave of migrants were from Ireland. From all reports the Irish were not always welcome, with signs in some small businesses including statements like "Catholics need not apply." In 1900 the workshops closed and a once large primary school dwindled in numbers as families moved from the area in search of employment.

In 2005 a new wave of migrant families arrived from Zimbabwe and the Philippines. To celebrate our growing, culturally rich school we placed a large map of the world in the foyer with photographs of all students along with greetings written in their languages of origin. Unlike many schools in Christchurch we boasted students from England, Samoa, Tonga, Croatia, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Cambodia, India, Argentina, Egypt, Fiji, as well as Māori and Kiwi students.

In 2008 we enrolled a total of 45 unexpected overseas students. These were and still are exciting times. Our migrant families arrived well organised with documentation and we needed to upskill our knowledge of work permits, student visas, overseas birth and baptismal certificates, plus gain an understanding of foreign immunisation forms.

Once they were in the classrooms we quickly became aware of the excellent skills and talents these children had, often locked away in a foreign language. To assist these students two teachers completed a two year ESOL certificate and three teacher aides gained honours in an ESOL training programme. At this time we also employed Mona from the Philippines as a teacher aide (Mona was in fact our highest qualified member of staff having a Law degree and Industrial Psychiatry training).

As more families arrived we became aware that the vast majority were "under-employed" many working in rest homes as care givers whilst being Registered Nurses. Whilst working for a minimum wage many worked to complete ESOL papers to advance their ability to return to their chosen professions.

To assist our students and families we started the Home School Partnership. This has received incredible support from children and their families. We always start by sharing food before leading into a session on teaching and learning. Thanks to Duffy Books we also have many prizes and games. We have had a good deal of trial and error with our food sharing, including muffins, a barbecue, savouries plus, a soup evening, where we quickly discovered that tomato was not a favourite and were left with many gallons, whilst the other flavours disappeared rapidly. Recently we have all made healthy sandwiches as part of our health promoting schools programme. At each session following our shared activities, teachers present how they teach a particular subject at their level.

Each year we have focused on reading, writing or mathematics. In mathematics we showed how the numeracy programme is taught. At each session families were given kits with games and cards to take home and use. On the final evening families brought along maths games from their own cultures to share in groups, and a great deal of noise and laughter was heard as all joined in.

To assist our reading evenings we filmed Mona, a teacher and a parent reading a variety of books to their children. We also had local librarians present to explain the library systems and to assist new families in joining the local library.

Whilst many of our students were able to decode with ease we soon found that their level of understanding of text was well below their decoding level. After researching areas of assistance we read of a new programme that had been trialled successfully in Hong Kong. After contacting Hilton Ayery it was agreed that we could trial it in New Zealand. After teacher training the CSI Programme was introduced with excellent outcomes. More recently we have introduced the AVAILLL programme for six weeks each year with very pleasing results.

Whilst it is easy to dwell on the needs of our migrant students, the advantages they have brought to all our lives far outweigh what we have given in return.

Our Filipino students have ensured that our basketball court gains full use during championships at Pioneer Stadium. Initially fathers from our Filipino community trained the teams, however it wasn't long before past pupils returned to eagerly train our present players.

The annual Science Fair has attained new heights with incredible scientific inventions and investigations being presented, well beyond those of earlier years. The standard of art work is such that a visiting art specialist was in awe.

Every year we have run a one term gifted and talented term with opportunities for all students in years 4-8 to take part in one of the following areas: writing, science, art technology and problem solving. Our annual speech competition has also strengthened with three of the four winners last year being new English language learners.

Our music specialist, with staff, prepares students for an amazing annual Arts Festival evening. The production is written by the seniors and usually involves a trip around the world, with songs, music and dance from other lands. It is always a great hit with families seeing the haka performed with gusto and with only one New Zealand student in the line up.

In term four we regularly study our Cultural Diversity with inquiries linked to this. At the end of the studies we celebrate our learning. Students still remember our umu celebrated with families and the wider community.

As the years have progressed we are very proud of the areas of responsibility now being shared with our migrant families. We have four different nationalities on our Board of Trustees. We have also been supported by priests from India and the Philippines.

As a staff we feel very privileged to have had this amazing experience. Times continue to change in Addington. After the earthquake of February 22 in 2011 we were greatly affected by the death of Ivy. Ivy was a mother who was adventurous enough to come on a school camp and was a huge support. She was preparing for a final ESOL paper when the building she was in collapsed. Her twin daughters have returned to the Philippines with their father. This brought terrible sadness to our community.

A further blow was when several families' work permits were declined. This was an added blow as many had worked without a break as care givers during the dreadful days after the quake. With the assistance of Members of Parliament, meetings and letter writing, the one year work permits are slowly returning for many.

Addington is rapidly changing from humble workers' cottages to new shiny office blocks and "men in suits". We are unsure of the future as house prices rise and families relocate. However, we have a new group of migrants arriving for the rebuild of our city and our doors are wide open.

In all, it has been a wonderful experience for us all at Sacred Heart. It would not have been possible without a very dedicated staff who, without exception, are prepared to go the extra mile. This includes extra professional development and innovative ways to promote the teaching and learning of all.

What Makes an Effective Religious Education Lesson?

Tom Silverwood, former Secondary Advisor Diocese of Palmerston North

How do we know when an RE lesson has been effective? Over the past four years as the then secondary advisor to the Diocese of Palmerston North, I have been present in many RE lessons, in numerous Colleges with a wide range of students.

One significant feature of these numerous lessons is the outstanding commitment of the RE teachers not only to teach the RE curriculum but also to pass on the faith in Jesus Christ.

There is nothing new in what I am about to write. We all know that you need passionate teachers who are well qualified in the curriculum to teach RE, but the students and the society that they live in is changing dramatically all the time.

As teachers we not only have to keep up with these changing times, we have to embrace them and incorporate them into the delivery of the RE curriculum, so that what we present to our students has relevance and meaning.

I suppose there are only two ways to tell whether an RE lesson has been effective: feedback from the teacher, and more importantly feedback from the other participants in the lesson, the students.

One factor that I have observed in effective RE lessons is the student - teacher relationship. This relationship is crucial, because as RE teachers we are not only teaching content (knowledge) but also passing on the faith. There is a critical balance between how much teaching of content goes on in an RE lesson and how much faith inspiration.

Our students come to us more unchurched than ever. That does not mean, however, that they do not have faith, it means that they have had little or no experience of expressing their faith or any connection with the Church that is parish.

So, effective RE lessons must have student engagement, which is the same for any curriculum subject. In RE, however, what is being taught must have extra relevance for students in their daily lives. They need to take what is being presented before them in the classroom and be able to apply it to their own lives outside the classroom.

The students need to see that the Church's beliefs and teachings about Jesus are as relevant today as they have always been and that what is being taught gives meaning to their lives. The students need concrete examples and modelling on how the lessons taught in the classroom can be applied to the real world. Making connections for the students between the Church's teachings and traditions and the world that they live in is crucial. An example of this would be how a teacher uses the resources supplied by Caritas during Lent and Social Justice Week to enrich their lessons in a way that the students connect the Church's teachings on social justice with the injustices that they see in the world.

Technology and visual learning is now the world in which our students live and I have seen creative and effective use of technology in RE lessons. Here are just a few examples that particularly struck me over the four years that I was an advisor. The teachers might recognise the lessons I am about to refer to. The first lesson incorporated a segment from a television programme, not a new concept, but how it was used was very effective. The teacher was teaching the Year 10 topic, "Inspiring men and women," and he wanted to draw out from the students that we have today in our society inspiring men and woman just as Jesus was an inspiring person for His day. This particular teacher used the "Good Sorts," programme from TV One website and showed the class a selection of "Good Sorts," to illustrate his point. Another effective lesson was introduced, with a slightly out of focus picture projected on the wall. As part of a meditation exercise students had to guess what the picture was, then write for themselves a possible scenario. At the end of the meditation exercise, the teacher put the picture into focus: it was a woman bent over carrying a load of firewood and this was the introduction to the Year 12 topic on Social Justice. I have seen teachers use YouTube clips, segments from the History channel on the Journeys of Saint Paul, and segments from movies like Luther, and Romero. The use of Prezi, which is an upmarket version of powerpoint is becoming more common. One teacher had his students working on computers producing biographies of historical persons in a particular period in Church history.

In conclusion, any teaching strategy in an RE lesson which engages the student's heart and mind is an effective lesson. We teachers must constantly remind ourselves that the students before us live in a different society to the one we grew up in, and possibly the Church we grew up in was somewhat different from the Church that these students have so little experience of. So when we teach them, we are not just passing on the content knowledge but also our faith in Jesus.

Our Identity as the People of God

Anne Tuohy, Director, The Catholic Institute

In his Synod Intervention late last year, Bishop Charles Drennan spoke of the relationship between the Catholic school and the New Evangelisation. He drew attention to the reality that, in the modern secular culture of countries like New Zealand, "the primary community of faith" has shifted to the schools, and now "teachers rather than parents have become, in many instances, the first formators in faith of our young." Accordingly, Catholic schools are being called to do more than support their students' faith formation - previously begun at home - and instead are finding themselves being more deeply "engaged in the satisfying task of forming a new generation of believers, disciples and evangelisers." One of the four pillars Bishop Drennan acknowledged as supporting this relationship between Catholic schools and the New Evangelisation was the call to foster a sense of identity and conviction that "awakens in the young the sense of belonging to God's people."

The call to reclaim our identity as 'The People of God' was given a renewed emphasis at the Second Vatican Council. It was developed most fully in *Lumen Gentium* - the Constitution on the nature and mission of the Church - and came to dominate and embody Vatican II's ecclesiology or understanding of what it means to be Church. As the New Evangelisation challenges us all to take another look at how we embody and pass on our faith tradition, the sense of belonging to God's people offers Catholic schools a unique and distinctive starting point from which to shape and form the identity of their students and wider communities.

The image of the Church as the People of God originally comes from the Old Testament and emerged from the Covenant with Moses - which of course marked the election of Israel as a nation. So 'People of God' is a covenantal or relational image. More than any other concept, it was the designation of being called the 'People of God' that bound Israel together and linked them intimately with God. This gave Israel a collective historical identity that was intimately linked into their relationship with God. So the People of God image carries a corporate personality; the individual takes on meaning and identity insofar as they are involved with a people or group, and the identity of the group takes on meaning insofar as they are in relationship - or covenant - with God. It is a very grace-filled image for it serves to personify the gratuitous or free invitation of God to a particular people, and it affirms that within the lives of these people, the Divine plan of salvation - or presence and grace of God - will be concretised or made real.

In keeping with this image of the People of God, the early Christian communities also saw themselves as a covenantal people, called to be the New Israel and charged with bringing the presence and grace of God into the world in a new way. In the Second Vatican Council's reflection on the nature and mission of the Church, this biblical image of the People of God was reclaimed in its collective sense and given a contemporary social emphasis. Accordingly, in *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican II clearly called the whole church - lay, clerics and religious - to participate in its evangelising mission, declaring that if the presence and grace of God was to be made visible in the modern secular world the Church needed to call upon the active participation of "all God's people."

So, while it would seem that teachers are increasingly becoming the first faith educators of our young, the challenge this presents is not about taking responsibility for yet another task, or squeezing something more into an already over-crowded timetable. Rather it is about taking every

opportunity to celebrate and affirm our identity as the people of God - to be 'in the world' in a particular and recognisable way and so inculcate a sense of identity and a real sense of belonging for all members of the school community. And in the very secular world in which most of our students find themselves today - where there are a myriad of competing identities calling for their attention - the opportunity to foster in students a sense of identity and belonging that has such an impressive lineage is surely not one to be missed.

The Aspiring Project and a Visit to L'Hermitage: Sabbatical Report

Dennis Fahey, Principal, Marcellin College, Auckland

My sabbatical in Term 3, 2012, with funding assistance from both the Catholic Principals' Association and the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, provided me with the opportunity to explore two important areas for my personal professional development. One, the Aspiring Project, allowed me to look more closely at positive means of increasing student engagement and the other, a visit to L'Hermitage, in St Chamond, enabled me to reflect upon the charism of the founder of the Marist Brothers, St Marcellin Champagnat.

I express my gratitude to both the Catholic Principals' Association and the New Zealand Catholic Education Office. Their funding enabled me to significantly develop a line of enquiry which originally was to be taken up in New Zealand (including visiting schools in Christchurch). The original research was delayed because of the Christchurch earthquakes and because of work within my own school, and it developed into the extended research in England and France which is described below.

1. Aspiring Project

While my general line of enquiry for my sabbatical centred on improving student achievement, the discovery of the work being undertaken at the University of Exeter under the Aspiring Project provided me with a different approach to other research I had begun to investigate. I was particularly interested in finding ways to improve Year 13 student engagement and could see how the process could be applied to this year level on an experimental basis.

We had tried several strategies over the years but had failed to discover an effective solution for a particular group of Year 13 students each year who had been engaged in Years 11 and 12 but appeared to lose interest during Year 13, with their achievement suffering accordingly. The aspect of Aspire that interested me in trying to solve this problem was its heavy emphasis on a 'bottom up' approach which empowers students to take control of their own learning and to identify the issues that prevent learning taking place. It requires a flattening of the normally-accepted school structure and its replacement by a structure in which all participants are given equal status. It does not mean that the teacher stands back and lets things happen but the role does change to one of being more of a mentor and guide, journeying with the students to better learning outcomes.

Under the guidance of an Aspire Lead Teacher (ALT), a process is followed which puts in place a team of teachers, students and, where possible, parents who will lead a particular project. The group formulates a research question related to the issue which has been identified and works together to put in place the necessary steps to research and analyse the problem, to map out an action plan for implementation and to evaluate outcomes.

The project views the performative function of schools as important where the academic achievement of students is given priority but it also moves beyond this into aspects of the whole person which are not so easily measured. It is in these aspects, such as creativity and emotional development, that lack of acknowledgement of their importance in providing positive feedback on achievement, can often leave students frustrated.

The process is research-based and requires the careful collection and analysis of data which forms the basis of the way forward and the evaluation.

The outcome of the process for Marcellin College will, I hope, be the identification of those matters which are preventing student engagement and the opportunity for us to deal with them in a systematic way to bring about improvement for those involved.

The above provides a very general and broad outline of the process involved. There is also available a 22 page document which outlines the process in much greater detail and a proposed plan for its development at Marcellin College in 2013. This plan is already undergoing major adjustment as we begin the implementation of it. However, it is our hope that the assessing of a more positive leadership role by our Year 13 will bear fruit in the grades they achieve at the end of the year. I am happy to provide copies of this.

2. Reflection on My Visit to L'Hermitage

Personally, the trip to St Chamond was firstly, an opportunity to visit the area I had heard of and read so much about, from the time I first attended Xavier College in Christchurch, through my time as a Marist Brother, until my present position as Principal of Marcellin College. Furthermore, I had the time to reflect on what I saw and heard and to form some conclusions - whether they be valid or invalid. I was privileged to have the services of an Australian Brother, Brother Neville, who was very much steeped in the history of the area and times which he shared freely.

The first point that struck me was that Marcellin Champagnat was responding to his times rather than to the poor alone. Marcellin came from a reasonably well off family and that they did not have a great amount of money was more the result of mismanagement by his father than of actual poverty. The villages and homes in the area around L'Hermitage were not those of the poor and they are not now either. The situation Marcellin found himself in was the result of a political situation which left many French people unable to practise their religion or gain an education as a consequence of the French Revolution.

Marcellin saw the need to provide the young with a knowledge of God and an all important education that the state was no longer providing. Thus he set about providing schooling opportunities for the children of the local area and the Marist Brothers were founded accordingly. It appears that in this process, Marcellin made it very clear that the educational opportunities he was providing were to be extended to all children of the area, that it was particularly important that all children have equal access to them and that special care was to be given to the most disadvantaged.

In responding to the needs of his local area in France at the time, Marcellin created a clear vision on which the Marist Brothers would be based. The need for religion and education was by no means restricted to France at this time and the growth of the Marist Brothers was a response to this need. Thus they spread to many countries to bring God and education to all those who needed it. Marcellin, then, identified a need in his times and responded to it. Would he ask that today's Marists, both religious and lay, also identify the needs of the times and review the vision, keeping in mind especially those who do not have an equal opportunity to participate in society?

A second insight gained was into the person of Champagnat himself. His father was a skilled craftsman, businessman and politician. He was a leading figure in his community and the house the family owned was by no means that of a destitute family. What Marcellin lacked was the education that his father had received and utilised all his life.

Marcellin may have struggled academically because of a lack of literacy skills but this is not an indication that he lacked ability but rather that he lacked the opportunity to develop it. Marcellin's father ended up bankrupt with little to show for his life. The same cannot be said of Marcellin. He did not repeat his father's mistakes. When he started out, Marcellin bought and paid for the first house in La Valla and took out a small loan in the process. The Brothers he trained did not get a free ride when they joined either. They were expected to contribute to their upkeep at La Valla and later at L'Hermitage. Champagnat gained support from the local community for his work and funds were donated accordingly. While he had a great faith in Jesus and Mary to provide, he was also a shrewd administrator who took the practical measures required to help finance the projects he undertook.

Marcellin's success was based not only on his business acumen but also on his ability to lead the way with the physical work required. He involved himself as a craftsman and a labourer. The labour demands of L'Hermitage must have been huge with the quality of local rock involved in the building of it.

As a result of my trip, my perception of Champagnat has changed from seeing him as a person mainly renowned for a legendary work ethic to understanding that he was both astute and shrewd in administrative and financial matters. He used these qualities to advantage in the foundation and establishment of the Marist Brothers' Institute.

The opportunity to visit L'Hermitage and the surrounding area was a very beneficial by-product of my travels to the University of Exeter, providing a much-appreciated opportunity to see and hear about the environment in which Marcellin Champagnat lived and worked, and the time to reflect on this.

Examples of Cross-Curriculum Work in Schools – Catholic Character Embedded in the Broader Curriculum

These examples are summarised from articles in the American periodical Momentum, Nov-Dec 2012 edition.

Sports and Spirituality: Fertile Ground for New Evangelisation

For young people, sport is a place where students are their “true selves”. Their commitment to sport, to a particular game, is what matters deeply to them. Encouraging their actions as team mates, supporting each other, doing and saying things for the good of each other, and also for the other team or the other competitors, the sharing of acts of loving kindness, are ways of leading students to a sacramental vision of life. The establishment of a group such as a Fellowship for Christian Athletes could be a good way to foster students’ growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Film Project - the Beatitudes

This educational project drew on objectives from Religious Education, English, Technology and Art. Students were required to gain an understanding of the Beatitudes, and their understanding was to be placed within a specific context. Student teams made films of the work of a range of local charities and other support organisations (most of them Catholic), linking each film and organisation to one Beatitude. The project was run across two schools, and resulted in the Beatitudes Film Festival. Students were given three months to research, visit and film their organisation. Some 25 films were shown in the festival.

The New Evangelisation and Assessing Catechesis

These material also is summarised from an article in the American periodical Momentum, Nov-Dec 2012 edition.

“Who do people say that I am? Who do you say that I am?”

These two questions of Jesus to his disciples at Caesarea Philippi mirror the two things we aim to do in Catholic schooling – to provide faith knowledge and to embed faith practice. The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) of the United States understands that the ability to articulate our faith and put it into practice are key components of the New Evangelisation. The Year of Faith provides an opportunity to reflect on this. While Religious Education aims to impart knowledge about religion, schools go further – they aim, through catechesis, to teach the Christian truths in a way that initiates hearers into the fullness of Christian life, creating believers who put their faith into action in the world as joyful members of the Church. The goal of Catholic catechesis is clear: to create committed disciples of Jesus Christ who understand and practise the Catholic faith. Since the 1970s NCEA has been helping educators in Catholic schools and parishes to assess how well their programmes of religious education are doing in forming committed Christian disciples through ACRE, the Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education tool. ACRE is currently being revised, and a new assessment tool will be launched in September 2013. The tool provides cognitive knowledge questions and has a section about behaviours and attitudes. The six tasks of

catechesis (knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, communal life and missionary spirit) are all assessed. When groups are assessed the effectiveness of the Catechetical programme is revealed and with objective data programmes can be shaped to cover perceived gaps. It also reveals where teachers and other catechists may need professional development. While catechesis is primarily the role of parents, catechists and teachers also have a key role. (A parallel tool, Information for Growth, IFG, is available for adults.) Further information is available at www.ncea.org (type ACRE in the search box).

Note: The tool does not exactly match New Zealand practice and it may not be appropriate for use in our classrooms, but it will provide much to think about.