Chapter Four: Arrival and Winning Acceptance - 1872-1875

Br Louis-Marie, the Marist Superior General, had acceded to the Sydney Archdiocese’s request for brothers in August 1868, but asked for two years’ grace in which to locate and train appropriate personnel. The English-speaking class at the Beaucamp novitiate did not immediately flourish, however, and the Franco Prussian War intervened, but the pressure from Sydney did not relent. When Fr Poupinel, the Marist Fathers’ Regional Superior in Sydney, was recalled to France in 1870 he added his oral pleas to the brothers’ General Council at St Genis-Laval and a Br Ezechiel, who had been teaching in Britain for some years, was nominated to open the Australian foundation. On his way from London to Lyon for his final briefing, Br Ezechiel decided to call in at Beaucamp to visit some of the English novices, who were his ex-students, and there, unfortunately, he contracted smallpox and died on February 2nd 1871. Despite the best efforts of Br Louis-Marie and his Council, therefore, the Australian foundation was not entrusted to an experienced and well-qualified Director, but rather to a young, inexperienced and under-qualified team who would face the daunting task of planting the Marist teaching tradition on Australian soil.

Department and Arrival

When word spread, in October 1871, that Br Ludovic Laboureyras had been appointed as Director of the new ‘Australian mission,’ in place of the suddenly deceased Br Ezechiel, a murmur of dismay ran round the Nord Province, of which the British houses of the Marist Brothers were then part. Br Ludovic was only twenty-eight years old, he was French by birth and education, and he had neither been awarded his brevet at the end of his initial training, nor learned to speak English very well while teaching the Infants’ classes in Britain at Sligo, Glasgow and Dundee, during the first years of his career. What he lacked in pedagogical qualifications, however, he somewhat made up for, by his genuine religious fervour and emotional intensity. The letter appointing him to the mission leadership, summoned him back from Dundee, to France, to make his farewells to his family and to be briefed by Br Louis Marie, and also by Fr Poupinel, who was, by then, stationed in Lyon. While making his farewells, he also...

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1 Doyle, The Marist Brothers in Australia p. 29. This Chapter is indebted to Br Alban’s account for charting a path through the primary sources available, chiefly Br Ludovic’s Annales de la Mission d’Australie, his Annals of the St Joseph’ Novitiate, his Journal of the Foundation and Progress of the Mission in Australia, and Br Augustine’s Diary. The present writer has read through all of these items for himself in the archives at Hunter’s Hill, however, and refers to them directly in the text. It should be noted that, apart from the Annals of the Novitiate and the Diary and despite their titles, the Journal and the Annals are not day by day accounts but edited versions of earlier notes, written by Br Ludovic some years after the events actually happened. Note also that where the Annales is quoted more extensively - it is written in French - the translation used is the one employed by Br Alban.
took the opportunity to make a fervent pilgrimage to the sacred Marist Brothers’ sites of Fourviere, La Valla and, of course, the Hermitage, where he was accorded the rare privilege, one night, of sleeping in the bed that Fr Champagnat had died in.

After the visit to Lyon, Br Ludovic travelled back north to Beaucamp, which was the Provincial House as well as the novitiate of the Nord Province, to meet two of his companions, Br Augustine McDonald, a twenty-one year old, newly-professed Scotsman and the twenty-five year old Br Peter Tennyson, who had just finished his first year of novitiate and was officially the cook (and second-year novice/pupil teacher) for the new community. Br Peter, an Irishman, had been a member of the Papal Guard, in Rome, before entering the novitiate, but had probably had no teacher-training other than the limited amount allowed during his novitiate. The three prospective missionaries then crossed the Channel, to London, where they met the fourth member of their community, another twenty-five year old Irishman, called Br Jarlath Finand, who had been teaching in Britain for several years and who was nominated as Sub-Director. All four sailed on the *Star of Peace* from London on November 30th. Also on board were three Marist priests, five Marist Missionary Sisters and two Anglican clergymen.

As was common for sailing ships in those days, the *Star* followed the Great Circle route South and was out of sight of land for the next seventy-nine days, during which time Br Augustine suffered a severe bout of rheumatic fever. When the ship came within sight of land, at Cape Otway, on February 22nd 1872, Br Ludovic noted in his journal:

> In my anxiety of seeing the land I got up at 2.30 am. I was first among the passengers to see it. My first sentiments and actions were those of Christopher Columbus on his discovery of America. Consecration of myself, of my Brothers to Jesus through Mary, for the Christian education of the children of Australia to whom we are sent.  

The ship eventually docked at Williamstown and the next day the brothers traveled into the city to pay their respects to the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Goold; but he was not available and the new arrivals were, instead, given accommodation for the night at the Irish Christian Brothers’ house on Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, a stone’s throw away from St Patrick’s Cathedral. The Irish Brothers had finally relented in their resistance to Australian appeals and dispatched a new community, though not to Benedictine Sydney, in 1868. Their ‘French’ visitors were made very welcome, shown over the thriving school of five hundred students and given samples of the text books that the Irish Brothers used in their classes. Br Ludovic and his companions then transferred to a coastal steamer, the *Macedon*, and continued on to Sydney.

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2 From about 1914 onwards Marist Brothers generally took annual vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience for the first five to seven years after leaving the novitiate. After that, they took Perpetual or Life vows and were regarded as fully-professed. In the nineteenth century they took a vow of Obedience on leaving the novitiate, for an indefinite period, and then took the three vows, for life, when they and their Superiors were satisfied that they were ready. Thus, Br Augustine was finally professed and Br Peter was in temporary profession, when they came to Australia. Professed brothers wore a small brass and ebony pectoral cross as part of their religious habit, to signify their final commitment.

3 *Journal*, Feb 22nd 1872.
One of the Marist priests, Fr Forestier, who had come out from London on the Star with them, had sent a telegram to the Marist Fathers in Sydney to alert them to the brothers’ imminent arrival and the news caused a flurry of celebration, anticipation and last minute preparation. The recently-defunct Catholic Association sprang briefly back into life and sketched plans for triumphal arches, street processions and congratulatory addresses of welcome. Fr Monnier SM, the Parish Priest at St Patrick’s, however, managed to calm things down, saying it was the Marist preference to be ‘hidden and unknown’ and ‘to do good quietly’. So, although a number of lay Catholics came to the wharf to pay their respects, the brothers were formally welcomed ashore by Fr Joly SM, the Marist Fathers’ Regional Superior, who then quickly and quietly escorted them to St Patrick’s Church and Presbytery before giving them a first tour of the old St Phillip’s school building. It lay directly across the street from the presbytery and from there Br Ludovic thought it presented ‘une assez belle apparence’. But, inside, the building was unfurnished, the schoolyard was overgrown with weeds, and the attached teacher’s house was too small and dilapidated to accommodate the new arrivals, without quite considerable renovation and extension.

After lunch at the St Patrick’s presbytery, Fr Monnier escorted the new Brother Director up the hill to St Mary’s Cathedral, to meet Archbishop Polding, briefing him all the while on the ecclesiastical, educational and political situation in the colony. The archbishop, however, was absent, as his Melbourne counterpart had been a few days earlier, and Br Ludovic was welcomed, instead, by the Vicar General, Archpriest Sheehy, who urged him to return the next day, when the Archbishop would certainly be at home. Since the teacher’s house was obviously not ready for them, Fr Joly invited the brothers to stay at the fathers’ Villa Maria monastery, at Hunter’s Hill, until it could be renovated. The Marist Fathers had been prompt and proficient in welcoming the brothers; but it was from the archbishop, the diocesan clergy and the Irish laity that Br Ludovic and his confreres would have to win acceptance.

Winning Acceptance - Part I: 1872

Dr Polding was at home the next day, February 27th, when Br Ludovic returned, accompanied this time by Fr Joly, and the old archbishop, who spoke French fluently, made them very welcome. Nonetheless, he quickly made it clear that he was disappointed that the brothers were going to St Patrick’s – he wanted them in the centre of his diocese, at St Mary’s. Br Ludovic, however, having been briefed by Fr Poupinel in Lyon and by both Fr Joly and Fr Monnier in Sydney, felt that he had to stay at St Patrick’s, to be faithful to his instructions. Whereupon the archbishop, anxious to avoid another Irish Christian Brothers’ debacle, deferred a final decision, in his customary fashion, until his Vicar General could be present to re-negotiate arrangements with the Marist Fathers and St Patrick’s parish. In the event, it was agreed that the brothers could go to St Patrick’s, but the debt on the building would be taken over by the diocese. A Board of Trustees was set up with Archpriest Sheehy as chairman and three laymen, all of them from outside the

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4 Annales Feb 26th 1872.
5 See above: Ch. 2 p. 27.
St Patrick’s parish, as members. Moreover, the brothers would be obliged to accept enrolments from any of the Sydney parishes, not just The Rocks area.

It is worth noting that the Marist Fathers, who were, to some extent, sidelined by this manoeuvre, had already decided to retain the Kent Street North Denominational School, conducted by a lay teacher and subsidized by the Council of Education, in case there were any parishioners who did not want to send their children to the brothers’ school and thus forego the government subsidy. The diocese’s compulsory resumption of the parish’s interest in St Patrick’s school did little to ingratiate the brothers with the parishioners, therefore, and when a diocesan collection was announced, six weeks later, to reduce the debt on the brothers’ school, it was poorly supported in St Patrick’s parish. Br Ludovic and Br Augustine continued negotiations with Fr Sheehy, with architects, builders and school furnishers, nevertheless, travelling in by ferry from Hunter’s Hill whenever necessary, and leaving the two Irish-born brothers to cool their heels in the French-speaking community at Villa Maria. The renovations dragged on, and fearing perhaps that the initial excitement and goodwill would evaporate entirely, the brothers asked if they could move into their still unfinished residence, open the school and take their meals at the presbytery until their own kitchen and dining room were completed. The Marist Fathers and the Archbishop both readily agreed to this proposal.

The news that the brothers’ school was to open on Monday April 8th was announced from all the Catholic pulpits in Sydney on Sunday 7th, but it caused most excitement in St Patrick’s where the brothers actually attended the Sunday Mass, wearing their black religious habits in public, for the first time. They were given a very flattering introduction from the pulpit by the French Parish Priest, Fr Monnier, and the white rabat (bib) which formed part of their habit would also have proclaimed - to those who knew about such things, at least - that they were French in origin; but three of the four were native English speakers and two of those were young Irishmen. The overwhelmingly Irish parishioners took them to their hearts and they were almost mobbed by well-wishers as they made their way back across the road, to their still makeshift house, after Mass. Next day, proceedings began again with a Mass in the parish church and, after that, they were mobbed once more, this time by eager parents, competing to see whose son should be first on the School Roll.

One hundred and forty boys were enrolled on that first day: some from the Kent Street North and St Mary’s Cathedral Denominational Schools; some from Fort Street Public School - which was only two blocks away and had a substantial Catholic enrolment; some from other Denominational or Public Schools in central Sydney and some from no school at all: school attendance was not yet compulsory in New South Wales. In an attempt to sort and classify the intake, the brothers distributed paper, pens and ink but, in another of those incidents which have passed into the Australian Marist oral tradition, chaos ensued: papers were spoiled, ink was spilt or thrown, pens were broken and tables overturned. A new word entered Br Ludovic’s vocabulary and his Journal: ‘what the Australians call larrikins.’ Even after order had been restored and the test completed, Br Ludovic found, to his dismay, that almost two thirds of his students

6Journal April 8th 1872 also Annales p. 40. The Annals uses the French ‘vrais petits vagabonds.’
could not make the Sign of the Cross properly and only a quarter knew the Our Father, 
Hail Mary and Apostles’ Creed. When he tried to say the Rosary with them, they giggled 
and mumbled or made up ludicrous words.

In the afternoon Archbishop Polding and the Bishop of Bathurst, Dr Quinn, 
came to see how the brothers were coping. Both professed themselves much in awe of 
the difficulties that Br Ludovic was facing and Bishop Quinn, who was eager to obtain 
brothers for his diocese, declared it would be a miracle, if they were able to bring these 
apparent street urchins under some sort of discipline, in less than a month. For much of 
that month, Br Ludovic was of much the same opinion. Enrolments continued to grow, 
weekly, and the four young brothers struggled to bring their large classes under control: 
Br Augustine with the senior class; Br Jarlath with the middle group and Br Ludovic with 
the infants, although he was often busy with administration and had to rely heavily on 
the under-trained Br Peter, who, at least, was freed of domestic duties, because of their 
temporary housing arrangements. They longed for the weekend breaks and it was here 
that the first ray of hope gleamed. In his agreement with Archpriest Sheehy, Br Ludovic 
had asked that one of the parish Sunday Masses be nominated as a Children’s Mass, 
where their students would attend, sit together as a group, and be supervised by the 
brothers. To his surprise, these Masses proved very effective. Under their parents’ eyes, 
as well as the brothers’, the pupils behaved quite well and a strategy began to develop 
in Br Ludovic’s pious imagination.

In Catholic France and Europe generally, the springtime month of May was 
dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and most parishes held Friday or Saturday evening ‘May 
Devotions’ consisting of recitation of the Rosary followed by Benediction. The Marist 
Brothers, being also dedicated to Our Lady, made much of these May Devotions in their 
European schools and Br Ludovic, predictably, decided to transplant the tradition in 
Australia, the reversal of the seasons notwithstanding. As April staggered to a close, he 
assembled the students, explained the European custom to them and asked them to bring 
to school the materials for constructing a May Altar: vases, candlesticks, votive lamps, 
flowers, lace doilies and so forth. Surrendering to the emotional force of his appeal, 
the former street urchins, rather surprisingly, complied and on the first Monday in May, 
Br Ludovic spent most of the morning preparing a spectacular shrine: a statue of Our 
Lady mounted on a tiered altar covered in white and blue cloths and surrounded with 
flowers, candles and lamps. After lunch, the students were assembled around the altar, 
the Parish Priest, Fr Monnier appeared, vested in stole and surplice, the candles were 
solemnly lit and the Rosary was reverently recited. The pupils were mesmerized. The 
ceremony was repeated each school day of that month – albeit without Fr Monnier - the 
supply of candles and fresh flowers continued and the Rosary period became an oasis of 
peace in the daily classroom battle. Bishop Quinn returned, declared that ‘wolves had 
been changed into lambs’ and the ‘May miracle’ was duly recorded in Br Ludovic’s 
Annals.  

Of course the ‘power of prayer’ was not a complete answer to establishing class 
control, nor was it the only avenue that Br Ludovic explored. A second tactic, was to use

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7 *Annales* May 15th.
the monitorial aspects of the ‘Mixed Method,’ approved in Br François’ introduction to the *Teachers Guide*, to alleviate the burden of the large class sizes on the brothers. Although approved by the *Guide*, it was still too early in the piece for monitors to be either popular or successful in Sydney. The selected monitors resented having to come to school early, to be briefed by Br Augustine; the other boys resented being supervised by their peers; and the parents of both the monitors and the other students objected to the practice. It was abandoned fairly quickly and not resumed until later in the year, by which time, the new monitors appointed were also postulants, seeking admission to the order, and therefore, *de facto* pupil-teachers. This later attempt, at employing pupil-teachers as monitors, was much more successful, won public acceptance, and became standard practice until 1905.

In the meantime, the other resort was to the use of the cane, a method which was quite inimical to the tradition of Fr Champagnat and which was both barely ‘tolerated’ and substantially restricted by the *Guide*. Br Ludovic, it need hardly be said, did not use the cane in his Infants’ class; but he repeatedly warned the others against severity in their punishments and he reports in his Annals, that the cane was too often used. Br Jarlath and Br Augustine must have fallen into this habit in their early years of teaching in Britain and they also passed it onto their pupil teachers in later years, because it became an entrenched feature of Australian Marist Brothers’ junior secondary classes, at least, until well into the 1960s. For the present writer, reading around this topic, it seemed a very curious irony that William Wilkins who, by 1872, was Secretary to the Council of Education had, in his earlier years, discontinued the monitorial system and strengthened the pupil-teacher system at Fort Street Model School and had severely restricted the use of the cane in the Boys’ section of the school, while banning it outright in the Infants’ and Girls’ sections. As was mentioned in an earlier chapter, Wilkins was also as thorough-going a believer in the use of the simultaneous method and in the importance of the teacher’s character, as both Fr Champagnat and the drafters of the *Guide*. He might have made a better apostle of ‘Marist’ education than Br Augustine McDonald.

Br Augustine was the strongest of the four Marist teachers, nevertheless, and although he may have used the cane, it was not the only string to his bow. Another means of motivation, and one that was properly sanctioned by the *Guide*, was the spirit of emulation or competition between the students, and the method, by which he encouraged this, was to divide the class into rival camps such as the Austrian Camp, versus the Prussian, or the Romans versus the Carthaginians. The two camps competed across a range of studies, detailed lists of the results were maintained and, at the end of each month, ‘Honourable Mention’ and ‘Bad’ cards were awarded, to be taken home and

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8 Chapter 3 p. 59.
9 *Annales* p. 45.
10 Chapter 3 p. 59.
11 *Annales* p. 81.
12 Br John Dullea also makes several references to over-use of the cane in his *Letters from Oceania*. For example: p.267 12.7.1884 and p.410 30.4. 1887.
15 Br Augustine’s *Diary* August 4th 1873.
shown to parents. Br Augustine had picked this tactic up, either during his own school
days at the brothers’ school in Glasgow, or during the early years of his teaching there.
Again, the present writer, after reading about this practice for the second or third time in
Br Alban’s *Story*, hoped that he might have discovered, in this, something peculiarly
and, perhaps, characteristically Marist about the teaching tradition being established
at St Patrick’s; but, alas, it was not to be. While reading Fr David Strong’s history of
St Aloysius’ College, Milson’s Point, I came across his account of a system of competing
‘camps’ – albeit with different names, Lancaster and York – operating there in the 1880s
and 90s, a practice introduced, presumably, by the Irish Jesuits who were that school’s
founders.

The most characteristically Marist aspect of the new school, therefore, at least
in these first six months of its existence, seems to have been its emphasis on catechism,
prayers and religious practices; and for the parents and the clergy, initially at least,
this apparently was an acceptable way to proceed. It reached a sort of climax with the
preparation of a large Confirmation and First Communion class towards the end of
August. One hundred and twenty eight boys received the sacrament of Confirmation in a
manner so reverent and respectful that the parents were delighted and the old archbishop
declared ‘it was the most edifying ceremony of the kind that he had ever performed’. The
Parish Priest, Fr Monnier, was also delighted and Bishop Quinn, who had kept up his
visits to the school, renewed his request for a community of brothers to work in his own
diocese. He even prevailed upon Br Ludovic to travel up to Bathurst with Fr Monnier,
who was going to give a retreat at the convent there, to look at the school he proposed to
give to the brothers. Nothing ever came of these applications and preparations, however.

If Br Ludovic was winning acceptance and approval by his emphasis on the
Christian and Catholic aspects of Christian Education, he contrived to stray somewhat
from the path to success, when he decided in mid-October, that the brothers would not
attend the annual parish picnic: a decision which disappointed the Parish Priest, upset
many parishioners and angered the other members of his community. It was a decision,
evertheless, which was in strict accordance with the *Common Rules* of the Order. The
brothers’ rule of life was semi-monastic and while this did not involve the complete
segregation of full monastic enclosure, it did severely restrict and virtually forbid,
social intercourse with ‘seculars’. They were even forbidden, by rule, to accept dinner
invitations in parish presbyteries and this was where the problem had begun, in this
instance. From April until July, the community had been taking their meals at the
presbytery, because their own house was still unfinished. This was an irregular situation
which the Major Superiors, in France, would have sanctioned because of the special
circumstances. While at the presbytery, the young brothers fell under the influence of a

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16 *op.cit.* p. 135.
18 *Annales* 22.8.1872 p. 56.
very unstable and outspoken young Irish Marist priest, Fr Kirk, who took to introducing them to some of the Irish parish families for a cup of tea here and a glass of something there. In the course of these ‘irregular’ visits, the topics of Br Ludovic’s religious strictness and lack of Irish empathy were, apparently, frequently aired. The ill-feeling that erupted over the parish picnic decision, therefore, was hardly surprising; but this particular crisis passed and did not re-surface for another twelve months.

Another decision that Br Ludovic had made, again with the encouragement of his Superiors and in imitation of Fr Champagnat, was eventually to relieve the tensions alluded to in the previous paragraph. As early as mid-July, only three months after school commenced, he had invited a sixteen year old student in Br Augustine’s class, Andrew Fitzgerald, to become a postulant and move into the brothers’ house. The boy, and his pious Irish parents, agreed. At the end of November, another local of Irish descent, but six years older, William Farrell, asked to be admitted and in February of 1873 the fifteen year old, Matthew Sullivan joined them. All three became pupil teachers, working under Br Augustine’s direction, and soon began to relieve the classroom pressure on the four brothers that the earlier monitorial attempt had failed to address. When Br Ludovic had first approached Archbishop Polding for permission to accept postulants – the very rock on which the earlier Christian Brothers’ mission had founder – the old prelate was sceptical about the chances of success. Br Ludovic had researched his case, however, inquiring about the local candidates for the several Sisters’ Orders which were then developing in Sydney and into the failure of the Archbishop’s own attempt at Benedictine recruitment. By virtue of this preparatory work, he eventually won Dr Polding’s approval. Oddly enough, one of the arguments that he could have employed – but apparently did not – was that in recruiting and training locals, as teaching brothers, the Marists were fulfilling the second expectation for which they had been invited: the training of Catholic teachers.

1872 ended quietly enough. Since there were no students presenting that year for the university examinations, which were later to become a very important reference point in Australian Marist schools, Fr Monnier prevailed upon Br Ludovic to give a ‘public exhibition of studies’ for the parents, which turned out to be a sort of Annual Concert, with choral singing, recitations and the staging of a ‘religious drama’. Archbishop Polding presided and gave his blessing to the success of the foundation. Fr Joly, the Marist Regional Superior, invited the St Patrick’s community to Villa Maria to make their annual retreat, an invitation which the brothers and their two postulants happily accepted. Then they returned to their own, now completed residence, and St Patrick’s parish, to celebrate Christmas and New Year and to restore their energies for the year ahead.

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19 As mentioned earlier, this Chapter is based on Br Ludovic’s *Annales*. The charges against Fr Kirk might therefore be seen as biased. However, this episode is also dealt with in Hosie’s *Challenge: The Marists in Colonial Australia* pp.238-241. Fr Hosie had access to the Marist Fathers’ archives and he agrees with Br Ludovic. Fr Kirk soon became an embarrassment to the Marist Fathers and the Sydney Archdiocese.


21 See above Ch. 2. p. 27.

22 *Annales* pp. 50-51.
Winning Acceptance - Part II: 1873-1874

Enrolments held up for the new school year, which began on January 7\textsuperscript{th}, but the consequent reduction in attendance at the nearby Denominational and Public schools sparked off a murmuring campaign against the brothers. This was led by the lay teachers in these schools – whose salaries were based on enrolments – but supported also by some of the diocesan clergy, who were reluctant to forego the Council of Education subsidy for their parish Denominational schools. It was bandied about, that all the children learned, at St Patrick’s, was to say prayers and sing hymns and that the brothers hardly knew anything else. In the light of the lay teachers’ financial situation and of Br Ludovic’s efforts of the previous year, this sort of campaign was hardly surprising. Archbishop Polding and Fr Monnier called on the Brother Director, advising him to cut out the daily recitation of the Rosary and to take his Infants class over to the church only once or twice per week. Br Ludovic pointed out, truthfully, that he could not comply with this advice, because these practices were part of the \textit{Common Rules}, which the Archbishop, himself, had signed a formal agreement to respect.\textsuperscript{23}

Archbishop Polding retreated, for the moment, but soon returned, to inform Br Ludovic that, to allay the hostile rumours, he must give some sort of public demonstration that the brothers were, in fact, competent to carry out the educational responsibilities entrusted to them. The Brother Director consulted with his community and decided upon a public examination day – a reasonably common phenomenon, in nineteenth century Britain and Australia, even in the National Schools.\textsuperscript{24} Each teacher would conduct an oral examination of the students in his own class, across all the subjects in the curriculum and parents, clergy, and interested members of the general public, were invited to attend. The demonstration/examination was held at the end of April and went off very well. The Archbishop was relieved and delighted and a favourable report was duly written up in the \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, for the benefit of those who had not been able to attend in person.

Fr Monnier may have been relieved, too, but he was evidently less than delighted. In early May, Br Ludovic, again upset the community and the parishioners by refusing to let the brothers attend the parish picnic and this time Fr Monnier too was offended. A rift developed between the Brother Director and the Parish Priest, which was exacerbated by the mis-managed acquisition of a property adjacent to the school. This property was largely intended for the brothers’ use, because the growth in the size of the community was causing problems. An older, only French-speaking member, Br Ange, had arrived from Europe in March, to relieve Br Peter of his kitchen duties and to give Br Ludovic some community support. Then, on July 2\textsuperscript{nd}, when the first two Australian postulants received the habit and officially became novices, with two additional postulants already in residence, the community numbered nine and was living in accommodation originally

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Annales}, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{24} G. Haines, \textit{Lay Catholics and the Education Question in Nineteenth Century NSW}. (Sydney, 1976). p. 47.
considered too small for four. Four more Australian postulants were accepted, before the end of 1873, bringing the total, briefly, to thirteen.

It was fortunate that Br Ludovic had been so pro-active in recruiting young Australians to the order, because the second half of 1873 proved to be something of a disaster, as far a staffing at St Patrick’s school was concerned. It began in mid-August with Br Augustine’s second serious relapse into the Rheumatic Fever which had afflicted him on the voyage to Australia and which kept him out of the classroom for seven weeks. As on the previous occasion, a year earlier, Br Ludovic assumed responsibility for Br Augustine’s class and while he had no trouble with order and discipline, as he freely admitted in a letter to Fr Poupinel, he knew nothing about the Algebra and Geometry he was supposed to be teaching: ‘I spoke with wisdom, (yet) without understanding the sense, like Balaam’s ass’.\(^{25}\) When Br Augustine returned to St Patrick’s from his recuperation at Villa Maria, he did not return to the classroom immediately, but spent the next three or four weeks of his convalescence coaching a small group of examination candidates that he had selected in July. One of these boys, named McDermott, sat the Preliminary Civil Service Exam in November and was one of only thirty-five of the ninety-three presenting candidates to succeed. Two other boys, called Finn and Smith, presented for the Land Survey Exam, but Br Augustine’s diary, from which this information is drawn, does not mention whether they passed or failed.\(^{26}\)

Even more trying for Br Ludovic than his senior teacher’s illness, was the hostility and irregular\(^{27}\) behaviour of his Sub-Director, Br Jarlath. The latter, who should have been the Brother Director’s main supporter was, in fact, the most disaffected of the community, most under Fr Kirk’s sway, most prone to clandestine visits to Irish parishioners’ homes and busily engaged in sending letters of complaint and criticism to the Major Superiors in Europe. Br Ludovic consulted with the Marist Fathers’ Regional Superior, Fr Joly; with the professed brothers of his own community, Br Ange and Br Augustine; and, eventually, with Archbishop Polding, before putting Br Jarlath on a ship, back to Europe on January 15\(^{th}\), 1874. Br Augustine, partly in sympathy with the former Sub-Director, and partly depressed by his own recurrent and protracted illness, was also campaigning to be sent back to Europe, but settled, instead, for a furlough in Noumea, where the French Colonial Government had asked Br Louis Marie to set up a communal school in 1873. Br Augustine left for New Caledonia on February 12\(^{th}\) 1874.\(^{28}\)

Thus, within a month of the start of the 1874 school year, the teaching staff at St Patrick’s had been reduced to: Br Ludovic, Br Peter, the two Australian novices who were, by then, some twelve to fifteen months into their time as pupil teachers and the six postulants, who averaged considerably less than six months’ experience between them. To increase the pressure on Br Ludovic, the new Coadjutor Archbishop, Dr Vaughan, had arrived in Sydney in mid-December and, in mid-January 1874, Archbishop Polding, ceded all administrative and policy-making decisions to this appointed successor. Having

\(^{25}\) Letter to Fr Poupinel Dec 1872. quoted in Doyle, op.cit. p. 75.
\(^{26}\) Diary Nov. 3,4,5\(^{th}\) 1873.
\(^{27}\) This word is used here, again, in its technical religious sense: ‘against the regulae (rules)’.
\(^{28}\) Annales pp. 107-109.
only just won the acceptance of the old diocesan administration, Br Ludovic, in his now seriously weakened personnel situation, would have to earn the trust and confidence of the new Archbishop. Moreover, Dr Vaughan, although English, Benedictine and rather aristocratic, like Polding, was not the weary and almost desperate figure that his aged predecessor had now become; but rather, a young, self-confident and academic prelate who was vitally interested in the education question. Br Ludovic’s own *Annals* account of this process is prolix and somewhat difficult to follow. Br Ronald Fogarty’s account, on the other hand, is a much more acute analysis of the forces in play and the issues at stake.\(^{29}\)

The first issue with the Marist Brothers, that Dr Vaughan had to investigate, was the purely educational one of teacher competence. With the two most senior teachers suddenly withdrawn, discontent and ill-feeling among the parents at St Patrick’s and the diocesan clergy, was open and vocal. Even the Marist Fr Monnier was unhappy:

> Jarlath is gone: it was time. Augustine is in New Caledonia, ill and cannot return here. Peter is only a novice. Ange does not know English. So we have only Ludovic and a few novices so that if the Superiors of the Brothers do not send us at least one good Brother, with a good knowledge of English, Mathematics, Singing and Music … our school will be a failure like the Sisters’ school and worse … will have cost the parish three times more than the Sisters.\(^{30}\)

Archbishop Vaughan moved decisively. He appointed a high-powered examining committee of ten, half clergy and half lay, who visited the school on June 22\(^{nd}\) and made a thorough inspection of the classes and the teachers. Among the clerical visitors was the Rev. Dr Forrest, the former rector of St John’s College. The most prominent of the laymen was Mr W. A. Duncan, the Catholic member of the Council of Education and a former teacher at the Parramatta Catholic Denominational school; but an opponent of denominational schools, nevertheless.\(^{31}\) So, although the inspection was certainly a public relations exercise, like Archbishop Polding’s public examination, of the year before, the committee itself, was by no means a paper tiger.

As it happened, Br Augustine had returned from Noumea on May 29\(^{th}\), in good time to prepare for both the inspectors and the ‘annual’ prize giving and concert, so the staffing situation had actually improved since February-March. Even so, the bulk of the teaching for most of that half-year must have been done by Br Peter and the first year, Australian novices and the positive report which the committee delivered was, therefore, a vindication not only of their developing competence as classroom teachers, and of Br Augustine’s skill as a ‘Master of Method’, but also of Br Ludovic’s courage and skill in recruiting suitable, local novices. One of the examiners, Fr Cunningham, singled out the senior boys’ grasp of English History, for particular commendation:

\(^{29}\) Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia* Vol. 1 pp. 246-248.
\(^{30}\) Letter of Fr Monnier SM to the Marist Fathers’ Superior General dated March 22\(^{nd}\) 1874. Quoted in Doyle, *op. cit.* p. 85.
I feel much pleasure in testifying to the high standard of proficiency attained by the senior boys in the department of English History … if the proficiency of these boys, in other branches be what I found it to be in English History, they would be a credit to any academy.  

And the entire report was, of course, published in the pages of *The Freeman’s Journal*.

A second hurdle that Br Ludovic had to pass, to win Archbishop Vaughan’s confidence, was the question, briefly hinted at in Fr Monnier’s letter, of financial accountability and affordability. As was mentioned earlier, there was some tension between Fr Monnier and Br Ludovic over the acquisition of property for expanding the school premises and this was heightened when the two senior teachers departed, leaving the Australian novices to carry the teaching burden. The terms under which the brothers had been contracted to work in the diocese included an annual stipend of £60 per brother and the first year’s stipend had been paid by the trustees of Fr McEncroe’s estate. Thereafter, the brothers were allowed to charge school fees, with the proviso that, if the fees fell short of the total for the stipend, the parish would then make good the deficit. Fr Monnier objected to this shortfall principle, and he also objected to paying the full stipend to the Australian novices. When this was first brought to Archbishop Vaughan’s attention, he sided with the brothers and the matter went no further.

Fr Monnier died in September that year, however, and the whole question of the Marist Fathers’ remaining in charge of St Patrick’s parish came up for review. The new Marist Fathers-appointed, Parish Priest, Fr Heuzé was summoned before Dr Vaughan in early October and, perhaps because the Archbishop still believed that the brothers were subject to the fathers’ control, so was Br Ludovic. The school’s capital debt, the payment of the stipend to the Australian novices, the brothers’ ineligibility for the Council of Education subsidy, and the cost of supporting the still-growing number of postulants and novices from the school fees, were all raised with some vigour. Br Ludovic left the meeting, almost in shock, feeling that the brothers would soon be moved to another parish and that the novitiate would have to close. Archpriest Sheehy, the former Vicar General, got to hear of this upset, however, and at his instigation, the old Archbishop, Dr Polding, intervened to caution his Coadjutor and to reassure the brothers. Br Ronald suggests, that one of the cautions Fr Sheehy may have used at this time was that, if the brothers were forced from the school, they might be snapped up by Bishop Quinn, for Bathurst.

Archbishop Vaughan returned to the discussion in late October, nevertheless, and more interviews, punctuated by sets of written questions and written answers, ensued. The new Archbishop was evidently still under pressure from his clerical councilors about the forfeiture of the government education subsidy in the religious-staffed schools, but he was also anxious to clarify the conditions of the brothers’ appointment and to bring them more directly under his episcopal and pastoral control.

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33 *Annales*, p. 118.
34 Fogarty, *op.cit.* p. 247.
Br Ludovic was, eventually, able to answer Dr Vaughan’s questions adequately and he also submitted a revised set of conditions for the management of St Patrick’s, which he believed the Major Superiors, in France, would be prepared to ratify. The Archbishop accepted the revised conditions on November 16th and he signified his acceptance by formally requesting the brothers to assume responsibility for a second Sydney school, St Benedict’s in Broadway, which was then in the process of renovation and expansion. Significantly, the conditions for the management of St Benedict’s included the clause:

5. That if, later on, the Brothers choose to place themselves under the Council of Education, the present conditions shall cease and new ones shall be proposed.

The third obstacle that Br Ludovic had to overcome, in winning the new Archbishop’s confidence, again hinted at in Fr Monnier’s letter, quoted above, was the acceptability of Br Ludovic himself and of the French Marists, generally, to the mainly Irish parishioners and parents. Ironically, Dr Vaughan, had aggravated this problem in August by rather hastily dividing the St Patrick’s parish in two and appointing an Irish priest, Fr Riordan, to the secondary church, St Bridget’s near Miller’s Point. Br Ludovic attended the opening ceremony of the new parish - which further widened his rift with Fr Monnier, though they were reconciled before the latter died, a month later – but it won him no more acceptance among the Irish parishioners. The division, itself, was also unwelcome to the St Patrick’s parishioners and soon fizzled out. Br Jarlath, by then, was long gone, back in Europe; but the Irish Marist priest, Fr Kirk, was still in the parish, spreading rumours hostile to Br Ludovic and stirring the embers of discontent. Br Peter, the other young Irishman in the original party of brothers, and introduced to parish social life by the malevolent Fr Kirk, left the Order in September and the perennial rumours of Br Ludovic’s autocratic ways and intolerance of Irish sensitivities swirled anew.

When the Brother Director approached Archbishop Vaughan, at the end of November, asking him to preside at a ceremony to formally receive a new group of postulants on December 8th, the latter told him that the rumours had reached his ears and that, as the new ordinary of the diocese, he believed he had both the duty and the right to investigate. The ‘domiciliary’ visitation took place on the day of the proposed Reception ceremony and was carried out with full ceremonial formality. All the rooms of the brother’s residence were inspected by Dr Vaughan; his secretary audited the house books and perused an inventory of the house furnishings; and each brother, novice and postulant in the community had a private interview with the archbishop. In a gesture reminiscent of an incident in the life of the Founder, Br Ludovic even insisted that Dr Vaughan inspect the cellar and the attic of the house.

Everything was found to be

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35 The correspondence between Br Ludovic and the Archbishop and the new ‘Conditions’ for St Patrick’s and St Benedict’s are printed as Appendices 5-8 in Doyle, op.cit. pp. 628-34.
36 ibid. p. 635.
38 In the Founder’s time, after the 1830 Revolution, rumours spread that the brothers at the Hermitage were storing weapons to mount a counter-coup and a Public Prosecutor arrived with an armed escort to search the house. When they came to a locked storeroom, to which the key could not be found, Fr Champagnat reportedly broke the door open with an axe, rather than leave the police with any grounds for suspicion. Furet, op.cit. p. 176.
satisfactory. The lavish furnishings, rumoured to decorate Br Ludovic’s bedroom, were found to be non-existent, the books were in order and the novices and postulant, all of whom were Australians of Irish descent expressed nothing but respect and affection for Br Ludovic and enthusiasm for their Religious state.

In his account of this episode, Br Alban quotes the memoirs of two of the novices involved, to the effect that they felt quite intimidated by the visitation. Yet, in hindsight, it seems strange that the new archbishop would conduct such an inspection on the eve, or the very day, of a reception ceremony, if he had seriously expected to find any truth in the hostile rumours. It seems, to the writer at least, that Dr Vaughan was more intent on impressing Br Ludovic with the extent of his Episcopal powers of supervision, than with placating the Irish rumour-mongers of the Rocks.

The Reception ceremony, therefore, went ahead as planned and was attended by the Marist Fathers and many of the diocesan clergy, as well as local parishioners and the parents and families of the new postulants. In his homily, the Archbishop, praised the achievements of Br Ludovic in gathering together, training and developing such a happy and enthusiastic community of young Religious. He declared that he had already taken measures to further develop the novitiate and that he now hoped he would be able to multiply the number of schools run by the Marist Brothers in the diocese. During the ceremony, Fr Kirk and another, un-named, Irish diocesan priest, who had been a constant critic of Br Ludovic and the Marist Brothers, left the church and, within a few weeks, quit the diocese. Br Treacy, the Superior of the Irish Christian Brothers in Melbourne, who had welcomed the Marists on their arrival, three years earlier, paid a visit to St Patrick’s around this time and came away convinced that Br Ludovic was the key to the Marist Brothers’ success in attracting local vocations: a success his own Congregation was unable to emulate for many years.

**Winning Acceptance - Part III: 1875**

By the start of the 1875 school year, Br Ludovic, had been informed that a new Provincial Superior was being appointed for Oceania; but the appointee, Br John Dullea, became seriously ill while being briefed at the General House, St Genis Laval, and did not actually arrive in Sydney until January of the following year. 1875, therefore, was to be Br Ludovic’s last year as head of the Australian mission. In the previous year, he had managed, albeit with considerable difficulty, to consolidate the brothers’ position in the diocese; but there were still several issues to be resolved.

The first of these was the maintenance of enrolments at St Patrick’s. Br Ludovic explained the problem thus:

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39 Doyle, _op.cit._ p. 94.
40 Annales pp. 144-45.
1. Almost all the children of rich and respectable families left the brothers’ school on account of the roughness and uncouth conduct of the poor children. Rich people could not tolerate seeing the sons of their servants or employees sitting alongside their own children: the school was earning a bad reputation.

2. School fees were becoming too burdensome for many poor families.

3. The government schools which, up to that time had maintained fees on about the same level as the Brothers’ school suddenly made a sharp reduction in fees. Parents took advantage of this to send their children to these schools with the result that, at the re-opening of school, more than a third of our pupils had left us.42

Br Ludovic’s solution was to advertise the opening of a Select School, which would share the premises with the ‘poor’ school, but would charge higher fees, teach a broader range of subjects - including Book-keeping, French and Latin - and segregate the ‘Select’ students from the others. This solution was acceptable to the brothers’ community – especially Br Augustine, who was to teach the Select students – and also, importantly, to Archbishop Vaughan. The latter had apparently been having requests forwarded to him for such a school,43 now that the classical curriculum at the Benedictine Lyndhurst Academy was losing favour with the Catholic lower middle class.44 The strategy also worked both ways: the income from the higher fees paid by the ‘Select’ students, enabled the brothers to lower the fees in the ‘poor’ school and win back the financially borderline waverers.

Modern, post-Vatican II, Australian Marist Brothers, with a heightened awareness of the social justice overtones in Fr Champagnat’s initial out-reach to the poor, are a little uncomfortable with this initiative of Br Ludovic. Even pre-Vatican II Marist accounts, such as Br Alban’s and Br Ronald’s, are sensitive to the issue and go out of their way to quote parallels with other orders, founded to help the poor, such as the Irish Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy.45 However, Br Ludovic was working out of a pre-industrial, pre-democratic mind-set which was in no way foreign to Fr Champagnat, or to The Teacher’s Guide. We have seen in an earlier chapter that Fr Champagnat took for granted a hierarchical society and, at least initially, doubted whether the children of the poor needed to be able to write as well as read.46 The Marist Brothers’ boarding schools in France were, by this time, in competition with, and to some extent, modeled on the De La Salle Brothers’ pensionnats which ‘gave a sort of education for which there was a real demand among the middle and lower bourgeoisie.’47 And in the edition of The Guide with which Br Ludovic would have been familiar we find this cautionary remark:

42 Annales pp. 50-51.
43 ibid. p. 100.
44 Fogarty, op.cit. p. 325.
45 Fogarty, op.cit. p. 289 and Doyle, op.cit. pp. 100-104.
46 See above Ch. 3 p. 32.
47 Anderson, Education in France 1848-1870 p. 115.
All this must be conformable to their standing and condition in life; for poor children must not assume such ways and manners as are suited only to a high education. It is sufficient to teach them to be polite, affable, charitable and obliging.  

A propos of manners, Br John Dullea, when he eventually arrived in Sydney, believed that the invidious comparisons made between St Patrick’s and government schools, like the nearby Fort Street Model School, came down to a matter of discipline. He thought that the discipline in the government schools was quite military and that this contrasted with the more relaxed attitude in the brothers’ schools. Br Ludovic, however, would yield to no one in the matter of manners and discipline. In a letter to Fr Poupinel he gave this account which contrasts rather strangely with the first point in his rationale for opening the Select School:

All the people here are astonished at the freedom between teachers and pupils, at the affection, so plain to see, with which these friendly children surround us. You cannot go along the streets, without seeing them running up to take our hands, receive a word or two and a sweet smile. When they are leaving school of an afternoon, all the passers-by stop to see them march past, in twos, in silence from the school to George Street. Two gentlemen, whose names I do not know, held the following conversation about this:

A: How fine it is to see these urchins, once so scatterbrained and disorderly, going off thus in perfect discipline!
B: That’s true! I’d rather see them going by than the march of the Light Brigade (our Sunday volunteers, who occasionally march by moonlight, their rifles on their shoulders).
A: Me, too, for these children are real warriors who fight daily on the field of battle, whilst our volunteers are only pretend soldiers.
B: I understand what you mean: their battle is not fisticuffs, for they have been cured of that bad habit; but against the government and sectarian schools which they are silently beginning to undermine.

Of course, the Brother Director may have been writing, somewhat self-indulgently, only about his own Infants’ class.

The second issue that Br Ludovic had to confront was the Irish diocesan clergy’s continuing reluctance to surrender their Denominational Schools to Religious teachers and thereby forfeit the Council of Education subsidy. When it was announced that Archbishop Vaughan wanted to hand administration of the renovated St Benedict’s over to the Marist Brothers, several clergy and some parishioners protested that the brothers were incompetent and did not have Council of Education certificates. The Archbishop therefore approached Br Ludovic and together they decided that six brothers should apply

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48 This quotation actually comes from p. 44 of the 1877 English translation of The Guide. It seems a reasonable presumption that this would still be quite close to the original French version of 1853.
49 Letter to Fr Poupinel Dec 1872, quoted in Doyle, op.cit. p. 154.
to sit the Council examination. The names of Br Augustine and Br Edwin Farrell (one of the newly-professed, Australian recruits) were forwarded to the secretary of the Council, William Wilkins, who referred them to a sub-committee of the Council, chaired by Professor John Smith, but including the Catholic member, W.A. Duncan. The sub-committee discussed the question at some length, for it was not unknown for Religious teachers to receive Council approval: several sisters were already in receipt of Council salaries. No decision was reached after that first discussion, but Duncan reported to Br Ludovic that he thought the brothers’ application would be approved at the next meeting of the sub-committee on May 31st.

He was wrong. There was another protracted discussion but, when the motion was put, it was lost by four votes to one. The reasons given for the refusal were:

1. The Brothers were religious teachers, the state wanted lay teachers.
2. The Brothers, as members of a congregation, were responsible to a foreign authority, but teachers in Council schools could not be responsible to two conflicting governments.

The following day, in parliament, Mr George Dibbs, asked several questions about the brothers’ application to the Council and when told that it had been refused, there was applause in the house. Mr Dibbs, who was a member of the Public Schools’ League, which aimed to make primary education ‘national, secular, compulsory and free,’ then launched an extended debate on the laicization of confessional schools. The major speaker against Dibbs’ motion was Mr Alexander Stuart, a member of the Anglican Defence Association, rather than any of the ‘Catholic’ members; but the numerous ‘Hear, Hears’ in the Sydney Morning Herald’s account definitely seem to favour the secular and non-denominational side of the debate. It was adjourned that night and when it resumed, on June 19th, Henry Parkes defended the operation of his 1866 Act; but, as he listened to the ebb and flow of applause during the debate, the astute politician in him, must have heard the growing enthusiasm for an end to the denominational system.

At this point, it seems worthwhile contrasting and comparing the aims of the French National Education system, which had been the Marist Brothers’ experience, and those of the founders of the New South Wales Public Education system. As Andy Green comments in his book on the rise of western national education systems:

French primary education was ... designed to impart a limited version of the national culture that would encourage political loyalty and civic obedience among the working class and impart a modicum of useful and appropriate skills without encouraging excessive ambition or the desire for social advancement. Whether they were church schools or municipal schools seems not to have made much difference. Both were concerned with what was essentially moral

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50 This account of the Council of Education discussion and the first part of the Parliamentary debate comes straight from Br Ludovic’s Annales pp. 161-164.
51 SMH June 2nd 1875.
52 SMH June 20th 1875.
education. Catholic schools laid great stress on teaching the catechism and preparing children for their first communion. They sought to inculcate a pious and receptive attitude and to instil the Christian virtues, but avoided exciting any worldly ambition ...

The purpose of the state in primary education was similar. Guizot told his prefects in 1833, in words that Durkheim would echo sixty years later, that ‘we have tried to create in every commune a moral force that the government can use at need.’ The government sought civil obedience and popular acquiescence in that hegemonic concept of nationhood which it promoted and on which its power rested, but its language in education differed little from that of the Church. ‘Faith in providence, the sacredness of duty, and respect due to law, to the ruler and the rights of all, such are the sentiments which (the teacher) will endeavour to impart’ read Guizot’s ministerial instructions to his teachers ... Guizot was a liberal and did as much as any education minister to improve working class education, but any idea of promoting social equality was far from his thoughts.

This extract, of course, refers to France in the 1830s, but a similar attitude prevailed during at least the first half of the Second Empire and it was not until the Franco-Prussian War and the establishment of the Third Republic that the anti-clericals resumed their struggle to wrest control of elementary education from the Church. Br Ludovic’s early experience in France would have been of this co-operative/competitive situation between Church and State. The New South Wales debate, to which we referred above, however, belonged to the latter era: the French Third Republic, the aftermath of Vatican I and the definition of papal infallibility, and the passing of the ‘free, compulsory and secular’ Education Act of 1872, in Victoria. Henry Parkes may not yet have been a die-hard secularist,  but Professor Smith and George Dibbs evidently were, and the Victorian Attorney General, James Stephens, who had introduced the 1872 Bill had done so in words that any European étatist would have been proud to own:

In a couple of generations, through the missionary influence of the State Schools, a new body of State doctrine and theology will grow up, and the cultured and intellectual Victorians of the future will directly worship in common at the shrines of one neutral-tinted deity sanctioned by the State Department.

Similarly, Parkes may have been more egalitarian and democratic, in his aspirations for the New South Wales National Education system, than the French bourgeoisie of the July Monarchy and the early Second Empire; but behind his early rhetoric of liberty and equality, there lurks a similar urge to instil a moral code and establish the basis for social control:

The state of society is such - it is so ignorant, immoral, scattered, migratory and eager in any employment which brings money; and the inducements to withdraw children from instruction at an early age, and to neglect instruction at a later, are

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so exciting and violent – that it may fairly be questioned whether any single and stereotyped mode will raise the brutal mass to humanity... It is education – and education alone – that is capable of making the masses acquainted with their rights, and mindful of their duties. Equally hostile to anarchy and despotism, it alone has power to awaken the humble classes to a true sense of the dignity of humanity and to inspire them with the love of equality and order combined, which is the true foundation of freedom.  

Archbishop Vaughan was not dismayed by the reply to the application for Government recognition of the brothers’ qualifications. He had called his critics’ bluff as regards the brothers’ competence and, listening to the tenor of the debate in parliament, he now shared his Irish suffragan bishops’ belief that the days of state subsidies were numbered. When the St Benedict’s renovations were completed, at the end of July, the premises were divided in two. The new classrooms were assigned to the girls, who continued to be taught by Council-subsidized lay teachers; the dilapidated older classrooms were given to the boys, whom the brothers were to teach and who, of course, would receive no subsidy. Br Ludovic appointed Br Augustine as Director and senior class teacher of St Benedict’s, with two newly-professed Australian recruits, Br Gregory and Br Hilary in charge of the junior classes. For the first few days of the school’s operation, the new staff travelled the three kilometres back to the residence at St Patrick’s each night, then a committee of parishioners rented a house for them near the school, but the Parish Priest, Fr Slattery, who had been opposed to bringing in the brothers, refused to be responsible for the rent. Despite this graceless reception, the school prospered. Prior to the brothers’ arrival the maximum boys’ attendance had been 99. On the day the brothers’ opened, 130 boys enrolled and by the end of August there were 220. Since many parents chose to send their daughters to the sister-school to that of their sons, enrolments in the girls’ school also increased and the salaries of the lay teachers, in this instance, would actually have improved, although they were replaced by Good Samaritan Sisters when the 1880 Act came into effect.

Br Ludovic’s final contribution to the foundation of the Marist mission in Australia was to begin negotiations for the purchase of a new property so that the thriving novitiate could be separated from the school community at St Patrick’s. This separation between a ‘formation’ community and an ‘active’ one was a requirement of canon law, but also a practical necessity at Church Hill where, until the new openings at Parramatta and St Benedict’s, the original, inadequate residence was required to house the three professed brothers and nineteen novices and postulants. With the encouragement of the Assistant-General, Br Ludovic had earlier considered an offer by the Marist Fathers to sell the old Procure House near the Villa Maria monastery; but since there was an idea of building a boarding school on the same property, the Brother Director rejected it, because it was too close to the smelly, tidal mudflats of Tarban Creek. In March 1875, Fr Joly, the Marist Fathers’ Regional Superior, drew Br Ludovic’s attention to another property at Hunter’s Hill and near to Villa Maria, which a French parishioner, M. Joubert, had put on the market. This was the site that was eventually bought; but before Br Ludovic

56 quoted from Parkes’ articles in The Empire 21.6.1853 and 2.8.1851 in D. Morris op.cit. p. 163.
57 Annales p. 179.
could obtain authorization from St Genis Laval for the purchase, or permission from the Archbishop to begin fund-raising for the project, his attention was distracted by the demand for another school opening at Parramatta, which brought with it the possibility of an alternative site for the novitiate.

It seems worthwhile concluding this account of Br Ludovic’s pioneering work with this incident only because the Parramatta opening, which actually took place before St Benedict’s, appears to mark a turning point in the attitude of the diocesan clergy towards the employment of Religious, the loss of the government subsidy and the displacement of the lay teachers. Parramatta was the earliest Catholic school in Australia. Established by Fr Therry in 1820, it had been run by a series of individual lay teachers – including the ubiquitous W. A. Duncan - or married couples, whose average tenure had been about two and a half years and whose professional and personal qualifications had varied widely. The incumbent in 1873, by which time the school had become a registered denominational school, was a John Benedict Doyle and he received a favourable report in the 1874 inspection. However enrolments dropped that year, because the Sisters of Mercy arrived in the town to begin an Infants’ school. And that same year, Dean Rigney, who had previously been the Administrator of St Mary’s Cathedral became Parish Priest of Parramatta.

Perhaps because of his closeness to the diocesan administration, Fr Rigney, although an Irishman, was evidently a supporter of the Archbishop’s policy of employing Religious and a pessimist regarding the medium term prospects of retaining the government subsidy. As soon as Mr Doyle heard that the Dean had applied to the Archbishop for Marist Brothers for the school, he sent his resignation in to the Council of Education and asked to be posted to another Denominational school. This move forced the hand of the Parish Priest, of the Archbishop, and also of Br Ludovic. If the school did not re-open immediately after the lay-teacher’s departure, the two clergymen assured him, the pupils would disperse and enroll at other schools. He hurriedly sent a community consisting of Br Ange – with his poor English – as Director and the newly professed Br Edwin, plus a second year novice, Br Stanislaus, to re-open the school on June 14th.

Br Ludovic had visited Parramatta earlier and Dean Rigney had shown him a twenty-three acre property, not far from the school, which was for sale and which the Brother Director thought would make a suitable residence for the community and also a site for the novitiate. After beating down the owners, a bereaved old Irish couple, to half their original asking price, Br Ludovic bought the farm property and it became the brothers’ residence. The novitiate was never built there, though, and Br Ludovic was later to be severely reprimanded by the major superiors for his impetuous purchase. It seemed poor thanks for the man who had, with minimum qualifications and little training, firmly established this French teaching congregation in an unenthusiastic, if not actively hostile Irish-Australian environment. His initiative, especially in the early opening of the novitiate and his successful recruitment and training of local personnel had a lasting influence on the Marist tradition in Australia. Br Ludovic was to serve the Australian mission for another ten years as Master of Novices and sometimes, Acting Provincial.
In the New Year, however, he would be superseded, as leader, by the recently appointed Provincial of Oceania, Br John Dullea, who was, as it turned out, an Irishman.\textsuperscript{58}

If Br Ludovic’s lack of ‘higher’ education made him an inadequate apostle of the full depth of the Marist teaching tradition in these pioneering years, his personal devotion to Fr Champagnat, his commitment to a Marist idea of Christian Education, and his example of a brotherly, guardian angel approach to both his Infants’ class and to his Australian novices, ensured that the latter, from the outset, would sense that they were being formed in a distinctive, self-conscious and articulated tradition. He may not have been able to expound that tradition coherently enough to satisfy Archbishop Polding, much less Archbishop Vaughan; but his, at times, stubborn adherence to the conditions, established by his Superiors, made these bishops realize that they were dealing with an established and integrated educational organization, rather than simply a malleable, economical and dedicated pool of manpower. He may have established no more than a mere foothold in the Sydney archdiocese; but for the clergy, at least, that foothold now bore an identifiably Marist footprint.

\textsuperscript{58} Much of these last three paragraphs is based on Ian McDonald’s \textit{A School of Their Own: The Story of Parramatta Marist, 1820-2000} (Sydney, 2000) pp. 35-96. He has done much to identify and characterise the early lay teachers at the school. However, most of Mr McDonald’s material on the Marist Brothers’ arrival in Parramatta comes from Br Alban’s work.