

Chapter Eight: Marist Tradition Meets the Modern World

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th, 1952, the Superior General of the Marist Brothers, Br Leonida, then on visitation in Australia, published a full-length circular in the *Bulletin of the Institute*, calling for a renewal and revival of the Religious and Marist Spirit of the Congregation. It was six years since the XIVth General Chapter, which had elected Br Leonida to his position, and one hundred years since the Second General Chapter had authorized the *Common Rules*, the *Life of Fr Champagnat* and the *Teacher's Guide*. The General House had moved back from its Italian exile at Grugliasco to St Genis Laval near Lyon. The order had grown to number some eight thousand brothers¹ working in fifty countries around the world.² The European, British Commonwealth and North American Provinces had survived two World Wars and the Great Depression and were everywhere engaged in the post-war re-construction and expansion of Catholic Education. Enrolments in the brothers' schools and even numbers of recruits entering Juniorates and Novitiates were increasing rapidly and Br Leonida might have been forgiven for thinking that, despite active persecution by the Communists in Eastern Europe and China,³ the order was enjoying a sort of second spring.

The tone of Br Leonida's circular was cautionary rather than exultant, however. Yes, the schools 'apostolate' was everywhere flourishing, but in some provinces a divergence had developed between the big city colleges, patronized by the wealthy and the poorer, smaller, country and primary schools, for which the order had originally been founded. Some brothers were aspiring to senior teaching positions in the colleges and accepting transfers to rural or primary schools as a penance and a humiliation. This was not the 'Religious Spirit' to which they were called. The comforts and conveniences which their wealthier pupils expected; the sporting and social contact with the brothers, which the wealthy parents seemed to seek; the increasing involvement of lay teachers, including female lay teachers, on Marist school staffs; and even the growing practice of allowing professed brothers to visit their families: all of these were undermining the 'Religious Spirit' of some communities. The steady encroachment of films, radio, secular newspapers and even television was also eroding the monastic seclusion of the brothers' residences. The educational benefit of these media resources was undeniable, as was the need for senior teachers, at least, to keep abreast of current affairs and professional

¹ *Marist Monthly*. Sept. 1954 w.e.f. 1.1.54. This figure is quoted twice, in different places, in this edition of the *Monthly*. The first quotation is in regard to internal statistics for the order and includes only brothers with at least annual vows: no novices, postulants or juniors. The second quotation is in relation to other teaching orders of brothers in the Catholic Church. According to the second list, the Marists were then the second biggest order of teaching brothers in the Church. Although a long way behind the De La Salle Brothers with 15,000, they were also a long way ahead of the next group of congregations, which included the Irish Christian Brothers and which averaged about 2,500 members each, at that time.

² *Marist Monthly*. March, 1955.

³ The China Province numbered 210 brothers in 21 schools at the end of 1946. *Bulletin of the Institute*. January, 1947.

developments. The brothers' involvement in all this, however, should be limited to what was necessary and useful and also in keeping with the requirements of Canon Law and whatever guidelines had been established by local Church hierarchies.

The brothers were not only reminded of the requirements of Canon Law and of the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, which underpin the whole structure of Religious Life; they were also exhorted to renew their awareness and appreciation of the Marist tradition, itself. Br Leonida directed them back to the basic texts: the *Common Rules*, the *Life of the Founder*, the *Teachers Guide*, but also to additional writings such as *Avis*, *Leçons*, *Sentences*; *The Good Superior*; *Lives of the Early Brothers*; and *Principles of Christian and Religious Perfection* which had accumulated over the years like a sort of Talmud, expanding and commenting on the Torah of 'canonical' texts. There was, as yet, no critical or revisionary work being done on these Marist sources; but Fr Coste SM had begun his editorial work on *Origines Maristes* and Br Pierre Zind was beginning to contribute short Marist historical items to a French language monthly magazine, designed for pupils, called *Voyages et Missions*. Within a few years, the Founder's Beatification as Blessed Marcellin Champagnat, would give new impetus to this thrust. In the meantime, the brothers were referred to the originals and to the *Collections of Circulars*, published by the Superiors General over the decades and now superseded by the *Bulletin of the Institute*, in which this present exhortation was being circulated.

Although a copy was sent to every Australian community, the *Bulletin of the Institute* was not avidly read by all the brothers. Published only in French, its format was unappealing and the standard run of contents - a long instruction, or exhortation from the Superior General on Religious Life and, perhaps, on Education, followed by a collection of shorter news items from scattered centres of the Marist world and an annual update on the membership statistics from all of the provinces - often seemed remote from the Australian brothers' immediate concerns. Since Br Leonida was in Australia during that December/January period and gave conferences at each of the annual retreats, the brothers probably received the bulk of this new exhortation orally; but, to make sure, Br Andrew, who had been re-appointed as Provincial of Sydney after the division into two provinces, had the whole *Bulletin* article translated and reprinted in three parts in successive issues of the 1953 *Marist Monthly*.⁴ This little eight to twelve-page newsletter was another of Br Andrew's initiatives. Begun in 1938 and edited from the Sydney Provincial House, it was circulated to all the Australian communities, even after the division of the Province. It was similar in content to the *Bulletin* but on a Provincial scale. The exhortation or instruction came from the Provincial and was shorter and more locally focused than the Superior General's; the news items were almost all about Australian communities, in which most of the brothers knew almost all of the others, from personal experience. The *Monthly* was much more widely read and discussed than the *Bulletin*.

How much of Br Leonida's *Bulletin* exhortation was directed at the Australian Provinces is a moot point. St Joseph's and, arguably, Sacred Heart College in Adelaide were, by this time, prestigious schools, involved in GPS-style sports competitions.⁵

⁴ March, April and May.

⁵ P. Donovan, & B. O'Neill, *In the Marist Tradition*. (Adelaide, 1997), p. 88.

The boarding colleges in the other states: Ashgrove in Brisbane, Campbelltown and Forbes in New South Wales, Kilmore and Sale in Victoria, one at Mt Gambier in South Australia, and St Ildephonsus' at New Norcia, in Western Australia, were simply country boarding schools, providing a Catholic education for the sons of small farmers, city and country town publicans and small businessmen and for the general Catholic population of the towns in which they were located. Although modeled on the pattern of St Joseph's, they were not prestigious or wealthy schools and the brothers who staffed them were moved with the same eye to qualifications, experience and expertise as those on the staffs of the Sydney parochial schools. In fact, the new, Scottish-born Assistant General, Br Justinian, who had succeeded Br Clement Murray in 1951 and whose previous experience had been as Provincial of colonial South Africa, actually ruffled a few Provincial feathers, by suggesting that the Australian brothers should concentrate more on prestigious colleges and less on the parochial schools when he made his official visit in 1952.⁶

Br Justinian's strategy as regards going 'up-market' was debatable from both a practical and a Marist/Religious point of view. The Marist parochial schools, after all, provided an irreplaceable percentage of Australian boys' Catholic Education, especially in Sydney. The encroachment of the modern media on the monastic seclusion of the brothers' establishments was undeniable, however, and probably irreversible. Since the 1920s there had been radio clubs in the boarding schools and since the 1930s there had been a radio in the community room or study of most brothers' houses. The brothers were not normally allowed to attend public cinemas, without express permission from the Provincial, but films were shown weekly in most boarding schools, and even during the brothers' summer schools. After Br Hilary Conroy succeeded Br Andrew, as Provincial of Sydney, in December 1953, reminders appear in the *Marist Monthly* that the Brother Director was obliged to strictly control the use of the community radio; and while Sydney's *Sunday Herald* might be taken as a community newspaper, the *Sunday Telegraph* was much too sensational and lurid a publication to appear in a Religious House. Television, of course, and community cars were still a few years 'down the track' in Australia.

Then again, if Br Justinian's enthusiasm for fewer, independent-style schools was debatable, two other General Council policies that he promulgated during his Australian visit were undoubtedly more far-sighted and responsible. There seems to have been a perception at the General Council level and, perhaps, also at Provincial Council level that the existing Australian Marist training program, even after the improvements instituted by Br Andrew in the 1930s, was producing professed brothers many of whom were still emotionally, spiritually and professionally immature. The juvenile recruitment into the juniorate, the competitive sporting and study regime in this sheltered, rural environment and the comparatively brief religious training during the novitiate and scholasticate levels meant that newly professed brothers 'flowed' into a period of six years of annual vows and faced 'final' or 'perpetual' profession at the age of twenty-four or -five, without ever having had the opportunity to take a fully personal and responsible decision. To counter this danger, Br Justinian announced, the Superior General wanted the scholasticate

⁶ Provincial Council Correspondence. 16.9.52.

increased to at least two years' duration and all brothers preparing for perpetual profession to undertake the Great Exercises of St Ignatius.

The Great Exercises are the foundation of Jesuit spirituality. They are a set of meditations developed by the Jesuit Founder, St Ignatius of Loyola, aimed at helping the participant to discern what is God's will for his/her future. In their classical and contemporary form, they involve a thirty-day silent retreat during which a spiritual director guides the participant through the meditations. Apart from the interviews with the director, every two or three days, the participant lives in prayer and silence, considering his/her present and future stance in the light of the Gospels. It might be argued that, with the Gospels as the basis for the meditations, the history of the Jesuits behind him/her, and the daily routine of Mass and the community recitation of the Office, the cards were somewhat stacked in the direction of the participant discerning in favour of perpetual commitment. But, at the very least, the prolonged silence, and the contact only with the spiritual director, broke the shackles of peer pressure, intensified as it had been, by prolonged socialisation within a particular age cohort. It offered the opportunity referred to by Yeats in his poem, *An Irish Airman Foresees his Death*:

I balanced all, brought all to mind.
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

The arguments in favour of prolonging scholasticate training were even more compelling. Although the increase in the Australian school population after World War II was considerable, across the board, the percentage increase at secondary level was much higher than at primary level. The Marist Brothers in 1950 might, perhaps, have been half primary, half secondary in their manpower commitment; but no more than half of the brothers involved at secondary level had the requisite paper qualifications. With the post-war trend towards an increased demand for secondary education, the Marist teaching force was therefore under pressure to expand both qualitatively and quantitatively. After its 1943 suspension, the Marist scholasticate was re-opened, at the start of July 1946, at Camberwell in Melbourne with Br Ronald Fogarty, a graduate of Br Frederic Eddy's, as part-time Master of Scholastics. In 1951 it was moved to Drummoyne, in Sydney, with Br Damian Willis, another of Br Frederic's associates, in charge; Br Ronald having been given some time release to do further studies and also to undertake the second novitiate program in France. The Drummoyne property was a substantial house on a half acre suburban block and had been bought only as an interim measure. A larger block, for a larger, more permanent facility was purchased in 1954 at Villa Maria, near St Joseph's, but, in the event, the new scholasticate was eventually built on a dairy farm property at Dundas, near Parramatta.

The ear-marking of these two, larger, properties as possible sites for the new scholasticate – the Dundas site had originally been intended as a junior school for St Joseph's – indicates that the two Australian Provincial Councils had acquiesced to the General Council's call for a longer scholasticate. The plans for the new building

envisaged accommodation for up to ninety scholastics, from both provinces, staying for at least two years.⁷ But the path ahead was by no means straight or clear. The demand for new openings and increased secondary accommodation in the Sydney Province was intense and the Melbourne Province was committed to at least half a dozen new secondary openings, including two boarding schools, in country Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia, all to begin in the first decade of its separate existence. Although the number of recruits to both provinces' Juniorates and the Novitiates did increase substantially after World War II and remained quite buoyant throughout the 1950s, there were, again, two ways along which the order might develop.

The Low Road, in this case, would have been to accept all the openings that were being urged upon the order, to intensify the recruiting of Juniors and to keep the training period as short as possible. This was the path towards which Br Placidus Redden, the last Provincial of the combined Australian Province and first Provincial of the separate Melbourne Province was inclined. At the division of the Australian Province the Sydney Province was assigned two hundred and thirty three brothers and responsibility for thirty one establishments. The Melbourne Province was given one hundred and nine brothers and seventeen establishments and, as has been mentioned, was soon committed to half a dozen more foundations. Br Placidus, who had gained his own BA, Dip.Ed. as a part-time evening student, could hardly bear to contemplate the manpower sacrifice involved in extending the scholasticate to two or three years. His own unselfish and energetic pastoral zeal for the spread of Catholic Education could, nevertheless, be honestly claimed as authentically Marist and faithful to the tradition of Fr Champagnat.

The High Road, on the other hand, was to follow the directions of the General Council, to slow the acceptance of new commitments and the expansion of existing ones and to extend the length of the brothers' scholasticate training. Br Justinian had asked specifically that brothers attending university courses should do so on a day-time basis and had secured Cardinal Gilroy's approval for this policy.⁸ Br Andrew, who was re-appointed as Provincial of Sydney after the division into two provinces, was less inclined than Br Placidus to resist the pressure from the General Council and opened only two Australian schools during his final term, from 1948-1953. He led the search for the temporary Sydney scholasticate site at Drummoyne, but it was left to his successor as Provincial, Br Hilary Conroy, to finance and build the more permanent, and much larger scholasticate, at Dundas. Br Hilary's own professional qualifications had, like Br Placidus' and Br Andrew's, been won the hard way. He had been Director of two secondary schools in Victoria, Bendigo and Kilmore, and one at Newcastle in New South Wales, before he was given a break from leadership and allowed three years of ordinary class teaching at Bondi Junction, while he acquired his BA, as an evening student, at Sydney University. Within twelve months of taking office as Provincial, Br Hilary had devised and implemented a fund-raising program to finance the new scholasticate, which was estimated to cost £250,000. He imposed a levy of £1 per pupil, per term, on all schools in the Sydney Province.⁹

⁷ Provincial Council Minutes. Oct., 1954.

⁸ *ibid.* July, 1953.

⁹ *ibid.* Feb., 1955, and *Marist Monthly* March, 1955.

The writer acknowledges that this deployment of the nomenclature is a slight re-definition of the Low Road/High Road dichotomy, employed in earlier chapters. However, as in previous descriptions of the two roads, the writer would also argue that the Br Hilary's High Road had as legitimate a claim to Marist authenticity as the Low Road of Br Placidus or the High Roads embarked upon by Br John Dullea and Br Andrew/Br Frederic. Had he been challenged, Br Hilary could have quoted the example of Br Louis Marie, taking the Order into considerable debt to move the General House from the Hermitage to St Genis Laval. In the event, his decision went unchallenged. The Melbourne Province sent its scholastics to Dundas for the requisite one or four years and, at the XVth General Chapter in August 1958, Br Hilary was elected Assistant General with responsibility for the two Australian Provinces and New Zealand. The next two sections of this chapter will attempt to analyse the two roads as now re-defined.

The Low Road: St Patrick's, Church Hill

When St Patrick's, the bellwether of our low road schools, last appeared in the narrative, it was struggling through the Depression, the brothers surviving financially with the help of Mothers' Club meals and the supplementary income from the evening classes, which they taught over and above their daytime teaching load.¹⁰ By 1935, when the worst of the Depression had passed, enrolments in both the day school and the evening classes increased. A school-based Employment Bureau, which ran from 1935 till 1938, perhaps helped the enrolment recovery; but, by 1938, the school magazine was assuring parents that only 'jobs with a future' were being offered and urging that they should not withdraw their sons before they completed the Intermediate Certificate. In 1939, day school numbers peaked at three hundred and ninety (primary and junior secondary) while the evening classes had two hundred enrolled. Many of the evening students were doing senior commercial subjects, while others sat the full Leaving Certificate. Some of the latter were also taking Latin, as a preparation for entering the seminary and the 1940 magazine reported thirteen ex-students studying to become priests or Marist Brothers: a traditional gauge of a good Marist school. But the 1938 magazine also printed a short article attempting to 'scotch the impression abroad' that a school in the Rocks must be short of physical education facilities. Evidently, not all was well in the resurgent St Patrick's.¹¹

Enrolments held up during the early years of the War, but declined quite dramatically in 1942, especially in the evening classes which dropped to only sixty-three from two hundred and twenty the previous year. Evening classes then stabilized or even improved a little, but day school numbers continued to decline for the rest of the War, reaching one hundred and nine in 1945 and reviving only to one hundred and fourteen in 1946. The low birth-rate of the Depression years and the manpower shortage of the mid-

¹⁰ See above: Ch. 7 p. 139.

¹¹ John Braniff, *Cradle to Canonisation*. (Sydney, 2002). pp. 64 ff. Much of this section of the present chapter is based on the writer's recently published school history of St Patrick's. This particular section of the school history was, in turn, based on surviving school magazines, house annals and other archival material, still held in the school library, at Dundas.

war years may account for some of the decline. The continuing residential population-drift, away from the Rocks area, could also be a factor; but concern over the cramped and ageing facilities, hinted at in the 1938 magazine article mentioned above, must also have been a contributing factor. In 1947 and 1948 the day school numbers declined to a mere fifty six, while the evening classes stagnated at between seventy and eighty initial enrolments, with a worrying drop-out rate during each academic year.

A report drafted in 1943 by an otherwise anonymous ‘Catholic Technical Advisory Committee’ lends weight to the doubts about the school’s facilities.¹² The committee was apparently commissioned to investigate the possibility of converting St Patrick’s into a Senior Technical College, taking its own First Year students through to Intermediate and then attracting additional students from the nearby Intermediate Catholic Technical Schools – the Marist St Benedict’s and the Christian Brothers’ Schools at Balmain, Rozelle and Paddington – to continue through to Fifth Year. To be economically viable the school would need an enrolment of around six hundred and to be educationally viable it would need ‘sports grounds ... an assembly hall ... (and) a good library, suitably housed’.¹³ However, the committee calculated that even if the Commercial College premises, built by P re Piquet in 1917, and the Parish Hall, were extensively adapted and renovated, to the tune of £10,000, St Patrick’s would still only be able to accommodate two hundred and thirty students. In those pre-State Aid days, no school community the size of St Patrick’s, nor any Catholic Education Office, for that matter, could fund such a project. Instead, as the day enrolments continued to drop, Br Placidus, who had been appointed Provincial in December 1945, lent the school £300 to purchase a set of second-hand woodwork and metal work benches from the Christian Brothers’ Junior Technical School in Newtown. The newly appointed Director of St Patrick’s, Br Geraldus, spent most of his weekends in 1948, fitting up the workrooms, installing the workbenches and doing Parish and Parents and Friends fundraising to pay back the loan. Then, in 1949, St Patrick’s opened its doors, in its new guise as an Intermediate Technical School.

If the conversion of St Patrick’s into a ‘Junior Tech’ illustrates how the ‘Low Road’ Marist schools of this era were funded, the following extract, from a letter written by Br Walter Smith, illustrates how they were staffed. Br Walter went on to become Provincial of the Melbourne Province but he had graduated from the novitiate while the scholasticate was still in its war-time abeyance:

I emerged as a rather terrified 18-year old in July 1945 and spent my first six months up at West Maitland under the wise guidance of Br Owen Kavanagh, in a community of very supportive Brothers. Then, at Joey’s, in January 1946, after those famous Summer Schools, I found myself climbing those stairs, up to the top floor of St Pat’s, Harrington St ... where I stayed for the next three years.

¹² Braniff, *op.cit.* pp. 70ff. A carbon copy of this three-quarto page type-written report is preserved in St Patrick’s House Annals, but it is on non-letterhead paper and the Sydney Catholic Education Office archives does not seem to have the master-copy.

¹³ Quoted, from the carbon copy itself.

I guess a week before school started, I was with Br Benignus who was one year ahead of me. Br Matthew met us and simply stated that one of us had to do the Leaving night school Geography ... the other would do the History. Both of us had done Science/Maths in our own Leaving Certificate ... Benignus very much so, me: I would not be too sure just what I was ... I took the Geography which I had never studied. I remember teaching something about subsistence farming in S.E. Asia. I was not too sure where S.E. Asia was, nor what Subsistence Farming was: and I had mostly returned soldiers in the class trying to make a fresh start ... some having spent time in Asia. Fortunately, a well-known Geography teacher in Sydney at that time had produced a very good set of notes on the Syllabus ... I was able to keep the famous one page ahead. I also had to do the Leaving Physics ... with the prac. being done at the Marist High School at Darlinghurst on a Sunday morning. Then there was the Public Service Maths, ... a sort of comic relief.

It really was a very hard life ... but at least I was nineteen by the time I started at Harrington St. During the day I had one of the larger classes in the school: about twenty in combined Fifth and Sixth Grade. Br Benignus had Third and Fourth Grade, I guess about fifteen, or so. But they got him down, and he did not last the year.

I had three different Directors during those years: Br Matthew, a wonderful man, often referred to as the best Director in Sydney: he was very kind and saw to it that we were able to relax on Friday nights (no night school) and at weekends. Then there was Br Y: a bit of an eccentric, his main attribute was that he was a commercial teacher ... he loved to go to the boxing at Rushcutters' Bay. Then came Br Geraldus, who restored some focus and direction to the community.

After Benignus left, I was with Brothers of a much older age bracket: Martin Smith, John Damascene, Noel, Alipius ... to name a few, but the constant help and encouragement I received from them helped to compensate for the workload.

The split of the Provinces took place at the end of '47. I was asked to stay on at St Pat's for one extra year ... for two reasons. First: to help Br Geraldus with the preparations to have the Tech. Courses start in '49. So I remember those benches from Rozelle or Balmain. I had studied Intermediate Tech Drawing in '46 at Darlinghurst, every Sunday afternoon, under the redoubtable Br Cassian. (Matthew did it too!) I was a budding Tech teacher. So the second reason I stayed in Sydney, was to do a Tech Course at the Sydney Technical College in Fitting and Turning. This had been specially set up by the College under the urging of Br Colman for Religious Teaching Brothers. About a dozen of us gathered each Friday evening for the year ... and I passed the F & T Course! But I knew I was going South ... actually to teach metalwork at Bendigo. It had all been arranged.

So, once again, in mid-January 1949 I found myself sitting in the Joey's Hall, waiting for the 'Shifts' to be read out. Not with great expectations this time ... I knew I was going to Bendigo. Bendigo was read out ... no Walter! I had to wait till Mt Gambier came out ... and I found myself teaching Maths and Physics

there. Thus ended my Tech Career. It began and ended at St Pat's – but before St Pat's started its Tech Career.¹⁴

This extract is quite long; but it is also so rich in its reference to themes that have appeared in earlier chapters – the inadequacy of the early training, the immaturity of the junior professed brothers, the dependence on Directors, the incredible workload, the ritual of the Summer Schools and the late reading of the 'Shifts' - that it hardly requires analysis or commentary. Perhaps the only aspect that needs to be emphasised is the relatively cheerful spirit of acceptance and commitment that underlies the account.

At any rate, thus funded and thus staffed, St Patrick's struggled on in its new guise as a Junior Tech. And 'struggled' is the operative word. Even in 1951, when the 1949 First Year intake of 'Tech' students had rolled through to Intermediate, the secondary enrolment had risen to only ninety-four, with a mere forty in the two combined primary classes. The reasons for this slow recovery are not too difficult to discern. A photograph of the staff in the House Annals for 1950 shows Br Geraldus surrounded by five young brothers, all of them, less than six years out of the novitiate and therefore with, at most, one year's scholasticate training behind them.¹⁵ The proportion of boys from St Patrick's parish in the primary school and, therefore, presumably in the junior secondary was only ten percent, which means that the remainder must have been commuter students. Yet when St Patrick's applied to have its Junior Secondary registration renewed upon re-opening as a Technical School this was refused. In 1949, the reason given for refusing registration was that no students were presenting for the Intermediate. The next year, the reason offered was that numbers were so small. And, in subsequent years, there is correspondence to the effect that there were discrepancies between the school's internal assessments and the results achieved by the students in the external exams which they sat as private students.¹⁶ This meant that the school could not accept Bursary holders and, even worse, that those students who did enroll were not eligible for public transport subsidies, which were available only to those attending registered schools: a severe handicap for a school most of whose students were commuters.

After 1940 the NSW Education Department began Vocational Guidance programs in their schools with the students exiting Grade Six or entering Year Seven being subjected to aptitude and Stanford-Binet intelligence tests. St Patrick's and most other Marist 'Low Road' schools applied for their students to be similarly tested and the results were duly recorded in the House Annals each year. These show that forty percent of the annual intake was below the 100 mark and that twenty-five percent were below 90, the accepted minimum for successfully attempting secondary studies. The Annals also record

¹⁴ This extract, perhaps 55% of the whole, comes from a letter which Br Walter sent to the writer, after the former had read a copy of *Cradle to Canonisation*. It was a spontaneous and unsolicited response, not intended for publication. The writer has received Br Walter's permission to print this edited version.

¹⁵ The Annals are, as mentioned previously, in the archives of the school library, at Dundas. In the photograph, only Br Geraldus is wearing the brass and ebony pectoral cross, which was worn by brothers after they had made their perpetual vows. That is why the writer concludes the others were all less than six years out of the novitiate.

¹⁶ This correspondence is preserved in the Annals.

Br Geraldus's pleas to the parents to send the boys to school in the proper school uniform and his apologies for having to raise the school fees to three shillings per week in primary and six shillings per week in secondary. The same Annals contain photos of the boys at their work benches and in small, formal class groups. Even in the formal class groups and on 'school photo' day, many boys are not in uniform. Until the end of Br Geraldus' term as Director in 1954, St Patrick's had the air of a battling school and a school for battlers. It was being faithful to the Marist tradition of reaching out to the poor, but it was not presenting an image that would tempt many parents to enroll their sons in those days of rising educational expectations.

Br Demetrius Radford followed Br Geraldus as Director and soon succeeded in restoring the school's morale and enrolments. At this distance in time and on the basis of the surviving House Annals and annual concert programs, it is not entirely clear how he managed to turn the school around, but a few initiatives are perhaps worth highlighting. A newsletter was sent home at the end of the first week congratulating the parents on the fine turn-out of the boys in their school uniforms and urging them to keep up the good work. The Newsletter seems to have come out more regularly and perhaps more frequently than in Br Geraldus' time. The internal house system or 'colour-comp', too, was re-furbished. Captains and committees were elected and the boys were encouraged to compete, not just in sport and studies, but also in sweeping the classrooms and school yard, in wearing the uniform properly and in having a good punctuality and attendance record. The winning house, each term, was rewarded with a 'banquet' of soft drink, pies and cakes. This was *The Teacher's Guide's* spirit of emulation and rewarding good behaviour, taken to their practical conclusion.

In August of Br Demetrius's first year, as part of Education Week, St Patrick's staged an exhibition which was open to the public on Sunday afternoon and all day on Monday, including the evening hours. The event was very well attended by parents and, among others, by both the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Carboni and Cardinal Gilroy, who was a close personal friend of Br Demetrius, and it was very favourably written up in the diocesan paper, *The Catholic Weekly*. *The Weekly's* coverage included a postcard sized photograph featuring some neatly turned out students showing off model ships and planes against a background of wall maps and display charts. One is struck by the similarity of these 'modern', P.R.- style tactics – the house competition and the public display of student work – with those employed by Br Augustine in the school's early days, when it was struggling to maintain numbers in competition with the Fort Street Model School.

An Intermediate class photo from 1955, again, preserved in the House Annals, shows a group of twenty-four students all dressed in school suit-coats with pocket badges and ties neatly done up. This stress on neat appearance and school uniforms might surprise the casual reader, because it is not an aspect of Marist education which has been much featured until this stage of the narrative. School uniforms only became compulsory at St Joseph's¹⁷ and the other High Road schools from the mid 1930s onwards but the custom began to spread to the other schools from at least early 1941 when the matter of

¹⁷ Naughtin, *A Century of Striving*. p. 189.

badges, school colours and mottoes was centralized under Provincial Council control.¹⁸ Certainly, it has become a characteristic of all modern Marist schools, especially in Sydney, where every school has a winter, a summer and a sports uniform, aimed at being economically priced and usually supported by a uniform exchange shop, staffed by mothers, which provides second hand-uniforms for the less well-off and smaller items like school bag, shorts and football socks.

Whether these foregoing items do full justice to Br Demetrius' administration or not, his overall strategy was evidently successful. Enrolments climbed back above the two hundred mark in 1955 and Registration with the Bursary Endowment Board was restored in March of that year, bringing with it both the availability of public transport subsidies and the possibility of enrolling bursary-holders. The former was a serious consideration, since, even in 1960, students were travelling to St Patrick's, mainly by public transport, from forty-three different parishes. The latter possibility, however, was overly optimistic. The Aptitude Tests for the First Year intake in 1960 showed only two 'Above Average' enrollees, three on 'Average', and the remaining twenty-plus students ranging from 'Below Average' to 'Very Inferior'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, enrolments rose again, to two hundred and thirty in 1956, Br Demetrius' last year as Director, and the school remained at capacity for the four subsequent years, while Br Ervan McDonough was in charge. So successful was the secondary day-school recovery that the evening classes, which had out-lived their usefulness, were discontinued in 1957 and the primary classes, which had stagnated at uneconomic enrolment levels – only thirty boys, in total, for the two combined Grades Three/Four and Five/Six – were closed in 1958.

When Br Ervan moved on at the end of 1960, enrolments again sagged below two hundred and the in-coming Director, Br Cyrinus Fisk, had to advertise quite vigorously to attract an adequate First Year intake. By the middle of 1961, however, the Wyndham Scheme, with its model of large comprehensive High Schools and proposed enrolments of seven to eight hundred, was looming over the New South Wales education scene in general and small secondary schools, like St Patrick's, in particular. The Labor Party Conference of June 1961 voted to implement the Wyndham recommendations and, in September of that year, the *Catholic Weekly* announced that St Patrick's would close, at Harrington Street, at the end of 1963, to re-open at Dundas, the following year. For the previous twelve to eighteen months, the Catholic Education Office had been negotiating with the various teaching orders about the need to rationalize the Catholic Education coverage in the light of demographic trends and the implications of the Wyndham Report. Cardinal Gilroy, publicly, as early as the November 1957 opening of the Scholasticate, had asked the Marist Provincial Council to open a new school at Dundas, where a large Housing Commission project had sprung up around the Marists' former dairy farm site.²⁰ The transfer of St Patrick's was, therefore, a logical and manageable development and would bring the old Low Road school into mutually beneficial contact with the new High Road.

¹⁸ Provincial Council Minutes. 15.4.41.

¹⁹ The figures for the 1960 Parishes, and the Aptitude Tests are taken from the House Annals.

²⁰ *Marist Monthly*. Nov., 1957.

The High Road: Champagnat College, Dundas

Before launching directly into the story and significance of the Marist Brothers' scholasticate at Dundas, it is necessary to first place it in a wider, Australian Catholic context. Although the changes initiated by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) came as something of a surprise, not to say a shock, to most Australian Catholics - lay, Religious and clerical - there had been some stirrings of change during the 1950s. News of the 'New Catechetics' and of some of the advances in Catholic Scripture Studies had finally reached Australia and liturgical reform was gathering momentum among some of the younger clergy, championed by Archbishop Young of Hobart.²¹ The Vatican was, of course, aware of these developments and also of the mushroom-like growth of Catholic secondary education, worldwide. The Australian Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Carboni, therefore, acting on instructions from the Sacred Congregation of Religious Brothers, directed the Provincials of the male teaching orders to organize a joint conference to discuss mutual concerns arising out of contemporary developments.²²

The first of these conferences was held at the Irish Christian Brothers' Scholasticate at Strathfield, Sydney in August/September 1955. The theme of that first joint conference was the training of brothers and Br Ronald Fogarty's paper on 'The Formation of the Young Religious' was well received.²³ Also well received was the Irish Christian Brothers' speaker, Br Campbell, who gave a paper on 'Higher Religious Studies for Brothers'. To meet this latter need the Institute of *Jesus Magister* (Jesus the Teacher) was set up within the Pontifical University of the Lateran, in Rome, to provide theological courses for teaching brothers and four Australian brothers - two Christian Brothers, one Marist and one De La Salle Brother - were among the pioneer enrollees in 1957.²⁴ It was another piece of encouragement from Archbishop Carboni, however, which finally set the scene for the Marist initiative at Dundas. At the January '58 Summer School at St Joseph's, the Apostolic Delegate delivered a paper which was intended to encourage the young Marists in their vocation as Christian teachers. The paper was quite free-ranging, advocating, among other things, the acquisition of 'a good GENERAL KNOWLEDGE' which the Delegate went on to define as a liberal arts, classics and social sciences background rather than a specialization in scientific and technical subjects.²⁵ But the following paragraph, from late in the lecture, must have sounded like music to the ears of the young brothers in the audience who were preparing to enter the new scholasticate:

My dear Brothers, you have lived and worked efficiently and well within your enclosures, your Colleges and schools. You have laboured that your monasteries and institutions, both large and small, should prosper for the honour and glory of

²¹ Mullins, W.A. 'The Development of Catholic Education in NSW 1900-1906.' (Catholic University, Washington DC, 1969), pp. 128-76.

²² *ibid.* p. 256.

²³ *ibid.* p. 258.

²⁴ *ibid.* p. 253.

²⁵ *Bulletin of Studies* 1958. p. 5. (Capitalization as in the printed text.)

God. And you have succeeded admirably. God has blessed your labours and they have borne abundant fruit. But let me repeat – beware of that narrow and insular outlook which is short-sighted and could be destructive and cultivate a far-seeing vision of the entire world which alone is worthy of the true follower of Christ.²⁶

Br Ronald was not present, to hear this encouragement delivered. He was leading the Melbourne Province Summer School at Kilmore, in Victoria. He was also ‘coming off’ a year of celebration as, perhaps, the leading authority on Catholic Education in Australia. His doctoral thesis, on the history of the subject, had been received with acclaim at Melbourne University in March 1957²⁷ and he had been featured as the leading speaker at the Adelaide Catholic Teachers’ Conference in September of that year.²⁸ Br Hilary, who had organized the funding of the new scholasticate, was still Provincial of Sydney; but Br Placidus Redden had reached the end of his term in the Melbourne Province and been succeeded by Br Damian Willis. Br Damian was another of Br Frederic’s disciples and had filled in as Master of Scholastics in the early War years and also some of the post-War years, when Br Ronald was on study-leave. Though no less committed, than Br Placidus, to fulfilling the Melbourne Province’s commitments to staffing the new openings, he was philosophically committed, also, to the proper professional training of the young brothers.

The Dundas scholasticate opened, therefore, on January 20th 1958 with twenty scholastics: twelve from the Sydney Province, six from Melbourne and two from the Province of South Africa. A compromise had been reached between the Provincials as to the length of the scholasticate program. Those brothers who had achieved Matriculation standard in the NSW Leaving Certificate or the Victorian Matriculation Exam, and especially those who were strong in Science, or had won Commonwealth Scholarships, were allowed four years in which to attempt a full-time BA, or BSc, DipEd. course, at Sydney University. The remainder would do a one-year, internally-taught teaching course at the scholasticate, which would qualify them for Victorian Registration. Of that first intake, twelve were university students (U-group, in scholasticate parlance) and eight undertook the registration course (R-group). Of the seven Sydney U-group scholastics the Arts/Science break-down was approximately half and half, while the three Melbourne U-groupers were all enrolled in Science. Science, at that stage, was more difficult to do as a part-time student, because of the requirement for practical sessions in the laboratories. Over the next three years, numbers built up. In 1962 there were seventy-one scholastics of whom nineteen were R-groupers and in 1963 there were seventy-eight, just two short of the college’s capacity.²⁹

This steady, natural growth towards capacity makes the launch of the Dundas scholasticate look like the inevitable triumph of common sense and sound judgment; but a close reading of Br Ronald’s Annual Reports to the Australian Provincials reveals that beneath the placid surface there was a great deal of furious paddling going on. In the first

²⁶ *Bulletin of Studies* 1958, p. 7.

²⁷ *Marist Monthly*, May, 1957.

²⁸ *ibid.* Oct., 1957.

²⁹ *Bulletin of Studies* 1959, ’63 and ’64.

Annual Report, delivered in December 1958, Br Ronald responded to a certain critical, envious or suspicious attitude that he sensed surrounding the scholasticate venture:

Here and there, about the provinces I have heard remarks to the effect that the scholastics are lucky, that they are being given wonderful opportunities and, generally, that a great deal is being done for them. If the implication behind these remarks is that more is being done for them than should be done then I publicly and deliberately dissociate myself from such views ... if we are doing more than *the spirit of our institute*, or the express direction of our former Superior General, or the direct commands of our late Holy Father, Pope Pius XII requires that we should do, then I have erred egregiously (but) I remain unrepentant.³⁰

He also discerned, in the early months of the program, a certain amount of resistance and suspicion among the first group of scholastics themselves:

Earlier I sensed a pronounced anti-intellectualism: although one was a teacher, one must not talk about teaching; although one was a student of the arts or science, it was not the done thing to discuss these things at recreation; one may have been a young Religious with the words of his first dedication still tingling in his ears, but one must not bring God, Our Lady, prayer or the apostolate into his ordinary conversation. This was just not done.

But, thank God, all this is changing and changing rapidly. Members of the R-group talk pedagogy quite naturally and spontaneously, and the U-groupers find history, literature and other aspects of their work just as diverting a topic of conversation as the things they formerly talked about.³¹

Br Ronald returned to this theme in his 1960 Report:

At the end of 1958, when our first year university results appeared, I had to stand with my back to the wall controverting the infantile thesis of those who argued that, having passed first year university in their subjects (the scholastics) already knew enough to be able to teach that subject 'right up to L.C.standard.' This year, 1960, I stand with my back to the wall again, facing some of the same challengers ... attempting a reconciliation between ... their new thesis, that a fourth, or honours, year is desirable ... and the immediate and desperate manpower needs of the provinces. This change of attitude has been wonderful to witness; to my mind it is a change of tremendous significance for the future of our work in Australia.³²

The reference to the 'desperate manpower needs' uncovers one source of the continued reservations about the scholasticate program in the unconverted, wider province community; but not the only source. As late as 1963, Br Ronald was still reflecting on the culture of the Australian Marist provinces:

³⁰ *Bulletin of Studies* 1959. pp. 12-13. (Italics, mine).

³¹ *ibid.* pp. 14 -15.

³² *Bulletin of Studies*. 1961. p. 8.

Why scholarship in a congregation such as ours should have been suspect I do not rightly understand. In some instances the attitude seems to spring from that sense of inferiority – social and economic inferiority, at all events – that characterised the Catholic body in Australia throughout the greater part of the 19th Century and even into the 20th. In other instances it may even find its origins in a misunderstanding of the first two articles of the (Marist) ‘Constitutions.’ What is there referred to as the primary and secondary ends of the congregation has been sometimes interpreted as ‘necessary and unnecessary’ or even, as another observer puts it as ‘safe and unsafe.’

...

The condition of society today and our role in it simply demand scholarship of a high order. The council of Trent in its day demanded that priests be given an intellectual formation that would elevate them well above those towards whom they exercised their ministry. Pius XII ... urged the same ideal on priests of the present day ... It is surely significant too that in the latest edition of the (Marist) *Common Rules* nine out of the eleven articles in the chapter on ‘Work’ refer to intellectual work; two only refer to manual work. This may come as a shock to those who have tended to think of work only as manual. This does not mean that we at Champagnat under-estimate the importance of manual work ... In a moderate degree manual work will always be necessary for us – from an economic viewpoint no less than from a therapeutic viewpoint ... But we cannot regard manual labour as a sort of sacred institution, to which daily service must be rendered.³³

Surely, what Br Ronald was doing in these annual reports was, once again, re-defining the educational and teaching tradition of the Australian Marist Brothers: the references to Papal statements and the directions of the Superiors General, the brief interpretations of the Marist Constitutions and the analysis of the Common Rules, all indicate that this is what was going on. And in the eyes of his scholastics, of his successors as Masters of Scholastics and, indeed, of succeeding generations of Australian Marist Brothers, his re-definition was accepted. In 1966 he stepped down, after eight years as Master of Scholastics, and was allowed, by his Provincial, to accept a Fulbright Scholarship and the shared Britannica Australia Award for Education for that year, with which he undertook post-Doctoral research in psychology at the University of Chicago. Br Quentin Duffy, who had been a Director of St Joseph’s and was Provincial of Sydney for six years of Br Ronald’s time at Dundas, succeeded him as Master of Scholastics and, in his first Annual Report on the Scholasticate, paid tribute to him in the following terms:

For us all ... I suggest that Brother Ronald stood as a typical spiritual son of Blessed Marcellin Champagnat whose name this college bears. If I were asked to sum up the spirit of Champagnat, the Founder-saint, I think I would say this – he was a man who had the vision to see an ideal and the courage and perseverance to

³³ *Bulletin of Studies* 1964 pp. 8-9.

see it through ... and to my mind few people in recent times have given a better exemplar, especially in the field of learning, than Brother Ronald.³⁴

It should be added that, after a short spell as Master of Scholastics, Br Quentin went on to become the Vicar General (i.e. Deputy Superior General) of the whole international Marist Order, a position he held for almost twenty years. Consequently, from a Marist point of view, his opinion of Br Ronald's Marist authenticity could be regarded as quite authoritative.

Yet, if Br Ronald's fidelity to the spirit of Fr Champagnat is today unquestioned, there are, for the writer at least, some questions of historical continuity and clarification which need to be addressed. As a result of the scholasticate reforms, between half and two thirds of each Marist age-cohort from 1958 onwards was turned over to modern secular universities for the bulk of their post-Novitiate, pre-service professional training. Even the remaining third of the candidates who undertook the internal, one-year Registration course, had little, specifically Marist content in their curriculum and were eventually absorbed into an inter-order Catholic Teacher College which, in turn, evolved into the present Australian Catholic University. There are some appropriately qualified Marist Brothers on the faculty of ACU. Some of the research these brothers conduct, and lay before the students, is done in Marist Schools, as are some of the practice teaching rounds the students undertake. But after this degree of dilution and assimilation, how much historical continuity can be realistically claimed with the spirit of Fr Champagnat?

Revision and Analysis

To conduct this analysis properly, it is first necessary to acquaint ourselves with the fact that, when the male teaching orders adopted, at the urging of the Vatican Congregation for Religious, this upgrade in the professional training of their personnel, it was emphasised that, in principle, the Religious, Theological and Catechetical education of the scholastics must also be improved to maintain parity.³⁵ The Australian brothers who had been sent to do the *Jesus Magister* course, in Rome, were meant to contribute to this theological upgrade and Br Valens Boyle, the first Sydney Marist Brother to enroll, did become a part-time lecturer, in Theology, at Dundas. However, the *Jesus Magister* courses soon proved to be unsatisfactory, only partly from a language point of view, and the teaching orders began sending their men to other international catechetical institutes in Belgium or Britain or to some of the American Catholic Universities such as Fordham in New York or Boston College.³⁶ Br Flavius Donnelly, of the Melbourne Province, attended the *Lumen Vitae* Institute in Brussels and then joined the Dundas staff to lecture and demonstrate in Catechetics. Genuine and systematic efforts were, therefore, made to preserve the scholasticate's links with both the Church's official *magisterium* and with the Marist tradition; but there were obvious difficulties.

³⁴ *ibid.* 1967 p. 13.

³⁵ Mullins, *op.cit.* p. 261 and *Bulletin of Studies* 1962 p. 6.

³⁶ *ibid.* p. 254.

These difficulties were perhaps less obvious in the case of the Registration course scholastics than in that of the University graduates. The R-groupers undertook a one-year course which consisted of five sections:

- A. Theory of Education
- B. Special Methods
- C. Theory and Practice of Religious Education
- D. Practical Work (including practice teaching)
- E. Cultural Subjects.³⁷

But although the lecturing was done at the scholasticate, by Br Ronald and other Marist Brother lecturers, and although the scholastics' observation and practice lessons were done in Marist Brothers schools, there was nothing specifically Marist about the pedagogy they were being taught. *The Teacher's Guide* was not used as a reference at Dundas.³⁸ And apart from the life-size portrait of the Founder at the entrance to the chapel, and the fact that all the scholastics and their lecturers wore the traditional habit, almost the only observable link between the R-group and Fr Champagnat was the nickname of the teaching resources which the scholastics prepared and accumulated in a central store-room. They were known as 'GMSes', short for 'Grand Means of Success.'³⁹ The iconography and the oral tradition of the order, therefore, still lived on.

Ironically, the real difficulty in identifying Marist continuity in the Registration program can probably be located in the 'Theory and Practice of Religious Education' course. This sort of course is more commonly referred to, nowadays, as Catechetics and the program that was taught to the R-group at Dundas, virtually from the outset, was the 'New' or Kerygmatic Catechetics which had begun in Germany in the 1930s but reached Australia only in the mid-fifties.⁴⁰ The 'old' or traditional catechism, which Fr Champagnat had founded the brothers to teach, had been so simple that a primary school child could memorize it and a theologically unsophisticated teacher could expound and expand upon it. Kerygmatic Catechesis, on the other hand, was more scripturally based and required a degree of theological sophistication, on the part of the teacher, which very few Australian Marist Brothers, prior to World War II, had ever possessed. We have seen that Br Frederic and Br Andrew had introduced theology into the Cycle of Studies in the mid-thirties; but the risks involved in that sort of self-education are clear. To take but one example, as late as 1958, the book *The Knox-Cox Gospel Story* was still on the Cycle reading list⁴¹ and Br Flavius Donnelly, when he took up lecturing in Catechetics at Dundas, dismissed that work as having set back the progress of Catholic scripture studies in Australia by twenty years.⁴²

³⁷ *Bulletin of Studies* 1959 p. 17.

³⁸ Though it was still on the reading list for the Cycle of Studies which all the scholastics had to study in the six months between leaving the novitiate and commencing at the scholasticate.

³⁹ See above. Ch. 3 p. 50.

⁴⁰ Mullins. *op.cit.* pp. 22-25.

⁴¹ *Bulletin of Studies*, 1958 p.17.

⁴² The writer was a U-group scholastic at Champagnat College from 1963 till 1966 and was introduced to the New Catechetics and modern Scripture Studies by Br Flavius. In the Knox-Cox book, the New Zealander, Fr Cox, took Monsignor Ronald Knox's lucid and modern, but not technically accurate, English translation of the New Testament and wove the four Gospels into a continuous narrative, with a running commentary on the facing page. This procedure re-affirmed the traditional notion that the Gospels were

Now Br Flavius regarded himself - and was regarded by others - as a 'devoted Brother' and he was to argue, in post-Vatican II days, that being a catechist was an essential, perhaps the central, element in a Marist Brother's vocation.⁴³ But it seems, to the writer at least, that the difference in content between what Br Flavius was teaching and what previous generations of Marist Brothers, right back to Fr Champagnat himself, had taught, constituted a significant discontinuity. The catechetics and the spirituality which the Founder had bequeathed to the brothers was characterised by child-like simplicity and found its best expression in submission to the authority of the Church and the will of the Superiors and in community participation in the liturgical, sacramental and devotional life of the Church. Previous generations of brothers, even those in positions of authority, or teaching senior classes, had not been expected to be speculative theologians or erudite scripture scholars, but simply to absorb and pass on the traditional doctrines and biblical interpretations of the Church. The New Catechetics was calling for a much more adult and self-directed response to Christ's invitation in the Gospels and so, for that matter, would the Second Vatican Council.

If the challenges to sustaining Marist continuity were nascent in the R-group Catechetics course, taught within the sheltering walls of Champagnat College, they were a great deal more obvious in the lecture halls of Sydney University. The U-group scholastics were expected to complete their BA, or BSc., at the university and then their DipEd at Sydney Teachers' College, doing their teaching rounds, if necessary, in the State High Schools. There was nothing particularly Marist about any of that and, therefore, to maintain the principle of parity, mentioned earlier, Br Ronald had been required to establish courses in Theology and Religious Studies for the scholastics which would parallel and supplement their secular studies at the university. With the guidance of the distinguished Marist priest and neo-Scholastic philosopher, Dr Austin Woodbury, and the lecturing assistance of Br Valens and, later, Br Flavius, these courses were duly set up and followed by the U-group scholastics. Thus, over their time at Dundas, they would complete four-year courses in Scholastic Philosophy, Systematic Theology, Ascetical Theology and, in their fourth or Dip.Ed. year, a course in Catechetics Method which, naturally, was not provided at Sydney Teachers' College. Since the scholastics were full-time students, attending university from Monday to Friday, during term time, these supplementary theological courses were taught at weekends and there was an hour set aside each weekday evening, in the scholastic timetable, specifically for Religious Study. Term exams were set in each of these subjects and the results were published in the *Bulletin of Studies*, alongside the university results, to reassure any remaining doubters, in either Province, that the scholastics were neither wasting their time, nor neglecting their religious development.

four separate but reconcilable biographies of Jesus and delayed Catholic acceptance of the nineteenth century (Protestant) scripture scholars' conclusion that the Gospels were NOT, in fact, biographies but rather narrative-style credal statements, redacted to suit the needs of the separate Early Church communities, for which they were originally written.

⁴³ Kavanagh, *Marist Brothers* p. 144.

Yet, despite Br Ronald's honest and entirely honourable intentions, there was a crucial weakness in this arrangement, namely, that the deductive methodology of neo-Scholastic philosophy and theology was basically incompatible with the inductive and empirical approach employed in both Science and the Humanities at university. Richard McBrien has described neo-Scholasticism as:

A revival of medieval Scholastic theology and philosophy, with a heavy emphasis on nonhistorical orthodoxy, that shaped the content and tone of theology textbooks from the sixteenth century to Vatican II.⁴⁴

There were class sets of these seminary textbooks in the classrooms at Dundas, designed to supplement the weekend lectures, given by Br Ronald and Br Valens. A different historian of theology has pointed out that, for St Thomas Aquinas, the pre-eminent philosopher of scholasticism, the first assumption was that:

while in all other sciences argument from authority is weaker than the argument from reason, in theology argument from authority is the strongest possible form of argument. The authority in question is not human but divine.[i.e. the Bible].⁴⁵

A heuristic system which was 'nonhistorical', and based on the authority of a medieval understanding of the Bible, could hardly serve as an adequate defence of Catholic and Marist orthodoxy or orthopraxy in a late twentieth century, western university context. If Aquinas's method was '*credo ut intelligam*' (I believe, so that I can understand), the approach of the contemporary university could, perhaps, best have been expressed, in quasi-Cartesian terms, as 'I doubt, so that I can find out'.

The saving grace in this, potentially head-on, confrontation was the Second Vatican Council, which met in discrete sessions from 1962 to 1965 and produced a series of authoritative documents, including, especially, *Gaudium et Spes*, a 'Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World', which sought to end the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Modern World, defined and dramatized by Pope Pius IX's 'Syllabus of Errors' of 1864. Some conservative critics of the post-Vatican II Catholic Church have alleged that the post-conciliar Church has 'gone Protestant'.⁴⁶ This is inaccurate and an overstatement. The post-conciliar Church may have retrieved some of the scriptural emphasis it had down-played after the Council of Trent; but the sacramental theology and hierarchical structure of the Church remain intact. It would be more accurate to say that, at the Council, the Church tried to come to terms with the Enlightenment, rather than the Reformation.⁴⁷ Freedom of conscience was proclaimed, Catholic Scripture Studies were freed to make up ground lost during the nineteenth century and Catholic theologians were liberated from the a-historical grip of neo-

⁴⁴ McBrien, R.P. *Catholicism*. (Melbourne, 1994). p. 1246.

⁴⁵ Evans, McGrath and Galloway, *The Science of Theology*. (Basingstoke, 1986). p. 89. Expansion, (in brackets), the writer's.

⁴⁶ These range from the now deceased and openly schismatic Swiss Archbishop Lefebvre, to contemporary, local critics such as P.P. McGuinness (occasionally in the *SMH*) and Mel Gibson.

⁴⁷ McBrien, *op.cit.* p. 642.

Scholasticism. These changes came too late for Br Ronald's philosophy and Br Valens' theology lectures; but Br Flavius' direction in Catechetics was affirmed and Br Valens' successor, as theology lecturer, Br Kieran Geaney, who had done his studies in Rome a crucial few years later than the former, was able to point out, to the Marist scholastics, a possible reconciliation between the cloister and the university; between the old tradition and the 'renewed' Church.

Nevertheless, if the prospect of the Vatican Council changes obviated any major conflict in the Dundas scholasticate, the perception of discontinuity with earlier definitions of the Marist tradition had been postponed rather than defused. In handling the transition, the Sydney Province was to fare rather better than the Melbourne Province, at the training level, at least. When Br Quentin was elected as Vicar General, he was succeeded at Dundas by Br Kieran, of the new school of thought, and when Br Charles Howard, the then Provincial of Sydney, was elected Assistant General in 1972, Br Keiran was elected Provincial in his place. Melbourne, however, founded its own scholasticate at Monash University in 1970 and although Br Ronald was named Master of the College, this was a largely honorary position and Br Ludovic Bourke, who had done the *Jesus Magister* course in Rome, just before the Council, was named Master of Scholastics. When Br Flavius, who was also from the Melbourne Province finished professing Catechetics at Dundas, he was commissioned by the Australian bishops to join a group preparing a set of teaching materials for senior secondary religion courses. These were duly published as the *Come Alive* series in 1972; but they attracted the ire of conservative elements in the Australian Church, led by Bishop Stewart of Bendigo. The latter went so far as to publish a pamphlet: *What's Wrong with Come Alive* and also a revised 'old' catechism called *With Peter and Under Peter*. Br Ludovic Bourke, either despite, or because of, his illustrious (Australian Marist) name joined Bishop Stewart's band of dissident theologians and contributed one of the articles in *What's Wrong*. The stage was set for a painful and protracted controversy, as to who were the true custodians of the Catholic and Marist tradition.

This controversy was not restricted, of course, to the Melbourne Province, to Australia or, for that matter, to the Marist Brothers. The Vatican Council had called on all members of the Church – clergy and lay, organized and individual – to re-examine their response to the Gospels and to the modern world. All of the Religious Orders were commissioned to hold General Chapters, to revise their Rules and Constitutions and to re-investigate the pristine motivation of their respective Founders. Within the Marist Brothers, a General Chapter was duly held and an 'experimental' re-draft of the Rules was undertaken. These new Rules called for the election of the Provincial Superiors and for the institution of Provincial Chapters to apply the General Chapter's direction to the local situation. They even called for regular Community Meetings which the local Superior would facilitate rather than, as previously, direct. The first of these Provincial Chapters were held in the Australian Provinces in 1969: the Marist tradition was to be re-defined yet again.

Although Br Kieran Geaney, as Master of Scholastics, as a member of the 1969 Provincial Chapter and, later, as Provincial of Sydney, was to have a significant role in

re-defining the Australian Marist teaching tradition after 1970; the writer believes that, prior to that date, he, like most, had no definition of that tradition separate from the role of brothers as teachers. In a 1966 Ascetical Theology class, when the writer – who had done his primary education in Scotland, in government funded, lay-staffed, Catholic schools – ventured the opinion that Catholic education could not absolutely be identified with education provided by members of religious orders, Br Kieran begged to differ. Open-minded as he was – and these were the days before the re-institution of State-funding for recurrent expenses, of course – Br Kieran simply could not envisage a Catholic education without Religious teachers and sincerely believed that the Catholic parent community would not be able to accept such an idea either. These were the days, it must be added, when, at least in Sydney, Marist secondary schools, staffing by brothers was still between seventy-five and ninety-five percent.

St Patrick's, in its new location at Dundas, and at its point of intersection between the new High Road and the old Low Road, was a startling example of this mind set. The new monastery, which was built alongside the school and opened at the end of 1962, was designed to accommodate no fewer than twenty brothers: more than enough, by the standards of those days, to fully staff the school, even when it reached its proposed status as an Intermediate High School. In fact, the highest number of brothers ever assigned to the community was twelve, in 1966, and in that same year, the first two lay teachers were appointed to the staff. In 1970 the number of brothers fell by one, by which time there were eight lay teachers, and this trend, once established continued inexorably. Even the school's new role as a Demonstration school for young Marist trainees was subject to the same development. By 1970 there were student lay-teachers as well as young Marist, Patrician and De La Salle Brothers using the demonstration facilities and the proportion of lay to Religious candidates continued to increase until the amalgamation into Catholic Teachers' College reached the point, around 1974-75 when the St Patrick's training facilities were no longer required.⁴⁸

In one of his historical forays, Winston Churchill is said to have remarked that the British Expeditionary Force, which was sent to defend Belgium at the start of World War II, was admirably equipped to fight the battles of World War I. Much the same could be said of the Dundas scholastics of Br Ronald's era: we were brilliantly equipped to 'fight' for the 'church militant,' the Catholic Church, as defined by the First Vatican Council of 1870. Despite the best intentions of Popes Pius XII and John XXIII, of the Superiors General, Br Leonida and Charles Raphael, and of Brs Hilary, Ronald, Quentin and Kieran, the Marist scholastics of that 'sixties generation were still not fully equipped to fight the battles of the Vatican II Church. In the Australia of the early 'seventies, the whole business of re-defining the Marist teaching tradition would have to begin again.

⁴⁸ Again these figures, are drawn from the House Annals at Dundas, until they 'disengaged' from the school's activities, about mid-1974, to focus more on the Religious community's concerns: in itself, a significant turning point, in the history of the school and in the development of the Marist tradition.

