

# The Marist Tradition

The Marist tradition of education has evolved over 200 years and forms the basis of Marist schools which operate in 75 countries across the globe. The Marist Brothers are also known as the Little Brothers of Mary. They are a diverse group of men committed to the common principle of making Jesus Christ known and loved, in the way of Mary, especially amongst the young and neglected. The passion for Christ and humanity these men exhibit is a living example of the inspiration Marcellin Champagnat used to respond to the challenges of his time.

As a Marist School, Marist College Ashgrove derives its ethos from the founder of the Marist Brothers, Saint Marcellin Champagnat (1789 - 1840). The Christian education of youth, particularly those of rural areas, was his first love, following the terrible religious persecutions of the French Revolution. That is why he founded the Marist Brothers in 1817 at La Valla, a little village in the Loire region of France.

## Foundational characteristics of Marist Education are:

### 1. Family Spirit

Marist College Ashgrove is a School community built on the relationships and principles of a loving Christian family. This means the needs of each student are addressed in a spirit of partnership, shared responsibility and mutual support.

There is a sense of life being shared across the School community, with successes and limitations being readily acknowledged. There is a commitment to the development of the ideals of mutual trust, forgiveness and reconciliation. The College family spirit respects the dignity and recognises the needs of the young people who attend the College, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Where special needs of any type are identified, these become a particular focus of care and concern.

### 2. Presence

The approach at Marist College Ashgrove is to educate by being present to young people in ways that show all students are cared for personally.

Relationships built on care; trust and respect foster a positive environment for the development within students of a commitment to the living out of Christian values within their lives. Teachers make time to get to know their students and their presence to them extends beyond the classroom in a multitude of activities and experiences, including liturgical, sporting, cultural and solidarity initiatives. In this way relationships of openness and trust are established and developed. Within such an environment students receive the social and emotional support they require to continue to grow into the fullness of their humanity as desired for them by Jesus Christ.

"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" John, 10:10

# The Marist Tradition (Continued)

## 3. Love of Work

The Marist Brothers follow the example of their Founder, St Marcellin Champagnat, who came from a hardworking rural background. He gave himself wholeheartedly to every undertaking whether it was personal studies, building houses and schools, visiting established schools, training and forming the Brothers or communicating with church and government authorities.

Marist College Ashgrove approaches the concept of love of work in a similar way. Students and staff are encouraged to set high standards and apply themselves in the pursuit of excellence commensurate with their ability. Through love of work, students develop strength of character and solid values on which to base their lives. They are also guided in discovering the dignity of work and the satisfaction that comes from achievements reached through genuine effort.

For our College's teaching staff, love of work ensures they strive to be innovative, flexible and creative when responding to the needs of students.

## 4. Simplicity

In a Marist school, simplicity is expressed primarily through interaction with young people that is genuine and undertaken without pretence or dishonesty.

The College recognises that while education is about literacy and numeracy it is also about teaching young people to be sincere and to maintain their integrity in all that they do. Classroom activities focus on the individual as well as the group. The way of educating is personal, practical and based on real life examples and experiences. Students are encouraged to retain a sense of humility and modesty in all that they do, to accept success with dignity and to learn and grow from their mistakes. We believe that encouraging students to be open, truthful and to have the strength of their convictions will assist them to develop into individuals who value themselves and others.

Through the practice of simplicity, our students achieve an integrated, balanced and loving approach to life.

## 5. In The Way of Mary

St Marcellin had a profound confidence in Mary, the Mother of Jesus, entrusting all his projects to her and looking to her for guidance and support. He joined the newly established Order of Marist priests and founded a group of teaching Brothers under the name "Marist". In the language of the time he referred to Mary as "our Good Mother and Ordinary Resource."

The Marist College Ashgrove community endeavours to imitate Mary's tenderness and concern for others, particularly the manner in which she lived out her faith in the face of great pain and adversity. Students are encouraged to reflect upon local, national and world events and other issues from the perspective of Gospel values, social justice and the God given dignity of human beings. Such reflection leads to a deepening of the spiritual dimension of students' lives and is reflected in their personal relationships, their commitment to the support of fund raising drives for appropriate causes, involvement in service learning and mission immersion.

