

J A Dale

2015 Secondary Principal's Sabbatical

Part 1 1 June 2015 – 3 July 2015

Part 2 24 August 2015 – 25 September 2015

Part 1

Feeder School Visits 11 visits

Primary Schools visited

St Josephs	Pukekohe
St Marys	Papakura
St Annes	Manurewa
Holy Cross	Papatoetoe
St Marys	Ellerslie
Mt Carmel	Meadowbank
St Josephs	Orakei
St Michaels	Remuera
St Pius	Glen Innes
St Ignatius	St Heliers
St Patricks	Panmure (not available)

NZ Secondary Schools Visited and Contacted - 6

- Mount Albert Grammar School
- Auckland Grammar School
- Baradene College
- Hastings Boys High School
- Lindisfarne College, Hastings
- St Johns College, Hastings

Australian Schools Visited – 3

- St Ignatius College, Riverview, Sydney
Jesuit Boys Day and Boarding School – Year 5 – Year 12 Founded 1880
Tuition Annual Fees - A\$22,000 – A\$25,000
Boarding Fees A\$16,000 – A\$18,000
- Scots College, Bellevue Hill Sydney
Presbyterian Boys Day and Boarding School Year 1 – Year 13 school
Annual Tuition Fees A\$15,200 – A\$20,000
Boarding Fees A\$12,500 – A\$16,000
- St Francis Xavier College, Hamilton, Newcastle

Visits to our SHC Feeder Primary Schools

“Creating and improving communication and connection with our SHC Community of Schools”

These visits were enlightening. To visit all but one of our Feeder Primary schools within a defined timeframe was a rare opportunity.

Having contacted the individual Principals in advance, I sought to confirm or observe the readiness of our new boys to adapt to the demands of a large Secondary school compared to their current Primary school. During my interviews and observations (class visits), I was afforded the opportunity to meet and talk with staff and more importantly the students themselves. I was not disappointed in the vast majority of the schools.

The transition from Primary to Secondary can at times be daunting for our new boys. New systems, new people and new expectations certainly challenge all boys new to Sacred Heart College, especially 10 and 11 year olds. The key to a successful transition is the boys ability to embrace and understand the core values and key parts which make up their new school. To that end I sought, to accurately assess the vital components of their current school and the foundation that it could create for their successful transition to Secondary school.

The main areas for discussion and observation were:

Special Character:

- Is the Special Character of their school visible and real?
- What part do the students take in daily liturgies etc?
- Is the parent community actively involved in Special Character?
- Are the children involved in any special programme or service initiatives, within their school or wider community?

Academia, Teaching and Learning

- Does the school have any special programmes or initiatives for improving Literacy and Numeracy?
- How does the school support gifted and talented students as well as students with learning difficulties?
- What is the schools experience with National Standards and how are they using the data and results gained from National Standards?

ICT

- Does the school have a BYOD programme in operation?
- If so, what device(s) are the students using?
- Does the school have any operational ICT facilities or programmes?
- Does the school have an ICT Lead teacher?

Pastoral Care of Students

- Is vital information being fully communicated to the Sacred Heart College Pastoral Care Team? (behavioural, family, special needs etc)
- Are any students receiving any assistance/intervention from RTLB, CYFS or any other key agency?

Findings and Conclusions

My visits to schools here in New Zealand and Australia afforded me the rare opportunity to step out of my day-to-day role as Sacred Heart Principal and to both see and experience at first hand the quality of teaching and learning in our Feeder Primaries. The key relationship between the primary Principals and myself is often critical to the smooth transition of boys entering SHC and especially for those boys who present with special learning needs. The visits gave me an insight into each schools Literacy and Numeracy programmes, National Standards, and also the current use of 'E' learning and the device(s) they currently use. Vital information and vital Principal and Principal communication opportunities.

My Secondary school visits both here in New Zealand and Australia served to reinforce my assessment of Sacred Heart College, as a leading Boys High School in New Zealand.

The following were used to compare our College's performance here at home in New Zealand.

- 1 Special Character/Tone
- 2 Reputation – Public/Community Judgement Assessment
- 3 Academic Performance
- 4 Sporting Performance
- 5 Pastoral Care of students
- 6 Cultural inclusion and cultural diversity

Applying the six criteria listed, SHC compares very strongly against other New Zealand Secondary Schools visited and against other leading Secondary schools both in Auckland and throughout New Zealand.

Applying the same criteria against the 3 Australian Secondary Schools, once again we competed very strongly indeed. The 3 schools in Australia were extremely welcoming and hospitable. There was one glaring difference between SHC and 2 of the Independent schools visited in Sydney. The cost!

Compared to Scots College and St Ignatius, SHC is very cheap indeed for the quality of education which we offer. I am confident in stating that our graduating students are as well qualified, as emotionally developed and secure, capable, ready and equipped for the next phase of their lives. Sacred Heart College delivers a high quality of education for NZ\$4,000 per annum compared to A\$20,000 and (NZ\$22,000) per annum. A considerable saving for our SHC parents and families which I know is richly appreciated by our school community.

Part Two

International Boys Schools Coalition (I.B.S.C.) Conference

Bishops School, Cape Town South Africa 7 – 10 July 2015

“Lessons from Madiba”

The conference in Cape Town was my first visit to South Africa. It has left one enduring memory amongst many memories and experiences which my wife Ann and I were privileged to encounter within and outside the confines of the Conference venue of Bishops School for Boys in Cape Town.

My enduring memory is simply this. Educational Apartheid is still alive in South Africa.

Each and every child in New Zealand regardless of ethnicity or creed has the opportunity to a free education. From my observations in South Africa, this is not the case.

Even Bishop Desmond Tutu, our opening Conference speaker, issued the challenge to all South African school leaders and educational leaders to be true to the intent and the lessons of Nelson Mandela to remove all and any existing barriers for a fair and equitable education.

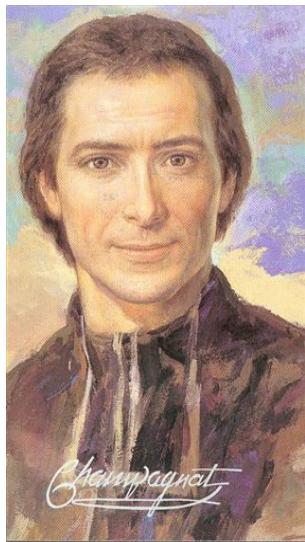
South Africa and Cape Town were a cold reminder to me that, as a Principal, I must at all times protect those most vulnerable and in need. At SHC we live each day by our 7 pillars (values) and at the core of Marist philosophy is our commitment to reach out and to support those individuals and to reach families in need and to care for and protect those who are marginalised in our schools and in our communities.

I can't help but think that South Africa needs to adopt such principles. I did not see one coloured or black student amongst all of the student helpers working and assisting at the Conference. What a glaring shame!

How blessed we are in New Zealand to have and embrace such a diverse society and diverse communities. Sadly, it would seem South Africa is reluctant to learn the “Lessons from Madiba”.

Part 3

“Walking in the Footsteps of St Marcellin Champagnat”



The holistic, educational development of all our students at Sacred Heart College is at the core of our Marist Mission.

My visit to the ‘Marist Region’ near Lyon, France, with my wife Ann, who is Deputy Principal at Marist College for Girls in Auckland was both spiritual and special.

Marist Brothers, Marist Sisters and Marist Fathers have had a profound impact on education in the Pacific. The Society of Mary founded by Father Jean Claude Colin and a group of seminarians, including St Marcellin Champagnat (Founder of Sacred Heart College) overcame many obstacles almost 200 years ago to give birth to what has become today, Marist Education, throughout the Globe. Sacred Heart College is but one of thousands of Marist Brother Schools and institutions in over 77 countries worldwide. The Marist Brothers influence in New Zealand education has been profound since the start of the 20th Century, and all because of the relentless drive and passion of one man – St Marcellin Champagnat.

My visit to Lyon and other key locations of the Marist story was to explore the viability of establishing an inaugural staff and student pilgrimage to our Founders homeland in France.

I am delighted to report that provisional dates are now in place for September, 2017. The Pilgrimage group, will be located at Notre Dame de L’Hermitage near Lyon. L’Hermitage is now the Marist Brothers Headquarters in France and has been significantly renovated to accommodate visiting groups and pilgrims from all over the world.

Using L’Hermitage as our base, our SHC group will be able to visit and study the historical locations of our Founder and the Marist movement.

Ann and I spent an entire week visiting key locations in and around the City of Lyon which are significant pieces of the Marist story.

- Le Rosey The birthplace of Marcellin
- La Valla The first school built by St Marcellin
- La Valla St Marcellin’s first Parish

Basillica of Notre Dame de Fourviere – St Marcellin and others made their commitment to form the Society of Marty at Fourviere

LeNotre Dame de L’Hermitage – The current headquarters of the Marist Brothers in France – the original L’Hermitage was built by St Marcellin and his Marist Brothers.

- Cerdon Central location in the story of both the “Society of Mary” and the Marist Sisters Order

Cerdon Parish Jean Claude Colin and his brother Pierre both serve as Parish Priest and curate in Cerdon

Belley The small town of Belley nowadays serves as the Marist Sisters Centre at the historical house of “Le Bon Repos” in Belley.



Notre Dame de L’Hermitage

A wealth of Marist history resides in many of the villages and small towns which permeate from the prominent city of Lyon. Ann and I had the opportunity during our visit to experience but some of the main landmarks.

I am delighted to report that the planning of the 2017 SHC Staff and Student Pilgrimage is already underway. Dates have been provisionally scheduled and points of contact have been established. Our SHC Chaplain and Director of Religious Studies will lead our group of planning. We have made contact with a Marist Brother who has extensive knowledge of “The Marist Story” having lived at L’Hermitage some years ago. 2017 will mark the 200 years anniversary of the Marist Brothers. It is very fitting that a New Zealand group will return to where it all began two centuries ago.

The opportunity to refresh and to gain added perspective for my current role as Principal of SHC was immeasurable. The role of Principal is a vocation and a lifestyle. It is not a job. The students deserve more.

South Africa opened my eyes.

Walking in the footsteps of St Marcellin and my fellow Marists opened my heart.

Acknowledgement and Thanks

- The Ministry of Education and Teach NZ
- Sacred Heart College Board of Trustees
- Sacred Heart College Senior Management and staff in particular.
- Mr Rob Pepping who was acting Principal throughout both stage of my sabbatical and my PA Liz Cable
- The Principals of SHC Feeder Primary Schools
- Principals of the New Zealand and Australian Secondary Schools visited during my sabbatical

- Generous hosts throughout our visit to the Marist Region
- David and Cecile Morgan
- Marist Brothers at L'Hermitage (especially Brother Peter)
- Marist Sisters in Belley

J A Dale

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