## Welcome to the Marist Way of Educating Youth

Dear Members of the Marist School Community,

In 2019, the Marists of the U.S. Province published the following document: *Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education: U.S. Province Schools and Sponsored Schools*. Below are the Vision and Mission Statements from which the standards and expectations are identified. They serve as the basis for the Province to evaluate a school's fidelity to its Catholic and Marist identities.

> Vision: To preserve and renew the vision of our founder, Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, for Marist education and to advance that unique mission into the future.
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> Mission: To provide a framework that will help to preserve and deepen the fundamental characteristics of our Marist schools, establish guidelines that govern what is to be expected from those involved with these communities of learning and faith, create a common language and set of actions that can be used to measure adherence to the larger mission of the Society of Mary, share our common understanding within the Province and wider Society of Mary about the spirit which guides and the principles that animate the programs and progress of schools within our Marist mission and ministry.

The following reflections are a guide to the *Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education.* While that document is comprehensive in identifying what is distinctive about a Marist education, it is akin to a skeleton. It presents the barebones or the key components of a Marist Catholic education.

The following reflections attempt to put some flesh on those bones by explaining why *Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education* are essential and what they look like when applied to our contemporary educational landscape. An overarching theme for all the reflections is that there is a particular way, the Marist Way, of educating young people. It is rooted in the mission of the Catholic Church and the charism of the Society of Mary. My reflections intend to help parents, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, parents of alumni, and the Marist Board of Trustees familiarize themselves with the Marist Way of educating young people in our contemporary world. They are rooted in Fr. Colin's vision that students be formed into strong, faithful disciples of Christ, honest and upright citizens, and learned in the humanities, sciences, technical skills, and critical thinking. They bring to life the vision of the Marist Way of educating and forming young people into faith-filled, global-ready servant leaders living in an increasingly secular age.

*"To Be Unwaveringly Marist"* affirms the relevancy of a Marist education and makes a case for its acceptance by parents who want their children formed in the Catholic faith or a decidedly Christian milieu for those from other Christian Churches or ecclesial communities. However, a Marist education is most effective when what is essential to the Society of Mary is taught in the home by parents who are the most influential teachers of the faith, primarily by their example. From that perspective, these reflections serve as a lesson plan for parents on making their family a Marist family. A Marist education can do for parents what it seeks to do for their children. That is to teach them the Marist Way of living the Gospel, which is to learn Mary's Way of discipleship, which is to think, judge, feel, and act like her in all things, especially toward Jesus, her son, and our Lord.

These reflections are also meant to serve as spiritual reading. They are designed so you can choose any reflection, read it, and walk away with something to think about, mull and pray over in the spirit of Mary,

who “treasured all these things, reflecting on them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). They are meant to be informative, inspirational, and, at times, challenging.

We live in an information age. In my reflections or meditations, I try to communicate important information about what it means to be Catholic and Christian in the spirit and tradition of the Society of Mary. Those who belong to other faith traditions can find points of contact with those Catholic beliefs that resonate with their own. Regarding those Catholic teachings or practices that diverge from theirs, they will better understand the Catholic position. Our Catholic students can benefit similarly by better understanding what we hold in common, where our traditions diverge, and why. It falls on all Christians to proclaim the Lordship of Christ by evangelizing the culture and to advance the Reign of God by working with all people of goodwill to create a more just and compassionate society. The same holds for those who attend Marist from religions other than Christianity.

I want to conclude by reaching out to those reading this introduction who are unchurched or whose relationship with the church is tenuous for various reasons. I invite you to look upon the time you will spend at Marist as an opportunity to rethink how you got to that point in your life. I hope you will reexamine your relationship with the church and consider adopting the Marist Way of living the Gospel. Should you want to pursue this further, I encourage you to contact Mike Coveny, the Director of the Marist Way at Marist School, or Fr. John Ulrich, S.M., the school chaplain.

With that, I invite you to turn the page and begin the journey into the Marist Way of educating young people, which is also the Marist Way of living the Gospel.

In the Name of Mary,

Fr. Bill Rowland, S.M.
Rector – Marist School