Looking Backward While Going Forward

The mission of Marist School is to form the whole person in the image of Christ through instruction grounded in religious values, the teachings of the Catholic Church, and the spirit of the Society of Mary. This mission is advanced through the communal pursuit of excellence in academic, religious, extracurricular, leadership, and service programs.

Dear Friends,

When I began my term as President at Marist, I was asked what my vision was for the school. Not having considered that question, I could only reply by saying, "My to-do list." Admittedly, that response does not inspire confidence. J.D. Childs will come with a better grasp of an answer to that question, which comes from having devoted his life to Catholic education and serving as a teacher, principal, and President. The Board of Trustees has asked J.D. to identify what he wants to accomplish within the first 100 days. I just wanted to survive my first 100 days, assuming I was counting them, which I wasn't. Clearly, J.D. will be an upgrade!

However, a vision for the school did emerge as I gained my "sea legs." Mine is the result of hindsight rather than foresight. Nonetheless, it is still a vision or a direction for the school that I discerned after considerable thought. That vision was intended to be captured in a series of reflections covering the following topics: *The Essence of Marist Spirituality, The Marist Way of Fostering Vocations, The Marist Way of Responding to Secularism, The Marist Way of Disciplining Students, The Marist Way of Worship, The Marist Way of Understanding Social Justice, The Marist Way of Being a Catholic School, The Marist Way of Promoting Ecumenism, The Marist Way of Promoting Interreligious Dialogue, The Marist Way of Promoting Lay Leadership, The Marist Way of Praying the Salve Regina, Schola Brevis Remarks, Homilies,* and *Other Writings.* These reflections complement the *Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education: U.S. Province Schools and Sponsored Schools* publication, which presents what is non-negotiable about a Marist education. The latter is akin to a skeleton, and the former is meant to put some flesh on those bare bones.

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, and the Marist Board of Trustees familiarize themselves with the Marist Way of educating young people in our contemporary world. It is 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.

He likened a Marist education to a second creation, which our Strategic Plan 2025 envisions as our students becoming faith-filled, global-ready servant leaders. However, a Marist education is most effective when what is important to the Society of Mary is also taught in the home by

parents who are the first or primary and, consequently, the most influential teachers of the faith.

The Marist Way of teaching adolescents is a gift to the Church. As a gift, it can be accepted or rejected. Just as Fr. Colin believed that everyone would not be called to be a Marist, not everyone may feel that a Marist education is for their child. The *Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education: U.S. Province Schools and Sponsored Schools* presents what is non-negotiable about a Marist education. My reflections paint a picture or 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. As such, it affirms its value and relevancy and makes a case for its acceptance by parents wanting their children formed in the faith this way.

At some point, it may be necessary to update these reflections. The school's Marist Identity Committee, charged with implementing the *Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education,* and the Board of Trustees, through the Mission Committee, charged with educating board members and overseeing the school's implementation of the above-referenced document, could take the lead on this. I write from the perspective of a Marist religious. Future editions would reflect a decidedly lay perspective on implementing the *Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education*.

"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." (John 16:16)

With those words of Jesus, I bid you farewell as President only to greet you in August with a "Hello again!" but as Rector.

In the name of Mary,



Fr. Bill Rowland, S.M.