

## Vice Provincial 1950

After the graduation and then later when I was sent off to make the Second Novitiate, even if it only lasted five months, it made me begin to think and to be concerned about not always being at Marist College. I had been asked to work that out, and we had been successful. The college was coming along quite well and had even grown with someone else in charge. I knew that I could completely rely on the Brothers whom we had there, and that with Bro. Linus Foy taking care of the college, and Bro. Kieran Thomas taking special care of the Scholastics, we could be assured of continued success. We were indeed fortunate to have these two men. Besides, I had already been chosen to be on the Provincial Council, and my work there was rather limited because of my work for the college.

It was then that the Provincial Council named me to be Vice Provincial to come to be of help of the Provincial, especially in the visitations of the various schools and communities. I had made the vow of stability in 1946 and had been sent to the Second Novitiate in 1949. In the early 1950s I was asked to be the Vice Provincial and to help out with school visitations, especially those of New England. It made sense as the Provincial was overworked anyway, and I had two top quality men to replace me in the work for the college, so I accepted. I had never refused any challenge in any way. Besides, I had read someplace that the mark of a true leader is that he is so dedicated and organized that he has already trained and put into motion a good successor, and he becomes no longer required. This is really what I had hoped for. Even as attached as I was to the work of the college, I knew that I was just to get it started, and that it would manage quite well on its own. So now it was time to serve as a helper to the Provincial.

Some new factors occurred at this time that helped me qualify for the job of Vice Provincial. One of these was the suggestion of the General Administration that the two schools in the United States that belonged to the Mexican Province should be looked after by the Provincial Council of the United States. That meant that the Brothers who were working in Brownsville and Laredo would come under the jurisdiction of the United States. I was sent to meet with the Vice Provincial of the Mexican Province to both visit these two communities and explain to them that this was only a matter of greater help for the administration of both these schools and communities. The Brothers who wanted to return to the Mexican Province would be free to do so, and those who would choose to belong to the United States Province would also be free to do so. The choice was left to each Brother.

All was soon settled peacefully in both places, and the transfer of Brothers from the U.S.A. to Mexico was done over a period of time rather than all at once, and without any disruption. We had also to take into consideration the feelings of the parents who had already been supporting these schools for years.

There was another problem that also took quite some time to be solved. At one of the Provincial Chapters the decision had been made to try to choose two new schools to be started in some of the poor areas where they needed Brothers. This would be in keeping with the directions of our Founder and his concern for the poor areas. It was then that we had to make several trips, first of all to Eugene, Oregon, to accept the offer of a school there, and at the same time we were also interested in starting or taking over a poor school in Mississippi. I recall that I was not in favor of acquiring these two foundations, not because they were for the poor for that is what our Founder wanted, but because they were too far away from any other Marist community. I remember pointing out that we had a somewhat similar situation in the two schools of Texas, for there is a couple hundred miles distance between Brownsville and Laredo. Yet in spite of the few hundred miles or so, the two teams of these schools managed to make the trips required to maintain a community and run the schools.

I felt that the two schools we were planning were isolated from all and any Marist schools, and these Brothers would be away from all Marist contacts. However, I did not prevail at the time, and the two foundations were made and after a long period of time they have both been closed. I feel that it is preferable for foundations to not be too isolated from another house of the Province. It would have been better for us to start two schools in the Northwest of the country, or else two in the Southeast of the country, rather than isolate either of them from any

other Marist foundation. But my assignment as Vice Provincial obliged me to go to these schools, and I enjoyed the work that we did there for the poor.

The new president of Marist was putting up new buildings at the college in keeping with the planned growth, and already we had 163 young Marist Brothers at the Scholasticate. We wanted to open our doors to lay students. I was satisfied that the work at the Scholasticate was progressing according to plan and so I undertook to visit all our houses in New England in order to enjoy the fall foliage, which always fascinated me each year here at our Poughkeepsie foundation. How I blessed the Old Brothers for starting here.

At the college in the meantime everything was going smoothly. We were still on the lookout to hire quality people, preferably those with doctorates. We were also planning to start the evening classes for the elderly and Bro. Linus Foy had that carefully planned with the choice of Dr. Schroeder to be in charge of that night school. Another great feature for keeping our Marist hold on the various departments was the fact that each one of the main departments had a Marist Brother in charge, and to this day this has been one of our greatest blessings. Marists were in charge of chemistry, physics, psychology, mathematics, biology, French, and Spanish.

Because of my involvement as Vice Provincial, I had to rely completely on Linus Foy and all the other department heads who worked with him as a team. Along with prized men of value like Paul Stokes, John Malachy and Kieran Thomas, all worked for the smooth operation of the college. All of these men were Marists to the core and essential to the operation of the college, and their influence on our students can never be underestimated.

Foy was a tremendous teacher himself besides being an administrator, and the same can be said of Nilus both as a teacher and as a real genius at building. He had a creative and inspiring outlook, took advice from clever friends, and always succeeded in turning out a new form of masterpiece. Kieran Thomas was perfect in his relations and influence on the young Brothers. What we had not anticipated or planned for, the Lord seemed to be quietly planning: an effective future for our small college. Linus Foy and Kieran were the ideal men to take over the work of the Scholasticate and the college at that time in a way that was grounded on the spirit of the Founder and dedicated to the success of our Marist family. There was plenty of Orare and Laborare.

The health of the college made it a lot easier for me to accept the call to serve as the representative of the United States in the forthcoming General Chapter. I could easily slip away for this without serious setback for the college. I felt at ease attending the Chapter. I expected to enjoy that month with other Marists the world over. I believed that it usually took a month or so for such meetings, and I expected to enjoy that month and make many new contacts and return to continue my work at the college with the Scholastics. I planned to take over the work and provide a break for both Foy and Kieran. Both were very dedicated men and both gave me great confidence because they were part of that team of dedicated persons who knew how to do good quietly. They were indeed the cause for the wonderful spirit that was evident in the Scholasticate. I will stop here, but intend to touch a bit more specifically on those tremendous spirits that both had and were spreading among the Scholastics. That spirit is indeed much more than just a six-letter word. It was pervasive and I would like to come back to that topic next. So I went to the General Chapter confident that Linus Foy and Kieran were keeping the home fires burning, and confident that I would return in a month. Little did I imagine that the Good Lord was chuckling on the sidelines.

Our Blessed Marcellin left us with the legacy of Work and Prayer, but even more so he left us the legacy of togetherness. We were always, and still are, a family; we care for each one of our members; they all are our Brothers. This same spirit is what has kept me going all through my religious life, and I was pleased that it was the bond for each and everyone at the General Chapter. Marcellin was a saint, his followers were one family, and they cared for each other. I was proud to belong to that family and was determined to do all in my power to instill that pride in our young candidates. I could move on, for with the spirit and men like Foy, Kieran, and Nilus, I could go forth.

What constitutes our Marist spirit? It is our dedication to Mary and Champagnat, and to the family, no matter who or how many we are. We do everything together. We work for the poor, the neglected, the orphans, the gifted, and the less gifted. Everything is done together; everything we do is in the family spirit, which is the

Champagnat way. Slowly each newcomer catches on to that spirit, for it was easy to live it, and to share it. We lived our motto as it was our spirit; and without that spirit we could never have succeeded here or anywhere. Besides, our spirit was catching, and the envy of those who worked for us or with us. In the jumbled ideas that follow I wish to reminisce and pay a tribute to that spirit.

- Mr. Casetta, who used to do the blasting for us and never charged. No accidents!
- John O'Shea, who did most of our electricity and was always on call.
- Danieli of Millbrook, who put asphalt on the chapel road for us at no cost.
- Schraft Ice Cream Company, which used to send us its unsold monthly special.
- The apples we picked in the orchard for free to provide pies for the year.
- The beehives we lent to the farmers with which to cross-pollinate their crops.
- Dr. Dorand Emie, the chiropractor who would come to treat the old Brothers.
- Our teaching catechism at Mt. Carmel for the Catholics of public schools.
- Our annual hike to Esopus for the semester break. Five cents each to cross the bridge.
- Bro. Frank Xavier's story telling around a campfire. Dr. Schroeder's fire.
- Our weekly trips to N.Y. to sell eggs, honey, etc., and the buddy work system.
- Our weekly return from those N.Y. trips with a wagon full of bananas.
- Our chipping away at the shale rock to provide ball fields. Tarcy ever ready.
- The waterwheel near the third baseball field.
- The firemen Scholastics and their reports each day.
- The daily evening walk to the cemetery for a prayer and the bell tolling a funeral.
- Blind Bro. Eli Justin and deaf Bro. Joseph Bonaventure on their nightly walks.

This was our Marist spirit.