

Lisa - Archives.
Wheelodon
At Heart
With the Young

The Story of the Marist Brothers
in Bendigo

1883 - 1993

Breda Phillips



Diocese of Sandhurst
Chancery Office

My dear friends,

Each day as I come into what is now the Chancery for the Diocese of Sandhurst I see in bold gold lettering on a stone at the corner of the front entrance to the building the simple words "Erected 1893". The Brothers are now in a new Monastery and the original building has been adapted to serve the various administrative areas in this large Diocese of Sandhurst.

However, that stone tells a story. It is a stark witness to the fact that it is now 100 years since the Marist Brothers came to Bendigo at the invitation of the Co-Adjutor Bishop, Bishop Reville and the blind Bishop, Bishop Martin Crane.

During this 100 years there has been an immense and marked contribution to the life of Bendigo and its surrounds by the presence of these Brothers. In those years a great number of them have come here. A large number have now departed this life and gone to their eternal reward, but their spirit lives on and the memories live on and the witness to their enormously strong devotion to Catholic education is ever present and ever real. How many thousands have passed through their school and how many families have reason to be deeply grateful and appreciative of what has been done for them and their children through this great institution.

It is a real delight to me that the Brothers are still a very strong presence within us - in these days when sadly we are witnessing the closure of a number of communities. I hope and trust that we will have them for many many years to come.

I know that I express the appreciation of my own predecessors, the Priests and Religious and the people of Bendigo for the magnificent good things which have happened through the presence of the Marist Brothers down through this 100 years. In more recent years the amalgamation of the College with the Sisters of Mercy brings further witness to the growth of the present Catholic College Bendigo to the size of some 1828 students and a staff of 178.

We shall no doubt have the pleasure of hearing the MARIST BROTHERS BAND at the Centenary. It has nation wide fame and is a prominent part of the story of the Brothers in Bendigo.

May their presence be with us and their influence strong for many generations yet.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


BISHOP OF SANDHURST

Given at Bendigo
on 19th March, 1993.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CALL AND THE RESPONSE

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS

After the Brothers had begun their work in Sydney, requests came from other parts of Australia, especially Victoria, for Marist Brothers to take charge of schools. Bishop Reville, Co-adjutor Bishop of Sandhurst, began negotiations as early as 1886 but without success. There were no Brothers available at that time for new foundations. During a visit to Europe in 1892, Bishop Reville met the Superior-General of the Order, put his request to him and was promised some Brothers. However, none could then be sent from Europe, so the matter was referred to the Australasian Provincial, Br John Dullea, in Sydney. He visited Bendigo in 1892 and was so impressed by the kindness of Bishops Crane and Reville towards him that he agreed to send Brothers to Bendigo the following year.



Most Reverend Martin Crane, O.S.A., 1874-1901 and Most Reverend Stephen Reville, O.S.A., 1901-1916

A house was rented for them for one year at the corner of Barkly and Waterloo Streets. The pioneer community arrived from Sydney on 7 April 1893 to take over a school previously conducted by a Mr Flanagan and his lay helpers.



Brothers' temporary residence at Barkly Terrace

FIRST BROTHERS

Br Basil Kelly had been chosen as Director. Born in Ireland, Br Basil had emigrated to New Zealand in 1874 aged 21, having taken advantage of the New Zealand Government's offer of free passages to suitable young settlers. There, he became a competent certificated teacher in both Government and Catholic schools. He came to Australia in 1879 and entered the Marist Brothers' Novitiate in Sydney. He proved to be an energetic and gifted teacher and a strong leader with great discipline whose students achieved outstanding results in the annual higher examinations. In later life, many of them maintained friendly contact with him.

Br Casimir O'Shaughnessy, then aged 29, was chosen as Sub-Director for Bendigo. He was a talented teacher and an outstanding choirmaster. Br Bernardine Callaghan was only 20 and still a novice, though with two years' teaching experience from St Joseph's College, Sydney. New Zealander, Br Walter Hansen, and Br Canice McDonald spent a few years in Bendigo and were then transferred to Marist schools in New Zealand.



The First Community
Left to right: Br Walter, Br Casimir, Br Basil (Director), Br Canice, Br Bernardine

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

In a magazine of the Marist Brothers' College and Old Boys' Union, The Bendigo Maristonian of 1915, Br Basil, leader of the group, recalled his first moments in Bendigo. "A sense of discomfort, disquiet and almost discouragement ... possessed me ... Only then did I realize fully the magnitude of the work ahead, the responsibilities it involved and the achievement that would be expected from the Brothers' labours ... and the lack of ability and experience in him who was about to inaugurate them."

SCHOOL BEGINNING

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Br Basil and his found it difficult to degrees, the boy silence was needed reward."

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RESIDENCE

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SCHOOL BEGINNINGS

St Killian's Hall had been divided into four classrooms. Movable partitions had been erected to the height of the walls, with windows in each partition giving on to the next room. Thick green baize curtains continued upwards from the partition to the vaulted roof.



St Killian's Hall where classes were held from 1893-1901

School began on 23 April, after the Easter holidays. "The classes waited with tense expectancy," later recalled Br Guibertus Browne who was present at the time as a 12-year-old schoolboy. Bishop Reville and the four priests of the parish accompanied the Brothers to the classrooms and introduced them to the boys.

Br Basil and his staff found their future students "decidedly lively ... The youngsters... found it difficult to observe silence, to obey orders, to apply themselves to study. But by degrees, the boys were made to realize that the classroom was not a playground, that silence was needed to promote study and that obedience was a virtue that brought its own reward."

The Brothers' difficulties were increased by the makeshift nature of their teaching areas. Br Basil wrote, "The arrangements proved unavailing in smothering the stentorian tones of the youngsters reciting their lessons, or the bang of a slate on the desk, or the noise incidental to a class when its movements are in full operation."

From their temporary residence at the corner of Waterloo and Barkly Streets, the Brothers walked to Mass at St Killian's every morning, home to breakfast, back again to school and home again in the afternoon. Sometimes they found the exercise far from enjoyable. Br Basil remembered the exhausting effects of the great heat in January and February when, after school, "it proved something of a trial of strength to jaded and exhausted nature to climb the hill to Waterloo."

RESIDENCE

They must have watched with a sense of relief when Bishop Reville laid the foundation stone for their new residence on a large empty block opposite St Killian's Hall in October

1893. Under the stone were placed copies of the Bendigo Advertiser, the Bendigo Independent and Advocate.

Bishop Crane in his address to the congregation said that parents would now know that their children would be "assured of a good, sound, moral and literary education by which they were not only prepared for whatever business they might follow in this life but would also receive 'a proper spirit of religion'."

The site chosen for the new building had to be specially prepared as it was once a gully filled with slush and tailings from the early gold diggings. Consequently, 18 shafts about 14 feet deep by 6 wide were excavated and strongly timbered to the bottom. Cement was then poured into them to form 18 concrete piers, on which were made numerous semi-arches about 2 feet thick and 4 rings in height to support the whole of the superstructure.

The two-storey building was completed in April 1894 and was considered the best and most spacious Brothers' residence in the province. The total cost was \$4000 in modern Australian currency terms. This was covered mainly by donations from the Catholics of Bendigo and from Bishops Crane and Renville.



Residence April 1894

TEMPORARY CLOSURE

School numbers increased to 170 and satisfactory progress was made. The Brothers travelled to Sydney in June to take part in their annual retreat at St Joseph's. They were a week late in returning, because of a seamen's strike, and arrived back only just in time to re-open school after the holidays. One week later, an epidemic of measles in the city caused the Health Officer to close all schools. The Brothers had started a Matriculation class which was given special permission to continue, but the rest of the school was closed.

SUPERIOR-GENERAL'S VISIT

A coincidence during the Bendigo foundation's first year was the first visit to Australia (from France) of the Marist Brothers' Superior-General, Br Theophane, and the Assistant-General, Br Leonida. The Bendigo Advertiser gave a long account of the visit and included

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the story of the Brothers in Australasia. At St Kilian's School, the newly-formed choir of 80 boys conducted by Br Casimir O'Shaughnessy sang a song of welcome in two parts. An address written in gold on a sheet of silk was then read by K. Dwyer on behalf of the boys and presented to the Superior-General. He responded with "a short and eloquent reply in French." This was put into English by the Assistant-General who advised the boys to make good use of their school time and to be "devoted to prayer and fond of devotion to the Blessed Mother of God." He also remarked that the steamer in which they had come from Europe had so many religious on board that she might aptly be called "a floating monastery."

VESPER CHOIR

On Christmas night, the vesper choir, a special group of the best singers in the school, trained by Br Casimir, sang the vespers alternately with the church choir. They were to continue that task every Sunday evening for some years to come.

MAIN EVENTS OF 1894

The Brothers moved into their new McCrae Street home in April 1894. After their annual retreat in Sydney in July, Br Edward returned with them to teach sixth class, leaving Br Basil free for the Matriculation class. The school had achieved its first Matriculation success following the May examination 1894. However, the student's name is not recorded.

Br Felix Garel, Australian Provincial, paid his formal visit in November. Despite the fact that two Brothers were ill and absent from their classes, Br Felix's report, though not glowing, was very good. Definite progress was being made. In speaking about the religious education, he recommended that the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition as well as the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus be said in every class at morning prayers. He also asked for a better attendance at the Rosary, which was recited in every class just after lunch.

DEPARTURE OF BROTHER BASIL

It was a shock to the community and to Br Basil himself when he was recalled to Sydney immediately after Christmas 1894, to become Director of St Joseph's College, "leaving behind me many benefactors to whom I was indebted for support and sympathy and carrying away with me memories which still live in the mind where old friends are photographed on a background of many pleasant incidents and cherished associations."

CHAPTER TWO

BECOMING ESTABLISHED

NEW DIRECTOR

Br Stanislaus Healy came to Bendigo to a school whose numbers had increased by 40, mainly from the state schools, to a total of **210**. Br Stanislaus is described by Br Owen Kavanagh, in his book *Marist Brothers*, as a "man of deep religious conviction joined to the highest intellectual culture." He was able "to form the character, refine the mind and lead the heart to the love of the noble and good. He had great skill in painting, music and poetry."

RESIDENCE AND COMMUNITY

The Brothers' residence was blessed by the Rev. Dr Barry and the **first Mass** was celebrated in the chapel on 1 February 1895, the Feast of the Purification. The privilege of reserving the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel was also granted.

The Bendigo community was about to experience its first real sadness. Br Matthias Hickey was brought from St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne at the end of March, accompanied by a nurse. He was in the final stages of tuberculosis, but lingered until 16 April 1895 when he died, aged 24. He was buried in the Back Creek cemetery, which was later closed, his remains then being transferred to the Bendigo general cemetery.

RELIGION

The Sodality of the Children of Mary was formed in May 1895 when three senior students were consecrated. Several more boys became Children of Mary on the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, 2 October, and the first consecration took place of younger boys as members of the Sodality of the Holy Angels. First Communion was celebrated annually on the feast of Corpus Christi until, in 1900, Bishop Reville decided on 15 August, the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, as the future First Communion date. The tradition of First Communicants enjoying a Communion breakfast together began on the feast of Corpus Christi, 1900.

The time for the daily school Rosary was changed in 1895, from just after lunch to mid-morning so that everyone would be present.



Two important visitors in 1895 were Archbishop Carr of Melbourne, and Archbishop O'Reilly of Adelaide who was interested in obtaining Marist Brothers for his own Archdiocese.

The joyful news of the declaration of Marcellin Champagnat as Venerable was received in September 1896 and gave rise to the chanting of the Te Deum at a special thanksgiving Benediction.

SUCSESSES

At the Juvenile Exhibition held in October 1896, Marist Brothers' boys won two gold medals, one silver medal and two certificates for singing, essay writing and mapping. Daniel Hogan passed Matriculation with honours in French. Eugene Nash and A. Heffernan were successful matriculants in 1897.

JUBILEE

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in June 1897 was marked by a special schools' procession in which Brothers and boys took part. The Marist Brothers' Bendigo annals records that they were complimented by the local newspaper on their good behaviour and excellent marching.

BROTHER KOSTKA MAUND

Br Stanislaus Healy, who returned to Sydney, was replaced in Bendigo by Br Kostka Maund, who was described by Br John Dullea, Provincial, as a man of tact and affability and a very successful teacher. He worked as Director in Bendigo in 1898 and 1899.

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

The first State inspection took place in April 1898. Mr J.J. Ryan found good discipline, sound teaching methods and a staff ruled by kindness, all of whom possessed "the power of control, teaching ability and a sympathetic knowledge of child nature." He discovered, on the other hand, that many parents failed to send their children regularly to school. Before his departure, Mr Ryan donated three cases of object lesson charts to the school.

An excellent report and a percentage of 88.94 was given in 1899 by the State inspector, Mr. Healy. By then, woodcarving was being taught very successfully to some of the boys. The inspector noted that proper apparatus was urgently needed for practical physics.

Br John, Provincial, during his formal inspection was impressed by the community's family spirit and devotedness and saw much progress in written and oral work but thought that reading was too monotonous in the lowest class and that prayer could be said more slowly and distinctly.



A Class of 1893. St

RELIGIOUS VOC

Only one year after Sydney Junerate 1968) as Br Guiber aged 14. V. Walsh the Marist Brother 1904.

REPAIRS AND D

General school re partitioned with tin two sets of Mass of groceries. With some paths asph

SCHOOL BUILDI

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A Class of 1893. Second row from back, sixth from left, is Philip Browne who became Br Guibertus.

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

Only one year after the Bendigo foundation Philip Browne entered the Marist Brothers' Sydney Juniorate in 1894, aged 13, and was later known throughout his long life (died 1968) as Br Guibertus. Thomas Prowse (Br Hubert) went off to train as a Brother in 1896, aged 14. V. Walsh, C. Raess, A. Graham began their training in 1899. C. O'Brien entered the Marist Brothers' Novitiate in 1903 and three other Bendigo ex-students entered in 1904.

REPAIRS AND DONATIONS

General school repairs were done during the 1899 Christmas holidays. A room was partitioned with timber donated by the Hibernian Society. Mrs Scanlan gave the Brothers two sets of Mass vestments for their chapel, a generous cash donation and several lots of groceries. With the help of other kind friends, the Brothers' garden was improved and some paths asphalted. Mrs. Scanlan donated a statue and altar to Our Lady in 1901.

SCHOOL BUILDING

The school was well established by 1900 and had gained a high reputation, despite the

temporary classrooms and the lack of proper equipment. It was obvious, nevertheless, that something permanent was needed.

A tender for a new school, to be constructed behind the Brothers' residence, was accepted in July 1900, the cost being \$4000 including furniture. The new building was ready for the beginning of the 1901 school year and was occupied by 180 boys on the first day. This number increased to 270 within two weeks.



First Primary School 1901

PRIZES AND MEDALS

E. Saunders passed Matriculation and also won the Kew Scholarship donated by Bishop Reville, who also gave a prize to the boy walking the longest distance to school. This was won by C. Dale who had a four-and-a-half mile walk.

As souvenirs of the 1901 opening of the first Parliament of the Commonwealth, commemorative medals, sent by the Education Department, were distributed to the boys.

BISHOP CRANE

When Bishop Crane celebrated his diamond jubilee as a priest, Dr Carr of Melbourne and the other Bishops of Victoria came to Bendigo for the occasion. The school children gave a concert in Bishop Crane's honour and presented him with gifts and an address. A few months later, on 21 October 1901, in his twenty-seventh year as Bishop of Sandhurst, Bishop Crane died. The Brothers and students paid him their last respects by marching in his funeral procession.

BROTHERS' DEATHS

Two other sad events took place in 1901. Br Timothy Gallagher, a Bendigonian, had become ill at the Marist Novitiate in 1899 and was sent home to be cared for. He died, aged 19, on 2 January and was buried in the Back Creek cemetery. Br Matthias Conway died of tuberculosis on 8 August, aged 22. His parents came from Kilmore for the funeral

to the Back Creek cemetery (died 1895) are now in

VISITORS

The construction of the ceremony took place and by His Eminence day and congratulate a grading of 98 per cent remain high in the year

LIBRARY

The school library, opened by 1902.

Bishop Reville address who gave his entire

BISHOP REVILLE

Dr Stephen Reville 1901. Boys and girls address and a cord of affection."

The following Marist sang songs and recited the boys, at a general

SPORT AND GAMES

Physical activities, dumbbell and club with the founding Teams entered having won four gear. To provide playground extension residence was

Marist Brothers 1903 and continued by a mounted

to the Back Creek cemetery. The remains of these two Brothers and of Br Matthias Hickey (died 1895) are now in the Bendigo cemetery, marked by marble headstones.

VISITORS

The construction of the Sacred Heart Cathedral began in October 1896. The opening ceremony took place on 29 September 1901. This was attended by the Bishops of Victoria and by His Eminence Cardinal Moran of Sydney who visited all the classes on the following day and congratulated the Brothers on their excellent school, which had just been given a grading of 98 per cent by a visiting inspector. The standard had been set and was to remain high in the years to come.

LIBRARY

The school library, established in 1900, had 90 volumes in 1901. This increased to 256 by 1902.

Bishop Reville added several books and the library was further extended by Mr P. Carolin who gave his entire library to the school. Additional books were purchased in 1905.

BISHOP REVILLE

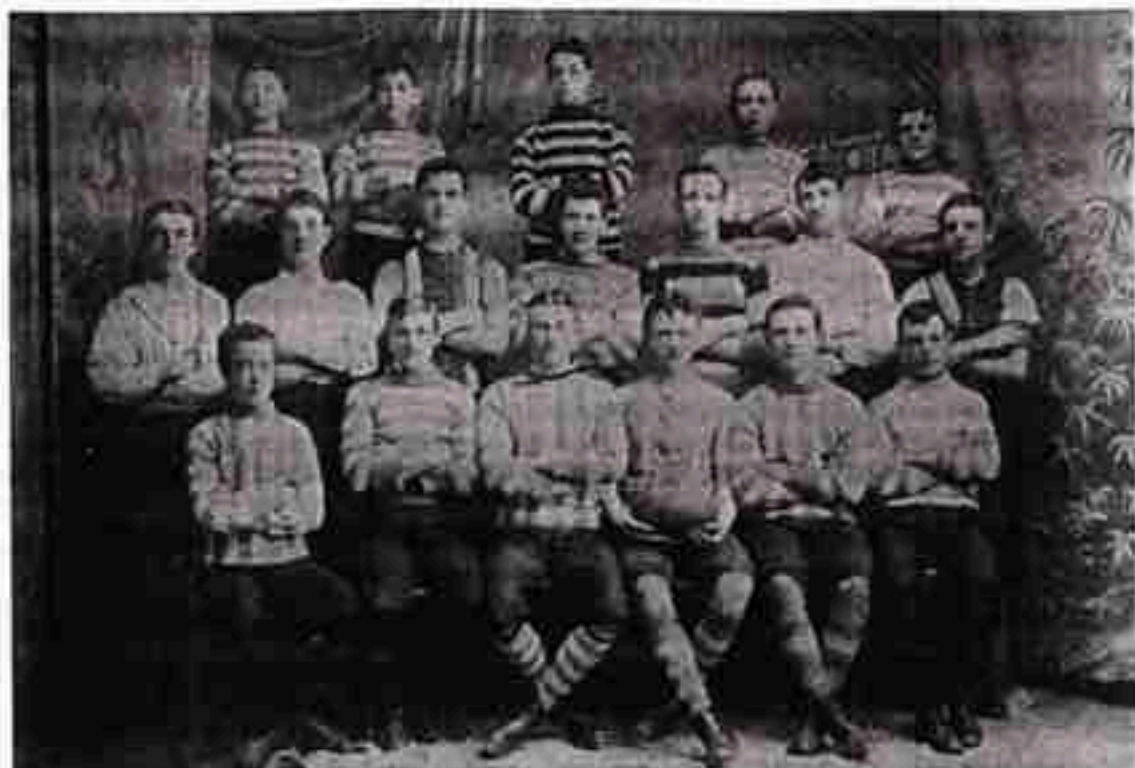
Dr Stephen Reville was enthroned as the second Bishop of Sandhurst on 30 December 1901. Boys and girls of the Catholic schools in Bendigo presented him with a special address and a crozier as "a small souvenir of our youthful and heartfelt love, esteem and affection."

The following March, before he departed on a visit to Rome, the whole school assembled, sang songs and read farewell addresses. On Bishop Reville's return from Europe in 1904, the boys, at a general assembly, greeted him with a song of welcome.

SPORT AND GENERAL HAPPENINGS

Physical activities for the boys during the school's initial eight years consisted of marching, dumbbell and club exercises and performing on the parallel bars. This changed somewhat with the founding of a cricket club in 1902 and the laying of two pitches in the schoolyard. Teams entered the schools' competition and played six matches. They finished third, having won four matches, lost one and drawn one. Mr Donegan donated a set of cricket gear. To provide more recreational space, an adjoining paddock was bought and the playground extended. Soon after that, a shed and gymnasium were built and the Brothers' residence was repaired and painted. Electricity was laid on in the school in May 1905.

Marist Brothers' involvement with the St Patrick's Day Procession began on 17 March 1903 and continued for several years. In the 1905 procession, the school was represented by a mounted contingent in uniform.



Football Team 1905

Back: J. Brady, J. Gordon, C. Fegan, J. Ryan, Dwyer.
 Middle: Galvin, Kilgry, Dowling, H. Fegan, J. Noonan, Allen, Lynch.
 Front: J. Mitchell, E. Curtin, M. Kenny, T. Garland, J. Noonan, Kelly.

When Pope Leo XIII died, in August 1903, the whole school assisted at the Solemn Requiem Mass in the Cathedral for the repose of his soul.

A Remington typewriter was purchased in 1903. The excitement was great and, according to the Marist annals, the machine was "patronised in first rate style."

The school curriculum conformed closely to that of the state schools. Extra subjects taught were drawing, singing and nature study. Seven Pitman's shorthand certificates were distributed. Francis O'Loughlin received the Angus and Robertson gold medal for the best writing in the colony of Victoria and two others received book prizes for their writing.

BROTHER PAULINUS MCCOLL

Br Paulinus McColl became Director in 1904. Br Paulinus entered the Sydney Juniorate in 1890 from his home in New Zealand, when he was still a few months short of 12 years of age. He is said to have developed into a very extroverted character, genial and warmhearted, generous to a fault, a tireless worker and with great public relations and administrative skills.

DISPLAY:

Marist Brothers violin play gained this and two other prizes. Murphy played when play. They won a half point.

First, second. The school. A Marist. Competitions gained first also obtained part in the.

Eugene C. first Australian Marist.

VISITS

A three-day Brothers progress charity, excellent consideration.

DEVELOPMENT

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DISPLAYS AND COMPETITIONS

Marist Brothers' students contributed to the 1904 Easter Fair with a gymnastic display and violin playing. The gymnastic class competed that year at South Street, Ballarat, and gained third place. The juvenile day of the Austral Competitions resulted in four first prizes and two second prizes for club swinging, dumbbell exercises and running. Mr Luke Murphy presented the violin class with a set of fifteen silver medals to be worn by them when playing in public. The 1905 cricket team defeated the BUCC senior team by 13 runs. They won every match during the season and gained the trophy for 1904-05 by four-and-a-half points.

First, second and third places were won in a writing competition held by Bolton Brothers. The school defeated all state school competitors to win first place in a spelling competition. A Marist group also won two sections out of three in the drill section of the Austral Competitions. The gymnasts won three first prizes, four seconds and five thirds. The choir gained first prize for an action song and second in the open contest. Several prizes were also obtained for elocution, class reading and dialogue. As a treat for those who had taken part in the competitions, Br Paulinus took them to Axedale for a picnic.

Eugene Gorman, a brilliant student who had gained the Merit Certificate in 1903, won the first Austral Scholarship valued at \$80 and decided to go to St Joseph's College, Sydney, a Marist Brothers' boarding school, for three years.

VISITS

A three-day visit was paid to Bendigo in 1904 by the Assistants-General of the Marist Brothers, Br Stratonique and Br John, who seem to have been happy with the general progress. Br Victor, Provincial, during his visit a year or two later, noted the "fraternal charity, piety, regularity and devotedness" of the Brothers. He expressed pleasure at the excellent Sodality of the Children of Mary. He also asked the Brothers to give careful consideration to Pope Pius X's decree on daily Communion.

DEVELOPMENTS OF 1906-1907

Three Central Business scholarships went to Marist Brothers' students about that time. Three cricket teams were entered in competitions, finishing first, second and fourth, the B team winning six games by an innings.

School attendance in 1907 had risen to 324 including 24 "advanced class" (secondary). Boys came to Bendigo not only from different parts of Victoria but also from New South Wales and Tasmania. They boarded in private homes and attended the Brothers' school. Commercial subjects were being taught. This led to Marist Brothers' students filling many of the leading clerical positions in the city.