MISSION & ETHOS

MSC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were founded by Fr. Jules Chevalier at Issoudun, France in 1854. He had a vision of regenerating society through devotion to the Sacred Heart. Included among the ways of achieving this vision was the education of youth.

Mindful that the teaching closest to Jesus' heart is his command to love one another as I have loved you, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart especially value love, concern, compassion, understanding, respect, and acceptance of every individual.

I give you a new commandment love one another;
just as I have loved you,
you also must love one another.
By this love you have for one another everyone will know
that you are my disciples. (John 13:34ff)

These qualities are enshrined in the charism handed on by Jules Chevalier and embodied in the current MSC Constitutions:

As Missionaries of the Sacred Heart,
we live our faith in the Father's love revealed
in the Heart of Christ.
We want to be like Jesus who loved with a human heart;
we want to love through him and with him,
and to proclaim his love to the world. #10

Ours is a spirit of family and a spirit of brotherhood,
formed by kindness and understanding,
by compassion and mutual forgiveness,
by gentleness, humility and simplicity,
by hospitality and a sense of humour #32

This charism generates the spirit in which various MSC ministries recognise the importance of meeting the specific needs of our times.

In a constant effort to share in the sentiments of the Heart of Christ,
we will be attentive to all human needs and aspirations,
such as,
the need to be respected as persons,
the need for love and peace,
for freedom, justice and truth,
and the search for meaning in life.
We will become all things to all people,
by respecting different cultures,
and by being ready to undertake whatever apostolic services people may need. #24
The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Australia have had a long involvement in the education of youth. Beginning with an Apostolic School at Douglas Park NSW in the 1920s, they later opened schools in Toowoomba, Bowral, Hamilton, Darwin and Canberra, and they also accepted responsibility for two schools in Papua New Guinea.

The Australian Catholic Church has been extensively involved in the education of youth for over 100 years. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart see this as still an effective ministry for meeting the needs of the times. Hence MSC schools proclaim and give witness to the love of God in our world.

They seek to engender a strong belief in God's love for all as manifested through the heart of Jesus Christ. *Fortes in Fide (Strong in Faith)* is the common motto of MSC schools. Father Chevalier saw particular value in the education of youth as a means of remedying the indifference of secular society to the love of God.

In the first MSC Constitutions which were approved in 1877 and which he himself wrote, we find the following:

The Society (of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart) has education as one of its principal tasks. All among us who accept the care of young people should never lose sight of the sublimity of such an important mission. Considering the great usefulness of this ministry, they will apply themselves to it with all the more keenness and zeal, in so far as it is often enough a thankless task...

They should not forget that the salvation of civil and ecclesiastical society depends on the Christian education of youth. "Train young people in the way they should go; even when they grow old they will not swerve from it". (Prov. 22/6)

It follows from this that the main hope for the Church for better times rests on the religious instruction of youth.

It was also part of the vision of Jules Chevalier that the mission to regenerate society would be carried out not only by professed religious, but also by an association of lay people who would form another branch of the Congregation. Among the staff of MSC schools are lay people who share the mission and charism of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and who work with them in a special way to proclaim and witness to the love of God.

Chevalier also gives advice for those involved in the ministry of education:

In order that a ministry of this nature be completely fruitful, it is necessary that those among us who take it on combine forces, and work with a spirit of unity.... It is also necessary that they commend themselves to their students by the goodness of their lives as well as by their teaching.

They should be tireless in teaching their students whatever is needed for them to gain academic results with distinction. And they should never forget that the first task required of them is that their students become "fortes in fide " (strong in faith), dedicated with great love to the practice of all Christian virtues.
MISSION AND ETHOS

MSC VISION IN EDUCATION

MSC schools exist to proclaim and witness to the love of God. They aim to make gospel values real in the lives of young people, their families and the staff who serve them.

With care, compassion and understanding as their hallmark qualities, MSC schools strive to build a community of faith among staff, parents and students. Great value is placed on commitment, trust and acceptance of others in fostering the growth of community. In the spirit of a loving and supportive family, members help one another grow in knowledge, faith and service.

While aiming for excellence in the search for truth, MSC schools recognise the importance of balanced human development and strive to help young people to achieve their full potential in all areas of life, and to be ready to show initiative in parish, religious and civic life. They are attentive to the aspirations and needs of individuals, especially of those who are disadvantaged or isolated: mentally, physically, financially, emotionally or geographically.

Staff relate to students with compassion and availability, creating a sense of family which permeates their attitude as professional teachers and caring adults. Staff also relate to each other with the same sense of understanding and care, ministering to each other in an atmosphere of friendship and collegiality.

Staff strive to improve their professional appreciation of their work by sharing in prayer and staff development exercises, and participate regularly in programs which enable them to collaborate with greater understanding in the MSC style of education at their school.

Founded on love and built on love, MSC schools offer a vision of hope for humankind, one to which all their members can contribute as they grow strong in faith.