

30. To educate children

Frères, Opposing ideas began to arise about the educational mission of the brothers. Drawing on his family experience - his father had been a local leader in the Revolution - and on his training as a priest, Marcellin produced a well-balanced statement on educating children.

To bring up a child involves more than teaching him to read and write, more than initiating him into the subjects which normally make up primary instruction. That teaching would be adequate for man, if he were meant only for this world; but he has quite a different destiny - he is made for heaven and God; and it is for these that he must be brought up. To educate a child, therefore, is to show him this high and sublime destiny and to give him the means to reach it; in a word, it is to form him into a good Christian and a virtuous citizen.

Life of Marcellin Champagnat, Bicentenary Ed., II, p.535

In Marist pedagogy, the formation of young people for Christian life is always paired with their general education for life. The phrase, "forming good Christians and good citizens", will often be heard from brothers as an expression of the ideal they set for themselves in education.

