

A Short History of Marists in Schools in Michigan, USA

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In Michigan, USA, Marist Fathers and Brothers served mainly in education. There were other ministries including a shrine which boasted the largest crucifix in the world at Indian River and a parish in the archdiocese of Detroit. Marists worked at Cathedral High School (1951-1956), Notre Dame High School (1954-2005), Madonna University (1984-2013), and at Notre Dame Preparatory and Marist Academy (since 1994). All are situated in the Archdiocese of Detroit.² There were overlaps. While waiting for their own school, the Marists taught at Catholic Cathedral. For two years they taught at both places until they finally moved fully to the new building in Harper Woods. From Harper Woods community some went to teach at Madonna College. In the early 1990's, at the request of the archbishop they accepted responsibility for a high school in Pontiac while continuing to operate in Harper Woods.

This compilation of texts from different sources with further additions forms a short overview. Still, it may serve to acknowledge the contribution of the then Boston and now US Province of the Society of Mary and the respective confreres in this important apostolate.

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1 Cathedral Central High School, Detroit, Michigan (1951-1956)

“...The school facilities of Detroit – public, parochial, and private – are rated among the best in the United States in physical plant and equipment, in teaching and administrative personnel and in awareness of changing educational needs...”³

By stipulation in the agreement approved at the birth of the Boston Province, the territory of that Province would comprise the New England States, Michigan and Wisconsin, and the State of New York. At that time, there were no Marist establishments in Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire and Wisconsin, and the Marist came into Michigan only in 1951, with the acceptance of an educational apostolate in Detroit, and the care of a Shrine at Indian River, known today as the National Shrine of the Cross in the woods, diocese of Geylord, MI. Marists worked there from 1954-1961.

The precursor and ambassador who instigated the Michigan project and finally brought it to fruition, was Reverend Charles Decker, S.M., a Marist priest imbued with the missionary spirit, tenacious in this pursuit of Marist goals, and zealous in his love of God and country.⁴

¹ I thank Father James Strasz SM for many important additions to this survey, and the community at Pontiac for the wonderful time I had there in 2017 when I collected material for this contribution.

² For the educational efforts of the archdiocese in general: Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Seasons of Grace. A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit*. Foreword by Edmund Cardinal Szoka, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1990.

³ Lionel F. Beaudoin, S.M., *Mantle of Blue: A Half Century of Marist Apostolate. History of the Northeast Province of the Society of Mary, 1924 to 1974*, Boston, 1974, p. 243-247. This section leaves out general information on Detroit as a city, its Christian churches, and automobile industry as given in the book.

⁴ Charles Decker was born in Boston in 1895 grew up in Our Lady of Victories Parish, was professed in 1918, and ordained in 1920 in Washington, D.C. He had a varied career teaching first at St. Mary's College convent, LA, St. Mary's Manor, Langhorne, PA, St. Mary's College, Van Buren, ME Maryvale Seminary, Bedford, MA then a curate at Our Lady of victories, Boston, and Immaculate Conception Westerly, RI. He served as socius of the Novitiate at Staten Island then superior of Maryvale. He was vocation promoter and when he went to Detroit where he was the first superior from 1951-1954. He then became Superior/Pastor of the Indian River Catholic

At the close of the academic year 1949-1950, a Provincial Chapter took place, at which Father Decker introduced a resolution, asking the members to go on record as favoring the establishment of another high school. The Boston Province already operated schools in Van Buren, Maine, an apostolic school in Bedford, MA as well as the Le Petit Séminaire in Quebec then a part of the Boston Province. The resolution was adopted.

Decker was appointed vocational director, and coordinator of mission appeals assigned to the Marists in several dioceses. As an extra activity, he was also given permission to initiate the project of a high school. It was in Detroit that the first effort was made.

In a report dated November 11, 1950, Decker brought to light the following facts: visits to Msgr. John Donovan, Vice-Chancellor of the Detroit Archdiocese, Monsignor Carroll F. Deady, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Verhelle, president of City Bank, had produced reassurance to the Marists that: Edward Cardinal Mooney, Archbishop, would be very pleased to welcome a new teaching group with all necessary permissions – the Dearborn area was full of promise – one of two recently established parishes had enough land for a high school – it was the policy of the Archdiocese to have Religious Orders construct their own schools, and that those who had done so were doing very well.

The type of school required, would cost about \$250 000; 8 classrooms at \$20 000 per room, and a gymnasium; there existed already some 80 parochial high schools and central high schools, catering to those who could afford tuitions running from \$75.00 to \$175.00 per year; there was no doubt that the Society of Mar y would find it financially advantageous.

Mr. Verhelle assured the Boston Province that if the Marist Corporation was a concern, lack of immediately available funds would not prevent acceptance by the Marists; he would gladly lend the money needed. Decker submitted all those points to the Provincial Council.

A four-hour long meeting of the Council produced the following: the “going concern” was the fly in the ointment, in view of the revenues at the time; chances of obtaining permission from the Roman Congregation were slim; wisdom of the venture was questioned; the only honest attempt that could immediately be made was teaching in a school owned by others; 1952 would be a good year for building, “if we could build”; taking available opportunities in Schenectady, or Buffalo, or Rochester (all in New York State), would be a more sensible and workable plan for development; the question was left open for consideration. The Boston Province eventually accepted a co-educational high school in Syracuse, NY (‘Bishop Grimes School’) which they co-ministered with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet from the mid 1960’s to the early 1980’s.

Probes in each of the above-mentioned locations produced no tangible findings, and so, the choice of Detroit was again proposed. Some vacillation on the matter was experienced before final approval of the matter was forthcoming.

Father Decker returned to Detroit and, while waiting for something to materialize, found employment with a pastor in Birmingham. One morning, Monsignor Donovan called to ask whether anything had turned up. The answer was that the Marists were waiting for something on the west side of the city. “Why not take Cathedral High School while you are waiting?” asked Msgr. Donovan. After consultation with Very Rev. Cyr J. Parent, S.M., Provincial, the idea was accepted, and an appointment made to meet with Most Reverend Allen J. Babcock, Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit, and Pastor of the Cathedral.

The historic meeting took place at the end of August 1951. The staffing by the Marist Fathers, of Cathedral Central High School, formerly held by the Basilian Fathers, who had built a new school further out into the city, was accepted after formal approval by the Provincial Council and by the Roman authorities. The arrangement was settled on a temporary basis of five or six years in the cathedral-owned buildings, when a school could be had on the west side, as promised by Monsignor Deady.

Shrine, Indian River MI. In 1961 at the request of Cardinal Richard Cushing of Boston, he became Superior General of a diocesan community of men called Sons of Mary, Health of the Sick, providing for their needs until 1969. He then ministered as chaplain to the Sisters of Ste. Chrétienne in Marlborough, MA. He died in 1977. His sister, Mother Mary Rose was the first superior general of the S.M.S.M.

The official establishment of the Marist participation at Cathedral Central High School, Detroit, is dated September 12, 1951, and the first faculty was: Very Rev. Charles Decker, S.M., Superior; Reverend Vincent Robichaud, S.M., Vice-Superior and Principal; Reverend John Lynch, S.M.; Reverend Fernand Gallant, S.M.; and Reverend James Kiley, S.M.⁵

At the turn of the year 1952, accommodations were available to the Marist Fathers in a house located just across the street from the Cathedral, on the former Kresge estate. This estate was bought by the Archdiocese and the house renovated at its expense. The fathers were thus providentially supplied with suitable living quarters. They said mass and heard confessions in different parishes, including the cathedral.

Authorization to sign the first agreement between the Archdiocese of Detroit and the Marist Fathers came from the Marist Superior General Very Rev. Alcime M. Cyr, S.M., on November 20, 1951.⁶

On July 12, 1956, the Marists left the high school. They were only committed to about this time. The Brothers of Christian Instruction took over (until 1970). The general development within the city of Detroit was such that more and more people, including Catholics, moved from the city center to the suburbs. This affected the downtown parishes and it affected the schools, especially secondary school. The Marists in education in this area followed in fact this sociological development. They moved to Harper Woods.

2 Notre Dame High School, Harper Woods, MI (1954-2004)

“...The very first stirrings on the question of building a high school in the Harper Woods section of Detroit were felt in 1948 when Rev. Leo Huver, pastor of St. Veronica Parish, began to mull over the idea of a high school for parochial school graduates of the area.⁷ Six parishes were interested in the project and willing to get involved financially. The first step taken by Father Huver was to call on the Holy Cross Fathers at Notre Dame. ... When it became evident that the Holy Cross Fathers could not undertake the project, other congregations were sought, until the Marists offered some hope in the matter. ...”

A series of meetings was held, culminating in a private interview between Cardinal Mooney and Father Parent, provincial. The year of 1953 was a time of decisions and happenings for the Marists in Detroit, Michigan.

One of the first things on the agenda was to form a corporation entitled: “Marist Fathers of Detroit, Inc.” The articles of incorporation were drawn up, signed on February, 9, 1953, and duly filed before the State of Michigan, through the Michigan Corporation and Securities Commission,

⁵ *Vincent Robichaud* was born in 1912 in New Brunswick, Canada and raised in Cambridge, MA. He was professed in 1931 and ordained in 1937. He spent the first part of his ministry in education at Van Buren, Me, Maryvale, where he served as both faculty and Superior, Marist College, Framingham, MA then principal at Cathedral in Detroit 1951-1954 and briefly as founding principal and superior of Notre Dame High School, Harper Woods, MI. He served as Provincial from 1954-1961 and then superior of second novitiate in Watch Hill, RI. He was superior of the Lourdes Residence, Boston, MA, The Marist House, Framingham, chaplain to the Holy Union Sisters Groton and then lived in retirement at the Lourdes Center in Boston. He died in 1989. *James Kiley* was born in Westerly, RI in 1925, professed in 1948 and ordained in 1951. He spent the first part of his ministry in education first at Cathedral and then at Notre Dame High School. After a brief stint as curate at Immaculate Conception in Westerly RI he returned to Notre Dame School in 1962 and became Principal in 1964-1968. He then assumed a variety of ministries and died in 1985. *John Lynch* was born in Maine in 1918, made profession in 1937 and ordained in 1942. He spent the first part of his ministry in education mostly in Maryvale as an English teacher and then as Superior. After short stint in the missions he returned was involved in a variety of ministries. He was remembered for his booklets on devotional subjects and the Boston Province. He died in 1990. *J. Fernand Gallant* was born in Massachusetts in 1917. He entered the Society professing vows in 1938 and ordained in 1943. His life was spent serving in education, administration and special ministries. He died at a nursing home in Framingham MA in 2002.

⁶ The text of the agreement follows Beaudoin, *Mantle of Blue*, p. 246-247.

⁷ Beaudoin, *Mantle of Blue*, p. 256-263.

Lansing, Michigan, on March 17, 1953. Bylaws for the new corporation were approved and signed on April 14, 1953.

Early in 1953, another vital document was agreed upon and signed. The basic question was financial. The official authorization came from the General house⁸ on April, 28, 1953.

Armed with the first vital loan, plans for the new school were drafted, and construction began with ground-breaking ceremonies on Sunday, October 4, 1953.⁹

The site chosen for Notre Dame High School was 2054 Kelly Road, Harper Woods, just around the corner from Eight-mile road and Eastland Shopping Center.

The architect for the school was Mr. Walter J. Rozycki of Detroit, Michigan and the contractor was the Kreighoff Co., General Builders, also of Detroit. There were adjustments and readjustments on the original plans, and fluctuations on the estimated costs, but construction began in the fall of 1953, and continued apace.

Notre Dame High School opened its doors to a freshman class for the first time on September 7, 1954. The following year, Regina High School, a new establishment for girls, was built adjacent to Notre Dame High, to complement the educational center at Harper Woods.

The first Marist staff at Notre Dame was: Rev. Austin E. Verow, S.M., Superior; Rev. Robert Graham, S.M., Vice-Superior; Rev. Robert Champagne, S.M.; Rev. Raymond Ouellette, S.M.; and Rev. James Kiley, S.M. Fr. Vincent Robichaud SM was the first principal.¹⁰ Living quarters for the Notre Dame Marist faculty became an acute problem and was temporarily solved by buying a house on Juliana St. nearby. As time went on, however, some fathers were obliged to live in several empty classrooms at the school, and then in apartments that were rented or bought outright.

In October 1, 1957 issue, the provincial letter carried this item:

“Notre Dame has 980 students for 1957-1958. It is the school’s first year with all four grades – 9 through 12. The faculty consists of 16 priest, 2 scholastics, and 17 laymen. The 1957 “Juggler” is again an impressive yearbook.”

By 1960 the student population numbered 1000 boys.

Within a year of Notre Dame’s opening the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis opened a girl’s high school, Regina Mundi, on an on a property next to the sisters. The Fathers would serve as daily Mass chaplains to the sisters until 2004.

⁸ ,Memorandum of Agreement‘‘, between the pastors of the parishes and the Marist Fathers, and the approval by the general administration, Rome, Beaudoin, *Mantle of Blue*, p. 257-260.

⁹ Beaudoin, *Mantle of Blue*, p. 260f, for the participants, and for an article in the Michigan Catholic diocesan paper, October 1, 1953.

¹⁰ The first Principal and Superior was Fr. *Vincent Robichaud* who after the first six weeks the school was open was made Provincial of the Boston Province. *Austin Verow* was born in Brewer, ME in 1911, made profession in 1931 and was ordained in 1937. He served in education first at Maryvale, in Bedford, MA, then at Van Buren, ME until he was made Principal of Notre Dame High School from 1954-1956. He then became Rector of the School until 1961. He taught a year at Bedford then was Provincial of the Boston Province from 1961-1967. He did parochial ministry for a year in Westerly, R.I. and then went to the Marist Brothers College in Poughkeepsie, NY for two years. In 1970 he became superior of Bedford and then Watch Hill RI where he died in 1976. *Robert Graham* was born in Salem, MA in 1921. He made profession in the Society of Mary in 1944 and ordination in 1950. He served in education at Maryvale in Bedford MA, Cathedral in Detroit, MI, Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods, MI, and Bishop Fenwick in Peabody, MA. He then served in parochial ministry in St. Joseph, Haverhill, Ma, Sacred Heart, Lawrence, MA, St. Anthony, White River Junction, VT. He also served as chaplain to the Sisters of St. Joseph in Framingham. He died in 2018. *Raymond Ouellette* was born in Brunswick, ME in 1924 making profession in 1945 and ordained 1952. He spent his ministry in education at Cathedral in Detroit and then at Harper Woods Notre Dame. He died in 2002. *Robert Champagne* was born in Salem, MA in 1922 making profession in 1945 and ordained in 1951. He served in education at Cathedral in Detroit, Harper Woods, Notre Dame, Boys High School Van Buren, ME where he served as Principal and then at Bishop Grimes at Syracuse, NY. He then did parochial ministry in Connecticut and hospital ministry in Framingham, MA. He died in 2019.

A milestone was passed on March 3, 1961, when accreditation was accorded to Notre Dame High School by the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for a period of two years, 1961 to 1963. This was a prelude to accreditation by the State of Michigan which came in the fall of 1961.

The year 1964 marked another memorable milestone in the short history of Notre Dame High School. It seemed appropriate that the construction of the new gymnasium should coincide with the tenth anniversary of Notre Dame. A congratulatory message from the Very Rev. Marist Provincial, Austin E. Verow, S.M. said in part:

“The continuation of this ‘dream come true’ is an achievement that must be deeply rewarding to everyone associated with Notre Dame in the years past and at the present time...”

It was under the rectorship of Rev. Francis Frechette, S.M. from 1960 to 1963, that the gymnasium “dream” was submitted to the architects for preliminary consideration. Rev. Omer St. Onge, S.M., Principal from 1957 to 1963,¹¹ visited several gymnasiums, to observe their features and incorporate them into the new Notre Dame building.

The gymnasium was originally planned for 1958, and money was raised for the much-needed facility. It was only on April 29, 1964 however, that the digging of the foundation began, and the official dedication took place on November 1, 1964. The opening was finally held on February 18, 1965.

The ground-breaking ceremonies “engineered” by the students of Notre Dame were mildly unusual. In place of a few dignitaries going through the traditional procedures and ritual, the Notre Dame hopefuls who had sold their quota of tickets in the Spring Fund Drive, were each given a spade. On a fired signal by Rev. James Kiley, S.M., Principal of Notre Dame, 250 eager students struck their spades into the muddy earth and went at it with a vengeance. A caterpillar tractor then moved in to continue the spading, while the Notre Dame Band played several lively selections to help the work along.

The addition to Notre Dame High School in 1964 was a gymnasium and cafeteria facility, and was constructed by Donaldson & Meier, architects, Thomas J. Black, mechanical and electrical engineers; and Matthew Lalewicz, Inc., general contractor. The cafeteria extension also housed an enlarged locker room, shower room, and an extra-long rifle range. The new construction was named the Notre Dame Memorial Gymnasium, including also offices, a classroom, and storage space, as a tribute to the sacrifices and generosity of the many friends of the school; it cost approximately \$400 000.

The year 1965 was judged to be the year for the building of a residence for the Marist personnel. A commodious, modern and attractive building was planned and constructed by the Charles M. Valentine Associates, Inc. at a cost of approximately \$250 000. The accommodations contain 32 rooms, bedrooms with bath, chapel, dining room, kitchen, indoor and outdoor recreation areas (the outdoor swimming pool was a gratuitous gift from the builders), and a complete suite for the domestic staff. Construction of the Marist residence was done by Mr. Edward Wagonsomer, one of the associate builders from Detroit.

The house is situated directly behind the school building with ample parking space, and forming part of the Notre Dame compound. There are offices for reception and counseling at one end of the building, and separated from the living quarters, assuring privacy and quiet to the regular occupants. Air conditioning throughout, and its location away from the noisy traffic, contribute to making this Marist residence one of the finest in the Boston province.

¹¹ *Omer P. St. Onge* was born in Brunswick, ME in 1920, made profession in 1939 and ordained in 1946. He ministered in education in Van Buren, ME where he also served as Principal, as Principal of Harper Woods, Notre Dame, Maryvale in Bedford, MA, as Principal at Bishop Grimes in Syracuse, NY. Then as Provincial of the Boston Province from 1970-1979. He did parochial ministry at St. Bruno, Van Buren, ME, Immaculate Conception, Westerly, RI, St. Francis-St. Blaise, Brooklyn, NY, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Bradford, VT. He died in 2007.

With the completion of the Marist faculty residence, the building program at Notre Dame, Harper Woods came to an end. There remained the liquidation of the large debt, which was achieved in the fall of 1979 when the mortgages on the school and residence were put to rest.

Notre Dame High School boasted a completely modern educational facility. Built entirely on a ground-floor pan, it had all the required equipment to carry out an impressive program: theology, English, foreign languages, mathematics, sciences, social studies, physical education. While elements of a business program were present in the curriculum, the school was known as college preparatory. In its later years it offered a much demanded Advanced Placement (AP) program which allowed students to qualify for college credit through demanding and rigorous courses.

Extracurricular student activities included possibilities with art, music, dramatics, student government, journalism (a student newspaper and annual yearbook both of which garnered awards through the years). Notre Dame sported a marching band as well as a symphonic band and a jazz band. The last was especially well known.

Services included pastoral, personal and vocational guidance, speech and reading development; and the athletic program takes offered the young men several choices to participate in. There were well equipped facilities with five science labs and a good library for student research.

There was an alumni association, a mothers' guild and a dads' club who worked to help supplement the monies needed to finance the school. In the late 1950's the Marists provided for a Third Order group attached to the community at Notre Dame. They also formed an auxiliary of ladies whose sons were pursuing a vocation with the Marists in the Boston Province houses of formation.

The development of the High School was rapid and satisfying. The Marists who were members of the faculty were dedicated priests and religious, progressive and energetic. They worked tirelessly with their lay colleagues devoting themselves to the mission of the school.

Notre Dame became an excellent school in its academic programs, its cultural and artistic endeavors, and its sports teams. Beginning in the 1970's, the Marist faculty began to explore more the words of Fr. Colin on education promoting the educational experience as a second creation... and forming men who were Christian gentlemen, upright citizens and academic scholars.

In its own words: "Notre Dame student policies aim at Christian formation, academic development, social consideration and dynamic citizenship... striving to promote a climate of personal growth, creativity, responsibility and freedom."

Beginning in the late 1960's after civil strife in the city of Detroit, the demographics in the area around the school began to change and with it the fortunes of the school. By the mid 1970's, other all boys Catholic high schools were beginning to close their doors and the large Catholic population had moved to other areas. Over the next twenty years Notre Dame continued to adapt and serve the needs of the local Church.

In the late 1990's the Marist Provincial Council was talking about the future of Notre Dame High School. Rising costs of education, the upkeep and maintenance of the facility, decreasing numbers of Marist religious and falling student population were of great concern. In a private meeting with Cardinal Adam Maida, then archbishop of Detroit, Fr. Joseph Hindelang S.M., the provincial spoke about the future of the school. Cardinal Maida offered to purchase the school if the Marist would continue to take responsibility for its running. In 1997, an agreement was secured between the Archdiocese of Detroit and the Marist Fathers of Detroit for the purchase of Harper Woods, Notre Dame High School for Boys. The Marists continued responsibility for the school until 2005 when the archdiocese decided to close it.

In 2007, a charter school The Chandler Academy purchased the property together with that of Regina Mundi Girls school and Luther High East which were adjacent to the Notre Dame property.

3 Marists teaching at Madonna University (1984-2013), Michigan

The Felician Sisters started the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary College in 1937.¹² This institution developed into Madonna University. It is located in Livonia, west of Detroit, MI. There are other campuses. Since 2009, Madonna University offers a doctoral program.¹³

For a longer period of time some Marist Fathers working and teaching at Harper Woods were also teaching at Madonna University. These fathers include Marists Leon Olszamowski, John Sajdak, Frank Crispino, and Ronald DesRosiers.¹⁴

4 Notre Dame Preparatory and Marist Academy (NDPMA) in Pontiac, MI

The Society of Mary agreed to establish Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy at the request of the Archbishop of Detroit, based on the excellent education offered by the Marists at Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods.¹⁵ The site offered in northern Oakland County was built as Pontiac Catholic Central High School which opened in 1968, when two Pontiac area schools, St. Michael and St. Frederick, merged. In 1988, the school was renamed Oakland Catholic High School but the new name did not revive enrollment and the school closed in June 1994.

Fathers Leon Olszamowski S.M., James Strasz S.M., Juan Gonzales S.M., and Brother Louis Plourde S.M. made up the first Marist Community sent to establish the Marist philosophy of education at Notre Dame preparatory. The school year began with Mass and a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrated by Archbishop Adam Maida and Fr. Joseph Hindelang, S.M., provincial on August 28, 1994, and classes began the following day. There were 18 staff members and 183 students the first year with 22 seniors in the first graduating class.

Part of the original plan was to also establish a middle school to provide a good Catholic school foundation for students preparing for NDP. The majority of original students in grades 6-8 came from public schools in the surrounding area. Marist Academy opened in 1996, under the leadership of Mrs. Sandra Favrow. A new wing was added to the building in 1997 to house Marist Academy.

Enrollment quickly grew so that by 1998 there was a need for further expansion. In 1999: the B wing with sixteen classrooms; the cafetorium doubled in size with a stage added for the performing arts; and the St. Peter Chanel Media Center a showpiece of the school. In 2008 an auxiliary gym was built and named after Mr. Jim Grimaldi, a generous benefactor of the school. Attached to that is the Music Center, named after the late Bev Gifford, a parent and coach. Also attached is a concession stand and bathroom facilities. In 2010, the Fitness Center, at the request of benefactors, named after Betty A. Wroubel, teacher, coach and Athletic director. Finally, in 2018 a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) wing was added.

Fr. Leon Olszamowski served as President of Notre Dame Prep and Marist Academy and Principal of the high school from 1993 until 2002 when the offices were split. Fr. Leon continued as President and Fr. Joe Hindelang was named Principal of Notre Dame Prep.

Cardinal Maida again approached the Marists in 2002 asking them to consider having a Mrs. Favrow was the founding Principal of the lower division (JK-5) which opened on September 2, 2003, at St. Benedict Parish in Waterford. Two years later, the Vice Principal, Mrs. Diana Atkins, became Principal of the lower division of Marist Academy. Mrs. Favrow retired in 2010 and Mrs. Jill Mistretta, the Vice Principal, was named Principal of Notre Dame Marist Academy – Middle Division.

The lower division moved to a newly built campus at 1425 Giddings Road in August 2013.

The school has grown to over 1000 students. It is the only Catholic school in the state of Michigan to be approved as an International Baccalaureate Program providing a diploma program

¹² Mary Janice Ziolkowski CSSF, *The Felician Sisters of Livonia, Michigan*, Detroit, Harlo Press, 1984, for the story of the sisters, the college, and photos of the campus.

¹³ Wikipedia, accessed 1 July 2017.

¹⁴ Oral information during my visit in the Marist community of Pontiac, June 2017.

¹⁵ Handout for the educators' workshop of North American School, Pontiac, June 2017; text by Fr Joseph Hindelang, S.M., Pontiac.

for students in grades 10-12, MYP (Middle Years Program) for all students grades 6-10 and PYP for students in grades k-5. On average 85% of diploma students receive the diploma. Also, the AP (Advance Placement) program offers many courses and numerous high school students also earn college credit. The IB Our dedicated staff is proud of the accomplishments of our students who are well prepared for college and for life as people of faith, as citizens of our country and our world, and as lifelong learners.” Notre Dame Preparatory School has the reputation of one of the most rigorous Catholic school in the state.

On July 3, 2014, The U.S. Province sold the entity of the school to an independent Board of Trustees established as a new non-profit corporation. In turn they purchased the main campus property from the Archdiocese of Detroit. NDPMA continues its tradition of excellent Catholic education under the sponsorship of the Society of Mary.

At the heart of the Notre Dame is the Marist charism of education. And a close part of this work is the Campus Ministry Department in the School. The Lower School participates in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, while the Middle School and Upper School have developing Campus ministry programs which includes retreat, prayer groups, community outreach in the school and outside through Christian Service Learning. In recent years, the Campus Ministry Department has been in contact with The Marist School in Atlanta and worked together on Marist student leadership projects.

5 Mission Statement Notre Dame Preparatory and Academy

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy provides its diverse student body a Catholic and internationally recognized college-preparatory experience of lasting value. We affirm our Marist mission to: **Work with God to form Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars.**

Christian Persons

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy recognizes that the principles of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church are the educational norms upon which the Catholic school rests. We are to understand and to witness the Christian Good News of humanity’s redemption by the saving work of Jesus Christ. The religious dimension of a young person’s growth must be addressed in the context of this Catholic Tradition. Thus, Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy assumes the responsibility of aiding in the development of a Christian conscience through an understanding and appreciation of Catholic doctrine, traditions and practices. Catholic education views the student as a person redeemed by Christ and having a supernatural destiny. Therefore, Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy strives to create an atmosphere where the student’s faith can grow and attempts to provide means and opportunities for participation in faith experiences.

“It is God’s children that are entrusted to us, and so it is towards God that we have to return their hearts by our constant efforts to provide them with sound rules for their guidance and examples lived in a manner consonant with them... We shall therefore work in the first place at giving them a sufficient knowledge of their faith, at stirring their wills to the accomplishment of duty through motives of conscience and the power of religion.” (Jean-Claude Colin’s Instructions to Teachers, #2.)

Upright Citizens

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy believes it is important for students to understand the great gift and great responsibility we have as citizens of the United States. We believe that we are increasingly part of a global society. It is important to grow in knowledge of and concern for all people and all of God’s creation. Because of these beliefs, opportunities are offered to help the student understand the responsibility of leadership in a

democratic society, to exercise the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, to respect the dignity of all individuals regardless of race, creed, sex, national or ethnic origin. Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy honors the right of parents to choose a public, private or religious school for the education of their children.

“Next we shall make it our chief concern to school our students in conduct and gentle, courteous, simple social manners, in good breeding and a thoroughly Christian polite behavior, so that most will not feel out of place later on in the world outside, and an object of derision by reason of boorishness. We shall also train them to modesty of tone, propriety in deportment, and we shall cultivate in all, without exception, purity of speech, clarity in diction, and as much as possible, naturalness in gesture.” (Instructions #3)

Academic Scholars

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy is staffed by an excellent and committed faculty. The teachers help and challenge students to achieve their academic potential.

“We shall then turn our attention to forming the minds of our students and to advance them in the different fields of learning by every means possible. We shall seize every opportunity calculated to broaden their knowledge, to put them on their mettle for study; we shall spare no pains or labour to achieve this. Let us not forget that for us this is a strict duty of trust that must be carried out.” (Instructions #4)

6 The Conference of Marist Schools in North America

After the international meeting on education in Rome in 2007, the Marist Leadership in North America worked at bringing together educators from the various Marist schools in eastern Canada, the United States and Mexico for an educational forum on the Marist charism. The response was good and further international forums have taken place both in Canada and the USA. Since 2008 these forums are held in the United States. The United States Province Education Committee continues to hold forums for its member schools: The Marist School, Atlanta, GA; Notre Dame Preparatory, Pontiac, MI; North Dame Academy, Duluth, GA; and Ecole Notre Dame des Victoires, San Francisco. These meetings are held each summer and dedicated to educating laity in schools on the Marist charism. These forums are open to other schools.

Déclaration de mission des Pères Maristes

Le but de la Conférence des Écoles des Pères Maristes de l’Amérique de Nord est de soutenir et de fortifier la présence du charisme mariste entre les élèves, le personnel et les parents dans nos institutions et de développer les liens de coopération entre nos écoles.

Marist Fathers’ Mission Statement

The goal of the Conference of the Marist Fathers’ Schools of North America is to support and strengthen the presence of the Marist charism among the students, staff, and parents in our school communities and to develop bonds of cooperation among our schools.

La Misión de los Padres Maristas

La meta de la Conferencia de las Escuelas Maristas de Norteamérica es apoyar y animar la presencia del carisma Marista entre los estudiantes, la facultad, y los padres de familia en nuestras comunidades y desarrollar los enlaces de cooperación entre nuestras escuelas.

North American meetings of Marist schools:

April 2007 – Pontiac, MI¹⁶

October 2007 – Quebec, Canada¹⁷

¹⁶ Conferences published in *Forum Novum* 10, 1 (2008).

October 2008 – Atlanta, GA
 October 2009 – St John’s Center, MI
 October 2010 – Atlanta, GA
 June 2017 – Washington, MI
 June 2018 – Atlanta, GA
 June 2019 – Pontiac, MI

Literature:

Lionel F. Beaudoin, S.M., *Mantle of Blue: A Half Century of Marist Apostolate. History of the Northeast Province of the Society of Mary, 1924 to 1974*, Boston, 1974.

François Drouilly, S.M., *Les avis de J.-Cl. Colin au personnel du petit séminaire de Belley - J.-Cl. Colin's Instructions To the Staff of the Minor Seminary of Belley* (Maristica, 3), Rome, General house, 1990.

John W. Lynch, S.M., *Mantle of Blue revisited. Statistics 1974-1990*, s.l. s.d. [Boston, 1990].

‘Marists in Education’, *Forum Novum* 10, 1 (July 2008).

Michael Pavlick, S.M., *Boston* (Data concerning the Particular Provinces of the Society of Mary IV), Rome, Society of Mary, 1952.

Handout for the June 2017 workshop of teachers from Marist Schools in Canada, USA, and Mexico, 1 page.

Yearbooks of schools with Marist involvement:

The Mitre, Cathedral Central High School, Detroit, Yearbook.

The Juggler of Notre Dame, Notre Dame High School, Harper Woods, Michigan, USA, Yearbook, 1957ff

The Legend, Notre Dame Preparatory, 1300 Giddings Road, Pontiac, Michigan, USA, Yearbook, 1995ff.

Other sources:

Visits and conversations during my stay in Pontiac, including the Educational Forum, in June 2017.

Usage of the Marist community library, Pontiac.

Various information gained from the internet.

¹⁷ Conferences published in *Forum Novum* 10, 1 (2008).