

the three  
**VIOLETS**





## *Marcellin and the Virtues of the Three Violets*

The 'three violets' and their associated virtues of humility, simplicity and modesty were proposed by Marcellin Champagnat as being at the heart of what it means to be Marist. They are not behavioural guidelines but rather, spiritual attitudes. If we nurture them in our faith lives – in the way we approach God, and in the way we create relationships with others, then it is likely that we will mirror them in all aspects of our daily lives.

As a symbol to represent all this Marcellin chose this flower that grows wild in the French countryside. When the violets are in season their scent is beautifully prevalent even though the violets themselves are scattered and sometimes hard to find. This symbolises the Marist tradition of being present and doing good quietly.

Sometimes in history, the story we tell in a modern context says more about ourselves, than it does about the original context from which the story grew. In our Marist community we look to the violets of Marcellin Champagnat's world and use them to sharpen our focus on our own world, right here where we are.

"Humility is a basic element in our relationships since it has to do with self-understanding. It means knowing and accepting the truth about ourselves, being honest with ourselves, being free of pretention and self-delusion. Simplicity is the way we live the truth of ourselves, giving us a personal transparency, which allows others to know us and to relate to us as we are. Modesty can be seen as the result of humility and simplicity especially in the respect that we show to others our sensitivity towards them in what we say and in what we do. These Marist virtues give a 'quality of authenticity and kindness to our relationships with our Brothers and with other people that we meet.'"

*(Br Charles Howard, former Marist Superior General in his Circular 'Marist Apostolic Spirituality.')*



*God of all creation,*

*When we see the three little violets, may we remember that  
although they are tiny, they have their own beauty, their own integrity,  
and they are perfectly formed, beautifully made, just as they are.*

*Be with us as we try to live in a way which is inspired by the violets of St Marcellin  
so that we, too, can make the fields of our world different, as a result of our presence.*

*Amen.*

*(Prayer by Robyn Rebecchi, Lavalla Catholic College Traralgon)*

# Humility

*Of all the words that characterise the life of Jesus — love, courage, obedience, leadership — high on that list must be **humility**.*

- In Luke's gospel Mary gives birth to Jesus in a humble stable in a small village called Bethlehem.
- He was raised in a humble little town called Nazareth.
- He owned no home, acquired few possessions and had no place of His own to rest His head at night.
- In fact, humble is how Jesus described His own character: "... learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt 11:29)

**Humility**, in its simplest sense, is the ability to consider others and their needs before our own.

So many virtues flow from this quality called **humility**. Respectfulness, kindness, generosity, compassion, patience - **humility** includes all these qualities. A truly humble person will demonstrate these traits - and these traits contribute to one's **humility**.

If we are humble, we think of others, we empathise with others, we put their welfare and feelings alongside our own.

## How can I show **humility**?

- **Always admit your mistakes:** it is okay to be wrong
- **Be a team player:** part of humility is the ability to consider the needs and feelings of others
- **Enjoy your accomplishments:** and always acknowledge the achievements of others
- **There is always room for improvement:** humble people recognize that no matter how much they think they know, they can still improve
- **Ignore the mistakes of others:** instead of throwing people's mistakes back in their face, use these times as your opportunity to show your humility
- **Be willing to serve others:** the homeless, your family, your friends
- **Always apologise:** a sincere apology is a true sign of humility
- **Remember to say 'thank you':** gratitude is a building block of humility

***Humility** is a basic element in our relationships with others. It is about being honest with ourselves and others and this helps others to get to know us and relate to us as we are.*

## Some classroom activities to help students learn the value of humility:

### Gratitude Cards: acknowledging the humble work of others

There are many people who perform thankless jobs that make our lives easier. This could be a teacher, grounds-person, librarian, tuckshop worker, school officer etc.

1. Start by having students identify someone in their community that they would like to thank.
2. Next, provide materials to create thank you cards to give to these people.
3. Work out the best way to give out the cards.
4. Once the cards have been given out, have the students discuss and share the best part of this activity.

### Random acts of Kindness: making someone feel special

1. As a class, create a list of kindness actions
2. Make these into a set of kindness cards
3. Everyone chooses a card
4. Each person does their kind action (place a time limit on it... maybe a week)
5. Return the card to the class and tell the story of what happened
6. Pass on the card to someone else or put it back in the pack of cards
7. Everyone chooses another card.

Leave a thank-you note	Clean up without being asked	Give someone a compliment	Let someone else go first	Say 'I love you.'
Send a friendly email	Give an unexpected hug	Say 'thank you'	Make someone a gift	Make a care package
Say 'well done'	Say 'hello' to someone you don't know	Volunteer	Say 'sorry' if you need to	Share
Smile at someone	Hold the door for someone	Do some chores without being asked	Offer to help someone who needs it	Offer to make a cup of tea for someone at home
Play with someone new at school	Share your lunch with someone who doesn't have any	Give up your seat for someone	Offer to clear the table at home	Share your pocket-money with a friend

### Sidewalk Quilt: acknowledging the needs of others

This is a whole class cooperative art project, creating a whole sidewalk quilt, using coloured chalk, for everyone to work on together.

1. Have the students measure squares of approximately the same size (like a grid) on a cemented area of the school.
2. Each person chooses one square to start.
3. Each person can fill their square with any patterns they want. These should be made from straight lines, using coloured chalk.
4. If you have more squares than people, have each person colour multiple squares.
5. Make sure every square is covered to make a complete quilt.



*Humility is not thinking less of yourself  
but thinking of yourself less*

*C.S. Lewis*

# Modesty

What does the Marist virtue of **Modesty** mean?

- Modesty is being unpretentious
- Modesty is being aware of your strengths and weaknesses
- Being humble
- Not being vain
- Thinking before we speak
- Not overstating our accomplishments
- Modesty is an inner attitude of our heart
- Listening to understand the other

Just mention the word **Modesty** and chances are you will be misunderstood. The first thing to come to mind has to do with clothing and modest dressing however, the Marist virtue of Modesty can be understood in the attitude that you wear. Our attitude affects many aspects of our lives, including the way we treat people, the way we think of ourselves and others, and how we view our relationship with God.

## In class discussion points:

1. *Modesty seems out of step with modern society. Today, as a rule, many people are most eager to impress others.*
2. *Those who work in advertising or cosmetic industries regard modesty as a handicap. They promote style over substance, image over essence.*
3. *What do you think of the saying, “nice guys finish last”?*

Not everything that happens is about us. Dropping the feeling that life has to be about us, means opening up to all the other great things life can be about. People who are insecure, make conversation about themselves and their accomplishments. Modesty means being secure enough that you can appreciate the good things around you and the accomplishments of other people without reference to yourself.

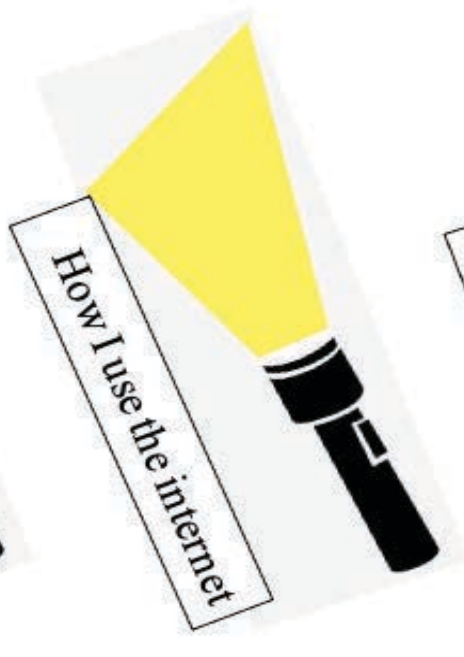
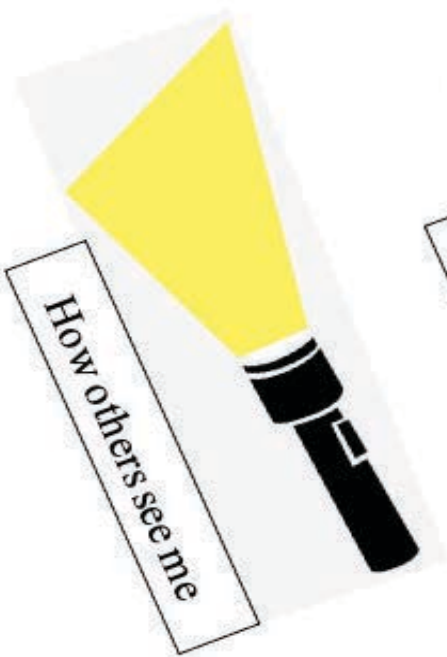
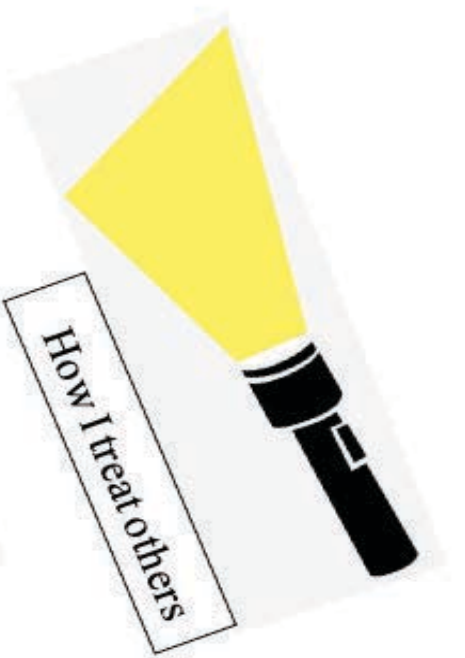
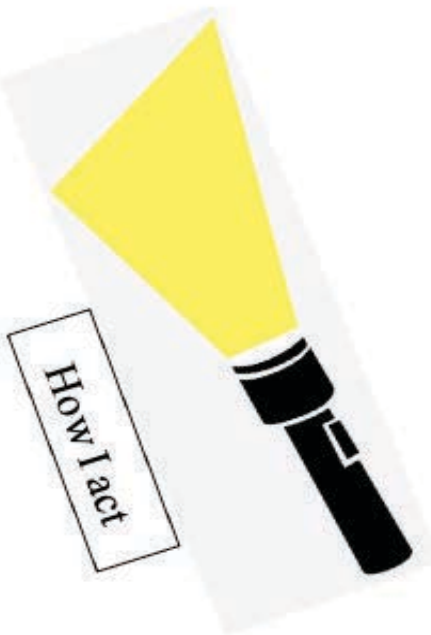
Practicing the virtue of modesty today is very difficult because thinking primarily about ourselves has evolved through the use of technology. With social media, the trend is to put your every thought and action out there for the world to see.

However, used well, social media has proven itself as a valuable communication tool to connect with family and friends, provide support through online community groups and get a quick response to a burning question. We can better spend our time on Facebook by building up and encouraging our friends and family. We all could use a little encouragement.



# Shine Your Light

*Being modest is a great way to shine a light for others to follow. It shows that you love Jesus and are trying to follow Him. Fill in the yellow flashlights by saying how you can do each of these in a modest way.*



# Simplicity

**Simplicity** is essential in order to live a good life and have a positive impact on those around us.

What does it mean to live with the virtue of **Simplicity**?

It means:

- Being grateful
- Being truthful
- Being true to yourself: this means accepting yourself just as you are
- Being true with each other
- Being genuine and open-minded
- Being approachable and interested in others

## What other qualities do you see in genuine people?

»  
»  
»

When people have a sense of **simplicity** in their lives, their direction comes from within, from their own principles and values. They do what they believe to be the right thing. Their happiness comes from within, as well as from the simpler pleasures—such as friends, family, and a sense of purpose—that make life rich.

### **How do we practise Simplicity?**

A good way to practise simplicity is to learn to have gratitude for the good things that happen each day. This will help us learn what is really important in life. We can practise simplicity by thinking of others first rather than ourselves, by trying to be fair in our decisions and actions and by giving away things that we really do not need.

## What are some of the things for which I am grateful?





## Reflection Question:

*How can I be myself, without allowing myself to be influenced by those around me?*



**Sit with a partner and talk about what these quotes mean to you.**

“The more you have, the more you are occupied; the less you have, the more free you are.”

- *Mother Teresa*

“The things you own end up owning you.”

- *Tyler Durden, Fight Club*

“The greatest wealth is to live content with little”

- *Plato*

“Less is more.”

- *Robert Browning*

## Why do people act fake?

- They aren't happy with who they truly are
- They want to feel better about themselves
- They want people to follow them
- They want to control others
- They don't like their life

## ROLE PLAY ACTIVITY

Gather together into groups of three.

Think of a story with three characters where one of the characters is being fake...that means they are not really being true to themselves...they are pretending.

Choose a role each, practise your scene and then show it to the rest of the class.



# WHO AM I?



WHAT DO I LOVE TO DO AND WHY?



WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE ME?



WHAT IS SOMETHING I WOULD LIKE TO TRY TO DO AND WHY?

WHAT DO I LIKE ABOUT BEING ME AND WHY?



WHAT IS SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT ME THAT OTHERS DON'T KNOW?

LOOKING GOOD!!!

IN THIS SPACE, WRITE SOME WORDS THAT DESCRIBE THE 'REAL' YOU...



WELL DONE!