

**'His spirit will continue to animate the schools he founded'.
Handing on the specific Josephite spirit to future generations.**

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Dissertation in partial fulfilment of the
MA in Chaplaincy Studies.

St Mary's University College

October 2005.



Canon Constant William van Crombrughe
(1789-1865)
Founder of the Congregation of the Josephites.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my Josephite confrères for giving me the time and space to undertake this study. My thanks and appreciation must also go to those who have participated in this research, particularly the six members of staff at St George's whose willingness to be interviewed enabled this study to be completed. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the wonderful welcome and enriching experience I enjoyed while staying at St Ignatius College, Riverview at Sydney in Australia. It was there that I learnt so much about the crucial importance of articulating and inculcating a school's underpinning ethos for the entire school community. I am also indebted to my colleagues on the MA course for the great times we shared together during our meetings at St Mary's and especially to Fr Patrick Kenna SDB who tragically died before completing the course. Finally, my sincere thanks and gratitude go to John Lydon for his constant interest, support and encouragement during the evolution and completion of this study.

Abstract

Since its original foundation in 1869, St George's College, Weybridge has always sought to be a Catholic, Christian and Josephite school rooted in the educational principles of Canon Constant van Crombrughe, the founder of the Josephites, a pontifical religious order of Roman Catholic priests and brothers.

In the past, the ethos of St George's College was maintained through a process of 'osmosis' and oral tradition handed down by generations of Josephites. More recently, however, the number of Josephites working at St George's has steadily declined creating the danger of the underpinning Josephite educational ethos being lost through the lack of any Josephite presence at the school.

Against this background, the Introduction starts by emphasising the importance of the underpinning ethos for a school's success. It then establishes leadership formation as a *raison d'être* of Josephite schools and highlights the move towards a more collaborative approach to ministry in schools in keeping with Vatican II's *communio* ecclesiology. The second chapter articulates the specific attributes of Josephite educational ethos, highlighting the importance of 'family spirit'. The third chapter describes the evolution of the research question and methodology while the fourth chapter highlights the outcome of the interviews and offers a considered response to the research question: 'To what extent is the Josephite ethos being maintained at St George's College?' The study concludes by offering a synthesis of its main conclusions before making four recommendations.

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Chapter One Introduction

This chapter starts by identifying the study's aims after which it establishes the importance of a school's underpinning ethos as well as the pivotal role teachers exercise in maintaining a school's distinctive ethos and culture. The chapter then moves on to outline the specific historical context of the Congregation of Josephites as a teaching order of Roman Catholic priests and brothers. The third part of the chapter highlights the importance of collaboration, an issue religious orders are having to address in respect of the governance and management of their (former) schools. This is set against the background of the move towards a more collaborative approach to ministry in the Roman Catholic church that finds its roots in the *communio* ecclesiology of the second Vatican Council. The final part of the chapter identifies educational importance of the study and the agreed research question.

The aims of the study

The aims of the study are to articulate the Josephite educational ethos and establish the extent to which the staff are maintaining this specific ethos at St George's College. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the study will prove useful in assisting the revision of the school's Mission Statement which is rooted in this ethos.

The importance of a school's underpinning ethos

As a result of a number of recent studies,¹ there is a growing consensus about the meaning and the importance of a school's underpinning ethos. A school's ethos can be described as:

'The fundamental spirit of the school that gives orientation to the energies of the school. Ethos is the touchstone for the character of the curriculum and the culture of the school' (Treston 2001:17).

Canavan and Monahan offer a similar definition:

'Ethos refers to the unique set of values that drives all aspects of a school's culture' (2000:2.27).²

The origin of a school's specific ethos can usually be found in the school's own history. As a consequence, although schools have to look to the future in order to survive and flourish, an appreciation of the school's past stories and historical traditions are essential to understanding the evolution of its present underpinning ethos.³ Therefore the quest to re-discover a school's founding ethos is much more important than Brien and Hack assume in their own quest to emphasise, 'What are we yet to become?' rather than 'Who founded us?' and 'What have we become?' (2005:81).

¹ For example: Flynn (1993), Lombaerts (1998), Prosser (1999), Furlong and Monahan (2000), Lydon (2001), Brien and Hack (2005).

² Note. In Canavan and Monahan (2000), each page is numbered according to the chapter number (ie 2) and the actual page number (ie 24-25) with each chapter starting with page 1 hence (2.24-25).

³ Alkire makes a point about the importance of stories, sagas, lore and myth that are vehicles for transmitting messages conveying the history of the organization' (1995:25).

A school is only as good as its ethos (Brick 1999:88) and for a school's ethos to permeate the entire life of a school, there must be a process of recognition and reflection (Gallagher 2003:196). To be neutral or indifferent about the school's moral or spiritual ethos will inevitably generate an ethos of individualism, functionalism and ultimately fragmentation (Williams 2003:1). Furthermore, this process of reflection needs to involve all staff as it is they, rather than the pupils, who will maintain and reinforce the individual school's underpinning ethos and culture.

There are, however, a number of challenges to the ethos of the Catholic school. Although Roman Catholic schools in England have been revisiting their ethos to make it more explicit and transparent, many teachers still lack a full understanding of the distinctive nature of the Roman Catholic school ethos and, consequently, any commitment to live it out (§66 *The Catholic School* 2004:36).

Another challenge to the ethos of Catholic schools is the increasing multi-faith culture of contemporary post-Christian England.⁴ This situation was recognised in the 1988 *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*:

'It is not always easy to bring these two aspects into harmony; the task requires constant attention, so that the tension between a serious effort to transmit culture and a forceful witness to the gospel does not turn into a conflict harmful to both' (§67 *Church Documents* 2004:167).

⁴ This issue was addressed in the 1997 consultation paper, *Catholic Schools and Other Faiths*, prepared for the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The traditional ethos of independent Catholic schools is being challenged by market forces and league tables especially as Catholic parents are no longer automatically choosing Catholic schools for their children, but those schools most likely to guarantee academic results.⁵ Catholic schools that fail to reflect continually on their underpinning ethos can end up becoming little more than 'examination factories where position in league table becomes their new *raison d'être*' (Brick 1999:103) under pressure from parental expectations and the need simply to survive.⁶ Where this occurs, it will probably also have a negative affect on the Catholic school's prime commitment to religious, spiritual and moral interests (Grace 2002:181) as well as affecting its policies of admission and retention.⁷ Linked to this is the effective school movement that challenges the Catholic schools' ethos through a constant quest for 'efficiency that is often given precedence over issues of social justice' (Spry 2000:125). Catholic schools also need consider messages they are giving out about their ethos. For example, what statement is being made when, after a string of academic and sporting awards, no or only one award is given for Christian leadership? (cf Brien and Hack 2005:79).⁸

While 'there is no one right way to live out one's Christian faith' (Sullivan 2001:5), there is a direct linkage between teacher relationships and a school's ethos and,

⁵ In 1960 there were 74,408 Catholic pupils attending Catholic independent schools. In 2001 the total number of Catholic pupils attending Catholic independent schools had dropped to 21,000 (Orchard 2002:3).

⁶ In 1997 as a response to these challenges within the wider sector of Catholic Education, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales produced *The Common Good in Education*. See also 'Schools as Business' in Sullivan's *Catholic Schools in Contention*.

⁷ 'The temptation in a market economy for schooling is to try by manipulation of admissions policies and exclusion to maximise the number of 'profitable' students and to reduce the number of challenging and uncooperative pupils' (Grace 2002:181).

⁸ Furthermore, as Brien and Hack point out a school's sacred spaces, and the lack of them, can reveal much about the ethos and identity of the school community (2005:79).

as a result, schools differ because of these relationships (Rosenholtz cited by Angelides and Ainscow 2000:150). In the ideal world, a Catholic school would be:

'Permeated by an ethos of prayer and moral virtue: this would, of course, *depend on the character of the teachers themselves*. The integrating force behind the curriculum of such a school would be love; love for creation, love for humanity, love for God – and finally love between pupils and teachers' (Caldecott 2005:40 - emphasis added).⁹

Finally, the on-going recovery of the past at St George's is helping to clarify and keep alive the school's historical Josephite educational ethos. At the same time it is a reminder, to those involved, of the school's continuous willingness to be adaptable to changing circumstances throughout its history. Furthermore, the story of *College Melle*, outlined in the next section of this chapter, shows the extent to which van Crombrugghe was prepared to go in order to adapt his Josephite schools to changing circumstances.

⁹ In the *Guide Pédagogique*, a collection of educational maxims of van Crombrugghe, there is also a requirement for Josephites to love their pupils as 'mothers and fathers' as this would provide the underpinning strength for their work.

'Here is the greatest method of education: **All of you who have devoted yourselves to the sacred work of education, love, love the children**. But there is love and love. I am speaking here of real, deep and enlightened love; pastoral and paternal love; this love is everything and accomplishes everything.

In a word, be like fathers to them, and that's not enough; be like mothers. You must love the children and make them feel that you love them; not only by avoiding, in your dealings with them, all hardness, unjust coldness and discouraging severity, but by caring tenderly for them and having a blessed and cordial affection for them; letting them see that you have devoted your life to them, that you are happy to be with them and will always be so. You must also identify with them, not only in work and study, but in everything else and in every detail of their school life.

But I must add one thing of the greatest importance: To love the children and to identify with them, you must love one another. Be of one heart and mind: *cor unum et anima una*. Putting this into effect is as simple as it is pleasant. Out of this is born life, strength and the powerful fruitfulness of your work for souls, since in this is the union of souls one with another and with God in charity.

If you know these things you will be happy, provided you put them into practice' (§129 with emphasis added).

The Josephites and their involvement in education

It needs to be remembered that the ecclesial, cultural and socio-political circumstances in 1817, when Constant van Crombrugge founded the Brothers of Mary and Joseph – the precursors of the Josephites, were significantly different from those prevailing at the start of the 21st Century.¹⁰ Furthermore, van Crombrugge was an ultramontane, conservative priest¹¹ who belonged to a Roman Catholic Church that saw itself as the *societas perfecta*, in other words, ‘the perfect society - visible, hierarchical, and juridical’ (Hume 1988:66) in which the few were ‘the custodians of power and truth’ (Cooper 1993:24). Moreover, at the time, European culture was still overwhelmingly Christian in outlook and practice albeit exhibiting nationalist tendencies.

It was on 1st May 1817 that Constant van Crombrugge, at the time a Canon of Gent Cathedral and Headmaster of *Le Collège d’Alost*, founded a Roman Catholic Religious Order known as the Brothers of Mary and Joseph that later became known as The Congregation of Josephites.

¹⁰ See Garcia (1980:44-45)

¹¹ As Powell comments: ‘There is no evidence to suggest that Van Crombrugge had any early ambitions to be a teacher or a priest teacher. Nor did he show any apparent interest in joining the Fathers of the Faith or any other religious congregation. It is clear that his primary ambition was to become a priest and to serve in whatever capacity his Bishop might require. That he did not wish to join of the Fathers of the Faith is, perhaps, odd. Having received such a deeply impressive education at their hands, it would perhaps have been logical for the young Van Crombrugge to join them and to do for others what he himself had received at their hands. Certainly the model of a young person being impressed by a religious congregation in his or her formative years is a not uncommon one and, until recent years, many teaching congregations regarded their schools as a seedbed for vocations. Had Van Crombrugge joined the Fathers of the Faith his life might in many ways have been easier, and he would have been in the company of the sort of urbane and cultured men that it was his ambition for the Josephites to become. However, this was not to be, and after his priestly ordination he embarked on the career of a simple parish priest’ (2003:188).

Van Crombrugge had humanitarian and religious motives for the establishment of the Brothers of Mary and Joseph. He wanted to alleviate the suffering and hardship caused by famine and the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars. Van Crombrugge also sought to protect the moral lives of the young children from poor homes since he was convinced these children might be forced, by their parents, into stealing food in order to survive and, as a consequence, the children would fall away from their religious practices.¹² Initially, the Brothers of Mary and Joseph were sent to van Crombrugge's own home town of Grammont in West Flanders, now part of present day Belgium, where they established work schools for the children.¹³

In setting up these work schools, van Crombrugge established the founding *raison d'être* for the Josephites and their schools: 'The evangelisation and education of young people'.

By the end of 1834, the Brothers of Mary and Joseph were involved in the running of four schools in Belgium.¹⁴ In 1837 van Crombrugge accepted the invitation of

¹² The original rules for both the Brothers of St Joseph and the Daughters of Mary and Joseph clearly indicated in their respective opening paragraphs that the brothers and sisters were called to serve God and the Church 'especially in the instruction of poor children'. In the 1830 Rules which were given Episcopal approval this reference to educating the poor was changed to read 'the instruction of children' with no explicit reference to the poor Garçia (1980:149-150). Garçia also points out that while there was indeed no specific reference to 'poor' children, the 'poor' were still mentioned in the fourth promise taken by the religious. The 1844 constitutions of the Josephites mark the final shift of emphasis towards to the education of the middle classes. The education and teaching had to be such that 'middle class and parents of the distinguished class (might) find them in harmony with the needs of their children and even with the reasonable demands of their condition in society'.

¹³ In Belgium, some towns have both French and Flemish names. For example, the Flemish name for Grammont is Gerrardsbergen. In this study the French names of Belgium towns have been used by and large where this dual naming occurs. However, Leuven (Louvain), for example, will be retained to distinguish it from Louvain là Neuve.

¹⁴ These four schools were at Grammont (the original foundation in 1817), Rooborst (1830-1860), Halle (1834-1842) and Maldegem (1834-1842). A school at Maria-Oudenhove opened and closed in 1833.

his brother-in-law to take over the running of *Le Pensionnat de Melle* otherwise known as *College Melle*, then a secondary boarding school for boys.¹⁵ The opportunity to move to *College Melle* presented van Crombrugge with his first chance to attract better educated men to his religious order and, moreover, it is with the move to Melle that the Brothers of Mary and Joseph are renamed Josephites.¹⁶ More importantly, within the context of this study, this is a seminal moment as it created the second *raison d'être* for Josephite schools: the education of the Catholic boys belonging to the new ruling classes who would eventually become the future leaders within society.¹⁷

¹⁵ *College Melle* was organised very much on the same principles as the *Le Collège d'Alost* where van Crombrugge had been such a successful headmaster.

College Melle had originally been established in 1789. In 1806 Adrien Joseph Dechamps had taken over the direction of a boarding school that was located at Melle, a small town between Gent and Alost. Dechamps was an excellent educator well familiar with Van Crombrugge, his work and his family. By 1822, because of growing difficulties with the Dutch Administration, Dechamps decided to give up the boarding school which, by that time, had an excellent reputation. It was bought by van Crombrugge's brother-in-law, Dominique Van Wymelbeke, and became known in some circles as *le premier pensionnat de Belgique*. cf Garçia (1980:176-177).

Another Josephite school had been started at Gent in 1825 but was closed very shortly afterwards when the two Brothers of St Joseph running the school were dismissed from the Order for insubordination. During the lifetime of van Crombrugge, three other schools were opened after *College Melle*: Bruxelles (1839-1858), Tirlémont (1839-1888) and finally Leuven (1843) which is still flourishing.

¹⁶ As an over-simplification, the Brothers of Mary and Joseph tended to have only a basic education and were, therefore, confined to teaching in primary schools. Those Religious Orders who had priests with higher levels of education tended to teach in secondary schools. By offering the chance of teaching in one of the more academic secondary schools, van Crombrugge hoped to attract more academically able entrants to join his religious order of men especially if they were no longer known as 'Brothers'.

It seems highly likely that if it had been possible, van Crombrugge would have split the Brothers of Mary and Joseph at this point in time but he simply did not have the numbers to achieve this. At the end of the 1837 chapter just before the move to Melle, van Crombrugge stood up and announced: 'The title of brothers was proving in the prejudices of the moment a true obstacle to our progress in the career in which we have committed ourselves'. Therefore the religious would be called outside the religious house *Messieurs* followed by their religious name and the congregation renamed *Institut des religieux de St Joseph* or more simply *Joséphites*. This change in name was to have serious repercussions for the Josephites as it resulted in serious tensions within the Josephite communities between the Choir Religious (the teaching Josephites) and the 'lay brothers' (non-teachers). This state of affairs continued well beyond the lifetime of van Crombrugge (Garçia 1980:181).

¹⁷ After Belgium's independence in 1830, van Crombrugge had come to the conclusion that there was a real need to education and evangelise the new ruling classes of Belgium, the commercial and industrial middle classes. Furthermore, he felt that if the sons of new ruling class were not evangelised they might soon turn against the Church and, through their liberal or democratic anti-clericalism, they might also as a consequence jeopardise the hard fought gains that the Church had achieved at the 1830 National Congress.

During 1839 van Crombrugghe began to conceive the idea of adapting the curriculum offered at Melle so that it might better suit the needs of the new ruling classes and the socio-economic needs of the country while not, at the same time, denying pupils the benefits of a traditional Christian humanistic education. The following year, the revised curriculum at College Melle introduced courses in Italian, German, Natural Sciences, business and commercial law.¹⁸ In 1841, the Melle prospectus was published in English, German and Spanish and emphasised this new curriculum. In 1843 Melle was given a new title: *L'Institution commerciale, industrielle, littéraire et scientifique de Melle*. This exciting and successful venture was brought to a premature end seventeen years later due to new government regulations for entry to higher education. The story of *College Melle* does, however, illustrate the willingness of van Crombrugghe to radically adapt his schools to changing circumstances.

The final stage of the development of the Josephites and their schools, during the life of van Crombrugghe, came with the acceptance of the offer made in 1842 by Cardinal Archbishop de Sterckx of Malines to take over a school being run by one of the Cardinal's priests. For van Crombrugghe, the move to Leuven offered a place for the initial formation of future Josephites. Furthermore, the school, because of its location in Leuven, would allow Josephites to follow the courses necessary for the priesthood offered by the *Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven*.

¹⁸ Even today as you walk through the front door of *College Melle* and look up at the ceiling you can read the three words which summarised the thrust of the new curriculum introduced at Melle: 'Industry Science Arts'. In passing Powell notes that there was still a brewing class at Melle in the early 20th Century (2003:181).

Finally, even though van Crombrugge founded no more schools after Leuven, he continued to maintain an active interest in his schools and their methods until his death in 1865.¹⁹

In 1869 the Josephites established a boys' boarding school in England, initially at Croydon, then at Woburn Park on the outskirts of Weybridge. Unfortunately, like many religious orders, the number of new recruits to the Josephites in England started to decline in the 1970s and by the late 1980s it had become clear that some major decisions would have to be taken if St George's College was to survive into the 21st century.

In 1989 the decision was taken to close the boarding facility at the College and sell 'Barrow Hills', the boarding preparatory school run by the Josephites since 1950, to the parents. In September 1992, the Junior School of St George's College, located in the grounds of the College, opened an Infants Department for boys that proved to be an immediate success. In September 1994, girls were admitted into the Nursery at the Junior School and started the process by which it, and the College, would become fully co-educational schools. During the summer holidays of 2000, 'The Move' took place. This involved the Junior Schools of St George's College and St Maur's Convent coming together and relocating into the buildings previously occupied by the senior girls at St Maur's in Weybridge. At the same time the senior girls moved to Addlestone to join the College at Woburn Park. 'The Move' marked the end of a period of significant adaptation during which St

¹⁹ For example: 'We have the greatest interest concerning methods, in not remaining behind; everything is moving, we must also moved forward' (Letter of van Crombrugge to Marie Coulon written on 26 December 1849).

George's successfully transformed itself from being a medium size boys' boarding school with day pupils into the largest co-educational, independent day school in England and Wales.

Furthermore, in another defining moment, on 11 February 1993, the Josephites formally handed over the governance and management of St George's to the trustees of a charity specifically created for this purpose.²⁰ Moreover, unlike some transitions from religious to lay governance, where the school's charism (ethos) was downgraded or even lost (Sullivan 2001:5), the handover at St George's took place with a public commitment by the Governors to promote the Catholic, Christian and Josephite ethos of the school.²¹ This transfer from religious to lay headship and administration, however, marked the end of the traditional means of maintaining the Josephite ethos at St George's College.

²⁰ Charity Number 1017853. The new charity is called 'St George's College, Weybridge' and is a Company (2789023) Limited by Guarantee. There are, however, three Josephites on the new board of trustees who also act as school governors. They are the Superior General and the Regional Superior and Bursar of the English Region of the Josephites.

²¹ Powell (1997) argues, however, that since the formation of the new 'St George's College, Weybridge', it can no longer lay claim to a Josephite ethos (1997:102). Powell prefers to use the term '*Constantian* ethos'. On the other hand, this study prefers to maintain 'Josephite ethos' for those schools founded by van Crombrughe or the Josephites but *Constantian* for those schools not originally founded by van Crombrughe or the Josephites but based on the educational vision of Constant van Crombrughe.

Collaboration

Since the second Vatican Council's Decree *Perfectae Caritatis* on the renewal of Religious Life, members of religious orders have been undertaking a process of rediscovering the original, founding charism of their religious orders.

Running parallel with this renewal has been a reappraisal of the relationship existing between consecrated religious and the laity. This was precipitated, in part, by the post-Vatican II ecclesial image of the Church as fellowship or *communio*. The Trinitarian underpinning of *communio*, or *koinonia* as it is also called, is found in §4 of Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* where the universal church is described as 'a people made one from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. Theologically speaking, collaborative ministry involves the entire 'People of God' – laity, religious, priests and bishops – sharing their common priesthood, working together in the Church's mission and ministry as a consequence of their Baptism (*The Sign We Give* 1995:28).²² In addition, it is more than simply working as a team since to be considered as collaborative ministry, five criteria need to be satisfied:

- It must express the *koinonia* of the Church.
- It must be an ecclesial activity.
- There must be a commitment to values and convictions.
- There must be a desire to work together because 'we are called by the Lord to be a company of disciples, not isolated individuals'.
- It must be a ministry committed to the mission of the Church (TSWG 1995:17).

²² *The Sign We Give* is shortened henceforth to TSWG for referencing purposes.

Furthermore collaborative ministry, being rooted in *communio*, is also a witness and sign to others of 'the inclusiveness of the Church' (TSWG 1995:28).²³ Since, therefore, a key feature of any authentic Catholic school is its existence as a 'community within the Church' (Battams 2003:64), all Catholic schools should have a spirit of collaboration as a distinguishing feature.

The Sign We Give offers two further important insights about collaborative ministry. First, it has to be a consciously chosen commitment by all those involved since it will not function when people are compelled to engage in it against their will (TSWG 1995:28).²⁴ Secondly, because of its very nature, collaborative ministry requires a lengthy process of skill development²⁵, supported by group prayer and reflective theological practice (TSWG 1995:30), and all must believe they have a meaningful and valued contribution to make (Slater 2004:4).

Communio ecclesiology and collaborative ministry have significant implications for leadership within Catholic schools. Such schools need special leadership because 'they are special places that must respond to the unique realities they face' (Sergiovanni 2000:165). While Catholic schools will never be democracies, they must embody a leadership spirit of collegiality based on *communio* and subsidiarity, which is the willingness to distribute discretionary decisions down to

²³ As Barr points out collaborative ministry involves a real challenge to change from 'a preoccupation with managerial hierarchies to a culture of collaborative concerns and networks' (2000:139).

²⁴ The same point is made by Slater (2004:4)

²⁵ Among the skills required are evaluation, self-appraisal, listening, consulting, discerning, consensus decision making, planning, group facilitation, and handling conflict (TSWG 1995:30). There is also a need to learn collaborative prayer (TSWG: 1995:35).

the appropriate level, and a genuine sense of mutual trust throughout the entire school community.

A third factor since the second Vatican Council has been the dramatic decline in the number of consecrated religious involved in education.²⁶ The 2002 Vatican document, *Consecrated Persons and their Schools*, having addressed the issue of religious orders and their schools, concluded by stating:

‘No difficulty should remove consecrated men and women from schools and from education in general, when the conviction of being called to bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the poor and small is so deep and vital’.
(§84 2002:44)

Despite this injunction, some religious orders have already abandoned their schools. Those orders, however, that are maintaining a presence in their (former) schools are having to address issues of governance and management. As a consequence, Josephites are no longer asking the traditional question, ‘How can others help us?’ but rather ‘How can we help others at St George’s?’²⁷

²⁶ For example, the number of members of religious congregations working in independent schools in England fell from 1,101 in 1980 (= 22% of all staff) to 17,408 (1982) to 96 in 2001 (=2% of all staff) (Orchard 2002:3). Moreover the total number of members of religious congregations in England (ie not just those in education) fell from 17,639 (1982) to 9,209 (2002) (Orchard 2002:3).

²⁷ See also this extract from a speech by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Jesuits:

‘Moving beyond simply inviting lay persons to join Jesuits in Jesuit sponsored works requires a different perspective for both Jesuits and lay partners in mission. For there to be a partnership of equality, the question changes from ‘How can lay women and men assist Jesuits in their ministries?’ A new question emerges: ‘How can Jesuits serve lay women and men in their ministries?’ For that to happen, Jesuits must think of our parish, our retreat center [sic], our school in a completely new inclusive way. It is ‘ours’ because it is a mission for which all of us – Jesuit and lay – are co-responsible....All this is asking for formation: formation of laity and formation of Jesuits to cope with this new dimension of our work. To grow in cooperation in mission together will require formation for both lay persons and Jesuits. We Jesuits should ensure that ‘laity who collaborate in Jesuit apostolates can expect from us a specific formation in Ignatian values, help in discernment of apostolic priorities and objectives, and practical strategies for their realization’.

‘Co-operating with Each Other in Mission’. Oct 2004. The text of this speech can be found at following website address <<http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Kolvenbach/Cooperating-in-Mission.pdf>>. (Accessed 12 May 2005).

The educational importance of this study

The educational importance of this study is grounded in the belief that a school's ethos plays a pivotal role in establishing the school's culture and, therefore, the ultimate success or failure of a school (Flynn 1993:7, Prosser 1999:3, Brick 1999:88).

Furthermore, the study should provide a basis for others to build on in the future; a process that will also be able to make considerable use of good practice already taking place in other schools run, or formerly run, by religious orders.²⁸

More specifically, this study is undertaken in the belief that a role of school chaplains is to be 'the court jesters of old' who remained outside the management line, but able to tell the truth to those in authority without fear of losing their heads (Cameron 2000:12). In imitating Jesus, it is part of the prophetic role of school chaplains to highlight incongruence between the school's mission statement and its ethos although the responsibility for upholding the school's ethos should not fall solely on the chaplains (Hayes 2002:134). It is also the responsibility of schools chaplains:

²⁸ For example: The de la Salles in H. Lombaerts *et al* (1998) *The Management and Leadership of Christian Schools*. Groot Bijgaaden (Belgium): Vlaams Lasallians Perspectief and the Jesuits in Australia in G Coleman *et al* (2001) *'With us all Days Ignatian Education' Now for Tomorrow 2002-08*. Pymble: The Loyola Institute.

One outstanding example of good practice takes place at St Ignatius College, Riverview, north Sydney in Australia. At this Jesuit-founded school, there is an induction programme spread over five years that starts with a day away spent learning about St Ignatius Loyola and culminates with a three day retreat (during school time). Full staff meetings (teaching and support) start with a 15-20 minute reflection on some aspect of Ignatian spirituality relevant to the school. All teaching staff are invited [at the school's expense] to take part in a two day residential reflective *colloquium* about 'The vocation of a teacher' at least once during their time at St Ignatius College, Riverview. For further information see: <http://www.riverview.nsw.edu.au/r_staff_formation.php> (16 September 05).

'To enable people to enter into the theological reflection required to ensure the school environment, at both personal and institutional level, reflects gospel values' (CES 2004:12).²⁹

In addition, chaplains need to ensure all discussion about the school's ethos values other people, respects their dignity, and promotes dialogue and discussion rather than confrontation; since the 'way things are done is often more important than the end result' (CES 2004:14).

The research question

It is because the staff in a school are so crucial for maintaining the ethos of a school that this study seeks to ascertain how well the staff are maintaining the Josephite educational ethos at St George's College, by asking the following research question: 'To what extent is the Catholic, Christian, Josephite ethos being maintained at St George's College today?' Furthermore, it does so in the belief that, in the future, the number of committed (practising Roman Catholic) teachers prepared to support the school's Catholic, Christian and Josephite ethos will be more critical for the long term maintenance of this ethos than the percentage number of Roman Catholic pupils attending the school.

Summary

The number of Josephites at St George's has necessitated some radical thinking about how the Josephite educational ethos is to be handed on in the future. The

²⁹ Catholic Education Service, 2004. *A Guide to the Employment of Lay Chaplains in Schools and Colleges*. London : Catholic Education Service.

paradigm of collaborative ministry was posited as the way forward to serve the future governance and management needs of St George's. As well as establishing the importance of a school's ethos, the chapter justified the educational importance of the study, highlighting the prophetic role school chaplains have in maintaining a school's ethos.

The next chapter seeks to articulate the core aspects of the founding Josephite ethos using primary and secondary sources relating to Constant van Crombrugghe.

Chapter 2 Articulating the Josephite educational ethos

After identifying van Crombrugghe's founding vision for Josephite schools, this chapter articulates and analyses the core aspects of Josephite educational ethos.³⁰

Identifying the founding Josephite educational ethos

It is possible to trace the roots of the Josephite ethos back to the time van Crombrugghe spent as a boarder at the *Le Collège St Acheul* at Amiens in France. Despite his initial very tentative start, van Crombrugghe spent four happy and enjoyable years at Amiens. The very homely and totally positive experience of *Le Collège St Acheul*, run by the Fathers of the Faith, became the formative experience of Crombrugghe's own vision for his Josephite schools.³¹ Furthermore letters to his parents during this time show van Crombrugghe had already recognised the importance of the 'family spirit' at *Le Collège St Acheul*.³² In

³⁰ Van Crombrugghe never wrote a formal treatise outlining his educational philosophy. There are, however, some monographs and speeches about educating young people, including an address to the parents of pupils attending the College Prize Giving when he was Headmaster at Alost, as well as his letters. There is also the text of the speech he made during his successful fight for the freedom of education at the 1830 Belgian Constitutional Congress. Full references for these primary sources can be found in the bibliography.

Apart from primary sources, secondary sources have included Garçia (1980) who concentrated on the historical context of van Crombrugghe, and Clements (1982/1983) who focused mainly on the spirituality of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, a sister congregation to the Josephites also founded by Constant van Crombrugghe. In addition Mary Dolan (1999) explored the establishment and lay spirituality of the Associates of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph based on a *Communio* ecclesiology. Powell (1997) articulated the founding educational principles of van Crombrugghe while most recently Powell (2003) has examined the primary sources that underpin the Josephites as a teaching order of religious schools using van den Bossche's original notes (1850) and van Crombrugghe's letters.

³¹ The Fathers of the Faith were formed in the Ignatian spirit during the suppression of the Jesuits in Europe. See Clements for an overview of the Fathers of the Faith and an analysis of their importance for van Crombrugghe and the Josephites (Clements 1985).

³² For example [Letter No 11]. to his parents on 18 December 1805:

addition, the happiness van Crombrugge enjoyed at Amiens was shared by others, including Alphonse Lamartine who wrote:

'I felt as though I had entered another family...The teachers, my friends, rather than my professors, will remain models of holiness, of vigilance, of fatherliness, of gentleness towards their students...in reality, this was the beautiful ideal of a Christian boarding school... charity and union among all' (Cited by Garcia 1980:21 and T Clements 1983:29).

In 1808, van Crombrugge wrote to his father making a tentative enquiry to see if he would support the idea of allowing Sister Julie Billiard to set up an orphanage in Grammont similar to the one she was running in Montdidier.³³ In the end the idea came to nothing but was indicative of Constant's concern for the plight of the poor and disadvantaged.³⁴

'You cannot imagine the happiness that I enjoy. We are under the wise tutelage of eight tutors, whose goodness and affability are extreme. Fr Le Blanc, the Headmaster, is like a shared Father; each of us goes to him to open his heart and to ask for advice with the same confidence that one would have with his own Father'

³³ Letter to Parents No 51 (6 January 1808): 'While speaking of the different houses of Sister Julie's order, the thought came to me that there is in Grammont the house of orphans that is now in a good state through the care of Mrs Myer, but that there is the fear that after her this house could lose a lot of the beautiful order that reigns there today. It is also a real fear that Mrs Myer will not be able to take care of it much longer. I spoke to the Sister about the good that would result if she could send two of her Flemish sisters there. She liked this proposition a great deal, as did Fr Cottu, especially as there is a question of establishing a Convent in Gent through the good offices of the venerable Prelate whom the Good Lord in His mercy gave to the Diocese of Gent. She even asked me to write to you, dear Father, to ask what you think of my proposition (which I had put, in truth, without thinking that it might be effected so quickly). I hasten therefore, dear Father, to satisfy her desires on this topic; please let me know how it seems to you as well as to Mrs Myer. If you judge it good, Sister Julie will come to Grammont.'

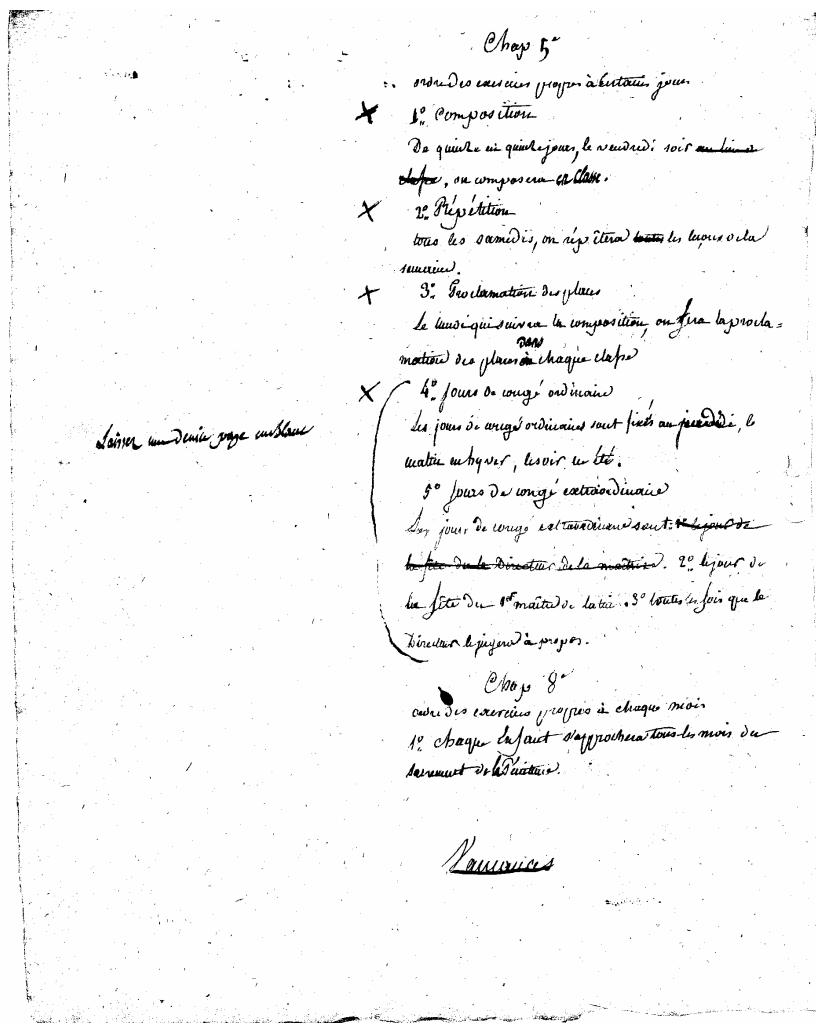
Sister Julie Billiard was the Founder of the Religious Congregation of Our Lady of Namur,

³⁴ This pastoral care for others is also shown to members of his family; for example to his sister Rosalie during her illness at boarding school.

Letter to Parents No 62 (29 September 1808): 'However the nature of her illness, according to what has been written to me, is catalepsy, and worries me because it is a type of apoplexy. Nevertheless I have much hope; today's letter tells me that she is more or less in the same state as on Saturday, and I hope things will be better tomorrow. All goes well here; nothing extraordinary has happened; up to now we have managed everything. We wait for your news with impatience. Be sure, very dear Parents, that we will try to acquit ourselves as best we can of our duties, and that we won't cease to pray to God for our dear sister.'

During his last year at Amiens, van Crombrugge took over the responsibility for supervising the choristers at Amiens cathedral. It was while undertaking this role that van Crombrugge first showed his genius at adapting other people's ideas as he revised the rules for the choristers.³⁵

Figure 1 Part of the revised rules for the choristers at Amiens (reduced in size).



³⁵ *Le Règlement Général des Enfants de la Maîtrise de la Cathédral d'Amiens*. The original handwritten notes of these rules, including many crossing-outs, have survived and are in the Josephite archives at Grammont.

Van Crombrugge seems to have enjoyed being responsible for the choristers. It also appears that the choristers had a deep affection for van Crombrugge. This is confirmed in a letter that van Crombrugge subsequently received from Fr Louis de Sambucy: "We are happy here, my good friend; only we miss you. The children miss you a lot". Letter to van Crombrugge 29 January 1810. Fr de Sambucy was a Father of the Faith.

In September 1814, just two years after his ordination, van Crombrugge sent by his bishop to be headmaster of *Le Collège d'Alost*.³⁶ He arrived to discover the school had just five pupils and the previous headmaster had not been a Roman Catholic. When van Crombrugge left in 1825, *Le Collège d'Alost* had become one of the most sought after schools in Flanders and equal in stature with *Le Collège St Acheul* at Amiens.³⁷

It was while at *Alost* that van Crombrugge began to formulate his vision for education as the process for forming *L'honnête homme et parfait Chrétien*.³⁸

'The goal which one proposes in this house is to cultivate the mind and heart of young people....the young people admitted to the College receive a careful and complete education, adapted to all states of life. It is therefore education's task to form the good man and to prepare him for society; consequently its task is to form in youth both the heart and the mind, to perfect reason and to adorn the imagination'.³⁹

³⁶ His appointment was almost certainly due to the admiration that Bishop de Broglie, recently returned from prison in France, had for the Fathers of the Faith who ran the minor seminary in Roeselare. This minor seminary was a near identical copy of the Collège at Amiens where van Crombrugge had been educated and so, in the eyes of Bishop de Broglie, van Crombrugge was the prime candidate for this post despite his young age. As it turned out, all the empirical evidence indicates that van Crombrugge became an outstanding headmaster at the Collège d'Alost despite his own initial misgivings about the entire project. While at Alost, van Crombrugge had held weekly staff meetings and invested heavily in the pedagogical formation of his teachers. Textbooks were even written by staff when no other suitable book was available.

³⁷ 'After 1819 the success of the school was assured within the well-to-do ruling class circles, *Bourgeois* parents, and even members of the royal government who sought '*une éducation distinguée*' for their sons, knew that the *Collège d'Alost* was now one of the best in the country and equal to the *Collège St Achuel*' (Garçia 1980:92). Among the pupils who studied at the College under the headship of CGVC were Theodore de Montpellier, the future bishop of Liège, Monsigneur Sheppers, Founder of "The Brothers of Our Lady of Charity" and Adolphe Dechamps, the future leader of the Belgian Catholic Party and J De Smet a missionary to North America.

NOTE: Van Crombrugge left *Le Collège d'Alost* when it was forced to close due to new Government regulations.

³⁸ '*L'honnête homme et parfait Chrétien*' literally means 'the honest man and perfect Christian' but can be translated as 'the true, committed Christian'.

³⁹ These words are inscribed on a plaque beneath a full length picture of Constant van Crombrugge in the main entrance hall at St George's College. The words are still appropriate today for St George's.

At Amiens, van Crombrugghe had already been exposed to the classical Christian humanistic education taught according to the traditional Jesuit style of the *Ratio Atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesu*.⁴⁰ The *Ratio Studiorum* had become the basis of most secondary education in Europe and exerted a considerable influence on the educational vision of van Crombrugghe. The purpose of Jesuit education is stated in the 1599 edition of the *Ratio Studiorum*:

‘The teacher shall so train the youths entrusted to the Society’s care that they may acquire not only learning but also habits of conduct worthy of a Christian. He should endeavour both in the classroom and outside to train the impressionable minds of his pupils in the loving service of God and in all the virtues required for this service’.⁴¹

The stress was on formation rather than information and the aim was the development of the character as well as the skills necessary for learning through the integration of the spiritual, moral and intellectual aspects of education.⁴² The attitude of the Jesuit teacher to the pupil was as ‘father to son’. Extra care and attention was to be given to those who appeared to be struggling while discipline

⁴⁰ *The Plan and Methodology of Jesuit Education*. This title is usually abbreviated to *Ratio Studiorum*. An English translation made by Allan Farrell SJ of the 1599 version (136 pages) can be downloaded at The Boston College website: <http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/ulib/digi/ratio/ratio_web.html> (Accessed on 29 August 2005).

The *Ratio Studiorum* was derived from a system of education used at the University of Paris at the time of Saint Ignatius, the Founder of the Jesuits. It was not a slavish imitation of the University of Paris which was itself based on the methods of Quintilian, the first century Roman educator famous for his *Institutio Oratoria* (Education of an Orator) [See especially Books 1 and 2. (A new translation in 2001 by Russell in the LOEB classical series replaces the dated 1922 translation of Butler)]. The 1599 *Ratio Studiorum* took sixteen years to produce. There are four principal aspects contained in the *Ratio Studiorum*: administration, curriculum, method, and discipline. It was not originally designed as a philosophical or pedagogical treatise on Jesuit education nor did it discuss any of underlying educational principles.

⁴¹ Common rules for the teachers of the lower classes. Paragraph 1. (Farrell’s translation)

⁴² Charmont in *La Pédagogie des Jésuites Ses principes – Son actualité* Editions Spes Paris 1943 p 175 highlights three principles of the *Ratio Studiorum* which are derived from the writings of St Ignatius: 1. Authority which is to be fatherly and exercised in the name of God. 2. The principle of adaptation which required a good understanding of each pupil’s ability 3. Activity. Education was not to be a passive experience. Charmont’s book makes many references to Joseph de Jouvancy’s 1691 commentary on the *Ratio Studiorum* : *Christianus litterarum maigistris de ratione discende et docende*..

was firm but sensitive.⁴³ As with the Jesuits, van Crombrugge believed religion underpinned everything in education.

‘The fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. There is no good education which is not founded on religion and piety towards God. Since religion is the foundation of the building on which we are working, it must be and always will be the principal object of our efforts and of the care we dedicate to our pupils’
(*Règlement du Collège d’Alost* cited by Powell 2003:39).

Furthermore, for van Crombrugge, education of the whole person was more concerned with the heart than mind; with virtue than knowledge.⁴⁴

The idea that Jesuits were to be ‘God’s instruments’ came initially from Ignatius of Loyola and later adapted by van Crombrugge with the result his teachers were ‘to be instruments of God’s mercy’.⁴⁵ For van Crombrugge, ‘being an instrument of

⁴³ §40 ‘The teacher should not be hasty in punishing nor too much given to searching out faults. He should rather pretend not to be aware of an infraction when he can do this without harm to anyone’ Farrell, A., (Translator). 1599. *Ratio Atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesu*. (29 August 05) at <http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/ulib/digi/ratio/ratio_web.html>.

⁴⁴ The beginning of Section Two of the *Règlement Des Professeurs*’ confirms the emphasis of the education offered by the teachers in Josephite schools should be the concerned with the heart and virtue.

‘The aim of your efforts is to make your pupils Christian and knowledgeable to the degree that their circumstances allow. You should spare no effort to reach this goal. **Nevertheless, you should keep constantly in mind that your first care should be the education of their hearts and that you should direct your greatest efforts to creating virtuous men rather than knowledgeable men.**

Your Institute, dedicating itself to the growth of man’s spirit, will never forget that one’s humanity and one’s usefulness to others lies in the heart. It therefore values the pupils’ virtue much more highly than their knowledge, and values most highly among its members’ works those which aim to instruct the young people in the duties of religion and to educate them in good ways (morals)’. (with emphasis added).

⁴⁵ There are references to the Jesuits being ‘the human instrument with God’ in §813 and §814 of *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* prepared by Ignatius of Loyola. In his commentary on §813, Ganss writes: ‘To be a closely united instrument in the hands of God from whom the true efficacy comes is a prominent and characteristic aspect of Ignatius’ concept of an apostolic worker ([30, 638, 814]). This concept flows naturally from his desire to be cooperatively associated with Christ toward achieving God’s redemptive plan’ (1970:332).

Letter number 36 (4 August 1832) in a letter to Br Athanase while he was a novice ‘When I see you during the holidays I will explain to you at greater length what you must do to become a true religious, an instrument of mercy in the hands of God.’

God's mercy' complemented the Josephite understanding of fatherhood that required teachers to be 'as compassionate as their heavenly father' in dealing with others.

Three individuals exerted considerable influence on his ideas concerning education; Bishop Charles Rollin, Francis de Sales and John-Baptiste de la Salle.

Rollin's importance is stressed in a letter sent by van Crombrugge to the Superior at Hal.⁴⁶ For Rollin:

'The head teacher in his school is to be like a father in his family. He must always have the vigilance and the gentleness of a father to ensure the health of the children which is the foundation of everything else' (1793:579)⁴⁷.

During his life, van Crombrugge closely identified with the life, and the spirituality, of Francis de Sales.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Francis de Sales had a significant influence on

For van Crombrugge to be an instrument of God's mercy meant taking on the following six attributes:

1. Abandoning oneself to the will of God.
2. Being poor in spirit and in fact.
3. Being open to experiencing the mercy found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
4. Listening to the Holy Spirit.
5. Proclaiming God as 'all-merciful' and 'all-compassionate'.
6. Being at the service of the whole church

For detailed analysis of these six characteristics, see Clements (1982:97-130)

⁴⁶ Letter number 92 (24 November 1834) 'I urge you to read in common with the Scholastics, the seventh book of the *Traité d'Etudes* of Rollin. Reading this will be most useful to all of you'.

⁴⁷ Bishop Rollin wrote *De La Maniere d'Ensigner et d'Etudier les Belles-Lettres* published by Chez la Veuve Estienne Paris 1739. The title is usually shortened to *Traité des Etudes*. (The quotation is from Volume 2.).

It is through Rollin that van Crombrugge becomes more acquainted with the educational ideas of Quintilian contain in his work *Education of an Orator*.

⁴⁸ In a letter to his niece Clothilde, van Crombrugge shows just how much he was drawn towards St Francis de Sales: 'I have always loved St. Francis de Sales; I ought to have imitated him? God frequently urged me to do so, but, to my shame, I must admit that I have not. I am going to begin again to make efforts, although age and deep-rooted habits no longer render the practice of meekness as easy as it would have been in my youth' (26th January 1837).

Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesians. It is not surprising therefore that the Josephites and Salesians share a number of common approaches to education inherited from Francis de Sales. As with van Crombrugghe, the principal aim of Don Bosco's educational vision was to 'inspire young people to be both good Christians and honest citizens' (Lydon 2001:7); while also important for the Salesians and Josephites are 'family spirit' (Lydon 2001:20) and *Douceur* or 'Gentleness' (Wright 2004:56). Furthermore, neither the Salesians nor the Josephites have found an adequate English word to translate the rich meaning of *Douceur* that reflects the gentleness of Jesus towards others in Matthew's version of the Beatitudes.⁴⁹

Van Crombrugghe was considerably taken by the educational ideas of St Jean-Baptiste de la Salle who founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools.⁵⁰ In 1820, van Crombrugghe ordered the abandoning of individual one-on-one teaching and

⁴⁹ (Matthew 5:1-11). (See also Wright 2004:186 Footnote 23 about the difficulty of translating *Douceur among Salesians*).

The following extract about *Douceur* is taken from *New Manual of 'Politesse' for use by Young People*.

'The gentleness which Jesus Christ recognises when he says "*Beati mites*", happy those who are gentle is not that weak and affected gentleness whose external appearance the world often adopts, in a purely mechanical fashion, in order to disguise personal feelings and to achieve one's ends more easily: it is not a simply quality of temperament or expression; neither is it that weakness of soul which fear makes one take on an appearance of goodness and gentleness, and which permits the very evil against which it should be striving. It is a virtue based on Christian charity: governed by moderation, perfected by patience, sanctified by grace. It is an attitude of heart acquired and polished by hard work which, through virtue, prevents us from harming our neighbour and which leads us to seek every possible benefit for him. It is a positive disposition of the soul, which makes us find our happiness in that of others, which inspires us to bring joy to all hearts, to banish their sadness, and, if one cannot succeed totally, at least to bring comfort and to share the sadness. This is the true gentleness of which Jesus Christ made himself the model on earth. It is this gentleness which he promised to reward: "Happy are the gentle for they will inherit the earth"' (No Date:112).

⁵⁰ Letter No 80 (21 May 1834) to Athanase, Superior at Grammont: 'Send me back, at your earliest opportunity, the book on the method of the Brothers of Christian Schools which I lent you'.

Letter No 148 (11 July 1834) to Stanislas, Superior of Grammont: 'For the moment he can make do with the book that the Brothers of the Christian Schools have had printed'.

adopted de la Salle's method of simultaneous whole class teaching.⁵¹ In addition, the key place that de la Salle gave to 'civility' or 'politeness' (Lombaerts 1998:71), in all probability influenced van Crombrughe, although there is no conclusive evidence to support this claim. Within the Josephite tradition, *Politesse du coeur* is more than simple 'civility', 'politeness' or 'courtesy'. It is underpinned by attitudes of mercy and compassion⁵² and involves being discreet and amenable in relationships with others as well as putting others at ease.

Despite the difficulties in translating *Douceur* and *Politesse* into meaningful English, there can be no denying their importance for van Crombrughe:

'I want the Brothers to do what they can, so that they are loved by the pupils and that they carry out their duties with greater certitude, for God and for the children. *Politesse* and *Douceur* are always essential'.⁵³

and

⁵¹ 'At the end of July 1820, we introduced into our classrooms the methods of simultaneous instruction. I went to Brussels with the founder in order to see this method in action with the Brothers of the Christian Schools'. van de Bossche entry for July 1820.

⁵² *Politesse* is deeply rooted in Scripture particularly St Paul's famous passage about true love found in 1 Corinthians 13 and in the attitude of Jesus who, for van Crombrughe, remains the greatest model of *Politesse*.

The following extract about *Politesse du Coeur* is from the *New Manual of 'Politesse' for use by Young People* (NDG:118-9).

'He had such a straightforward and attractive manner that we see the crowd gathering round him, and children, naturally timid, approaching him with a freedom and confidence inspired by his air of goodness and gentleness. "Let the little children come to me", he said to his Apostles who wished to keep them at bay, "let them come to me as they will share everlasting happiness with me"....The rules of politesse are rather complex, and one needs to know how to discern the correct use of conventions: age, merit and character make different demands, and if one is not aware of these distinctions one risks being regarded as impolite. According to Rollin, a lack of politesse detracts from even the greatest merit, to the extent that even virtue itself seems less virtuous. One should, therefore, become familiar with all the rules of civility, and make one's self so at ease with them that one never omits a single one; one should know how to distribute one's politesse with liberality but not with prodigality: and excess of politesse is often a wearisome incivility.

⁵³ Letter number 96 (31 January 1835). Written to van den Bossche.

'I especially recommend that you live together in friendship and politeness, and that you should be, without exception, gentle and compassionate towards the children; without these four things you will never have a good community and you will never have good disciples'.⁵⁴

The Josephite educational ethos in the 21st Century

The most common expression used to describe the distinctiveness of the Josephite educational ethos is 'Family Spirit'. Van Crombrugge wanted this 'Amiens-inspired' family ethos to exist among the teachers themselves and in their relationships and attitudes towards the children. Stanislas de Haeck, who later became the third Superior General of the Josephites, highlighted this understanding of the Josephite educational ethos in his Circular 49 of 26th September 1857:

'Try to maintain among the pupils a true family spirit, working for their happiness with sincere devotion, demonstrating at all times a prudent affection for them, showing how happy we are to be useful to them: giving them thousands of those small signs of attention which enlightened charity allows and inspires; and, especially, avoiding curtness and rudeness towards them' (as cited in Powell 2003:189).

The commentary on §4 of the 2001 Josephite Constitutions explains that the Josephite 'Family Spirit' is closely associated with the Holy Family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus and entails cultivating an attitude of selfless charity and sharing towards others within the spirit of the Gospels by:

⁵⁴ Letter No 8, 10th December 1828. Written to van den Boscche.

1. Proclaiming God as Father.
 2. Being obedient to the Father's will in imitation of Jesus' own obedience.
 3. Imitating the obedience shown by Jesus to Mary and Joseph.
 4. Imitating the service and love shown by Jesus to the community of disciples.
- (Hamilton 2003:11).

There has, however, been some recent debate as to whether 'Family Spirit' is still meaningful today for describing the Josephite educational ethos. Powell considers any notion of 'Family Spirit' based on the Holy Family of Nazareth as simplistic especially, he argues, 'as there is no empirical evidence to support its presumed family values and domestic harmony' (2003:184). Furthermore, Powell believes 'Family Spirit' should be subsumed into *Politesse*, which he considers to be of much greater importance, rather than allowing 'Family Spirit' to be identified as the core aspect of the Josephite educational ethos (2003:184). Nevertheless, Powell agrees that the 'Family Spirit' which van Crombrughe originally wanted in his Josephite schools is the same family spirit van Crombrughe had experienced with the Fathers of the Faith at Amiens (2003:187).⁵⁵

Another challenge to 'Family Spirit' is the increasing number of children whose experience of family and fatherhood is largely dysfunctional. Given so much negativity in contemporary society about fatherhood, Josephites have sought to re-affirm that their understanding of fatherhood is not rooted in any particular socio-

⁵⁵ As Powell writes: 'Certainly the image of family as an enduring hierarchical structure permeates Van Crombrughe. The son is in a position of filial duty to parents; parents have a duty of care to the son. The place of the parents is taken over by the Fathers of the Faith in Amiens; the son seeks a continuation of hierarchical structure in the Church; the son becomes parent as Headmaster of the *Collège d'Alost* and as Founder. Within the communities an almost Trinitarian atmosphere is to be engendered whereby the individual religious lives in harmony with his confrères and with his pupils in a symbiotic relationship. It is perhaps this notion of symbiosis which most specifically illuminates Van Crombrughe's concept of family spirit' (Powell 2003 184-5).

political model but in the very relationship between Jesus and his own Father.⁵⁶

The Heads of Josephite schools must, therefore, exercise their 'fatherhood' not in a spirit of power and domination but in one of gentleness, service, and pastoral support.

Finally, the Josephite educational ethos requires teachers to have certain personal dispositions that were articulated by van Crombrughe in his 1818 Rule of the Brothers of Joseph and Mary.⁵⁷ These are in addition to *Douceur* and *Politesse* and his already noted wish that teachers should love the pupils as 'fathers and mothers'.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to highlight and analyse the core aspects of the Josephite educational ethos. It is important, however, to realise that St George's College is not unique in having a 'Family Spirit'.⁵⁸ Reference has already been made to the

⁵⁶ This understanding is in keeping with the Trinitarian *communio* or fellowship that underpins post-Vatican II ecclesiology.

Fr Jean Lefebvre, who has animated several Josephite General Chapters, reminded Josephite superiors in 1999: 'God has revealed himself as Father for his people but a father whose feelings are maternal. The revelation of fatherhood is characterised by mercy, maternal tenderness and unflinching benevolence. We will never be able to fulfil our mission to become a father for our confreres and for the people we meet, unless we ourselves really behave as sons of our heavenly father'.

The full text of the talk has been circulated privately among Josephites and can be found in 'Fatherhood' (1999) in the series *Studia Josephitica*, pp.33-44.

⁵⁷ Politeness – Patience – Affability (Joy) – Kindness – Cheerfulness (Good Humour) – Prudence.

⁵⁸ The 1988 Vatican Document, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, suggests that pupils should think of school as an extension of their own homes and that schools should be able to create a 'pleasant and happy family atmosphere' (§27 *Church Documents on Catholic Education* 2004:151). The same document also states; 'Primary Schools should try to create a community school climate that reproduces, as far as possible, the warm and intimate atmosphere of family' (§40 *Church Documents on Catholic Education* 2004:126).

specific family spirit in Salesian Schools.⁵⁹ Among the Jesuits, Fr Thomas Gartlan deliberately created St Ignatius College, Riverview at Sydney in Australia as a 'family school' while he was the Headmaster in the early 20th century (Strong 2005:7).

Although the socio-political and educational circumstances of the 21st century are not the same as those in previous centuries, any contemporary articulation of the Josephite educational ethos, in order to remain faithful to the founding 'Family Spirit' based on van Crombrugghe's experience at *Le Collège St Acheul*, must be:

1. Holistic but giving priority to the heart and virtue over mind and knowledge.
2. Rooted in religion.
3. Owned by teachers who are 'Instruments of God's mercy'.
4. Characterised by attitudes of *Politesse* and *Douceur*.
5. Adaptable to the needs of the epoch and the children.

Two months after van Crombrugghe died, *La Revue Catholique* carried a lengthy ten page obituary on the life and work of van Crombrugghe making explicit reference to the underpinning educational ethos of his Josephite schools:

'All those who knew the headmaster of the *Collège d'Alost* know the gentleness of his administration. His boarding school was all about being a family...the fraternal relationships between the pupils themselves and their filial affection and regard for their teachers and their headmaster enabled them to discover in a real way a gentleness within the school....The Josephites

⁵⁹ Page 27. Lydon also cites the Salesian Cardinal Cagliero who wrote: 'The life he led in common with us made us feel as though we lived not in a school but in a family, under the guidance of a most loving father who had no other concern than for our spiritual and temporal wellbeing' (as cited in Lydon 2001:20). It is noteworthy that the Josephites still pray each evening for 'The spiritual and temporal wellbeing of the pupils'.

have based their own system of education on the same ideas of their Founder...Their boarding schools are truly like families.. The superior is the father and where the most genuine affection unites all...Holiness flourishes there but without affectation...the studies serious but varied, the discipline precise but without having excessive rigour...(and finally)...his spirit will continue to animate the schools he has founded'.⁶⁰

Finally, although the underpinning ethos of a Catholic, Christian and Josephite school may not be unique, it is distinctive and pupils should always feel they are 'Coming Home to School'.⁶¹

Following this critical retrieval of the distinctive Josephite ethos, the next chapter outlines the methodology used to establish and answer the study's research question.

⁶⁰ *La Revue Catholique*. February 1866. All from page 93 with the exception of the last comment from page 97.

The last words of the obituary, 'his spirit will continue to animate the schools he has founded', provided the first part of the title for this study.

⁶¹ The inspiration for this phrase is found in a talk to mark the 150th anniversary of H. Drievuldigheidsschool, (HDC) Leuven. given on 13th February 1993 by Fr Guillermo García, in his capacity as Superior General of the Josephites. He chose, as the title for his talk, *Thuis Bij de Jozefieten* (At Home with the Josephites). During the talk he told this story:

'Late on a Thursday evening, as noisy groups of university students brushed past her, a visitor pauses near the Gambrinus and gazes at the Old Market. An amber spotlight, like so many of those illuminating monuments across the country each evening, focuses on a building at the other end. As she approaches it the word "fortress" comes to mind. Its doors are firmly shut against the restless wave of merry makers sweeping into and out of the many cafes surrounding it.

Early Sunday morning our visitor again wanders through the now almost deserted city and stops once more before the building. The façade that impressed her the other evening now seems to gaze nostalgically on the quiet square recalling other times and other neighbours.

As our visitor prepares to leave the city on Monday morning she comes again to have a final look. This time the building appears to have an indefinable welcoming air about it. Its gates now stand proudly open allowing another, a younger and even more restless wave of youthful energy to sweep into and through it. In a few minutes the wave disappears and the building radiates satisfaction. **Adolescents and youngsters have come home, they are now "at home" on the Old Market and the building has come to life'** (2001:17-21). (Emphasis added).

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

This chapter traces the establishment of the agreed research question and its methodology.

Establishing the research question

The original proposal for this study sought to establish a programme through which the Josephite educational ethos could be handed on within the wider school community at St George's. To achieve this end, a representative sample of ten schools run, or formerly run, by religious orders was to have been used to establish current good practice. This recognised good practice would have served as the basis for establishing a new programme to inculcate the Josephite educational ethos at St George's.

Further reflection about collaborative ministry and inculturation, however, raised important questions about the original research proposal. Since Vatican II, as already shown, there has been an emphasis on religious and laity collaborating together. It seemed inappropriate, therefore, to start researching a new programme without first taking into consideration the extent to which the Josephite ethos was already understood and being maintained at St George's. As a consequence the agreed research question was established as: 'To what extent is the Catholic, Christian, Josephite ethos being maintained at St George's College today?'

The Methodology

It is beyond the scope of this study to justify in depth the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning its chosen research methodology. Nevertheless the study has sought to avoid the practice of 'methodolatry' that occurs when research questions are fitted into a pre-selected research method instead of putting the questions first (Punch 2005:20, Holliday 2002:22).

In seeking to answer the agreed research question, the original intention was to employ a small scale quantitative methodology involving written questionnaires. However, while such questionnaires have considerable merit in their ability to sample a greater number of people, doubts were raised about individual responses reflecting aspirations for the ethos rather than its reality. In addition, questionnaires do not naturally lend themselves to the in-depth answer the research question is seeking, even when open-ended questions are used. More positively, the findings of quantitative methodologies are achieved independently of researchers who remain neutral and detached from the situation (Wellington 2000:18). Furthermore, unlike most quantitative surveys of this kind, a high level of response could have been expected from the questionnaires as this study enjoyed the unequivocal support of the Headteacher and the staff. However, having considered all these points, it was decided, on balance, to reject the quantitative approach involving written questionnaires and adopt a more qualitative methodology.

In deciding to use a qualitative approach, consideration was initially given to an ethnographic survey often used by researchers studying and interpreting culture and patterns of behaviour (Descombe 2003:86-7). Its advantages include a focus on what people do and say as well as rituals and myths (Creswell 1998:59). However, the timeframe for the study precluded the necessary long term observation.

In the end it was decided to adopt an interpretive, phenomenological qualitative methodology as the research question sought to analyse the detailed views of the interviewees (Creswell 1998:15). The advantages of this methodology include adaptability and the ability to develop and clarify answers otherwise not possible in written responses to a questionnaire (Bell: 1999:135). In choosing an interview-based method, it is recognised there is a danger of anecdotalism, and a lack of objectivity as researchers can bring to the investigation their own pre-conceptions and value systems. A more serious concern was that the validity of the final outcome would only be based on a small representative sample (Grix 2004:121). Notwithstanding these concerns, it was decided that this methodology offered the best compromise solution for the study especially given the time constraints of the study.

Researchers using a qualitative approach have the option of three styles of interviews; unstructured, semi-structured and structured. Each of these have strengths and weaknesses. While open-ended unstructured interviews offer the greatest flexibility, their outcomes can be more difficult to analyse. Furthermore the researcher needs considerable skill and training to conduct these interviews

(Punch 2005:172). Structured interviews provide an easier framework for analysis but the interview process is less flexible, being totally controlled by the interviewer's predetermined agenda (Wellington 2000:75). Semi-structured interviews start with a number of specific questions but offer a degree of flexibility that allows unexpected responses to be pursued during the course of the interview. For the purposes of this study, it was decided semi-structured interviews offered the best approach.

Two pilot studies ensured the final eleven interview questions were clear and effective in elucidating meaningful answers.⁶² The opening question was deliberately framed to be non-threatening and easily answered. Question two sought to establish whether the College was an inward or outward looking school community. Questions three, four and six were included because of van Crombrughe's insistence on the importance of religion and adaptability in education. All the other questions sought to establish the level of understanding about school ethos, either generally or specifically for St George's. These questions were explicitly framed to pick up incongruence between stated ethos

⁶² The eleven questions of the semi-structured interviews:

1. What do you perceive to be the main strengths of St George's College?
2. What links are you aware of between St George's College and the wider community?
3. Are you aware of any ways in which the College helps with the Christian development/formation of the staff?
4. Are you aware of any ways in which the College helps with the Christian development/formation of the pupils?
5. If you had to describe the general ethos of St George's College what aspects of this ethos would you wish to highlight?
6. How well do you think the school has adapted to change since 1992? Can you give examples?
7. What do you understand by the term 'school ethos'?
8. In your opinion, are any of the following used by the school to pass on the school ethos at St George's?

Staff Induction	Yes	No	Occasionally
Staff Meetings	Yes	No	Occasionally
School Liturgies	Yes	No	Occasionally
School Assemblies	Yes	No	Occasionally
9. What do you like to see as the over-all priorities of St George's College Senior School during the next five years?
10. Who do you believe is responsible for maintaining the ethos of the College?
11. Are there any final comments you would like to make about the ethos of the College?

and praxis. For example, question nine sought to find out if the perceived (financial) priorities of the school sat comfortably with the Josephite ethos while question ten tried to ascertain if staff accepted a corporate responsibility for maintaining the school's ethos.

As the research methodology involved interviewing staff at St George's, clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee at St Mary's University College, Twickenham and the Headteacher of St George's College. The study has fully complied with all the guidelines of the Ethics Committee pertaining to the research project. These include the information sheets, consent forms, guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality as well as the secure storage and disposal of data.

Choosing people to participate in research is ethically problematic (Busher 2002:78) and clear criteria are needed. Furthermore, given the time constraints of the dissertation, it was necessary to limit the interview process to a small but purposeful sample comprising six members of staff.⁶³ To guarantee a balanced but representative cross-section of staff, the following criteria were chosen for the selection of the interviewees:

1. a member of the Senior Management Team;
2. a member of the School Chaplaincy Department;
3. the Head of a major Academic Department;
4. a recently appointed member of staff;
5. a member of the Religious Education Department;
6. a member of the support staff.

⁶³ The decision to limit the sample size to six people was taken as it was decided that, within the time constrictions and the length of the dissertation, six people would offer acceptable outcome for this small scale research project.

The final group of participants were chosen from among those offering to take part to reflect:

- the demographic balance of the staff;
- the male and female staff ratio;
- the balance between long and short serving members of staff;
- a representative cross-section of curriculum subject areas.

Religious affiliation was not used as a criterion for selection. The six members of staff eventually selected against these criteria were informed and all agreed to take part in the semi-structured interviews.

After the interviews had been transcribed, significant statements about the ethos were extracted, clustered and coded while acknowledging that coding risks de-contextualising the data. Finally an analysis of the significant statements was undertaken to establish if there was a degree of congruence with the Josephite educational ethos. The outcome of this process was then used to answer the research question.

As it is not good practice to rely just on one method of inquiry (Grix 2004:126), a comparison of the outcomes from the interview data was made with the school's recent 2005 Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) Inspection Report,⁶⁴ the

⁶⁴ The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) exists to provide inspection of schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) according to standards and criteria set out in the handbook and agreed with the Department for Education and Science. As such, its prime functions are:

1. to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of standards and quality of education and welfare afforded to pupils by ISC schools;

Governors' recent 2005 Policy Review Document, and the school's Mission Statement⁶⁵ for triangulation purposes in order to enhance the validity of the research findings (Punch 2005:241).⁶⁶

Summary

While the need to articulate the Josephite educational ethos has remained, the original research proposal proved to be inadequate due to its failure to address issues concerning collaboration and inculturation. Further reflection on these issues caused a radical reappraisal of the research question and a consequential shift from a quantitative to a qualitative methodology. Having chosen an interpretative interview method, rather than an ethnographic survey, the questions were piloted and interviewees chosen against strict selection criteria. The interview data was analysed to assess the extent to which the ethos is being maintained.

2. to assure the Secretary of State for Education and Employment that ISC schools meet the requirements for registration as independent schools.

Finally the ISI is operationally independent of the ISC.

⁶⁵ St George's College and its Junior School shared the same Mission Statement:

We are:

- independent Roman Catholic day schools that welcome Christians of other traditions allowing all to grow together in faith and worship.

We seek to:

- promote Christian values within a Roman Catholic context;
- promote our Josephite tradition which encourages a strong sense of family;
- create an environment where all, whatever their strengths and weaknesses, will be equally valued and encouraged to fulfil their aspirations and potential;
- attract able boys and girls to a broadly-based appropriate education in which they will strive for academic excellence and aim for the highest standards in their sporting and extra-curricular activities;
- offer a structured and challenging academic education within a disciplined and supportive environment which will enable pupils to play a responsible role in the shaping of society;
- foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and compassion which will reach out to all our families, Old Georgians, the local community and the wider world.

⁶⁶ In addition comparison was made with the text of the school's prospectus, website (www.st-georges-college.co.uk), and the 2005 staff and pupil handbooks.

Moreover to ensure a greater degree of validity, these results were tested by a basic triangulation. Finally this chapter has shown the study fully complied with all ethical issues and the requirements of the Ethics Committee at St Mary's.

Chapter 4 The Analysis

The first part of the chapter identifies the main findings arising from the six interviews. This is followed by an evaluation of these responses against the five articulated aspects of the Josephite educational ethos. This evaluation is used to answer the agreed research question: ‘To what extent is the Catholic, Christian, Josephite ethos being maintained at St George’s College today?’

The Data

1. The main strengths of St George’s

All the responses to the perceived main strengths of St George’s included at least two of the following four categories: ‘Catholic school’, ‘Josephite ethos’, ‘family/ community’ and ‘staff relationships’.

Table One. The main strengths of the College.

	Catholic School	Josephite Ethos	Family / Community	Staff Relationships
WA02 (see below ⁶⁷)			Yes	Yes
WA03	Yes		Yes	Yes
WA05		Yes	Yes	
WA07	Yes	Yes		
WA08		Yes	Yes	Yes
WA11	Yes		Yes	Yes

⁶⁷ At the beginning of their interviews, each interviewee was allocated a unique code (WA02, WA03, WA05, WA07, WA08, WA11). In the following tables, the responses of the interviewees are grouped according to their unique reference WA02, WA03 etc.

A sense of family was referred to explicitly by five of the six interviewees and implicitly by the sixth who stated:

‘We are a Catholic, Christian and Josephite school. That is our fundamental strength. It underpins everything and we translate it today into the different areas of our school – academic, sporting and cultural’.

Typical of the other five interviewees are the following comments:

- Most definitely the family atmosphere.
- I think it is a very family orientated school.
- The sense of family.
- It is very much a community.
- As a member of staff I feel I belong to St George’s College.
- The relationship between the staff is a particular strength.

Only one interviewee specifically referred to the academic performance of the school as a strength of St George’s.

2. Links with local community

Table 2. Links with the Local Community.

	Local Parishes	Local Schools	SVP/Kennedy Club	Other
WA02	Yes		Yes	Lourdes
WA03		Yes	Yes	Local Industry
WA05		Yes	Yes	
WA07	Yes	Yes	Yes	Lourdes
WA08		Yes	Yes	
WA11		Yes	Yes	Local Sports Clubs

St George's is clearly an outward looking school community with staff and pupils committing themselves to issues of social justice through the St Vincent de Paul Society, the weekly Kennedy Club for vulnerable adults with learning difficulties and with handicapped children in Lourdes. All the interviewees were able to talk about other work undertaken by the College in the local area, including links with two local maintained secondary schools and the 'RE in Primary Schools' programme. Links are also maintained with outside sports clubs and other associations, some of which make use of College facilities. Furthermore, as one interviewee acknowledged: 'St George's is now a significant employer within the local area'. The following two comments were typical of the perceived commitment to the local community.

'I think the fact that the place is alive at the weekends including the chapel speaks volumes for the fact that the school is an integral part of the community'.

and

'During my time here, the College has always been an integral and significant partner in the local community'.

3. Christian formation and development of staff

This was seen very much as a weakness, although all six interviewees thought school liturgies were opportunities for staff Christian formation and development. The overall impression given was one of genuine sadness and regret that not more was being done for the staff coupled with the desire for a greater

commitment by the school to the Christian formation of the staff. For instance, one interviewee was very keen for staff retreats to take place.

Any formation that did take place was largely felt to be by default or accidental. For example, Group tutors going on retreats with their tutees, or prayer meetings organised by the staff themselves on an *ad hoc* basis. As one interviewee commented:

‘If you are talking in terms of a formal structure there is nothing similar to what goes on in a Jesuit school and the sharing of the Ignatian spirit’.

The role of the chaplain, however, was appreciated and the recent introduction of the weekly Wednesday morning Mass welcomed. Three interviewees could remember staff colleagues being received into the Roman Catholic Church at the College. Finally, a number of interviewees commented that recent tragedies at the school had been opportunities for the Christian formation of staff as well as the pupils.

4. Christian formation and development of pupils

This was reasonably positive, with the recognition that the Christian development and formation of the pupils was being helped through:

1. the Religious Education programme.
2. the school liturgies.
3. the retreat programme.
4. the daily prayer that takes place every morning in the tutor group.

There was a clear wish for more to be done for the pupils. For example, two of the interviewees wanted the school to become pro-active in preparing pupils for Confirmation, while recognising the difficulties this might cause in the local parishes.

Several felt in recent years the number of chapel based liturgies had declined and made specific reference to the absence of class-based Masses. One was very keen for the reintroduction of services of reconciliation although recognising the majority of pupils were not Roman Catholic.

It was felt that the pupils were offered good opportunities to live out the demands of their Christian faith through the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Kennedy club, and the Sixth Form trip to Lourdes each Easter as part of the annual Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust. However, while all the Upper Sixth took part in the 'RE in Primary Schools' Programme' in 2005, doubts were raised about the formative value of this programme at a personal level for the Sixth Formers. Finally, there was a consensus that the prayerful recitation of the 'College Prayer' was, in itself, formative for the pupils.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ The following is the text of the College Payer:

O Lord, give us the wisdom to know ourselves, the humility to accept ourselves as we really are, and the courage and independence to defend what we know to be right. Help us to respect the needs of others, being always ready to dedicate our own talents to their service. Give us the strength to suffer the trials and tensions of life with fortitude, and the vision to see through suffering to the peace which lies beyond. May we, by our tolerance, be a constant support to each other, and a source of strength to our families whom we commend to your care. Amen.

5. The general ethos of St George's

The responses were very similar to those for question one and again highlighted the sense of community and family within the school. Others referred to the school's Mission Statement and the values of respect, tolerance, courtesy, and forgiveness. One specifically referred to the need for teachers 'to love their pupils':

'The other thing that comes to mind is the Josephite ideal of love in education.⁶⁹ You know it is an extraordinary statement to make 'to love the children'. I find it quite humbling but that is at the heart of it'.

Another comment summed up much of what the other five expressed:

'Within a week of being here you would realise that you were among people who cared about you'.

Some concern was expressed, however, that the increased size of the school was placing tensions on the sense of family. In addition reference was made to the lack of any indoor space where the whole school could regularly gather together.

6. Adaptation to change

There was almost universal praise for the way the school had successfully adapted to the changes since 1992 especially as one interviewee noted:

'the College was perilously close to extinction in the early nineties'.

⁶⁹ As in §129 of the *Guide Pédagogique*.

Although some had expressed initial anxieties about 'The Move', involving St George's and St Maur's in 2000, these fears were soon overcome. Furthermore, there was common agreement that the incorporation of the girls into the College had been overwhelmingly successful with very healthy relationships existing between boys and girls. St George's was now seen to be a flourishing, vibrant, over-subscribed, fully co-educational school.

However a number of concerns were raised. The relocation of the Junior School was perceived by one interviewee as the separation of the Junior School from the main College family. Other concerns again included the increased size of the school; how the changes are communicated to staff; and the perception of an ever increasing number of demands needing to be squeezed into shorter periods of time.

7. Understanding school ethos

All six interviews offered a clear understanding of what was meant by school ethos and its importance in underpinning the school's culture.

Descriptions of a school's ethos included:

- The way we try to live out what we understand the school to be.
- The guiding principles by which we wish to operate.
- What is special and different about St George's.

8. Passing on the school ethos

Table 3. Passing on the school ethos.

	Induction	Liturgies	Staff Meetings	School Assemblies
WA02	No	Yes	Yes	Occasionally
WA03	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WA05	No	Yes	No	Occasionally
WA07	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WA08	No	Yes	No	Occasionally
WA11	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

All six interviewees agreed school liturgies helped to pass on the school ethos. Apart from this, there was no consensus about staff induction, meetings or assemblies although two interviewees stated all four aspects helped.

9. Priorities for the future

Looking to the future, most interviewees wanted something done to keep the Josephite educational ethos alive. Apart from this, there was little unanimity among the interviewees. Among the diverse opinions expressed were:

- the need to improve communication as this supports relationships.
- the need to continue nurturing the individual.
- the promotion of the well being of all at the school.
- the provision of a wider range of worship experiences.
- a need to continue developing an awareness and service of others.

Reference was made to the increasing number of other Christians being admitted into the school rather than Roman Catholics. Concern was also expressed about a lack of time for reflection and discussion available for the staff.

Comments about the financial priorities of the College tended to relate to its long term financial survival. Only one interviewee expressed any concern about the influence of market forces and league tables and their juxtaposition with the school's underpinning Josephite ethos. No mention was made by any of the interviewees of the need to create a fund to provide bursary support for pupils in the future.⁷⁰

10. Responsibility for maintaining the ethos

Although it was recognised that the Josephites, Governors and Head had the privilege of articulating the ethos and, while the Headmaster was perceived to have the most powerful influence over the inculcation of the school's distinctive ethos, there was a positive acceptance by four interviewees of the staff's responsibility for the maintenance of the school's ethos. One interviewee believed it was the responsibility of the Josephites while another thought it was the role of the Senior Management Team. Despite this there was common agreement that the ethos 'had to be believed in' and, as two members of staff explicitly stated, 'it was what the staff had to buy into while working at the College'.

⁷⁰ This omission is noteworthy especially as the College's Development Committee has been set the goal of raising funds for such bursaries.

However, there was a clear requirement expressed by the interviewees for the need of additional help in understanding Josephite educational ethos. As one interviewee observed:

'I cannot think of one quote from van Crombrughe that runs naturally. I would like quotable quotes that are short, snappy, simple and which capture the information. Expressions such as: 'meeting each one where they are'. We need to put the ideas such as *politesse* and *douceur* into current language. So we need a language that captures those things we hold dear'.

11. Other comments about the ethos of St George's

Only one significant comment was made:

'The totally changed nature of the background of so many of our Catholic children where there is little evidence of their being Catholic. They may define themselves as being Catholic, or practising Christians, but in reality it is extremely limited. That is a challenge'.

The extent to which the Josephite educational ethos is being maintained

The essential attributes of the Josephite educational ethos needing to be recognised in the evaluation process, alongside the interview responses, were already articulated in Part Two of this study.⁷¹

⁷¹ They are: The 'Family Spirit' based on van Crombrughe's experience at *Le Collège St Acheul* as well as being:

1. Holistic but giving priority to the heart and virtue over mind and knowledge.
2. Rooted in religion.
3. Owned by teachers who are 'Instruments of God's mercy'.
4. Characterised by attitudes of *Politesse* and *Douceur*.
5. Adaptable to the needs of the epoch and the children.

The most positive and encouraging outcome of the analysis is that the founding 'Family Spirit' is alive and well at the College; having been explicitly or implicitly identified by those interviewed as the main strength of St George's.⁷² Furthermore the existence of the 'Family Spirit' and its importance to the College was confirmed in the 2005 ISI report:

'The school by its arrangements, very effectively encourages pupils to relate positively to one another, to take responsibility and to participate fully in the school community. The school stresses strongly its corporate family life' (2005:§6.5).

The evidence from the interviews was much less explicit in supporting the holistic value-driven approach to the Josephite educational ethos although this is referred to in the school's Mission Statement, while the ISI report stated:

'The school is committed to providing a broad education, including a good quality extra-curricular programme of games and activities, and to an ethos which promotes Catholic Christian family values' (2005:§1.1).

The religious formation of both staff and pupils is an area in need of further development. There is, however, a commitment to the pupils' retreat programme and issues of social concern and justice as shown by the involvement with the 'RE in Schools' programme, the SVP, Kennedy Club and the annual trip to Lourdes each Easter.

⁷² The Governors' recent Policy Statement has given rise to some concern about the continuing integrity of the family spirit that is under pressure from market forces and league tables. This Policy Statement was issued on 21 June 2005. Although recognising that the Mission Statement of the College, that is about to be reviewed, is 'central to the mission and the ethos of the Schools' and while there is 'no intention to depart from these core values', the remainder of the document does not reflect the Josephite Family Ethos of the school. Indeed there is a key policy change that will see the very weakest students at the Junior School being asked to leave at the end of Year 2 if where there is 'no realistic expectation of reaching the College entrance standards'. On the other hand, there is a commitment to establish 'effective and then on-going links with the entire Georgian family, mostly alumni'.

There is also evidence of close links with local community and the ISI report corroborated this: 'Links with the local community are very good' (2005: §1.17).

While the expression 'instruments of God's mercy' was not used by any of the interviewees, there was some awareness typified by the wish 'to go on nurturing the pupils'. The ISI report also noted that:

'Pupils are well known by teachers and tutors, and enjoy very good relationships with them, based on mutual respect and trust' (2005:§1.2).

A very encouraging outcome was the recognition by some of the staff of *Douceur* and *Politesse* during the interviews, despite difficulties in translating their meaning.

Again to quote the ISI report:

'[Pupils] show courtesy to each other and to the adults in the classrooms, in the dining area, and in the playgrounds. The respectful and considerate use of the premises demonstrates the school's ethos of family togetherness very well' (2005:§4.8).

Another aspect of the Josephite ethos which enjoyed a positive outcome was the way the College had adapted to meet new needs especially since 1992. This was very favourably commented on by the interviewees while the ISI report noted the 'successful merger with the neighbouring Catholic girls' school' (2005:§7.1).

Finally, the ISI report acknowledges the lay leadership of St George's is 'conserving the distinctive Roman Catholic and Josephite ethos and aims' (2005:§3.6).

It is possible, therefore, to conclude there is enough empirical evidence, taken from the interviews and the ISI inspection report, to suggest that the Josephite educational ethos is being maintained to a much greater extent than might have been expected given the lack of any explicit and direct inculcating of the ethos during the last ten or so years. The 'Family Spirit' and the ability to be adaptable come across strongly. Other areas, however, need to be worked on and developed, especially the Catholic, Christian formation of the staff and pupils.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

For most of its history, St George's has benefited from the presence of a large Josephite Community. Between the 1960s and 1990s, there was a marked decline in the number of Josephites. The College has now entered a third phase. There are no longer any Josephites working full time at the school, which is now under lay management and governance albeit with three Josephite governors. Furthermore, the number of longer serving members of staff, who lived the school's Josephite ethos when members of the Josephite Community occupied key leadership positions in the school, is also declining. As a consequence, the extent to which contemporary staff understand and are receptive to the Josephite educational ethos will be crucial for its future at St George's. This is because the future maintenance of its ethos is no longer going to rest with the Josephites but with the staff. This also has implications for the recruitment of future staff.

The study has emphasised the importance of a school's ethos. As Brick asserts, 'a school is only as good as its ethos'. In addition, it has been shown how important it is for the staff to own and support a school's underpinning ethos. The outcomes of the interviews indicate that there is a genuine wish to do this at St George's. On the other hand, there are a number of challenges to this ethos including those of market forces.

While staff relations are very good, there was little evidence of any collaborative ministry being undertaken. Collaboration was identified as an important issue in this study given the contemporary *communio* ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic

Church to which St George's, as a Catholic School, should be witnessing. Although a collaborative ministry has been recognised by the Josephites as the way forward in establishing their new relationship with St George's, following its handover to lay governance and management, there remains considerable work to be undertaken in this area.

The study has established the specific *raison d'être* of Josephite schools as the 'evangelisation and education' of Catholic Christians who will be future leaders. The education offered in Josephite schools must be rooted in religion and holistic so each pupil has every chance of becoming a true, committed Christian (*L'honnête homme et parfait Chrétien*). This style of education favours values formation over acquisition of knowledge. Furthermore Josephite schools are supported by a specific, although not unique, school ethos that comprises a distinctive 'family spirit' as well as *Douceur*, *Politesse* and adaptability with members of staff being 'instruments of God's mercy' towards each other and the pupils.

The outcome of the qualitative research established the Catholic, Christian, Josephite ethos is being maintained at St George's College today to a much greater extent than might have been expected. This is especially true regarding 'family spirit'. However, the interviews indicated the staff would welcome a more formal opportunities, organised by the school, to develop their own personal Christian formation as well as their knowledge and understanding of the Josephite educational ethos.

The authenticity and the academic rigour of the research outcomes of this study would have been enhanced by additional questions, including one dealing with leadership within the school, as well as longer interview times. In particular, concerns can be legitimately raised over the limited number of interviewees and their ability to be an objective, representative sample of the much larger school community. However, it has been possible to corroborate some of the findings of the interviews using the 2005 ISI inspection report that preceded the interviews.

As a result of the interviews, the study offers four recommendations:

1. The dissemination of information about Constant van Crombrugghe, the Josephites, and the underpinning ethos of St George's to all members of the extended Georgian family, governors, staff, pupils, parents and former pupils, in an appropriate style and language.
2. The provision of an ongoing formation for staff about the ethos of St George's College as a Catholic, Christian, Josephite school.
3. The school should offer more formal opportunities for staff to develop their Christian formation.
4. This study is used in the process of reviewing the school's Mission statement that is about to be undertaken.

It is recognised there are time and cost factors associated with these recommendations but they do address issues that are at the very core of St George's College as a Catholic, Christian and Josephite school. In particular, the imminent review of the school's Mission Statement will be critical as it offers an opportunity for all staff to be involved and collaborate in its re-articulation.

Moreover, this involvement is absolutely essential if the Mission Statement and the underpinning Josephite ethos are going to be owned and maintained by the staff in the future.

There are grounds for considerable optimism that three of the four recommendations will be acted upon in the immediate future. However, the commitment to a more formal ongoing Christian formation of the staff will need a longer lead time to ensure it is carefully planned and presented given the ecumenical background of the staff. A process of induction for new staff about the Josephite educational ethos is already underway. Furthermore, the Josephites have agreed to undertake the process of disseminating information about their tradition in a more 'person-friendly' manner. Finally, confirmation has been offered by the Head of St George's that the review of the Mission Statement will involve the whole staff.

Two potential research projects emerge from this study. One is to identify current good practice in schools similar to St George's for the handing on of a school's ethos. The other is the evaluation of the provision St George's makes for 'developing leadership potential' among its pupils and staff. This is, after all, one of the *raisons d'être* of all Josephite schools.

Finally, while recognising the limitations of the research methodology, the academic value of this study lies in its re-articulation of Josephite educational ethos of St George's, within its specific historical context, and the confirmation that this ethos is still being maintained among the staff at St George's.

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Word Count = 10,537 words.