

The Sacred Heart of Jesus

What does that even mean?

- Who are we?
- Jules Chevalier

Who are we?

Before we take a walk on the wild-side of being a missionary in the NT, let's take a quick look at MSC the Catholic order.

The most famous battle-cry at MSC schools is: *Huu-waa, Huu-waa- Huu-waa We? We are the boys from MSC!*

So what is MSC an acronym for? The order's English name is *Missionaries of the Sacred Heart* - which is 2 out of 3 - so what's the C-word?

Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis (Latin)

As the name implies, MSC, at its *Cordis*, is a missionary organization. When you talk about religious zeal - it doesn't get any zealier than MSC.

The order was founded in France by eccentric priest, Jules Chevalier in 1855. In researching this, i read an excellent (though flawed, imo - will explain as we go along) thesis by *Professional Historian at Osbaldwick Consultants*, Wendy Beresford-Maning - have reffed it a few times already. It's a slanted version the MSC's adventures in the NT, titled, *For the Love of God*. It's a valuable resource, in that it collates a substantial collection of primary resources, the *best kind*. She adds to this with her own interviews with elderly key-participants in the MSC order in Australia. This for example:

*Very few of the MSCs, in fact, seem to be particularly aware of Chevalier's charism. .. During a conversation with the Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral, Darwin, Father John Kelliher MSC, and the current Northern Territory MSC Superior, **Father Malcom Fyfe**, both commented that they were **not surprised** that there was not much sense of connection to the founder since, even within the order, there had been little emphasis on this or other aspects of MSC history or theological orientation during the time that Leary, Merritt and Burke (1950's -'80's) would have been seminarians. p100*

Right, so Aussie MSC had broken free - *doin it for themselves*... That's fine ... if you're a missionary in the farthest flung corners of the known earth, you are the expert, on the spot. It's all DIY. No-one's there watching over you. Who gives a shit about Jules Chevalier in France?

Reading Fyfe & Kelliher's frank admission, at first i thought, *so what?* It's a simple statement of fact: *Stuff France, we're Aussies - we'll do it Aussie-style*

Later though, after reading on, i wondered whether Fyfe was commenting in opprobrium - a crafted piece of MSC-speak re Leary, Merrit, Burke. Especially Leary.

There was historical tension between them - clear battle-lines:

Fyfe & O'Loughlin from HQ on one side ...

... the on-site Missionaries on the other side

Was Fyfe trying to pull up the draw-bridge on a dark-chapter of MSC's history ...? Explain it as a *straying from the path* ... that we've all *moved on* from? That period - Leary especially - is a good yarn - sounds like he may have gone a bit Kurtz-esque up on Daly River. Father Caruana's report of being propositioned by a group of young girls at there - *Daly River Mission* - that was Leary's baby - as was Port Keats. Is this the Sacred Heart of Darkness...? I don't know, yet. But as part of understanding i'm keeping alive the possibility that Fyfe trying to politely distance MSC from that?

Or: Had MSC-Aus-management itself, unlinked from their founder? Not only some rogue missionaries operating on the fringes of society - the whole Aussie MSC Order had disconnected from its roots ... ? Fyfe does say: *even within the order, there had been little emphasis* (on Chevalier).

Unmoored or not, this is a tale about MSC, so as the spiritual source of the order, Jules Chevalier, he's gotta be in it. Let's give him some love ... even if MSC Australia did lose touch ...

(teaser: The Chevalier page is funny, imo. Not my wit, unfortunately, but as told by MSC)

Jules Chevalier

The Good News: MSC re-connected with their founder! Their website now provides great info on Jules Chevalier. The setting is the mid 1850's in France. Let's take a look ...

MSC website: *As a priest, Jules first served as curate in three different parishes in quick succession.*

Hell! Hope Jules wasn't being bounced around like ... Risdale-style ...

MSC: *At the age of thirty (same age as Jesus) he was **sent to Issoudun**, which was regarded as the most dechristianised town in the whole region.*

Cool. You don't get to pick & choose as a missionary priest, btw. You go where you're told. History doesn't make it clear if Jules was sent to Issoudun as a punishment or: they thought if anyone can re-christianize those Issoudun heathens - it's Jules. (Song idea: Hey Jules ... don't make it bad ...)

The other curate in the parish was Fr Emile Maugenest, one of a small group of his companions in the seminary who had shared Chevalier's vision.

For context, Catholicism was, at that time, a large powerful group. Not that they didn't have internal, rival Christian orgs to deal with.

*At Issoudun the two priests became determined to found a religious congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. However, aware that they **could be deluding themselves** they wanted a clear sign that this was what God wanted.*

Ok heavy. Points for acknowledging this could be a delusional thing - how did ...?

Over a period of nine days, they prayed asking Our Lady to intercede for them in having God provide this sign.

As you would, i guess, if you're super-religious expialidocious spectrum ... Then ... lo n behold:

The following morning one of the parishioners called at the presbytery with a letter announcing a gift of **20,000 francs** from an **anonymous donor**.

Wow! Ask & you shall receive!

The donor's preference was for a house of missionaries to be established in the area with the approval of the Archbishop.

So serendipitous!

The Archbishop agreed as long as they had some means of financial independence and support.

Shit - there's always a catch ...

*Another period of prayer resulted in **another anonymous benefactor** promising to give an annual gift of 1,000 francs which was enough for both of them to live on.*

Man, that prayer shit really pays off ... !

They now had the sign and the means to begin the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

There you have it: the secret sign from God at the heart of the sacred heart ... was ... 20, 000 francs.

With the original 20,000 francs the two priests purchased a rundown vineyard with a sound house and tumbled-down barn in Issoudun. The house became their first community house and the barn was renovated as the first chapel, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Such a nice story ... fully-restored in MSC internet puff-piece-speak.

This was in 1855. From these simple beginnings has come a whole family of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - priests, brothers, sisters and lay associates.

Great. One big happy family! Fathers, brothers, sisters, all without sex, supposedly - or is that what you mean by lay-associates?

*Later, because of **national tensions in colonial areas** where missionaries worked, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart were founded by **Fr** Hubert Linckens MSC with the approval of Jules Chevalier,*

Lot going on in that sentence. Why was there an order of women founded because of colonialism tensions? Were the priests kicked out?

*Within **twenty-five years** of their small beginnings, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart had spread in Europe and to North America. Before his death, Fr Jules Chevalier was to see his 'family' working in Central and South America, the Philippines, Australia and the Pacific Islands. Their **concern was global** .. the fulfilment of a dream that Fr. Chevalier already had as a seminarian.*

Nice dream. Probably didn't envisage the NT Reports finding that that dream resulted in a culture whereby: *sexual abuse of Aboriginal children is **common**, widespread and **grossly** under-reported .. **abuse is rife***

The spirit of Jules Chevalier/MSc?

1. **The Blessed Virgin:** Strong-to-creepy link to Our Mother-figure ... inspiring Celibacy. Doubles as an objectification of women.

2. **The Lord speaks in mysterious ways** ... but sometimes it's obvious ways too - like money
3. **Dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus:** Assuming it's not the physical organ, i'm guessing the innate goodness of Jesus - who identified with the downtrodden, uplifted them ... by speaking truth-to-power ... arguing with the experts in the street ...
4. **Most unchristianized places on earth:** No challenge is too great
5. **Global mind-control:** One God, one culture - to rule them all.