

FR. CHAMINADE SCULPTURE DEDICATION

Reflections by sculptor Joseph Aspell

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Saint Louis Schools / Chaminade University

Honolulu, Hawaii

You have heard that this statue is about Fr. Chaminade.

And I would say Yes.

It is not the traditional portrait of him as the older man, his works flourishing.

It is of another moment in his life.

He is a younger man living in uncertain times, facing an uncharted future, at the moment when he is discovering what he is going to dedicate his life to.

It depicts him returning from exile to his beloved France devastated by revolution and war. Everything has to be rebuilt from scratch. He has nothing to lean on except his vision — and he doesn't know how to make it happen. But it starts to take shape as he meets people along the way. Together they come to focus on education for people; first in the Bordeaux region of France, then creating innovative schools throughout the whole of the country, then Europe - and beyond. Here.

He created the Marianists: communities of priest, working brothers, and teaching brothers, all working together and living together as equals.

He wears the garments of the priest; he holds a book of the teacher; and like you with your school back pack, he travels with his satchel - representing all the skilled and practical things of the working brother.

You may think this is a statue about Fr. Chaminade.

And I would say No.

This statue is about You.

You too, live in uncertain times. An uncharted future lies before you. This statue shows you how to stride into your future with confidence, courage - and trust.

The book in your hand is all the wisdom and knowledge that your parents and teachers have lovingly given to you.

The satchel holds all the natural and practical gifts, skills and interests that each of you has: your love of music, your love of running or swimming, your love of exploring and collecting things, be they stamps, shells or stars.

Remember too, the statue's stretched-out hand. It shows you that there is *more* than is found in the book or the satchel: it is the person you are becoming as you live your life; meeting people along the way – people who will help you; others you will help. And know that God's love and mercy accompany you all along the way.

I hope it doesn't rain now. I hope this was short.