

**Marianist Educational Praxis: Institutions,
Agents and Recipients.**

Establishing a Marianist Educational Culture

Stephen M. Glodek, SM



MARIANIST EDUCATION
HERITAGE AND FUTURE

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Volume 5



MARIANIST EDUCATION
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PREFACE

The publication which we present here forms a part of the collection of *MARIANIST EDUCATION: HERITAGE AND FUTURE*, a series of essays on Marianist education that came out of a project which began to take shape, four years ago, under the leadership of the Assistant General for education of that time.

We Marianist religious have been creating educational works since our very origins, almost two centuries ago. Today we continue all over the world to dedicate the best of our human and material resources to education. The practical implementations are accompanied, just as we have always done, by reflection about the task accomplished, the ways of responding creatively to novel and unforeseen situations and the means for transmission of our experience and wisdom to new generations of educators.

In this way, the Marianist educational tradition has been enriched over the years, nourished by the reflection, competence

and creativity of those who carry on the initial commitment. The Marianist educators – at the beginning all were Marianists and today almost all are laity – have known how to maintain an on-going dialogue with their environs so that their formational goals might be able to continue being incarnated in each human situation.

Again today, current circumstances demand our attention. The internal conditions of the Society of Mary and of our own establishments need our renewed planning. The growing development of Marianist works in new countries and cultures, along with the consequent need to transmit to them an up-to-date Marianist pedagogy, as well as the majority presence of lay persons in almost all the positions of responsibility, are realities that mark the way forward in Marianist education.

Given these considerations, the idea arose to undertake the project of *Marianist Education: Heritage and Future*. The desire to deepen and to develop the content of the document on our educational characteristics impelled us to create something new. The growing interest in knowing our charism and the current contributions of the educational sciences have inspired and oriented our efforts. The new circumstances in which the youth and families of the societies where we are present urge us along in this task.

The books which form the collection are intended to respond to these needs. They are the result of a process of study, re-

flection and dialogue, and are meant to offer guidelines for a Marianist education capable of inspiring individuals and of transforming society.

The target readerships are the many diverse groups of men and women interested in Marianist education: *Marianist religious* currently dedicated to education, both those who are now preparing themselves for it and those who have consecrated their entire lives to it; *lay persons* who direct, animate and teach in a Marianist institution, so that they can take on an educational project that might give meaning to their efforts and fill them with enthusiasm; *pastoral workers and other educators*, so that they might accomplish their task with awareness of the principles and motivations which inspire Marianist works; *those who animate and govern* Marianist life according to diverse levels of responsibility; *parents of the students*, who also begin a process of formation when their children enter an educational institution. The project is also directed to *alumni*, to *the society* in which we are present and to all those interested in education. And, of course, also to local churches, so that they might understand more deeply what the Marianist educational works intend to do.

The ultimate goal, of course, is to better serve the *children and young people* who come to our educational institutions, and who are the principal addressees of all our efforts.

The purpose of this whole project is to offer a good instrument for promoting formation, reflection and dia-

logue in different Marianist surroundings. It can serve, at the same time, as a point of reference and of inspiration for local educational projects. For that reason it includes theoretical reflections, as well as more concrete proposals. The *Characteristics of Marianist Education* are thus framed in a comprehensive study that intends to be thorough and rigorous, but yet accessible.

The ensemble of the work consists of various sections, each of which is developed in an independent publication. The purpose of the first section, *Charism and Educational Mission*, is to show how the Society of Mary's dedication to education is closely related to its very identity. In the section on *Educational Principles* we intend to plumb the depths of the foundations of Marianist education with the contributions of anthropology and theology, showing the vision of society, of the world and of the person which we try to form and of the educational institution where the work is carried out. The third topic addressed is the *Context*, given that the Marianist institutions must take account of, along with general principles, the needs, expectations and conditions proper to each locale, as well as of the advances of the pedagogical sciences and new technologies. The fourth section treats the *Identity* of Marianist education, the heir of a rich tradition with distinctive traits that respond to the principles studied in the preceding chapters. The fifth section deals with the *Educational Activity* which is developed in diverse institutions and considers some agents and specific addressees. The sixth theme refers to *Animation and Leadership* of the

Marianist educational works, since the accomplishment of its objectives depends in great part upon those who bear the burdens of leadership responsibility.

Under the title of *New Education in New Scenarios*, we intend to bring together in the seventh section the contributions of countries or continents more culturally distant from the Western environment in which Marianist education was born, or where there is as yet less of a tradition. The elaboration of the last section, *A Project Open to the Future*, is foreseen for later. In it we will try to develop what are for us today, as the fruit of a *creative fidelity*, the Mission and the Vision of a Marianist education that looks toward the future.

To carry this whole project forward we have enjoyed the collaboration of a very valuable team. Among the authors are religious and lay persons, men and women, immediately engaged in the Marianist educational mission or fulfilling diverse responsibilities in this field. All of them know well the Marianist educational praxis and its history. The majority have been teachers, directors, department heads, researchers in pedagogical sciences or coordinators of the Marianist mission in their respective countries.

The book you now have in your hands is, therefore, the fifth of the collection. It carries the title: *Marianist Educational Praxis: Institutions, Agents and Recipients (Establishing a Marianist Educational Culture)*. It explains how the Marianist educational principles are incarnated in concrete actions

and institutions: the schools, as the principal locales, the universities, the non-formal educational centers and other works. In each of these institutions we try to create an authentic *educational community* in which are involved different categories of persons. All of them are, together, both agents and recipients of education.

The author of this volume is Stephen M. Glodek, an American Marianist religious. A specialist in English, psychology and theology, he is very knowledgeable about Marianist education. He has held various offices in his own country. He was a provincial superior for many years, first of the Province of New York and later of the Marianist Province of the United States. He is currently the Director of the *Office of Formation for Mission* in his Province. We sincerely appreciate the work he has accomplished, its quality and precision, as well as the time that he has dedicated to it. We are also grateful to those who have shared with him in the composition of the text by contributing their suggestions and comments.

At the end we have added some questions that might be useful, for those interested, for reflection and discussion. They are presented as suggestions for a possible group dialogue or for personal reflection, so as to apply the content of the text to the concrete reality of each educational center – be it a school, a university or a work of non-formal education.

Marianist education will have a future if we are capable of responding to the changes of time and place, but remaining

faithful to the original insights. New adaptations will be needed, new pathways explored, but in this way the tradition will be enriched even more, and our educational project will continue to fulfill, now and in the future, a quality and relevant role. And so, it will be able to continue *to give life and life in abundance*.

Essodomna Maximin Magnan, SM
Assistant General for Education
May 2014

INTRODUCTION

If we were to search for a maxim, a guiding principle, from our tradition that speaks to the goal that Marianist Education proposes to those who embrace it, I believe it can be found in the following quotation:

The multiplication of Christians is brought about less by the use of certain pedagogic procedures than by the presence of a religious atmosphere in the school. Religion is not taught; it is communicated. Religion is instilled more deeply in the spirits and in the hearts of the students through the atmosphere that permeates the school than through teaching.¹

¹ This quote is attributed to Blessed Chaminade. It is listed in *La Educación Marianista, Antología de Textos*, Luis Maria Lizarraga, SM (Servicio de Publicaciones Marianistas (SPM), Madrid, Diciembre, 1995), p.16, number 1.17; translated into English by Michael Galvin, SM, 1998.

Marianists attempt to create an atmosphere in their educational work, both formal and non-formal, that allows the Gospel to be taught and practiced. This necessarily encompasses all aspects of the educational experience and all the persons who interact both directly and indirectly with the students in that experience. All these educational agents participate in and help to create a culture that at its best radiates the Gospel of Jesus Christ and attracts people to its message. The idea of *culture* and the way that word and experience will be used throughout this work, needs some explanation.

A working definition of culture

There are entire sections of libraries filled with books about culture, and there are volumes written about different perspectives and definitions of *culture*. Defining culture becomes even more complicated when we begin to speak about *institutional culture*, that is, the culture of a group of people who are bound together because of their work and commitment to a particular institution, for example, a school. To develop a synthesis of the sociological and anthropological research would take us far afield from the focus of this work.

I use the word culture throughout this exposition to denote what Blessed William Joseph understood as *atmosphere* or *milieu*. The richness of this word conjures images of *the air we breathe*, and *all that surrounds us in a particular place*, and *how people relate and respond in that place*. Culture can then be understood for our purposes as the learned and shared values,

beliefs and attitudes that shape and influence both perception and behavior.

Culture finds expression in language, art, thought, storytelling, spirituality and social activity and interaction. These expressions of culture are largely internalized and “taken for granted,” but they form the real group structures by which a person enters, interacts and is formed by the group or institution.

Throughout this work, when I speak about building a Marianist educational culture, I will be speaking about a conscious appropriation of, and instruction in, all these elements that contribute to a Marianist atmosphere in an educational institution. Formerly this appropriation and instruction happened through a process of *osmosis* because there were persons in the institution who themselves had been solidly formed in that culture. And the transmission of culture was accomplished often through example. Today we have to look to a more structured program to introduce and form people in the Marianist culture. Providing a blueprint for building the Marianist educational culture is the goal to which this work aspires.

All Marianist Apostolic Activity Is Education

Within the charismatic understanding of the Founder, all Marianist apostolic activity is education; teaching was to be one of the means of educating. The *Constitutions of 1839*, written by Blessed William Joseph states this clearly:

Under this title [education] are included all the means by which religion can be inculcated into the mind and heart of men.²

The Society of Mary teaches [instructs] only in order to raise souls in a Christian manner; that is why we have placed all works of teaching [instruction] under the title of Christian education; care should be taken never to change this.³

While it is understood that all Marianist apostolic activity, whether the animation of lay communities, parishes, social work, direct service to the poor, or ministries of peace, justice and the integrity of creation, are fundamentally educational, this work will focus on Marianist ministry, both formal and non-formal, in institutions focused on direct instruction of children and young adults.

Formal/Non-formal Education

In General Chapters of the Society of Mary and in its General Office of Education, terminology has arisen in recent years that distinguishes between *formal* and *non-formal* educational programs. The term *formal education* includes schools that exist within a country's established educational system (civil and Church) and usually institutionally-designated according to

² *The Constitutions of the Society of Mary, 1839*, trans. by Herbert G. Kramer (Honolulu, Hawaii: Marianist Province of the Pacific, 1967), article 251, 30.

³ *Ibid.*, article 256, 31.

the age of the students as primary, secondary and university. The term *non-formal education* refers to schooling provided by Marianists outside these established systems often focusing on the urban and rural poor and the teaching of marketable skills or preparation of street children and the abandoned poor for entrance into a country's established school systems.

Characteristics of Marianist Education

In response to a call from the Society of Mary's General Chapter of 1991 to rearticulate the common elements of the Marianist educational tradition, Thomas Giardino, SM, then Assistant General for Education, published in 1996, *The Characteristics of Marianist Education*. Under Brother Giardino's leadership an international effort of research and consultation resulted in a five-point synthesis that guides many Marianist educational efforts and articulations to our day:

- Marianists educate for formation in faith
- Marianists provide an integral, quality education
- Marianists educate in family spirit
- Marianists educate for service, justice, and peace
- Marianists educate for adaptation and change

These characteristics have been developed in great depth over the years by many Marianists in many different cultural and educational settings. I mention them in this introduction because they articulate the foundation for

many of the formational efforts that will be described in the following chapters.

Caveat

This work is being written by a Marianist most familiar with the educational system of the United States. The Marianist Province of the United States at its inception included the international educational efforts of Eastern Africa, India, Korea, Mexico and the Philippines. The civil and Church educational complexities of other countries of the Society have not been the experience of the author, although the general formational principles of what is suggested here, I believe, are applicable to all Marianist educational endeavors.

1 | THE INTERNATIONAL SCOPE OF MARIANIST EDUCATION

If we were to do an accounting of the persons who are collaborators or directly influenced by Marianist educational efforts in formal and non-formal ministries throughout the world, the numbers might surprise you. Based on 2011 statistics from the General Office of Education of the Society of Mary in Rome, almost 104,000 students are enrolled in Marianist programs of education worldwide. The 350 members of the Society of Mary involved in these works collaborate with approximately 1750 administrators and 6600 faculty members. To these numbers must be added more than forty centers of non-formal education, mostly in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Approximately 6,000 persons attend these centers and there are more than fifty Marianists working in them. Twenty-five countries are blessed with these Marianist educational efforts. These efforts are in addition to, of course, the educational ministries and outreach of Marianist parishes, retreat centers, social service agencies, and various individual ministries.

Publishing

A particular effort which began in Spain has had widespread international influence in the entire realm of Catholic edu-

cation, i.e., the publication of textbooks and other educational materials. As early as 1918, Spanish Marianists grew dissatisfied with the quality and content of the textbooks they were using in their schools and decided to begin to publish their own. Headquartered now in Madrid the Grupo SM, as it is called has three locations in Spain employing approximately 766 persons. About fifteen members of the Society are directly involved in the administration of Grupo SM and its social justice outreach and professional training foundation, La Fundacion Santa Maria. The Foundation, from the profits of the publishing houses, supports the training of teachers and specific programs in social justice awareness.

In 1987, Grupo SM moved outside of Spain to Chile. Since then it has established publishing houses also in Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, employing about 1200 persons in these eight countries. They account for a significant percentage of Catholic textbooks used in the school systems of these countries in the Americas and the Caribbean. In the last couple of years, there has been discussion between Grupo SM and the University of Dayton in Ohio regarding collaboration between these two entities. Together, they have created a brand of educational materials for learning English (ELT). In addition, the Marianist Province of the USA participates in the investments of Grupo SM in Puerto Rico.

Educating Persons who are Poor through Non-formal Education

In poorer countries of the world and in poorer areas of developed countries, Marianists often began their educational ministries with elementary and secondary education with which they were familiar. The needs of the people soon indicated that other forms of education were urgently needed. And so, *reading the signs of the times*, some Marianists ventured into what we have termed *non-formal education*. Persons who are poor often need basic skills in order to begin to raise themselves and their families from the stranglehold of generations of poverty. Women, children of the streets, and children orphaned by AIDS were particularly vulnerable to the ravages of dire poverty. Efforts to teach marketable skills: sewing, catering, hair-dressing, carpentry, agriculture, and the like, in countries like Kenya, Malawi, India, Peru, Togo, and other places have been extraordinarily successful. Programs like IMANI, REDS, MIRACLE and others have moved countless individuals and families towards being able to sustain family life, and consequently, to be more open to evangelization.

In developed countries, Marianists have been sensitized to recognize places of poverty and marginalized persons. Efforts in countries like France and the United States have been made to locate religious communities in these poor areas as witnesses to solidarity. Ministries have been encouraged that reach out to new immigrants in these countries and the marginalized. Places like St. John's Home in New York which

dealt with troubled urban youth since 1930, gave witness to our efforts to educate the poor in the broadest sense of the word *educate*.

The goal of all Marianist efforts in non-formal education has been to relieve persons who are poor from anxiety about the basic necessities of life so that they might begin to hear the message of the Gospel. The significant and unique contribution of Marianist educational institutions toward education of persons who are poor and systemic change of unjust structures will be covered in the chapter on “Why Marianist Educational Institutions?”

United Nations Office

Through the urgings of the past several General Chapters of the Society of Mary, Marianists have been encouraged to work at systemic change of ingrained cultural patterns that are perceived as unjust and which perpetuate poverty. It is never enough to merely provide skill training for persons who are poor. It is incumbent on us to educate them to challenge and change the systems that keep them poor.

In a bold and prophetic move some years ago, the Society of Mary under the joint sponsorship of the General Administration and the Province of the United States began a non-governmental office (NGO) at the United Nations in New York. This Office has involved Marianists, both professed and lay, throughout the world, in efforts to influence and promote the world-wide

policies and actions of the United Nations that encourage systemic change where desirable.

In all Marianist educational efforts, we attempt to promote openness to the Gospel message of transformation and to produce persons capable of leadership and service. We look now at what that person, one who has experienced Marianist education might look like.

2 | PROFILE OF A MARIANIST- EDUCATED PERSON⁴

By developing a Marianist educational culture through implementing the *Characteristics of Marianist Education*, we hope that students leaving our educational apostolates will be whole persons, steeped in faith and capable of community and service. But what does this Marianist person look like and what can we expect from that individual?

A Marianist-educated person is formed in faith.

This person has a basic critical understanding of the tenets of the Catholic faith. She understands the Marian dimension of that faith and experiences Mary as a model of Christian discipleship. Her study has helped her to achieve a correctly formed conscience. She prays daily and she exhibits Christian attitudes in all her relationships and behaviors. She is a person of integrity, honesty, fortitude and justice in her personal and community living.

⁴ The author is indebted to an initial formulation of this profile by James Gerker, Gloria Ramos and Blane Collison (undated)

A Marianist-educated person exhibits Family Spirit in relationships.

This person is capable of developing balanced interpersonal relationships and successfully maintains those relationships. He understands and has some personal experience of community. His personal experience of community has taught him the importance of community in ongoing personal development. He has come away from the Marianist educational experience with some basic skills in the formation of community in whatever circumstances he will find himself.

A Marianist-educated person has received an integral, quality education.

This person leaves the Marianist educational environment proficient in basic academic or technical skills. She understands the interconnectedness of the various academic or technical areas of study which she has pursued. She is capable of critical thinking and is able to apply this critical thinking to the dialogue between faith and culture, as it will apply to her life in the future. It is the expectation that she has acquired some basic leadership skills which she can successfully apply in her family, Church community, and society. She enthusiastically embraces life-long learning as a gift for her future.

A Marianist-educated person offers service and work for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

This person leaves a Marianist educational environment willing to share himself and his material possessions with others. He has been taught the basics of the Catholic social justice doctrines and promoted justice in his interpersonal and professional relationships. He is capable of identifying both the persons suffering injustice and some of the systemic structures that cause that injustice. He demonstrates a willingness to work with others to change unjust structures. He is able to resolve personal and professional conflict in a non-violent manner.

A Marianist-educated person can adapt and change.

This person leaves a Marianist educational environment with the ability to read the signs of the times, and to critically evaluate the need for and the steps toward positive change. He has the basic leadership skills to engage in collaborative efforts for positive change in society and in his personal life. He can critically evaluate and use technology and understand its cultural impact. He demonstrates the necessary flexibility and disposition to embrace change and be a positive agent in the community for change.

We look now to why Marianist education is best accomplished when it is embodied in the stability and structure of an institution.

3 | WHY MARIANIST EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS?

Blessed Chaminade chose as a major focus to ground his universal missionary project of re-Christianizing France in the *institution* of the school. It is valid for us today to ask why he did that and why it is important for Marianists today to value the educational institution as an important tool in our Marianist apostolate. Joseph Lackner, SM, describes the significance of Chaminade's choice in this way:

...Chaminade did offer the vision of an educational culture different from the one generally prevalent in the France of his day. Like many of his contemporaries, he held that the kind of school one created determined the kind of education that resulted, and that the purpose of founding schools was not simply for the sake of instruction but for education.⁵

One hundred and fifty years later the General Chapter of the Society of Mary of 1986 would reaffirm the importance of the

⁵ Joseph Lackner, SM, *William Joseph Chaminade: His Apostolic Intent and His Engagement with Schools, Instruction and Education: An Historical Portrait* (Dayton, Ohio: North American Center for Marianist Studies, Monograph Series, Document No. 42, 1999), p. 31.

Marianist tradition of embodying the missionary project in a concrete institution with these words:

*The school is the meeting place of culture and faith par excellence. It allows faith to become incarnate in a culture and it enables culture to give a language to faith. The school provides the stability so necessary to form in the faith.*⁶

Marianists speak consistently of transforming society: of birthing Christ into every age, as the foundational dynamic of our charism. We understand our charism not as creating a *parallel* Christian system, but rather, as entering *into* the secular systems and transforming them. The school as institution is the incarnational embodiment of the charism and an entry point for Marianists into the secular. Institutions provide stable and enduring frameworks for activity. If the milieu of the school, the culture of the school, as we are speaking about it, is infused with Marianist and Catholic values then that school becomes the stable framework for both understanding and critiquing the secular culture. When we speak these days of the dialogue between faith and culture, the institution of the school provides the arena for that dialogue to happen: to embrace what is good in the culture and to change what is not. Empowered, during their school years, with the fruits of that dialogue, graduates leave the institution of the school to bring Catholic Marianist values and behaviors to their families and to the other insti-

⁶ *Vision and Journey*, Document of the General Chapter of 1986 (English), article 30, p.17.

tutions of society which will provide their livelihoods for the remainder of their years: the university, the place of manual labor, the office, the hospital, etc.

Father Chaminade understood this transformative role of institutions well. We read in *The Spirit of our Foundation*:

*The principal object that the venerated Founder of the Institute had in view in establishing schools was to form good Christians of the children, who would later become apostles in their families, and by their conduct be a consolation and edification to society at large; reading, writing, and all other accomplishments are but the means, the bait, so to speak, to reach the end proposed.*⁷

Eduardo Benlloch, SM, commenting on this intuition of Blessed Chaminade states:

*From early on, the idea was widespread that there was little one could do with the present generation, contaminated by Philosophism and the Revolution. To multiply Christians, to get future sodalists, and to re-Christianize, it would be necessary to work with the upcoming generation to keep them from going bad and to form them.*⁸

⁷ *The Spirit of Our Foundation* (Dayton, Ohio: Mount Saint John Normal School, 1920), Volume 3, #277, p. 352.

⁸ Eduardo Benlloch, SM, *Origins of the Marianist Family* (Dayton, Ohio: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 2010) p. 206.

Paul Joseph Hoffer, SM, in his circular letter entitled, *The Pastoral Role of the Christian School*,⁹ has a section called “The Specific Role of the Christian School to Effect the Synthesis between the Secular and Religious Formation” in which our former Superior General defends the establishment of schools as the best place for Christian education and catechesis to happen, rather than giving catechesis somewhere else outside a school.¹⁰

Vincent Vasey, SM, writing many years ago about the efficacy of the communitarian apostolate and the particular value of religious committing themselves together to an institutional ministry states:

*Furthermore an institutional commitment to our Catholic people is necessary. Without our commitment, that is, institutional commitment to the people of God and the human family, the Catholic community is deprived of indispensable help in their ascension to God who gives meaning to their life. Our Founder had the institutional outlook. He saw institutions as the means to overcome what is faulty in secular institutions and it is in this sense that he has been called Precursor of Catholic Action. His vision was so great that he was modern before his time.*¹¹

⁹ Paul Joseph Hoffer, SM, *Circular No. 32*, (December 8, 1965), pp. 813-990.

¹⁰ Paraphrased from Lawrence Cada, SM, personal correspondence with the author, December 6, 2011. I am indebted to Brother Cada for indicating this section of Father Hoffer’s Circular 32 to me.

¹¹ Vincent Vasey, SM, *Marianist Presence in Education*, (Dayton, Ohio, Marianist Press, 1979), p. 85.

The value of the institution as a tool for ministry and accomplishing the mission is perhaps no better demonstrated than in the possible impact on persons and communities that are poor.

Education is a highway out of poverty. The first responsibility for Marianist Catholic educational institutions is to give some accessibility to their quality education to persons who are poor. Boards and administrators, realizing their responsibility in this regard, need to make provisions in school budgets for tuition assistance based on financial need. While understanding that the cost of Catholic education continues to spiral upward in the developed countries, budget provision for tuition assistance needs to reflect the institution's commitment to educate persons who are poor.

Catholic Marianist schools need to provide quality education that trains leaders. Leaders, in this sense, are those who are conscious of unjust systems that oppress persons who are poor and who have the necessary skills to accomplish change in those systems that oppress and marginalize. We are speaking here not only of graduates who are involved in the political, legal and financial worlds, but rather, of all graduates who leave our institutions. All Marianist graduates should leave with a just heart and a sense of right relationships, no matter what professional direction their lives make take. It is the stability and structure that allows the institution of the school to set for itself this goal for each of its graduates and to measure over the years, the success of that goal.

We turn now to the agents of this education: the immeasurable collaboration of persons who make such an education possible and how that education is accomplished through community.

4 | THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

The challenge that Marianist educators face is how to transform a school, in whatever cultural and political context it exists, into an educational community. An educational community is a *milieu*, to use Blessed Chaminade's word, in which Catholic Marianist values are tangible in all aspects of the life of the school from Board formation and decisions to classroom instruction.

The *Characteristics of Marianist Education* and our long-standing educational tradition have used the term *family spirit* to describe the atmosphere that should pervade an educational community. Once upon a time, we could use a phrase like *family spirit* and it evoked similar images in people's minds. We likened the model of family spirit to the nuclear family or even the Holy Family. In our day, the image of family can mean very different things to different people. Our schools have single parent families, stepfamilies, blended families and young people being raised within lesbian and gay partnerships. And, therefore, I believe that it is more helpful and accurate to speak about a culture of the educational community, than to speak of a community imbued with family spirit. This sense of culture used throughout this work is explained in the introduction.

If I had to name the culture that a Marianist milieu of family spirit denotes, it is a culture of *home*. Our educational ministries are meant to be safe homes where lessons are learned, discipline imparted, faith nurtured and the whole person educated: in body, mind and spirit.

In a poem entitled, *Death of the Hired Man*¹², the American poet, Robert Frost, speaks to the meaning of *home*. The poem is a dialogue between a man and his wife about the return of an old man who had worked on their farm for many years but who had been fired the previous year. Now he has snuck back onto the farm to die. At one point in the conversation the farm owner says to his wife:

*Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they
have to take you in.*

And his wife replies:

*I should have called it something somehow you haven't to
deserve.*

Establishing a culture of home, a place where Marianist family spirit can flourish in the educational community, does not mean that we take whoever comes along. Nor does it mean that certain kinds of behavior or disregard of rules is tolerated in-

¹² Robert Frost, *The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Collected Poems*, ed., Edward Connery Lathem (New York: Henry Holt, 1979), 34.

discriminately. It does not mean that we abandon educational standards. Rather, it means that those who are welcomed into our educational ministries find there a place that they do not have to *deserve*.

Persons in our educational communities do have to study and learn to the best of their abilities. The word *deserve* can mean that I have done something that gives me the right to expect something in return. But persons who enter and work in our educational communities do not have to earn a safe place. They do not have to earn just treatment. They do not have to earn respect and dignity. They do not have to earn kindness. And most importantly, they do not have to *deserve* an atmosphere that will teach them faith. We have to be able to insure that they find these attitudes and ways of behaving as hallmarks of our Marianist educational ministries and create a culture of home. They do not have to do anything to achieve these things because they are welcomed into a culture where these attitudes and ways of behaving should be part of any Marianist environment and ministry.

For some years, I was the Dean of Faculty in a large secondary school. Basically this position required that I do orientation and supervision of first and second year teachers before they became eligible for tenure. Most of the young women and men knew the material of their courses thoroughly. What usually posed the greatest challenge was classroom discipline. They either tried too hard to be friends with the students or they maintained an attitude that was perceived as harsh and aloof. The challenges

were how to establish an atmosphere of respectful dialogue, just boundaries, and discipline with clarity and kindness. These were the skills these young teachers needed to learn. Teaching them these attitudes often transformed their classrooms. Their efforts to embody these attitudes resulted in the formation of a culture. This was a culture where students saw in teachers the values and manner of behaving that were tangible evidence of the Catholic and Marianist values taught in the classroom.

We know when we Marianists do this culture-building well, don't we? Students and parents speak of how "this school was different." Alumni return out of affection and gratitude. Parents send their children to the school they attended. Members of the neighboring communities seek to serve on the Boards of such schools.

Collaborators and Beneficiaries

When we consider all those who collaborate in a Marianist educational community, it is quite impressive. These collaborators include the students, the faculty, the administrators, the support staff, the Board who directs the school, the parents/guardians, the local Church and the civic community in which the school is located. We might paraphrase a former First Lady of the United States, writing on the necessary collaboration involved in quality education¹³, by saying: *it takes a community*

¹³ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *It Takes A Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

to educate a child! When those collaborators are united in a common vision of the mission of the school, the power and influence of such collaboration is undeniable.

But the genius of Blessed Chaminade's approach to educational community is that all those who collaborate in the educational ministry are also the beneficiaries of that ministry. The gift and the strength of community is that we come to community with individual gifts and, in turn, are the recipients of the gifts of all those who gather with us. Blessed Chaminade understood this dynamic most profoundly in terms of faith formation, but it is equally applicable to education. I am stronger and able to do much more because I am a part of a community who is sharing their gifts and strengths with me. The consequence of this vision of educational community is that formation in things Marianist and Catholic needs to be developed for all those who participate in whatever way in the educational ministry of a school.

The Particular Role of the Professed Marianist Community in an Educational Ministry

Professed Marianists bring to the educational community their individual professional competencies, but they are missioned at a particular educational ministry not primarily because of individual competence, but because together, they will influence and spearhead formation of a Marianist Catholic culture. This group of professed Marianists must witness to being a unified apostolic team. Like the proverbial yeast of the gospel

baker, they together provide leadership for kneading Marianist Catholic values into all aspects of the school's life.

For the professed community to be such a witness and catalyst, they must be visible and be experienced as a community. The students, faculty, administration, parents, and Board have to be able to not only say: "that's Brother Thomas; he teaches Religion." They have to be able to also say: "that's Brother Thomas; he's a member of the Marianist community." This visibility and cohesiveness of the professed community will take different forms in different cultural contexts.

The professed community, as individuals and as a group, must be able to speak to issues in the educational community that either reflect, or do not presently reflect, Catholic and Marianist values. The openness of the local culture to hear and implement key values of Catholic and Marianist identity is a critical factor in the discernment of where and in what capacity professed Marianists should minister.

Blessed Chaminade called his communities to be "spectacles" of Gospel faith and life. In the same way, professed Marianists within an educational community should be spectacles of Catholic Marianist educational values and behaviors. Individual competence is a gift to any educational setting, but professional competency does not necessarily create educational community.

This significant role played by the Marianist religious community in an educational community: forming and deepen-

ing a Marianist Catholic culture in the school is what Blessed Chaminade meant when he told his religious that they were to be “the man who never dies.” They were to so infuse the culture of their ministry and influence it with Catholic Marianist behaviors and values that, in time, they could move on as missionaries to another place and other communities. They could move on, confident that they have left behind an institution and an educational community that would continue to live and exhibit those Catholic Marianist values and teach succeeding generations to do so.

Relationship with the Local Church

When describing our educational identity and philosophy, we use two descriptors: *Catholic* and *Marianist*. We are pretty good at the *Marianist* piece of this. We usually ascribe the *Catholic* piece to excellence of theology curricula, well-developed campus ministry (called pastoral activity in the Spanish-speaking Marianist world), service projects for the students, and beautiful, well-executed celebrations of the Eucharist. All of those factors are extremely important elements of the Catholic identity of the school. But often times our schools, especially if they are owned by the Society, become little islands in the larger sea of the diocesan Church.

Local church, as it is used in these paragraphs, refers to the educational structures of the Church as expressed in the local diocese. Our educational work is, in the deepest sense, an extension of the teaching responsibility that the local Bishop

has toward the people in his diocese. This episcopal responsibility is often structured as a “Diocesan Education Office,” and expressed in the person of a superintendent of Catholic schools. It is critical for Marianist educational ministries to develop and maintain open dialogue and good mutual relations with local diocesan structures and persons. It is important to take pride that we are one arm of the teaching authority of the local bishop; it is also important to listen carefully and critically to the voice of the body from which the arm extends.

This is particularly important in the United States in the educational ministries of the Marianist universities. Universities are obviously very complex realities which attempt to enshrine both academic freedom and the values of Catholic and Marianist identity. This is a very difficult task in the cultural diversity of today’s society. It is extremely critical that our educational ministries understand that they are in partnership with the local Church and preparing students to be faith-filled, educated leaders for that local church.

5 | FORMATION OF OUR PARTNERS IN MARIANIST EDUCATION

We borrow the word *formation* from the world of religious life. Its roots are in the ancient tradition of St. Benedict and the other early founders of monasticism. The young person seeking entrance to the monastic life was called a novice. The novice was instructed in the life and tradition of the monastery in a systematic way for a period of time. At the end of that time, the novice and the monks with whom he had lived, decided whether the novice should either embrace monastic life or leave the monastery. This process of instruction and practice was, and is known as the period of formation.

When we speak today about formation within a Marianist educational community, we are speaking about a systematic program of instruction and practice by which a person, or a group of persons, learns and embraces Catholic Marianist educational values and practices.

Because different people have different responsibilities in the educational community, the content of such formation varies according to who is being formed. Consequently, there are different emphases in the formation of Boards, than in the

formation of administrators. There are different emphases in the formation of teachers than in the formation of students. However, there are common elements in all Marianist formation programs. Five key elements in any Marianist educational formation program should be:

The Marianist educator has a basic understanding of the Marianist Project.

The person understands the historical circumstances that caused Blessed Chaminade and his collaborators, Marie Therese de Lamourous and Adele de Batz de Trenquelleon, to initiate the lay and religious communities that we know today as the Marianist Family. And while the scope of the Marianist project is presented, there is also a specific focus on Chaminade's understanding of education and why the Marianist project began apostolically in schools. The Marianist educator understands the international scope of the Marianist project and the national and international collaboration that is possible for all different forms of Marianist education.

The Marianist educator understands Marianist spirituality as the basis of all efforts in education, community, and social outreach.

The Marianist educator evidences a basic understanding of the spirituality that inspired the Marianist Founders. Foundational to all Marianist spirituality and apostolic action, particularly

education, is the role of Mary, Mother of Christ and First Disciple. All Marianist education attempts to build a Marian Church community and the educator is able to understand and participate in that building.

The Marianist educator has a basic understanding of Marianist Educational Philosophy and Pedagogy.

Why Marianists choose education as a primary means for the transmission of faith and how they do it in the classroom and through other educational means, is the basic goal of this part of the formation of a Marianist educational novice.

The Marianist educator has an understanding of The Characteristics of Marianist Education.

The Marianist educator has been taught the Characteristics and is able to demonstrate how the Characteristics are embodied in his/her area of responsibility in the educational community.

The Marianist educator understands that Marianist educational ministry has a transformational role in the families, the local Church, and the civic society in which it is located.

The Marianist educator has a basic understanding of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church and understands that integral action for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation are constitutive elements of the Catholic faith. The educator

understands and is supportive of the integration of all these elements into the life and curriculum of the educational ministry. The person has some experience of networking educational ministry with other Marianist ministries in the geographic area.

The Formators

Who is it that has responsibility to make this Marianist educational formation happen? In former days, much of what we have described as Marianist educational formation happened through a process of osmosis. There were numerous Marianist religious in any given educational work. Because of their own formation in things Marianist they were able to influence the culture of the educational work by authority and by example. These Marianist religious were the policy-makers and often the implementers of policies. Neither the numbers of religious nor their role authority exists in the same way today. Consequently, there need to be programs of systematic formation for all involved in Marianist educational ministry, be they participants and/or policy-makers.

A primary responsibility for such formation rests in the office and person of the Unit Assistant for Education. He should have the resources and finances to convene particular groups for formational programs: Boards, chief administrators, teachers in particular subject areas. The ongoing development of such programs on the Unit level is key. It establishes the expectation

that such on-going formation is an absolute requirement for Marianist educators.

Also, as stated above, it is a primary responsibility of the apostolic team of Marianist religious missioned at a particular work to influence that work, formally and by example, toward Catholic Marianist values and witness.

The chief administrators of educational works are primary agents of formation. They have accepted this responsibility presumably because they understand and are skilled in the promotion and formation of a Marianist educational culture. The Boards of educational works are by nature of their Board membership ultimately responsible to insure that this formation is happening for all persons in the educational community.

Let us look now at some unique aspects of the formation process that are particular to specific groups of people in the educational community.

Formation of Teachers and Staff

The publication of *The Characteristics of Marianist Education* in 1996 was a catalyst for Provincial and Regional Offices of Education and their collaborators to deepen the articulation of how these *Characteristics* could more effectively be embodied in Marianist educational works in particular cultures. They have identified strategies and behaviors that are used in assessing that implementation. These Offices

have produced curricula and numerous teacher training programs that have been made available to the entire Society. There is no need in this brief work to reiterate the excellent work already done and which is easily available in numerous languages. In this section, I would like to reflect on two topics that can enhance the programs already in place. The first will be to evoke Blessed Chaminade's understanding of what we call today "teacher formation." Then, I will describe a new program at the university level called Marianist Educational Associates.

Chaminade's Understanding of Teacher Training

The formation of teachers was of paramount importance to Blessed Chaminade. They were for him the primary agents of the school's mission: to mentor young people in the faith. One day when I was in college, I came back to the community and, during dinner, was expressing my frustration and boredom with my Philosophy of Education course, a required course to receive one's teaching certificate. One of the elder Brothers at the dinner table said to me: "Everything you need to know about the philosophy of education is in the *Constitutions of 1839*." The *Constitutions* (now called *The Rule of Life*) is a book that outlines the life and work of a religious order. *Constitutions* deal with the spirit of the Order, the community life of the members, the apostolic work that they were to do and issues of organization and governance. The 1839 version of this book is particularly precious to the Society of Mary because it was written to a large extent by Blessed

Chaminade himself and formed the basis for the approval received from Rome that we, the Society of Mary, could indeed be a religious order in the Church. Many times I have returned to the articles of those *Constitutions* dealing with teaching (articles 251-268) for my own prayer and reflection. I came to realize that Chaminade's understanding of education was not about a method of teaching, but rather, about the attitudes of heart and faith that a teacher needed to have. Some sections of these articles can be a little difficult because, naturally, they are written in the language of 1839. I have dared to reframe them in more contemporary language because I feel the wisdom and holiness that they express are the basis of any Marianist efforts to educate educators.

The young person is beloved by God. And because of that, Marianist educators strive to resemble Jesus and Mary in all their interactions with students. Through their own prayer and God's grace educators strive to adopt the attitudes of Jesus and Mary. They demonstrate these attitudes by their solicitude and kindness toward their students.

Marianist educators teach in order to educate. That education involves awakening in their students the love that God has for them. This fundamental goal does not mean that most of the teacher's time is spent in teaching religion, or even in religious practices. But rather, with untiring zeal and tender charity, the Marianist educator gives a lesson in Christianity with every word, by every gesture, and with every look.

Like the Good Shepherd, Jesus, Marianist educators open their hearts to their students, attending to their weaknesses and ignorance with kindness. The Marianist educator understands that it is not the teaching of religion or devotional practices that inspire the Christian faith, but rather, the heart of the educator to which the students respond.

Discipline is a necessary part of any educational effort. Marianist educators, mirroring the patience of God, require of their students: study, order, silence and fidelity to rules. But the educator accomplishes this atmosphere of study and order with great calm and a wise tendency toward indulgence. The Marianist educator is careful not to reject as bad what is not absolutely good. The educator understands the uniqueness of each individual and the uniqueness of God's action in that individual heart.

Marianist educators nurture faith in their students. The educator provides willing students the opportunity to gather in small groups, outside the classroom, in order to nurture a deepening of that faith through prayer and community.

Marianist educators provide excellent instruction and operate excellent schools because it is this atmosphere of excellence that makes the nurturing of faith possible without distraction. This excellent education is always being adapted to the needs of the times and the needs of the society from which the students come.

One hundred and fifty-seven years later this understanding of teacher formation would be synthesized and re-articulated as *The Characteristics of Marianist Education*. All efforts at the formation of Marianist educators flow from the Founder's beautiful understanding of the role of the teacher as evangelizer of the Gospel, as captured in these articles from the *Constitutions of 1839*.

Marianist Educational Associates

The Spirit continues to renew and energize Marianist education in new ways for a new age. One of these energizing new developments has been the formation of the Marianist Educational Associates (MEAs) at the three Marianist universities in the United States.

As early as 1999 the Presidents of Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii, St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, and the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, realized that they were facing new challenges in sustaining the Marianist educational tradition on their three campuses. Around the same time, four of the United States Provinces of the Society of Mary decided to merge and become the new Province of the United States. In August, 2003 the Association of Marianist Universities was established. This Association was composed of the Presidents of the Universities, the three professed Marianists called "mission officers," a representative from the Provincial Council of the Marianist Province, and the Executive Director of the Association. The

Association maintains the office of the Executive Director on the campus of the University of Dayton.

In 2004, the Board of the Association of Marianist Universities developed a program called Marianist Educational Associates. The original rationale for this faculty program was that it “intended to build a partnership between members of the Society of Mary, the sponsoring religious body, and a cadre of lay collaborators that would together sustain and renew the mission and identity that was Catholic and that embodied our Marianist educational traditions.”

The original working definition of the Marianist Educational Associates was:

Marianist Educational Associates are members of a community intentionally committed to strengthening and developing the Catholic and Marianist mission and identity of Marianist universities. Marianist Educational Associates support one another in growing in the knowledge and appreciation of the Catholic and Marianist educational traditions. They also work together to incorporate these traditions into the culture of Marianist universities and to adapt and transform these traditions so they are responsive to the challenges facing our Marianist universities. Individuals from all sectors of our Marianist universities are invited to be Marianist Educational Associates.¹⁴

¹⁴ Raymond Fitz, *Summary Report on the Marianist University Meeting 2009*, (29 July 2009), 2-3.

Since 2004, the Marianist Educational Associates have grown. There are presently about 100 Educational Associates on the three above-mentioned campuses. They have continued to refine their understanding of their role and their commitment. In 2009, they understood that their core commitment as Marianist Educational Associates included:

- Professional presence on the campus that promotes the Catholic and Marianist mission and identity of our Marianist sponsored universities;
- Ongoing learning about the Catholic and Marianist traditions as they apply to university education;
- Forming a community of challenge and support with other Marianist Educational Associates which strives to embody and give witness to the Catholic and Marianist tradition of education;
- Being part of a community of positive influence on campus that is engaged in reading the signs of the times and learning to utilize the Catholic and Marianist traditions in forging responses to these signs;
- A public affirmation to live their commitment as Marianist Educational Associates.¹⁵

What is exciting about the development of the Marianist Educational Associates is that this program is forming those

¹⁵ Ibid, 7-8.

who will form others. This program gives us a core of faculty members both committed to, and trained in, Catholic Marianist educational tradition and philosophy. They, in turn, commit themselves to form other faculty and influence the entire culture of the university toward those values. There has been some interesting conversation recently about whether what is occurring with the formation of the Marianist Educational Associates at the university level can be replicated on the secondary school level.

Formation of Students

Marianist educational ministry is intentionally directed to the faith formation of the students. The Marianist philosophy of education and our particular style of pedagogy have been articulated by some of the great educators of our tradition: Jean Baptiste Lalanne, Paul Joseph Hoffer, Joseph Panzer, among others. Over the past two decades Marianist educators and administrators have worked to integrate many aspects of *The Characteristics of Marianist Education* into the curriculum of our educational ministries at every level. Students are instructed in the fundamentals of Marianist history and spirituality; care is taken to instill a deep Marian devotion, and opportunities for service are provided. In the previous section we saw that the Marianist tradition has placed great importance on the teacher's example as a primary agency of faith.

But, in each age educators wrestle with the question of what forms the students' minds and hearts, what facilitates a do-

cility of spirit that will open them to the Gospel message? In our complex and technological age, the mentoring of faith often has to win time from many cultural distractions: social networking, a consumerist drive for financial success, a disproportionate individualism that views community-building in competition with personal fulfillment, just to name a few. Yet, we are told that young persons of the present generation accept diversity, are intolerant of prejudices that have defined many Western cultures such as racism, are generous, and are about changing the world in ways that previous generations have failed to do. Well-formed, dedicated Marianist educators face these and even more complex challenges, depending on the cultural context. I address in this section four of these areas of challenge: fostering a sense of belonging to a faith community, conveying the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, stressing the importance of art in communicating Marianist values, and embracing the world of technology and social-networking.

Fostering a sense of belonging to a faith community.

In a previous section, we discussed a new way of viewing the traditional Marianist characteristic of family spirit. We called it “establishing a culture of home”. In a world where family comprises any number of arrangements of individuals, the Marianist educational ministry needs to be a safe place where students understand that they belong. While well-formed, skilled teachers can create that kind of atmosphere in individual classrooms, it is imperative that the entire school embody it;

the burden for that school-wide atmosphere of community and belonging often falls to the area of campus ministry (or what is called in the Spanish-speaking Marianist world: pastoral activity). Regular church attendance is often sporadic for families, at best. A young person's experience of liturgy, as the celebration of faith and the mythic communication of the Gospel, is often communicated primarily through the educational ministry and not the local parish. The importance of beautiful, well-prepared, and participative liturgies for the school community is extremely important and should be a high priority for the adults in a Marianist educational ministry. Well-prepared liturgy will convey to young people that they indeed belong to a people of faith, a people of tradition who celebrate and renew themselves in their faith through the liturgy.

Many Marianist educational ministries have student retreat programs that require participation. These retreat experiences are often the primary responsibility of the office of pastoral activity or campus ministry. They take many forms and give a sense that the faith community, of which the students are members, extends beyond the walls of the classroom. Students get to experience the safety of community in expressing belief or lack thereof, personal difficulties, and ideas and experiences that motivate and excite them. Many Provinces and Regions also have extra-curricular retreat experiences, such as the LIFE (Living in Faith Experiences) program in the Province of the United States. This kind of extracurricular experience, where students from several

different Marianist ministries join together in sharing and faith-building, helps to give young people a sense that they belong to a faith movement that is much larger than their local experience. Liturgies and retreats help to give students a deep sense of being part of the People of God: a people who together celebrate and build community, based on their living of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These are often profound experiences of faith-building that go beyond the intellectual content of religious studies classes.

CONVEYING THE CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL TRADITION.

One can only accept or reject what one understands. The greater the understanding, the more informed the acceptance or rejection. While we spoke in the previous section about the need for the students' faith education to include the symbolic experience of liturgy and the interpersonal aspects of community building through retreats, we cannot neglect the more intellectual parts of transmitting the faith. Religious studies programs should include study of the Scriptures, the rich history of the Church, both grace and shadow, the sacraments, the moral teachings of the Church and the current complex problems to which that moral teaching responds, and the social teachings of the Church. The student must have a sense of belonging to a community that has inherited a rich tradition from Christ, a tradition that has been built-upon and reinterpreted by the Spirit for each age. Only then can the student experience that the Gospel lives through them and their participation in the community for this time and this place.

The importance of art in creating a Catholic Marianist culture.

The place where faith is witnessed by the community should be beautiful. Beauty and art convey a different level of the experience of God than do intellectual study or even faith-sharing within the community. Several years ago, a White suburban Marianist parish decided to invite an urban African-American parish to twin with it. Both parishes felt that it would be to their mutual enrichment.

The initial conversation to explore this idea was held at the White parish. Before the meeting, the Parish Council decided to replace the art in the meeting room. They hung colorful African cloth and religious pictures and a crucifix that represented African-American figures and an African Jesus on the cross. The group from the urban parish, obviously ill at ease for this first meeting, walked into the room and was deeply moved at the gesture of the art that was hanging. One woman said: “these meetings are going to be okay because I feel welcomed here.” The images on the wall spoke much more eloquently than any “getting to know you” exercises could have. The meetings and the eventual twinning of the parishes, while not without difficulty, were ultimately successful. This is one example of the power of art to convey welcome, beauty, and messages that words only strive toward.

Great care should be taken in Marianist educational ministries to have the walls and the chapel speak to the faculty and

students about what is valuable, about what is beautiful, and about what a Catholic and Marianist enterprise is all about. Images and art should always reflect the local culture and the people who are served by the educational ministry.

Embracing the world of technology and social networking.

Computers and information technology are key instruments in delivering curricula that previously were conveyed through lectures and chalk boards. Younger Marianist educators have been trained with these media and are adept at more and more creative uses of them in the classroom. Even in the financially poorer Units of the Society, the impact of the Internet in education and in the life of young people is indisputable. While these technologies are for younger persons like the air they breathe, older persons often debate their influence, accusing the advent of computers as the death knell of the interpersonal interaction in education, the revered relationship between teacher and student.

Social networking with its blogs, instant messaging, texting, and tweeting is even more contested. One side of the debate cites the totally uncensored communication and the loss of personal interaction in relationship; the other lauds the almost boundaryless possibilities for communication and community building.

There are critical questions regarding information technology and Catholic Marianist education. How is it that these Internet

tools can be used to enhance the teacher-student relationship and provide deeper, more meaningful educational interaction? What is the role of the teacher as mediator and interpreter of information in this technological forum? How is it that we define scholarship, excellence, and ethical standards for the student, when almost everything about everything is available to the Internet surfer?

The term *social networking* implies that, at its best, these are tools that can be used effectively for community-building. How is it that we bring all our skills and values related to community-building into this world of instant conversation and instant response? How is it that the Marianist System of Virtues, once applied to deepening faith and virtue in interpersonal relationships in community, can be used to do the same things in building social networking communities? Already there are faith sharing groups and virtual Marianist lay communities that span the international Marianist community. What do we have to learn from these virtual communities that can expand the Marianist influence and message beyond what we thought possible?

Many questions and challenges face Marianist educators that would never have been dreamt by their predecessors. Yet in wrestling with these questions, Catholic Marianist education will take on a new face and influence for the twenty-first century.

Formation of Boards

Marianist Boards are groups of men and women chosen according to local custom to govern the mission of a ministry. They usually have a term of office, and a certain percentage of the members are usually professed members of the Society of Mary. Membership includes persons from the local Church community and the civic community. Their selection is often based on their professional skills, their commitment to the continuance of the Catholic Marianist tradition of the ministry, and the breadth of their personal and professional perspective. The governance power of Boards varies according to civic, Church, and Provincial/Regional structures of the local area, but often their responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the Catholic and Marianist identity of the ministry;
- Approval of budgets and general financial stewardship of the ministry;
- Appointment or ratification of the chief administrator(s) of the ministry;
- Developing a relationship between the ministry and the local Church and civic communities.

The Province of the United States has done extensive work in the formation of Marianist ministry boards. Formation programs for boards have been integrated with *The Character-*

*istics of Marianist Education.*¹⁶¹⁶ I would like to highlight three aspects of board stewardship and formation that will continue to need emphasis.

- Board members need to be consistently conscious of the need to articulate and re-articulate for themselves and for outside audiences the mission of the educational ministry for which they are responsible. This articulation of mission does not need more documents. Rather, the Board needs to apply the documents by clearly and critically reviewing the implications of decisions that are made within the ministry's administration and community. Decisions to purchase land, to build buildings, to change curriculum, and of course, budget decisions need to be made with the overall Catholic and Marianist mission in mind.

What are the values involved in the decisions that a ministry board makes? A particularly helpful structure to keep value-based decision-making in the forefront of the Board's consciousness is to establish a mission-integration committee. This small group of board members would have responsibility for ongoing formation of the Board members in Marianist Catholic tradition and values. It would also be charged to insure that these values are discussed in terms of chief administrators' performance evaluations and long range decisions of the board.

¹⁶ Resources for Board selection, initial and ongoing formation can be found at www.marianist.com/boards.

- One of the key responsibilities of Board members is to insure that the Catholic and Marianist culture in the ministry is nurtured and developed. They must assure that there are identifiable values and behaviors in the ministry community that give witness to this culture. One way of doing this is, to borrow a phrase from Bernard Lee, SM, to develop good habits.¹⁷ These good habits must be recognizable in the daily life of the ministry, in conflict management and resolution, in prayer and in decision-making. It would be a wonderful challenge for a Board to look at the culture of its ministry and ask themselves questions. How is it that we arrive at decisions? How are dissident and marginal voices treated in discerning directions for the future? How diverse are we as a group or in our decision making? Is there an intentional Marian component to our prayer and liturgy? Are we identifiably Catholic? The kind of conversation and decisions that would flow from these questions will give an identifiable aura to the culture of our educational ministry. Just asking these and similar questions can become a habit; and culture is created from the patterns of our habits.
- And the third important responsibility of Board members is to seek and embrace new ways of doing things. This is critically important in the context of the collapse of a Catholic subculture in many countries of the Western hemisphere.

¹⁷ Bernard J. Lee, SM, *Habits for the Journey, A Mystical and Political Spirituality For Small Christian Communities* (Dayton, Ohio: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 2000).

How is it that young people are mentored in faith in our ministry in new ways? A radical shift in vocation ministry in the Province of the United States occurred when we realized that young people no longer read newspapers, even Catholic ones, where we were placing vocation advertisements. Instead, we ventured into the realm of the internet, creating a vocation chat room and vigilant e-mail response to vocation questions. We were doing the same kind of advertising, but we were meeting the young people where, in fact, they were. Boards must create an atmosphere among themselves and in their ministries where the means to conduct what Blessed Chaminade called the *nova bella* (*new ways of doing things*) can happen. Too much Board meeting time is spent in business as usual and in financial planning, albeit both important concerns. What is often lacking are the listening hearts; the hearts that hear the people within the ministry and in the outside communities that the ministry serves. What is often missing is hearing how the Spirit is leading in new ways.

Formation of Parents/Guardians

In our modern, complex society, the caretakers of the students in our educational ministries are sometimes parents and sometimes other family members of many varieties, acting *in loco parentis*. I will use the term *parents/guardians* to designate those who have primary care for the student who attends one of our educational ministries. Blessed Chaminade always understood the well-formed Marianist student to be, at best,

an apostle to the family from which she or he came. That being said, the educational ministry bears some responsibility in the formation of its parents/guardians. There are three areas in particular, I believe, that can provide opportunities for such formation.

In orientation meetings and other meetings between administrators, faculty and parents/guardians, the mission of the school and its Marianist history and values should be carefully explained. The adults in the young student's life need to accept the mission and values of the school so that what is done at school is supported in the home. Often times, the preoccupation of the caretakers will be with the quality of the academic or skill training and how that training will prepare the young person for success in the future. The commitment of Marianist educational ministries to the education of the whole person cannot be measured solely by the percentage of graduates entering university or the percentage of graduates who secure a job. *The Characteristics of Marianist Education* embodied in the school need not lead to such obviously quantifiable outcomes. Parents/guardians need to be educated themselves in mission-centered education that extends beyond their cultural expectations. Opening school liturgies and other faith-based activities at the educational ministry to parents/guardians is an excellent way for adults to observe and participate in the faith education their children are receiving.

Secondly, if the resources of the school allow it, there should be additional opportunities provided for the on-

going education of parents/guardians. These could be adult-orientated lectures on the Catholic faith, moral issues that pertain to parenting, and many other relevant topics that would gather parents/guardians together as a community of faith. These efforts are particularly important in lower socio-economic areas where our educational ministries are located, since adult faith education is often more limited there. Efforts at adult education are also an excellent opportunity for networking Marianist resources of both finances and personnel from different Marianist ministries in a specific geographical area.

Thirdly, the educational ministry should provide retreat opportunities for parents/guardians. Uniquely directed toward their faith concerns and development, these retreat experiences are opportunities for parents/guardians to gather as an adult faith community and to share faith, liturgy, quality conversation and support. Once again, the Marianist resources throughout a local geographic area can be utilized to provide these kinds of experiences. The long-term benefits of retreats and other adult gatherings for parents/guardians cannot be underestimated in their long-term effects on families and in support of the mission of the educational ministry. It is important that the school view the parents/guardians as adult journeyers on the way to faith and whatever efforts the educational ministry can afford to them will bear much fruit.

Formation of Alumni/Alumnae

If the Marianist educational ministry is successful in its mission, an affectionate bond often develops between the graduate and the educational ministry. Ministries that carry a long history of service in a particular place, bear testimony to generations of alumni who remain attached and promote the ministry. In the United States, there are groups of very elderly men who were graduates of the elementary schools run by the Society in the 1930's and 1940's who still refer to themselves as "Brothers' Boys."

Often alumni will seek out old teachers at the school to discuss life issues, family problems, and problems of faith. What they remember is a safe place where issues and values that really matter were a part of everyday school life. This often is not their experience of the world outside of Marianist educational ministries.

Many educational ministries have active alumni groups which promote nostalgia and fund-raising for the ministry. The challenge regarding ongoing formation of alumni is similar to that of parents/guardians. Opportunities for adult discussion, adult faith formation, liturgy, and retreats should be a significant part of all alumni outreach from our educational ministries.

These efforts are not aimed at recreating the past, but rather, for providing ongoing training in Catholic Marianist values that will enhance their leadership in their families, their parishes, and their businesses. One of the most significant contributions

that Marianist educational ministries provides is leadership. The transformation of the world occurs not simply by providing education, but by providing education for leaders who will influence areas of society far beyond what the educational ministry can touch. Attention to ongoing formation of alumni is a critical part of the legacy of Blessed Chaminade, who called his followers to educate “from the cradle to the grave.”

These men and women who bear the labels: students, faculty, staff, administrators, board members, parents, guardians, and alumni are the focus of Marianist educational ministry. They are the recipients of its gifts and, in turn, the donors of these gifts to others in wider and wider circles of influence. Changing these circles of influence in the Church and in society is what Blessed Chaminade meant by transformation. It is about that large project of transformation, transforming the world to Christ, that Chaminade has called us to work in education.

6 | CONCLUSION

Marianist education is a vast international enterprise that takes many forms. From skill training and daily nourishment in the slums of Bangalore to the academies of Marianist universities in the United States, Marianist education seeks to develop faith communities dedicated to excellence with a deep commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The form and content of that education develop and adapt according to the culture it serves and the unmet human need to which Marianist educators sensitively and competently respond. We have come a long way from the primary schools of post-revolutionary France, although the motivation which guides us and the goals that we seek remain remarkably the same: **to bear in every age and place Christ, Son of God become Son of Mary.**

Vincent Vasey, SM, in a series of lectures given at the University of Dayton in 1975, felt the need to defend Marianist presence in university education. He said:

We cannot admit that university education is out of our field of action, so that we would be more faithful to the Founder if we were to imitate him more apishly, doing exactly as he did. If we appear to be in externals, further from him in

*what strikes the eye, we can well be closer to him in spirit, in adaptability, in originality, in the broad scope of the means we use to spread the faith.*¹⁸

While Father Vasey was speaking of university education, we can echo his words in speaking of the newer ventures of Marianist education in skill training in poor rural areas, the education of street children in India and the Philippines, and the educational ministries in developed countries among the urban poor. Hearing the cries of unmet human needs and responding to them has always been a hallmark of our Marianist educational tradition. This is because we Marianists are most basically involved in the mission of Mary, Mother of Christ and First Disciple. In his eighth circular letter to the Society of Mary (August, 1839) Blessed William Joseph Chaminade wrote:

*The Blessed Virgin makes us depositories of her ingenuity in working out the designs of her almost infinite charity.*¹⁹

As Marianist educators, let us lay claim to that Marian ingenuity in shaping together the work and the future of Marianist education. May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

¹⁸ Vincent Vasey, *Marianist Presence in Education*, ed. Gerald T. Chinchar (Dayton, Ohio: Marianist Press, 1979), 52.

¹⁹ *Circulars of V. Rev. W.J. Chaminade* (Kirkwood, Missouri: Maryhurst Normal, 1945), 139.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

—The most important element for education is the “environment.”

In what aspects of the life of your educational institution is this element most in evidence?

How would you qualify the “environment” of your institution? In which aspects and in what way could it still be improved?

CHAPTER 2

—In this chapter a person who has been educated in a Marianist work is described with various traits that s/he ought to have.

To what degree do the students who finish their studies in your educational institution approach this ideal?

In this sense, what do you think are the most positive aspects of the education given in it? To what are those results due? In which aspects is there a need for improvement? What needs to be done to achieve it?

CHAPTER 3

—What role does the educational institution in which you work play and what kind of respect does it enjoy in your surroundings (families, civil society, the Church)?

— What is the influence of the said institution in forming good citizens disposed to improve the society in which they live? And good Christians?

CHAPTER 4

— How would you define “family spirit”? Is it easy to see in your educational institution?

— Do you think that the students feel welcome and secure there? And the new teachers as they join the faculty? And all the other members of the educational community?

CHAPTER 5

— How present in the formation of the different groups of the educational community of your institution are the five key elements highlighted in this chapter (a basic understanding of the Marianist project; of the Marianist spirituality; of the Marianist educational philosophy and pedagogy; of the characteristics of Marianist education; of the transformational role of the Marianist education in the families, the local Church and the civic society)?

— Do you think that the criteria and guidelines of the 1839 Constitutions of the Society of Mary for educators continue to be valid today? How can they be reformulated nowadays?

— Do you think that the experience described in this chapter about Marianist Educational Associates could be valuable, with

appropriate adaptations, in the environment of the institution in which you carry out your educational work?

— In what way are present in your institution the four great challenges mentioned with respect to the formation of the students: fostering a sense of belonging to a faith community; conveying the Catholic intellectual tradition; stressing the importance of art in communicating Marianist values; embracing the world of technology and social-networking? How are they being faced? Do you think there is any other important challenge to be considered?

— In your institution what role do prayer and well prepared and motivated liturgies play in formation in faith? Is there an interest in cultivating the atmosphere, the music, the decoration, and the symbols for these celebrations?

— What response would you give to the questions found in the text relative to the use of new technologies in Marianist education?

— Is there a good environment of collaboration between the institution and the parents in the education of their children? What means of formation in the spirit of Marianist education can be put into practice?

— What relationship is there between the institution and its alumni? Could more be done in this area?

The Marianist religious have been creating educational works since our beginnings nearly two centuries ago. Today, we continue to dedicate the best of our human and material resources to education across the globe. The changing circumstances of our world and the growing presence of Marianist works in new cultures pose questions regarding how to respond creatively to new situations and how to transmit our educational knowledge and heritage to the new educators who join in our works.

Connected to our history and with a foothold in the present, we will be able to face the future with confidence if we can act with fidelity and creativity. Heir of the past, full of life today and open to the future, Marianist education continues to represent, as it has since its beginnings, a **heritage** and a project of the **future**.

The collection *Marianist Education: Heritage and Future* was born out of these convictions. It is intended as a tool for formation and reflection for all people and groups involved in Marianist education, as well as a source of inspiration for local educational projects. The collection comprises a number of titles that aim to take an in-depth look at and expand upon the contents of other existing documents on the characteristics of Marianist education.

0 Marianist Education Heritage and Future

1 Marianist Charism and Educational Mission

2 Principles of the Marianist Educational Action

3 Marianist Education and Context

4 Identity of Marianist Education

5 Marianist Educational Praxis: Institutions, Agents and Recipients

6 Leadership and Animation

7 New Education in New Scenarios



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