

Dayton Meetings March 21-22, 2007 with Marianist Groups Summary

Project Tiers

- 1) *Education for Justice*: for use by Educating for Justice audience which includes high school teachers, pastoral ministers, social justice committees, campus ministers, and other interested individuals.
- 2) *Marianist*: Creating and fostering greater collaboration within the Marianist network using this project as a collaborative focus to convene and connect people. Resources created will be disseminated for use in Marianist Family and related networks according to audience interests and needs.

Project Vision

- The vision of the project needs to be clear and must be articulated.
- There could be a tendency to move too energetically just to the Magnificat. Project must present a theological grounded and complete understanding of Mary.
- The Fr. William Ferree, S.M. approach to social justice may provide an important foundation for the project [**Note:** see dissertation obtained: *Introduction to Social Justice*]

Focusing Questions for the Project

- How can reflections on Mary's life lead us to live our faith radically in the world ourselves? How can Mary become a model for us, for individuals to act justly?
- Can we draw attention to the development of devotion that then should lead us to action?
- How will the development of the doctrine surrounding Mary be presented in the project?
- In the use of images: How were these images and devotions that developed at specific points in time used, and what was their social impact?
- How can we use new images of Mary to help audiences move beyond private devotion and piety to new ways of seeing and relating to Mary, and living their faith actively engaged in the world?
- How can we push theological reflection beyond the private and devotional into the communal and social engagement?

Project Caveats:

- There may be dangers in instrumentalizing Mary for your purposes that not necessarily in Mary's purview.

- There is a danger to be avoided inherent in an American pragmatic approach which starts with topics first and then imposes Mary over them. This approach overlooks the proper starting point and should be avoided.

Theological Foundations

- At the outset of the project it is important and essential to determine the theological grounds from which this project will proceed.
- The philosophical/theological definitions and foundations need to be in place before turning to the practical and the pastoral “product”. In addition the definition of social justice also needs to be articulated and spelled out. (see Fr. Ferree)
- If we know very little about Mary’s life, what is our foundation for justice?
 1. Human dignity- Mary as humanity’s Yes to God.
 2. Biblical words – limited but essential
 3. Ecclesial foundation – see *Lumen Gentium* to start
 4. Liturgical – 44 masses since Vatican II have been themed around Mary and provide themes that would interact well with justice and peace.
 5. Ecumenical scope –a balanced view emerging; Greater Protestant engagement with Mary has been emerging recently.
- In linking Mary and justice you need to ask how? How far?
- Linking Mary and justice may lead you to Liberation theology. But how far do you go?
- Linking Mary and justice may lead you to feminist theology. But how far do you go?
- Linking Mary and justice may lead you to ecology – Godist/Mother images – but how far do you go?

Theological Sources/Considerations

- Paul VI focused on Mary as more a model of peace than justice
- In Church documents – especially those written since 1975 there have been recurring references to Mary in the documents with several symbolic avocations stated or engaged, but they have not been defined or spelled out or developed i.e. Mary as Star – these titles have been used, but what the specific theological meaning of this title is has not been defined or developed.
- See *The Supplication to the Queen of the Holy Rosary* was composed by Blessed Bartolo Longo in 1883 in response to the appeal of Pope Leo XIII, made in his first Encyclical on the Rosary, for the spiritual commitment of all Catholics in combating social ills. It is solemnly recited twice yearly, in May and October.
- See *Marialis Cultus* by Paul VI
- See *Lumen Gentium*

- See *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* the Encyclical on the Rosary by John Paul II
- See JP II's message/address for Mission Day of Prayer
- See the Paragraph in *Veritatis Splendor*
- See John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, 1999
- Look at John Paul II's endings of his three social encyclicals (LE, SRS, CA)
- See *Deus Caritas Est* & Mary, 2006
- See *Sacramentum Caritas*, 2007

Catechetical Considerations

- At the outset, think through the educational levels – it is not an easy topic there is danger of forcing the ideas together which presents difficulties. [**Note:** See resource purchased, “The Virgin Mary in Intellectual and Spiritual Formation” from the Congregation on Catholic Education, 1989]
- The project should be conscious in its approach to how we are educating and catechizing about Mary: What must we learn about Mary? Dogmas are most frequently treated, but the norms for catechesis are often overlooked or omitted.
- There are 7 norms of educating about Mary which were promulgated by Paul VI. these did not show up in the catechetical directory until the late 1980's but the treatment in the catechetical directory is too brief – this is what you must teach.
- In the U.S. in spite of the 7 norms for teaching about Mary in textbooks and resources for Religious Ed we moved back to reliance on dogmas in the U.S. This has created a rupture in Marian understanding in the U.S. – a reaction perhaps against being beaten over the head with dogmas. In the U.S. we need to restore catechesis on Mary to include the 7 norms.

Marian Perspectives to Consider and Incorporate:

- Mary is first and most essentially a woman who
 1. listens to God
 2. responds with faith
- Using a foundation of virtues: Mary as a model of the virtues needed for today's world
 - boundless hope
 - unselfish service
 - radical hospitality...etc.
- Significant title of Mary: Mary Our Mother – a communal mother with an emphasis on the social/communal dimension
- Mary as the model par excellence of a woman of faith
- Mary's words in scripture all take place within the context of relationships and all her words are words of love.
- Mary is always in union with Christ, leading others to Christ

- Magnificat
 - Mary and oppression – how are people being oppressed today?
 - Mary and developing a sensitivity to the reality of the poor in the world today
- Mary's humanity, the woman, was called to bring Christ into the world. How are we called to bring Christ into the world today? How can we look to Mary as one who embodied contemplation and action?
- Mary's ponderings and the definitive Yes to God – where can this lead us?
- Mary's Visitation: a radical presentation of hospitality, and the importance of relationship. When students meet people who are poor as equals, as human beings, as friends transformation results.
- Explore titles of Mary & linkages
 - Mary and the environment – how Mary's yes to the world can shape our response to the use of the earth and its resources
 - Mary and community for the common Good
 - Saying Yes to God in Today's world
 - Visitation and hospitality – given and received
 - Mary as voice for the voiceless
 - Cultural devotions and global dimensions of Marian devotion – How are visual images connected to the cultural context and community

Process Considerations for Marian Connections

- **Process:** In terms of process: look at the legion of Mary – the service element was essentially a social justice component and was central to its focus. In connection to the devotional practices, members of the Legion has to commit to weekly action.
- Define dignity and life out of a human perspective
- RE: Immersion Trips/Service learning/Experiential learning: How do we connect Mary as a model of service and justice?

Pedagogy in Resources:

- teach through the arts
- teach through the heart – stories/narratives/ cultivate affectivity – don't simply inform... *move* people.
- education for transformation - impel people to engagement and action in communities

Project Outcome & Resource Considerations

- **One-Pagers** you can download which contain synopses or streamlined summaries re needed about Marian theology/doctrine. Resources that are readily accessible: See it, choose it, use it.
- **Prayers** - there is a strong need for good prayers. Consider a variety of Magnificat reflections, etc.
- **Images in Art**- There are some interesting things that you can do with the arts in looking at the images of Mary and the way they depict different spiritualities (create a timeline of images and highlight how devotion and doctrine are reflected)
- **Art Cards** - Create a Marian deck of cards (larger size) with artwork on one side and prayers on the other side.
- **Visual meditations** (on PowerPoint) that focus on Mary as a model of Justice
- **Mary Calendar** with art and feast days/ global photos?/ suggested reading list? Prayers and quotes?
- **Discussion Formats:** "Perspectives on Faith and Life" – design platforms for conversations around Mary's role, virtue, humanity and provide bridges to conversations around current issues of justice and injustice in the world.
- **Table topics** - Come up with suggested "Table Topics" that can be used for discussion/reflection by a variety of different audiences: i.e. in College dining halls, community meetings, student retreats, classrooms, religious community settings. etc.
- **Case studies** – engage a case study approach for adult learners – concrete stories (see examples from CCHD)
- **Stories**(Personal Narratives) of IMPACT – How Mary has been influential in the lives of those who are working for social justice. Invite social justice leaders to reflect and respond, ask different generations for input as well. Include concrete stories that grab the heart for people to read and reflect upon.
- **Mary in Music**, podcasts, Christian music recommendations for college/HS audience.
- **Movie suggestions** or film guides or highlights of clips from films with Marian themes.
- **Retreat Plans** using Mary as a model of Justice – for high school students, college students or adults
- **Service reflection guidelines** which incorporate Marian ideals/virtues/ passages/ charisms.
- **Idea Board** where teachers/campus ministers can post suggestions, activities, ideas and best practices on how to integrate Mary and justice.

- **Interactive learning/Virtual Learning** – adults seek this out more than college age students who are too busy at this point.

Vehicles for finished products:

- **Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation** is an important, willing vehicle for presenting project results in the form of a course on Mary as a model of Justice. Outcomes of this project could be formulated into a course using NACMS tracks. Courses are structured on a 5-week framework. Seminars are structured on a 3-week framework.
- **NACMS** web site can post/announce resource availability when completed
- **Marianist Family**, can use resources as
- **Education for Justice** web site will post all resources created

Notes:

- A study group was recommended by Sr. Jean Frisk to study the connections between Mary and justice in small units and see how it unfolds. The Marian Research Institute could consider offering a course in the fall on Mary and Justice. The research journal could consider focusing an issue on this topic to see what the research can offer by way of a foundation and theological framing and support.
- Fr. Francois concurred that we have sound justification to look at social justice in relation to Mary.
- Consult the recent Marianist General Chapter statement on a Marian style of church.
- Chaminade used the notion of sodalities to replace the collapsed parish structure during the French revolution in order to rebuild the church. He offers insights into creating transformative communities – in/through Marian spirituality.
- Communities must be gathered, read the signs of the times, discern where change is needed – particularly institutional change, and be sent out. How can we work at transformation of institutions?
- Being gathered and sent is part of creating transformative communities. Transformative communities work for systemic/structural change to bring about a more adequate realization of the common good. To be transformative communities, you need social justice.
- Look at the statements of religious communities and what they have said about Mary and acting with justice.