

Doing Social Justice as a Marianist

by Don Geiger 2-7-08

As Marianists we do not have a monopoly on the practice of social justice. Being a Marianist does enhance the practice in a number of ways. Heading the list is God's gift of Mary's example. Her readiness to listen and ponder is essential for a perceptive insight into the signs of our times, pointers for our culture from now into the future. The title of Fr. Bert Buby's book on praying the psalms, "with a listening heart" says it well. Reading the direction being taken in our time while adopting a trajectory that pursues right relations is the fruit of faith-filled pondering following the lead of Mary. A case in point is globalization, a mark of our times. Bad or good? Yes! Practiced by the proud of heart it is disastrous; exercised in a spirit of humble compassion social justice on a global scale can reach out to those in need, bring down the powerful and fill the hungry with good things.

On our own we are no match for the powerful, working for social justice in community and through communities can do great things. Commitment to the integrity of creation demands community. Mary's example of openness, giving space for the power of God to act through her is a powerful inspiration for the transformation of society in the midst of disheartening happenings. Transformation is the work of God not of us depending on our power or cleverness.

Today we are blessed with the methods, virtues and examples of commitment available to us by the work of individuals and groups of Marianists. The challenge before us is to connect the Mary's example, the power of Marianist spirituality and the new awareness of the impact of human actions on earth and on social structures. The mission of the Marianist Family is to transform the world in the spirit of Blessed Chaminade's life and works. In a presentation at the University of Dayton, Fr Fitz spoke of this transformation in the face of today's individualism. Wealth in the hands of a few answered by a community that shares resources, that helps meet basic needs of people; over-consumption of resources answered by a community that stewards creation and lives simply; challenges of immigration and migration responded to by a community that witnesses the welcome of Mary.

In seeking to promote the integrity of creation we will do well to use the insights of modern science, sociology, political science, economics of sustainable living and other

“secular” disciplines as gifts of God, powerful revelations. Applied wisely and in living faith, these insights are powerful means to enable communities of faith to deal with what look like hopeless challenges.