

**Rick Wibbenmeyer**  
**Chaminade College Preparatory School**  
St. Louis, Mo.  
October 6, 2008

After being asked to say a few words today about integrating the Marianist mission into what we do as faculty members, a few questions came to mind: What do we do? How do we do it? As Marianist educators we are called to be witnesses of Christ to one another and to all of the students God has entrusted in our care. So, how do we work to integrate the Marianist mission into our daily actions as Marianist educators? I believe we must strive to do so naturally, each in our own unique way, sharing our varied gifts and talents with God's guidance. Father Vasquez stated in a recent homily . . . through the Mother to the Son. When we pray and ask our Mother Mary's guidance she will lead us to Jesus. Then as a teacher, staff member, coach or administrator, we can respond to the present situation armored with the love and peace of Christ and truly educate in the Marianist charism.

Thus, I believe there are two things we each must do. We must all pray to our Mother Mary to grow closer to Jesus. Second, we must each work to lead other to Christ in our own unique way. I must do things naturally in the way God intended for me to do them. A simple prayer I pray daily is for God's guidance to be the best husband, father, teacher and coach I can be. Then throughout my daily activities and interactions as an educator I can respond to situations naturally. Certainly, I make mistakes, falter and sin along the way. It is during these times of struggle that others will pick me up and help me to grow in the love of Christ.

I was once taught as a baseball coach that little things win championships. In a parallel way I think this applies to us as Marianist educators. I believe little things also make us champions for Christ. Simple things, hello, thank you, opening a door, smiling, saying something positive, listening to a student or a colleague in time of need, consoling others. The list doesn't end and neither does our work. May our blessed Mother guide each of us on our journey.

**Kris Ranciglio**  
**St. Mary's High School**  
St. Louis, Mo.  
October 6, 2008

How do I use the CMEs in my teaching?

I have always been very serious about academics – as a student, as a parent and as a teacher. I find myself focusing on performance and grades when those are really

secondary to what Fr. Chaminade had envisioned for education. He knew that to educate young people, it was the teacher's responsibility to find ways to make them want to learn and want to be in school. It's not about the quantity of information, but the quality.

As teachers, we are pushed more each year to up our students' standardized test scores. Colleges and universities set minimums on those scores for admission. Is that supposed to be an indication of the student's ability to succeed? Is it truly an indication of the student's academic abilities? As Marianist educators, we know otherwise. Nowhere in our characteristics of Marianist Education does it say to educate for academic perfection. Instead, the characteristics of educating in the Marianist way are to make our young men the best people they can be.

That was one of the first things I noticed when I started at St. Mary's and looked at the characteristics to see how my teaching style fit into the Marianist tradition. I didn't find academics on there at all. It says to provide an integral quality education, but that doesn't necessarily pertain to academics. Giving the boys a well-rounded education requires so much more. I have to be a model of faith, service, justice and peace both inside and outside of school. My job is to help form these boys into responsible, confident Christian men. When we send these young men out into the world, we want to make sure they are strong in both mind and heart.

Now I look over the characteristics regularly to remind myself of where my focus should be. I still do my best to prepare the students for college, but more importantly, I do my best to help each one become the man he wants to be.

**Charlie Walsh**  
**St. John Vianney High School**  
St. Louis, Mo.  
October 6, 2008

Good morning. My name is Charlie Walsh from Vianney High School. If I had attended Vianney High School (which I did not) it would have been in the 1960s and there would have been a noticeable presence of Marianist Brothers in the classroom and in the main office. When I began my career at Vianney, there was a discernable trend. It became evident that through attrition, eventually the keys to St. John Vianney High School would be passed to lay people. With the handwriting on the wall, I believe the Brothers generated a wish list, a list that delineates what a Marianist school should embody.

Let's take a quick tour of the CMEs in 2008:

In late August, our starry-eyed freshman arrived at our doorsteps. New backpacks, new file folders, anxious about their plunge into high school. The Marianists ask us to provide them with a quality education. One thing about teachers, we all have keys . . . lots of keys. One key starts my car, one opens my classroom, one my desk. More importantly, we also have keys to unlock intellectual curiosity. We have keys to inspire young adults to reach inside themselves and surpass their wildest expectations. We have the key to unleash potential. Sadly, not all keys work the same. The key that works for Alex doesn't work for Dave. Some of our keys don't fit the locks at all. I swear some of the locks are super-glued shut. If my keys aren't working, may I borrow yours? The Marianists have challenged us to keep trying until we find a key that fits.

We are also called to teach for adaptation and change. When it comes to adaptation and change, we have no choice. When I was a student at Saint Louis University, we got word that Washington University had acquired a gigabyte of memory. One gig, let's have a party! Students bring more memory into our classrooms each day in their pockets than Washington University and Saint Louis University had combined! There is no one in this church this morning who really wants to know how many text messages fly out of their rooms throughout the day.

The first course I taught at Vianney was typing on manual typewriters. Teaching on a manual typewriter is as close to hell as I hope to get. Manual typewriters gave way to electric typewriters, then the Apple IIe's, then Macs, then PCs and who knows what's next. On a much larger scale, our world is changing by the minute. Thomas Friedman in his book *The World is Flat* has a stark warning for our kids. There are millions upon millions of students in India and China who want their jobs. They are wired, they are ambitious, and they will work their hands to the bone to participate in the global economy. Our world is changing at an amazing pace. Driving the adaptation and change bus will require an ever-changing set of keys.

If you are keeping score, the first two characteristics are not specific to Marianist education. Every school strives for quality education and all confront adaptation and change. I believe education for justice, peace, and service is where we separate from the rest.

In my lifetime, as a nation, we decided that using race, religion, gender, and other filters violate the principles upon which this great nation was founded – liberty and justice for all. This didn't just happen. Brave men and women, much braver than I, put their lives on the line to challenge bigotry and injustice. Consider the images of the water cannons and police dogs in Montgomery, Alabama. In a month, we will participate in a historic election with an African American at the top of one of the tickets and a woman on the

other. We are not a perfect union but the opportunities that exist in our country are the envy of the world.

It was Father Stuart Schramko who challenged me at St. Viator High School to rethink my value system. I was a tough sell. At 17, I had it all figured out. Fr. Schramko and I had some epic battles. I would like to think it was the battle of the Titans but realistically, there was only one Titan. He never actually changed my opinion but more importantly he made me think. Every day we have the opportunity to teach the message to Christ, lessons of peace, justice, and service to others. Whereas the first two characteristics are rather generic to all schools, I hope teaching for peace, justice, and service sets Marianist schools apart from the rest. The Marianists are counting on us.

At Vianney, the biggest key ring belongs to our campus ministry staff. Faith formation is a tricky business. Faith formation is a lifelong journey. In this room, we are all at different stages. So are our students. Let me describe a part of my faith journey. We had Mass everyday at St. Peter's. Through grades 1-6 Mass was quite predictable. I was wild-eyed and inspired by the homilies. Things changed rather radically during 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. With newly acquired hormones on board, a sacred event would often morph into fodder for the conventional. Bless me, father, for I have sinned. Was it Sally again, my son? Yes, father, it was . . . at Mass! Father, impure thoughts at Mass . . . I'm pretty much done, aren't I? No, my son. Say three Hail Marys and for God's sake sit in the front pew and give yourself a fighting chance.

Somehow, on my faith journey, I found a key that opened me to experience Mass in a different way. As is typical for me, it was music that provided the key. Marvin Gaye lyrics always run through my head at the consecration. In a very obscure song he professes his devotion to Jesus and says, "All he asks of us is we give each other love: love your sister, love your mother, love your father, love your brother. When I hear the words, "Do this in memory of me," it clicks that there is a purpose. When I receive the host, the body of Christ, I accept the challenge to try to walk in Jesus' shoes.

For me, Marvin Gaye's lyrics were a key. Our campus ministry is awesome at trying a never-ending variety of keys to enhance our students' faith.

As a classroom teacher, we also have keys. The Marianists asks that we use whatever keys we have to move our students along their faith journey. It's my hope and my prayer that I don't disappoint.

Family spirit is perhaps my favorite CME. When I interviewed incoming freshmen last year, I asked them what attracted them to Vianney. They all indicated that from walking our hallways, they sensed camaraderie, respect, and a unique atmosphere that they found endearing. I agree with them. Vianney is unique. Vianney is a great place for

young men. When you have a faculty that treats its students with respect and dignity and an administration that trusts and respects its faculty, you have a great atmosphere for students. I am proud to be a member of the Vianney family. At Vianney, family spirit is alive and well.

Everyday, we have the enviable opportunity to touch the hearts and the minds of young men. Everyday we have the opportunity to challenge our students to be better than the rest to appreciate their gifts, to lend a helping hand, to sharpen our skills for the betterment of our world, and most importantly, to walk in Jesus' shoes. We are challenged to continue to educate young men based upon the foundation that the Marianists have created. The keys to Marianist education have been passed to us. I hope we never take this awesome responsibility for granted.