



DUC IN ALTUM

+ 22 February 2012, Ash Wednesday

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus and the love of His Mother be with you and your communities!

WITH GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION

Just about a year ago, I was elected to serve as president of the Marianist Lay Network of North America. Since taking office in July 2011, I've spent the last several months getting to know the organization, both its leadership and its members, and listening to so many of your wonderful stories of life, community, faith, service, and hope. In a word: amazing. I have been inspired and humbled by the deep commitment of our Marianist Lay Communities to our communal apostolic life. I should like to begin, then, by thanking you for your confidence and trust and expressing my profound admiration for the witness that each of you gives in your Marianist life.

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

An old suspicion of mine was recently confirmed: this isn't a typical membership organization. It's an identity. It's a way of life. Our Marianist life is truly 'being as community.' To put it another way, we exist solely in our relating one to another: in physical or spiritual community, in communal prayer, in service to the marginalized, in unity of purpose. In so many rich and varied ways, our Marianist way of being is in community.

Indeed, it really is all about relationships. As we move into this new year, I invite your feedback and conversation. As some of you have heard, it is my hope to visit as many of your communities as possible in the coming year. What makes our Marianist Lay Communities so rich and our witness to the Church so powerful, is the good work and faith lived out by each of you. So, if you're having an event, a regular community gathering, or would just like to chat, please know that I would very much enjoy hearing from you (my contact information is listed below).

WHAT REALLY MATTERS

At the threshold of Great Lent, we turn our attention to the things that really matter. Lent has

RUDY REYES JR.

PRESIDENT, MARIANIST LAY NETWORK OF NORTH AMERICA

THE MARIANIST CENTER

1341 N. DELAWARE AVENUE, SUITE 301

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19125-4300

574.631.0694

rreyes@stmarytx.edu

always been for me a time of preparation, yes; but it is also one of great joy. God asks not for our sadness, but for our conversion. Blessed be Our God! Our loving God calls us to joyfully spring into Lent, echoing the glad 'yes' of Mary. This glad 'yes' is a year-round effort, no doubt; but, it requires some fine-tuning every now and again. In my own life, as the year rolls by, I often add a qualifier to my 'yes': "Yes, Lord, but..." Don't we all? Lent is a time for conversion, for paying attention to what really matters. It is a time to remove those qualifiers and come to the Easter banquet offering our God the unqualified 'yes' of our hearts.

SPRING TRAINING

Removing those qualifications is no simple task. It takes practice and concerted effort; it is often difficult. Lent is the time to get our 'yes' muscles into shape; it's like Spring training for the soul. The hallmarks of this inner conversion are known to many of us as the traditional Lenten practices of fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. These disciplines come out of the Church's age-old wisdom and offer us a chance to peel away the distractions and get to the core of our hearts: hearts created by God in love, out of love, and for love. Of course, we Marianists have the benefit of Blessed Father Chaminade's unique lens on these disciplines, attending to the works of our minds, our hearts, and our hands. In the coming weeks, I invite you to journey with me and the entire community of Marianist Lay Communities in North America in exploring these and other great gifts of our Marianist spirituality for this Great Season of Lent.

May a spirit of true conversion be in your hearts. May you and your communities turn with Marian acuity to the needs of our world and our Marianist Family – to the things that really matter. May our 'Being as Community' enrich our Church and our world. Happy Lent!

Assuring you a remembrance in my prayers, and asking God's every blessing upon you, may I remain:

Faithfully Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rudy". The signature is written in black ink and has a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Rudy Reyes Jr.