

Characteristics of Marianist Education

Introduction

Members of the Society of Mary (Marianists) discerned that a contemporary articulation of the common elements of the Marianist educational tradition was needed. To this end, serious research, consultation, and discussion were undertaken involving lay and religious educators who minister in Marianist educational institutions throughout the world. The process was guided by the lived reality of Marianist spirituality, springing from the foundational charism of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, founder of the Marianist Family (Society of Mary, Daughters of Mary Immaculate, and the Marianist Lay Family.)

Marianist educators (administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, and alums) at all Marianist sponsored schools strive to:

- Educate for formation in faith
- Provide an integral, quality education
- Educate in family spirit
- Educate for service, justice, and peace
- Educate for adaptation and change

These characteristics of Marianist education are offered to all Marianist educators. All are invited to work together in the Marianist tradition, adapted to the present times and, more concretely, to the practices current in the daily life of Marianist centers of education.

God calls us as educators to extend the reign of God in the work through the Church. Education serves the Church by evangelizing, working to transform the world and its people, inviting them to a deeper following of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Alert to the signs of the times and in faith to Marianist traditions, we consider ourselves “in a permanent state of mission . . . forming persons and communities in a lived faith expressed in service responsive to the needs of the times.”

Marianist education aims to sow, cultivate, and bring to fruition the Christian spirit in the human race. For this reason, in all our educational institutions, formation in faith and the animating of Christian communities are truly priorities.

Consonant with the tradition of the Catholic Church and of Marianist education, we believe that each person has been created in the image and likeness of God. Basically good, the human person is also weakened by sin and must acquire good habits through personal discipline. Nonetheless, human worth is inherent and not reducible to occupation or achievement. Endowed with intelligence and freedom, a person becomes more fully human by serving and loving in community. These fundamental principles regarding the human person ought to inform all Marianist educational activities.

Grounded in this faith-filled view, the Marianist tradition invites a prudent openness to social and cultural change in the world, following the maxim of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade; “For new times, new methods.” We encourage the creative imagination. Facing new times, while relying on faith benefits all those who work in Marianist education, including those of other faiths, because it so deeply respects what is most human in students and in one another. In being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, we live with and for the people of our time and share with them their joys and hopes, their anxieties and sufferings.

This simple faithfulness to the gospel and Marianist educational traditions serves the church by making available to all the energy and grace that springs from the Marianist charism. We hope thereby to revitalize our educational institutions and our personal presence, to offer people what Blessed Chaminade believed that Mary offers to all our lives: “a reason for us to have hope . . . support, help, and a renewed strength.”

In this vision and this ministry we give encouragement and confidence to each other. Open and attentive to new approaches, each educator keeps Marianist education up to date by his/her contributions. Even further, as lay and religious Marianist educators, we are called to offer to those around us the testimony of our lives, to live in such a way that we vigorously revivify the message of the reign of God, already present in the midst of our world, but the fullness of which is yet to come. We hope that this renewal and putting into practice of the characteristics of Marianist education will be a blessing for all those whom we serve in our educational communities.