

+ 14 March 2012

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the peace of the Lord and the love of His Mother be with you!

For the past few weeks, we've been meditating on the Lenten disciplines of the Church: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. This week, we take up the last. If fasting is about making space, and prayer is about filling that space with things of God, almsgiving is about offering ourselves out of love for a world in need.

BACK TO THE GARDEN

Last week, we meditated upon the Lord at Gethsemane, turning to his Father in prayer. The 'rest of the story' is familiar to us: Jesus returns to find that his disciples have fallen asleep. He says to Peter, "Could you not stay awake with me for one hour?"

Imagine how tired, afraid, and confused the disciples must have been. They probably tried to follow the Lord's example, but they couldn't keep their eyes open.

ONE HOUR

We've noted that the Church uses the Lenten disciplines to focus itself on the things that really matter. Jesus made space for God by fasting for 40 days. He prayed that his mind, heart, and body might be filled with the things of God. He did all of this so that he might offer the greatest of alms: his body on the cross.

When the Lord asks his disciples to stay awake and watch with him, he's asking them to learn from what he is about to do. Jesus is teaching us how to recognize need and to respond to it; how to serve and how to love.

KEEPING WATCH

We exist as Marianist Lay Communities solely in our relating to one another: in physical or spiritual community, in communal prayer, in service to the marginalized, in unity of purpose. In the same way, our national and international organizations of Marianist Lay Communities are not voluntary membership organizations, they are an expression of the reality of our being Marianists.

Our Marianist Family follows the call of Christ and the example of his Mother, addressing the needs of the world through the works of our minds, our hearts, and our hands. The [Marianist Lay Network of North America](#) (MLNNA), for example, provides welcome, formation, and connection to nearly 2,000 lay Marianists in three countries. More broadly, the MLNNA's annual support of the [International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities](#) enables our global lay Marianist family to gather in assemblies, respond to the important questions of our

Marianist life, and when the need is particularly great – as it was for our brothers and sisters in Haiti and Japan in recent years – to provide much needed resources to those in need.

For some years now, lay Marianists across the world have contributed one hour's wage in support of their national/continental organizations. The practice is quite significant. As the Lord asks us to keep watch with Him for one hour, I ask each of you to prayerfully consider [offering one-hour](#) of your wages to the MLNNA during Lent (details below). Even if you cannot contribute financially, I ask you to offer one hour of prayer or service in thanksgiving for our Marianist life and for the needs of our world.

TIME TO WEIGH-IN

We've considered that Lent is spring training for the soul – getting our 'yes' muscles into shape. As we approach the mid-point of our Lenten journey, it's time to 'weigh-in,' recommitting ourselves to the things that really matter. Like the Lord asked his disciples to stay awake with Him for one hour, let us keep watch, like Mary at Cana. May we keep our eyes open to notice the critical, unmet needs of a world deeply in need and have the courage to respond to them with the gift of ourselves in love.

Assuring you a remembrance in my prayers, offering my sincere gratitude for your prayerful witness to our Marianist life, and asking God's every blessing upon you, may I remain:

Faithfully Yours in Christ,

Rudy Reyes Jr.

p.s. This is the fourth (of eight) installments in our Lenten Series which will conclude on Easter Wednesday. I welcome and invite your feedback and conversation; please 'weigh-in' with your thoughts, financial support, and prayer!

Rudy Reyes Jr.

President

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*Faites ce qui est nécessaire pour obtenir et maintenir la paix de l'âme;
cherchez Dieu seul et son bon-plaisir.*

-- B. Guillaume Joseph Chaminade

Please consider SUPPORTING THE MLNNA.

Individual contributions to the MLNNA are tax-deductible in the United States and support the work of the MLNNA in welcoming, networking and assembling lay Marianists and Marianist Lay Communities. Contributions made as a community are welcomed and encouraged (please supply individual names and amounts for tax receipts and acknowledgements).

Contributions SUPPORTING THE MLNNA may be made:

- . **Online.** Give through our charitable giving partner, [JustGive.org](https://www.justgive.org) ([click here](#)).
- . **By Mail.** Send checks payable to "MLNNA" to:
Marianist Lay Network of North America
The Marianist Centre
1341 N. Delaware Ave, Suite 301
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19125

The Marianist Lay Network of North America (MLNNA) is an organization of Marianist Lay Communities, an international Roman Catholic private association of the faithful. The MLNNA, together with the Society of Mary and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, form the Marianist Family Council of North America which sponsors the [Marianist Lay Formation Initiative](#) (MLFI) and the [Marianist Social Justice Collaborative](#) (MSJC).

Thank you for SUPPORTING THE MLNNA.