



# In Alliance with Mary

The Fourth International meeting of Marianist Lay Communities was recently held in Bordeaux from July 23 to July 29, 2005. At this meeting delegates and observers from 24 of 28 countries attended. Also in attendance were members of the World Marianist Family Council. Members of the council were able to dialog with participants about the role of Family Councils and how communication between the World Council and National Family Councils can be strengthened.



Another example of the interaction between the branches of the Marianist family was the meeting with the Brothers of the Horizon group. We spent an afternoon dialoging about the characteristics of a Marian Church and how we were challenged to work toward these characteristics.

A significant development of the meeting was the creation of the new Region of Africa. Delegates from Africa petitioned the entire assembly to create a new

region, which places a representative from the MLC's in Africa on the leadership team. The petition was unanimously accepted by the assembly and then celebrated later with Eucharist.

The Marian spirit was definitely at our international meeting. The meals eaten together with great French wine and food; the spontaneous cultural celebrations that grew out of the meals; the wonderful multi cultural celebrations of prayer and liturgy, a common shared vision of the role of Mary in our lives. All of these elements combined to create a deep unity of purpose among delegates and observers.

**Anthony Garascia MLC**  
President  
International Team



## **We Celebrate a the publication of a new Document, In Alliance with Mary.**

During the week together delegates worked on their understanding of who Mary is for Marianist Lay Communities in the 21st century. The result of this reflection is the document entitled **In Alliance with Mary**. This document, along with the members of the new International Team, can be found on the web site [www.marianist.org](http://www.marianist.org) under the section Marianist Lay Communities.

There is a challenge from **In Alliance with Mary** that can animate our own community life. Paragraph 31 of the document tells of our hopes to be an evangelizing force in our world and in our Church.

This Alliance is an evangelizing instrument through which we commit ourselves to:

- Construct from our witness a model of family life that respects the gifts and vocations of each member and where responsible freedom will be the fruit of our love;
- Develop egalitarian communities, in which all are accepted without exclusion or discrimination;
- Reaffirm our preferential option for the youth;
- Take part in the social, cultural, political and economic life in our areas, helping to build the Reign of God in our daily tasks, calling for peace and justice, and denouncing all situations that oppose them;
- Assume our work as an important part of life's experience where the

opportunity is given to us to witness to our understanding of life;

- Care for life and work for the integrity of Creation;
- Share with simplicity and humility expressions of faith and community devotion.

May the Spirit of God continue to inspire all of us to live out our Marian ideals.

## **A New International Team and a special thanks to our former president Carlos Beneitez and to Iñaki Barrio**

With gratitude we give thanks to the wonderful work of Carlos Beneitez and Iñaki Barrio, who have served on the International Team for eight consecutive years. Each of them have dedicated countless hours and energy to promote the mission of Marianist Lay Communities world wide. I count them as dear friends and thank them for their faith, friendship and spirituality.

At this past international meeting a new team was elected to serve the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities. The team is comprised of Tony Garascia, (USA), president; Isabella Moyer, (Canada), representative of North America; Lorna Mueni, (Kenya), representative of Africa; Ezequiel Reggiani, (Argentina), representative of America Latin; Ana Blazquez, (Spain), representative of Europe. Please keep all the team members in your prayers as each of us seeks to promote the mission of the international organization. The new team is dedicated to living the spirit of paragraph 26, from **In**

**Alliance with Mary**, which states: "We seek, as members of the MLC, to imitate the virtues of Mary in our personal and community lives and place ourselves at the service of the specific society in which we live. Our Marianist identity leads us to witness by our presence and hard work that our Marian devotion, according to Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, is a dynamic devotion that goes beyond ritual and affection; it propels us to mission".

## **We Embrace the Challenges of the Future**

The following challenges were ratified by delegates to the recently concluded international meeting. These challenges represent the direction and focus of the next four years and become for the team directions for our future meetings. As the new team prepares to meet for the first time I want to share with all of you the specific challenges that I hope all MLC's world wide will embrace as priorities.

1. Take advantage of the Web as a privileged means of expression, communication and evangelization platform in the world.
2. The International Team should establish a working group to integrate the documents from the past four Convocations into one document that would be the starting point for a guide about lay life.
3. Give an impulse to the MLC international dimension and to its commitment in building God's kingdom; in this line, promote the Twinings as a means of knowing and helping each other





between communities that work on the same missionary scope.

4. New models of relationship within the Marianist Family: How to face our mission the next decade in countries in which religious vocations have diminished and the number of lays is growing. Define steps to be made for the development of a strategy of mutual support and growth.

5. The International Team should identify and communicate a theme or focus for the MLC's each year and encourage local communities to participate through a letter with suggestions about how to carry out the theme, through both prayers and actions.

6. Promote and create ways for mutual exchange of information, documentation and experience... among the MLCs throughout the world as a mean to mutual knowledge and enrichment and to reinforce the family links that join us.

7. Preferential option for the youth, especially in relation to the Marianist world: Work on the aim of creating ways of promoting young vocations that can be inserted into our Marianist Family.

8. The International Team should promote the creation of a reflection group with an international composition: Process: To launch the proposal. If there are people interested, they would work by email. They would choose the topics to reflect on and work on them; i.e.: "Present and future of the MLC".

9. Formation School of Marianist Leaders at a Regional Level: To create an international commission with the purpose of

preparing leaders that give an impulse to the mission in our society, focused preferably on the poorest. This should allow us to be present as lays and open new possibilities of spreading our Marianist charism in our communities as well as in our environment. Be aware of how indispensable formation is in our development as MLC.

10. For future International Meetings, all costs, including trips, should be prorated among the delegates. Regional Meetings would also consider this procedure.

• Recommendation:

The International Team should work with the World Council to establish a collaborative global project to address global offences to justice, such as poverty, hunger, and water scarcity.

**Accountability**

As we prepare to meet this November, 2005 in Rome to take up the challenges of the future, your international team makes a promise to be accountable for our decisions and for implementing the above challenges.

Let us all dedicate ourselves to the task of promoting and building Marianist Lay Communities. If it is your tradition to say the Three O' Clock Prayer, please keep the entire global lay Marianist Family in your prayers.

I close this letter with the prayer for the Mariansist Family by Jose Maria Arnaiz, SM.

**Our Father, we pray for our Marianist Family with all its weakness and all its wealth. Look upon us with kindness; it is our mother and our family. Give it your grace so that it may become what it longs to be.**

**A family that fosters life and enthusiasm, in which all can express what they think and feel, what they believe and desire; a community of freedom.**

**A family in which all can pray in their own language, develop and cherish their own culture, appreciate the heritage and history in which they feel at home: an incarnated community, one that knows the paschal mystery and experiences a new Pentecost.**

**A family of which people will say: "See how they love one another", rather than "See how well organized they are": a living and growing community.**

**Marianist Family, you are small but growing, fragile but full of hope Hesitant but believing. Lift up your eyes and see: Jesus and Mary are always with you. Amen.**

