



Lay Marianists and the Spiritual Life

Lay Marianists grow in prayer and faith.

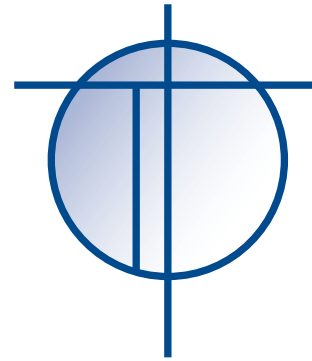
Lay Marianists seek to embody the Marianist charism in their lives and to respond generously to God's call, as Mary did. They are concerned about self-knowledge, discernment, and spiritual growth. They make an ongoing commitment to personal and community prayer, listening to the Word, openness to spiritual guidance, and celebrating their faith through the Eucharist. This commitment increasingly transforms their lives and impels them to realistic and effective service to and action for others.

Lay Marianists' Contribution to the Marianist Family

Lay Marianists give time and talent to the Marianist Family and give treasure to support the lay organization.

Lay Marianists are consciously connected with Marianist Family groupings in their local area or beyond. They see themselves as members of a "community of communities." They are active contributors to lay communities and their development or to one of the many education, formation, or justice ministries of the Marianist Family on a local, regional, national, or global level. Communities are self-supporting and determine a means of sharing community expenses. Lay Marianists, either as individuals or as community members, contribute as appropriate to the general expenses of Marianist organizations, in particular the Marianist Lay Network of North America (MLNNA) and the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities (IO/MLC).

These seven characteristics of Marianist Lay Communities and Lay Marianists tap into the deep wisdom acquired from a 20-year journey that birthed the International Organization of MLC, the Marianist Lay Network of North America (MLNNA), and the ecclesial recognition of Marianist Lay Communities as a Private Association of the Lay Faithful. The sources of this document reflect the rootedness in our past, the conversations of the present, and our vision for the future.



*The full titles and texts of the source documents
can be found at www.clm-mlc.org.*

To obtain copies of this brochure, contact

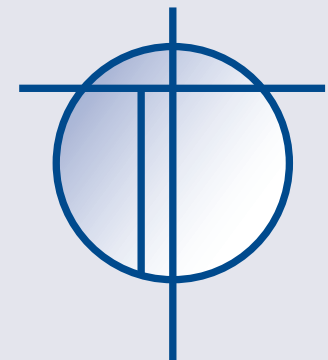
MLNNA

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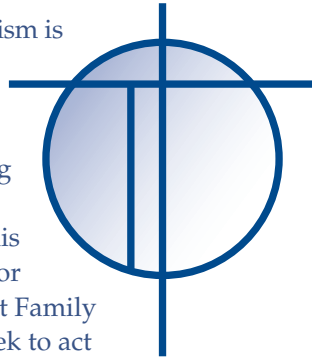
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Characteristics of Marianist Lay Communities & Lay Marianists

More than 200 years ago, in France, the Marianist Family was founded by Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, Venerable Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, and Venerable Marie Thérèse de Lamourous. Today, these founders offer a spirituality and witness through which Christians can live out their baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to transform the world into his image.



At the heart of the Marianist charism is Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus, and her role in the mission of her Son. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Chaminade experienced being formed by Mary to continue her mission of bringing forth Christ in his person and message as good news for the world. Members of the Marianist Family identify with this experience and seek to act personally and to build institutions and organizations in ways that embody that same insight. The Marianist Family gathers, prepares, and sends members to bring about the reign of God, experienced as human dignity, freedom, justice, solidarity, and reconciliation for all persons.



Entering into the mystery of the Incarnation is the source of spirituality and discipleship for the Marianist Family. Members continue to discover new ways to enliven and embody the five characteristics that manifest the charism in everyday life: faith of the heart, permanent mission, Mary's inspiration, community-in-mission, and discipleship of equals. These manifestations of the charism can be seen in laity and in vowed religious.

Formation for mission takes place through belonging to and actively participating in a Marianist community or a communal environment created by Marianists working together, for example, to advance social justice, education, or spiritual development. Members grow through openness to the influence of the community and by acting in ways that create communities that motivate, provide direction, and act in faith for social transformation. In this way, members of the Marianist Family are called by God, formed by Mary, and sent for mission.

Characteristics of Marianist Laypersons and their Communities

Among those called to the Marianist Family are laypeople who experience the spirituality and approach to ministry of the Marianist charism as their way of living out their baptismal commitment and "being Church." Consistent with the

characteristics manifested by all members of the Marianist Family, there are seven characteristics of lay Marianist life that have been identified and elaborated by the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities. They are also consistent with the recognition of Marianist Lay Communities by the Catholic Church as a Private Association of the Lay Faithful with international rights.

Lay Marianists and the Marianist Charism

Lay Marianists grow in understanding of the founders of the Marianist Family and how the Marianist charism is a gift both to the Church and to the larger world.

Marianist Lay Communities and individual Marianist laypersons are part of the worldwide Marianist Family inspired by the charism of its founders. Ongoing study of the founders, their spirituality, and their life choices, shapes the missionary vision of lay Marianists and challenges them to devote their personal and community lives to actions that would result in a more just and compassionate world.



Lay Marianists and Mary

Lay Marianists grow in understanding of and relationship with Mary.

Lay Marianists discover Mary in the Scriptures and are inspired by her Magnificat to care for the poor and to reject violence. Their approach to works of mercy and justice is framed by Mary's attitudes of listening to the Word of God, openness to God's spirit, acceptance of the will of God, simplicity, hospitality, and fidelity. They ally themselves with Mary in her faith, in her love for Christ, and in her mission. Lay Marianists ordinarily express their commitment of bringing Christ to the world in the midst of their community or other public setting.

Lay Marianists and Community

Lay Marianists help build and sustain communities of faith and hope.

In a time characterized by competitiveness, violence, and individualism, communities provide a visible place that

responds to the needs of ordinary men and women to reflect in depth on their faith and to sustain their hope for the future. Members are engaged with each other and share values they hold at the center of their lives. For Marianists, communities are the favored means of evangelization and effecting social transformation. At their best, they are, as Chaminade dreamed, a "spectacle of saints" and a sign that the Gospel can be lived in all its vigor. Lay Marianists invite and help people build communities that increase sensitivity to the needs of others and sustain the involvement of members in a common mission and a variety of ministries.



Lay Marianists and the Mission of Jesus

Lay Marianists embrace the mission of Jesus that is expressed in Scripture: "Do whatever He tells you." (Jn. 2:5)

Lay Marianists, as individuals and as communities, express their commitment in dedicating their time, skill, energy, and resources to a variety of activities that promote justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. They work together with other parts of the Marianist Family, lay and religious, in these shared, persistent priorities. They strive to hand on their faith through forming communities and community animators. As laity, they express their commitments in their family lives, in their workplace, and in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of their society.

Lay Marianists and the Church

Lay Marianists grow to be a prophetic sign within the Church.

Lay Marianists and Marianist Lay Communities, together with the entire Marianist Family, are a gift to the Church and a prophetic sign of its Marian dimension. All around the world, they offer this gift to church organizations, activities, and parishes in a special way whenever their way of life and ministry reflects values for inclusivity, equality, participation, dialogue, solidarity, sensitivity, affection, patience, and courage. Differences within the community are recognized, appreciated, and reconciled in "one great family."
