FROM ALL FOUR CORNERS OF THE COUNTRY:
THE TRIENNIAL LAY ASSEMBLY

Like a magnet, the Marianist Lay Network of North America drew more than 130 participants — from all four corners of the country — to its triennial continental assembly from July 24-27 at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio. Rudy Reyes, Jr. serves as president of MLNNA. Eileen Kleffner and Paul Combest co-chaired the event.

The group was welcomed by Thomas M. Mengler, president of St. Mary’s, and Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller shared a letter of welcome as well.

On opening night, participants shared stories about their introduction to Marianist life. “The stories were usually one of invitation, indicating how vowed members invited them to a dinner or an event — welcoming them to the Marianist Family,” said Matt Dunn, MLNNA communications coordinator. “The message for the weekend was that Lay Marianists must continue to make that same invitation.”

Keynote speaker Gregory Pierce challenged participants to meet people where they are and to use language they are familiar with in talking about the Marianist Family.

Throughout the weekend, participants shared stories about living the charism; interacted with 18 Marianist ministries represented at conference booths; and visited local ministries including the care center at the Marianist Residence, Bro. Cletus Behlmann’s art studio, and the Marianist sisters’ community. Members of the sisters’ Provincial Council attended the assembly.

A key session of the assembly was the presentation of a strategic plan and leadership proposal that will take MLNNA into the future. “Participants reacted full of energy, eager to learn more and to step up to the plate to get involved,” said Matt.

The event was peppered with creative touches, including a prayer service featuring blended water from around the country to remind participants of their common baptismal call, said Matt. Sunday Eucharist featured bilingual music by the St. Mary’s campus ministry. Fr. Al McMenamy and Fr. Rudy Vela co-presided. Read Bro. Jack Ventura’s homily.
“The energy generated from gathering as family was electric — and so is our spirit of mission,” said Diane Browne, one of more than 50 first-time participants. “Mary has called us and our Lay Marianist family is ready to follow her!”

"Over the next three months, we will elect new leaders who will assume the work of fulfilling the strategic plan presented at the assembly," said Rudy. "Please join us in prayer for the growth of our family as the Marianist laity respond to God’s call to leadership."

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