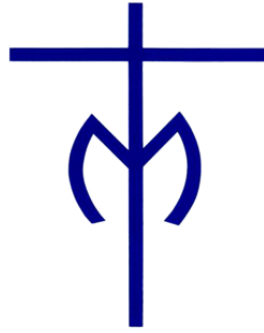# PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MARIANIST ADMINISTRATION

SOCIETY OF MARY (MARIANISTS)

October 2, 2013

PRESENTATION

Throughout recent decades, we have been developing within the Society of Mary the task of reflecting upon the characteristics which are proper to the nature of the SM and the "Marianist" way of conducting our apostolic mission. This endeavor has been undertaken as a response to a concern about how to transmit our charismatic identity into the future. We cannot forget that, if we should lose this identity, we would lose our *raison d'être* for being in the Church and in the world.

In the past, this transmission has been achieved almost by a sort of "osmosis," from one religious to another, and from one generation of religious to the next. In recent years, due, on the one hand, to the composition of the personnel of the Society and its distribution (diminishing number of religious in traditional Units, while growing in new cultures and countries) and, on the other hand, the growing participation of laywomen and laymen in our mission, as they assume positions of responsibility, this "osmotic transmission" has weakened considerably. We need, therefore, to make use of other resources: documents, meetings, formation seminars…

In light of this, and for the same purpose, this present document, approved by the General Council, presents the grounds upon which is based the proper way to "administrate" in the Society of Mary and the traits that characterize it. It uses the term "administration" in its broad sense. As such, it is not limited to the realm of economics and finance, but goes beyond to embrace the set of resources, both human and material, with which the Society lives and carries out its mission. It is, therefore, a comprehensive document – as is our intention – to assist in the formation of those who exercise some responsibility in this domain, be they religious or laypersons.

May St. Joseph, under whose patronage the Society of Mary, following the tradition started by our Founder, has always entrusted its administration, accompany us and help us remain faithful to what the Lord expects of us, for the good of God's Kingdom.

Manuel J. Cortés, SM
Superior General

God is perfectly able to enrich you with every grace, so that you always have enough for every conceivable need, and your resources overflow in all kinds of good work. (2Cor 9:8)

Divine Providence has not abandoned us…we are living from day to day, undoubtedly so that we might place all our trust in God.
(Chaminade, October 31, 1837)

Acknowledgements

Introduction

The idea of articulating the principal elements of Marianist Administration germinated in the deliberations of the 33rd General Chapter of 2006 of the Society of Mary (SM). Among its actions, the Chapter approved and published the "*General Finance Directory on the Use and Administration of Material Goods in the Society of Mary*" as well as called the Society to an increased knowledge of, and a living out of, its charism.

In the last twenty-five years or so, significant work has been done to develop contemporary resources that articulate the ideals of Marianist spirituality and the manner of Marianist education and pedagogy so as to make them more accessible. These resources have become critical in deepening the understanding of the charism and putting it into practice throughout the Society.

Yet, in this same time frame, with the exception of the *General Finance Directory*, there has been less development on the ideals of Marianist administration, particularly administration associated with the Third Office—the Office of Temporalities. To encourage this development, a process of study and dialogue was undertaken to establish a set of characteristic elements of Marianist administration.

Dr. Steven Neiheisel, a professor of Political Science with a specialty in administration and leadership, was invited to conduct the primary research. He initiated the inquiry into the characteristic elements of Marianist administration in the fall of 2007. The result of his research, *Characteristics of Marianist Administration[1]*, was published in June 2009. This paper was distributed to the Unit administrations for discussion and feedback. Likewise, the paper was discussed in the General Council and in the Temporalities Committee of the Society. It has also been used as a resource in workshops given to school and university administrators as well as the leadership training programs for the brothers of the Province of the United States.

The *Principal Characteristics of Marianist Administration* presented below is a redaction that incorporates Dr. Neiheisel's original work and the feedback received in the ensuing discussions. While the focus was to develop characteristics particularly associated with the Third Office, the Marianist system of administration is an integrated system that involves a diversity of participants. Hence, the characteristics articulated in this synthesis are understandably applicable beyond the Third Office.

The aim of this synthesis is fourfold: it is to be a basic articulation to help form and inform administrators in Marianist Communities, Unit administrations, and Marianist organizations; it is an aid in the mission of deepening and sustaining Marianist organizational identity; it is to be a basic resource in crafting and evaluating organizational policies and actions; and it is to provide a basis for further study and amplification.

While the *Principal Characteristics* would naturally have resonance in the other branches of the Marianist Family because of a shared charism, they have been developed out of the tradition, experience and documents of the Society of Mary. Their focus then is directed to the Society and the organizations associated with it.

The *Principal Characteristics of Marianist Administration* was ratified by the General Council on 22 September 2013.

---

[1] Steven Neiheisel, PhD, (2009), *Characteristics of Marianist Administration*, may be found in the documents section of the Society of Mary on www.marianist.org.

Origins and Contexts

The *Principal Characteristics* articulated here, as well as those developed in Dr. Neiheisel's work, are a synthesis. This synthesis is not understood in the scientific sense whereby two or more elements/components are brought together in a process to form something different from their original state. Instead, it is a synthesis which brings together parts so that a "whole" can be seen and grasped with a frugal clarity in such a way that it always communicates there is still more to be discovered in the "parts." To grasp a full understanding of the *Principal Characteristics* within such a synthesis, it is important to understand their origins and some key contexts that influence and shape their application.

First and foremost, the *Principal Characteristics* are rooted in a dynamic Catholic and Marianist religious heritage, a heritage that is discovered not only in the written word but also through lived experience. At their core are Jesus and his Gospel. They are rooted in a Catholic Christian anthropology which seeks to understand the relationship between God and humanity, the relationships amongst the people of God, and the relationship between people and creation.

They are most immediately derived from the Marianist charism, first given shape by William Joseph Chaminade[2] and his companions in the early nineteenth century. Tenets of the charism can be found in written form in the letters and writings of Fr. Chaminade, his associates and his followers. They are also found in the Constitutions and documents of the Marianist Family—the lay communities/sodalities and the religious congregations, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI) and Society of Mary (SM). Further, they can be discovered in the lived experience of those who profess to be Marianists. Sometimes this experience is present in written form and at other times it comes through an oral tradition.

As is understood from experience and from academic research, culture shapes the actuation of administrative practice[3]; so too is it with the *Principal Characteristics*. They are actualized in a particular time and place, shaped by the norms of the culture in which they are active. One expects to find variations of actuations throughout the Marianist world but not variations on the *Characteristics* themselves. For example, in many cultures, the normative manner of decision-making is largely reserved to the one in charge. The Marianist administrator in this situation would understand this norm but also seize on and operate out of the *principal characteristic of consultation* to arrive at major decisions.

The operational domain of management and administration is also shaped by the rule of law in each country. Naturally, each country's legal requirements would impinge upon the actuation of the *Principal Characteristics* to varying degrees. However, laws generally set minimum standards, leaving managers and administrators free to augment practice with higher ideals, thus creating space for the application of the *Principal Characteristics*.

There are two other contexts worthy of attention as a frame of reference for the *Principal Characteristics*: the progression of the science of management and administration and Catholic Social Teaching. Below are notes on these two contexts and the import they have on the *Principal Characteristics*.

---

[2] William Joseph Chaminade (1761-1850), was priest of the diocese of Bordeaux, France. He founded Marian sodalities (lay communities) and the Society of Mary. Along with Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, he founded the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI). Today, the Marianist Family includes the Marianist Lay Communities, The Daughters of Mary Immaculate, The Society of Mary, and the Alliance Mariale. Fr. Chaminade was beatified on September 3, 2000 by Pope John Paul II.

[3] See Geert Hofstede (1980, 2001), *Culture's Consequences*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

The Science of Management and Administration[4]

Since the onset of the Industrial Revolution much has been studied and written on the persons, processes, and organizations that marshal human and material resources for production. Over the last century and half, four significant movements can be delineated in this inquiry. These movements, while portrayed here as somewhat discrete, are less so in practice.

The first of these movements is ordinarily associated with the classicists of modern management theory (e.g. Henri Fayol, Frederik Taylor).[5] They generally viewed organizations and the means of production mechanically. They drew significantly from engineering, strategic planning and military practice. Administration from this perspective was characterized by centralized command and control functions that work to fine tune the mechanics of the system and its processes. Organizations are viewed as bureaucracies with clearly defined hierarchical structures and regulations. Effective production in this perspective is largely attributed to personal ability and function.

Taking inspiration from anthropology, sociology and psychology, the second movement focused on human relations and behavioral perspectives. It was characterized by a "people-centered" approach in which social relationships, social needs, and social attitudes are seen to critically condition productivity and organizational efficacy. From this perspective, managers focus on understanding the worker as a person, comprehending the social milieu within and beyond the workplace, enhancing worker satisfaction, and attending to workplace environment.

The third movement is rooted in the advent and aftermath of the Second World War, its complex logistical challenges and its corresponding massive efforts to rebuild nations and continents in the ensuing peace. Commonly referred to as the "management science approach", it was characterized by the understanding that rational decision-making is the key element in bringing together an organization's human and material resources in the most effective, productive manner. To this end, the myriad of variables of the organization, its management and administration, along with the production processes are discretely delineated and quantified so as to incorporate them into rigorous quantitative formulas. The resulting models provide the basis by which management makes its decisions.

In the early 1970s, social scientists and some economists began to promote the notion that many of the economically wealthy nations, particularly Japan and those of North America and Western Europe, were moving or had moved into a *post-industrial age*. They contended that these "new" age economies moved away from manufacturing and became increasingly dominated by services, technology, information, knowledge, innovation, and finance. In tandem with these economic shifts were also changes in lifestyles, social relationships, education, and work styles. Likewise, perspectives on management and administration had changed along with these developments.

Approaches to management in the *post-industrial age* (which still characterizes the time in which this document is written), are largely bereft of meta-theories. In this age, an organization is understood as a multifaceted system[6]. As such, they demand acute flexibility where a "one

---

[4] See and compare David Lewis (2001), *The Management of Non-Governmental Organizations*, Routledge, London. Daniel Wren (2004), *The History of Management Thought*, Wiley & Sons, Hoboken.

[5] Brother Guiot's *Manuel de l'Économe* and his subsequent book, *Guide de l'Économe* uses Fayol's definition of the functions of an administrator to frame his work.

[6] Chaminade's system of the Three Offices, replicated throughout the Marianist Family, is a "systems" approach in organizational structure. He recognized that in order for the mission to be accomplished, the

sized" management approach will not fit all systems or all parts of the systems at any given time or in any given place. This situational or contingency approach to management and administration can be characterized as eclectic — mixing and matching approaches as the circumstances warrant. It has also been a confirming force toward the understanding that management and administration approaches differ amongst different types of organizations.

For example, scholars have shown that while parallels may exist, not-for-profit organizations will require, because of their priorities and perspectives, a different set of management approaches than those employed in for profit organizations. Furthermore, within the sector, there may be more differentiation based on these priorities and perspectives, e.g. faith based not-for-profits versus secular not-for-profits. [7]

Also during this period, there had been a rise to prominence of the development of the organization's mission, vision and values as an orientation for its management and administrative practices. These "high level" principles were seen to provide direction for the organization in setting goals and in evaluating performance. Moreover, they would provide a differentiation between organizations operating in the same sectors.

As much as invention drove growth in the industrial age, innovation was (and remains) critical to success in this age. Inherent in the process of innovation is transformation and change. Emerging from this dynamic process is a new dimension to management and administration. By and large, managers/administrators up to this point were primarily concerned with "transactional processes and relationships" that focused on the "allocation" of human and material resources and their efficiency.[8] In today's environment, the transformation and change processes demand that managers develop strategic leadership skills to keep the organization attuned to the changing world and its emerging requirements, while promoting innovation to meet these requirements.

Catholic Social Teaching[9]

Catholic Social Teaching (CST), also referred to as Catholic Social Doctrine, is a collective body of teaching that seeks to identify basic truths of the human person, to foreground moral components of social relationships in society, and to orient individual and communal behavior in an ethical manner.

 CST is commonly identified as emerging with the publication of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (*Of New Things*) in 1891. The "New Things" that concerned the Pope and the Church at that time were the vast social changes wrought by industrialization, new forms of economics and political/governance systems. Subsequently and nearly paralleling the timeframe of the developments in management science, other encyclicals and Church documents have been published that have come to form the corpus of CST.

---

parts must work together in a unified structure flexible enough to accommodate diversity throughout its parts and members.

[7] See and compare Peter Drucker (1990), *Managing the Non-Profit Organization : Principles and Practices*, HarperCollins, New York.

[8] See Steven Neiheisel, PhD, (2009), *Characteristics of Marianist Administration*.

[9] See and compare Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2004), *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City; Peter J. Henriot, et. al. (1985), *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York; and Paul Devitt, "Themes of Catholic Social Teaching", Archdiocese of Canberra, http://www.cg.catholic.org.au/services/default.cfm?loadref=129.

While each of the documents in the corpus is primarily written to address the exigencies of the time in which it was written, taken together, common themes can be recognized throughout the corpus. The number and articulation of the themes vary depending on the author and the perspective emphasized. Delineated below are six of the most often repeated themes that pertain to the endeavor undertaken in this document.

- **Human Dignity, Human Rights and Responsibilities**

  The cornerstone of CST is that of the human person as created by and in the image and likeness of God. Because of this, a fundamental dignity inheres in all persons not because of their state in life, their accomplishments, their gender, or their ethnicity, but because they were created by God.

  Being created by God, each person possesses universal, inviolable rights. These include a right to life and a worthy standard of living, to cultural and moral values, to worship according to one's conscience, to choose one's state in life, to meetings and association, to emigrate and migrate, and to political and economic rights. These rights are coupled with duties, which include a reciprocity and respect of the rights of others, to mutually collaborate, to act for others responsibly, and to preserve life and live it appropriately.

- **Solidarity, Participation, Family Life and the Common Good**

  Created by God, the human person is naturally and fundamentally social. As social beings people are drawn into relationships with one another and engage a variety of human communities for support, protection, growth and development.

  As the foundation for building community, family life has a unique role to play and needs to be supported. It is in the context of the family that we first learn about ourselves, about our faith and how to foster social relationships.

  Solidarity calls us to recognize that by being created by God we form a single human family. As such, we are tethered one to another in society. Not only are we responsible for one another regardless of differences, but we also have a responsibility to foster interdependence, so that everyone achieves their potential in a manner that is respectful and free.

  As members of a human family, we have the responsibility and right to participate in decisions that affect our lives. We must participate in shaping our own destiny and the destinies of our communities.

  The common good is the collection of all the social conditions that make it possible for communities, groups of communities, and individuals to achieve their full human potential. This principle of the common good also underlines our inter-connectedness as a human family. In this context, the possession or action of an individual right and/or responsibility should not adversely affect the common good.[10]

- **Subsidiarity**

  The principle of subsidiarity holds that decision-making and responsibility should be delegated, with decisions being made at the level of the individual person or persons affected, or by those who have the responsibility for carrying out these decisions.

---

[10] See Paul Devitt, "Themes of Catholic Social Teaching", Archdiocese of Canberra, http://www.cg.catholic.org.au/services/default.cfm?loadref=129.

- **The Dignity of Work**

  At its core, human work is an extension of God's creation. This means it is much more than a way to make a living. As such, work has an inherent dignity requiring decent and fair remuneration, the ability to be sufficiently productive, and conditions that are conducive to the safety and health of the worker.

- **Stewardship**

  "All property has a 'social mortgage'. People are to respect and share the resources of the earth, since we all are a part of the community of creation." [11]

- **The Preferential Option for the Poor**

  The most vulnerable persons—those who are poor and marginalized—have a special place in society and require particular attention from the human family. For how the human community takes care of its most vulnerable members is a measure of its overall moral aptitude and the collective well-being of the community.

---

[11] Paul Devitt, "Themes of Catholic Social Teaching", Archdiocese of Canberra, http://www.cg.catholic.org.au/services/default.cfm?loadref=129.

Principal Characteristics

1. Marianist Organizational Culture

Organizational culture consists of the values and norms that give the organization character and purpose. Organizational culture shapes the behavior of members within the organization and provides value-content for goal formation and mission design.

Marianist organizational culture is that which gives the organization its specific, intentional set of values, giving shape to both what goes on inside the organization and its public face.[12]

Key Concepts in Marianist Organizational Culture

1.1 Mission

Fundamental to any Marianist undertaking, indeed to what it means to be Marianist, is *mission*. Simply put, the *mission* is an ever deepening communion with Jesus Christ, living his Gospel and in so doing, drawing others into the process as well. [13] The call to this *mission* is both personal and communal.

For Father Chaminade, being in mission and being a missionary are essential to the Christian life. It is a permanent process not limited in scope or to certain types of individuals or groups. For him, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the definitive example of what it means to embrace God's call to mission. She is the first to wholly accept Christ in her being and the first to bear him to others; she is the first *missionary*. With a deep sense of humility and dedication, Marianists and those associated with Marianist organizations follow her example of bringing Christ to the world.

Mission is the cause and purpose of all Marianist organizations.

1.2 Community

In Fr. Chaminade's understanding, mission was not a solitary task. People, as a reflection of the Trinitarian God, are relational beings. Drawing on one another for support, understanding, knowledge, love, and faith, interpersonal relationships are essential to human existence. He believed the most efficacious manner of mission was to gather people together in relational groups — in communities.

Using the first Christian communities of Jerusalem as inspiration, these groups, under the auspices of Mary, are to be a living spectacle of apostolic renewal and regeneration. They are marked by openness, cooperation, mutuality, collegiality and a sense of service. Moreover, they help their members to learn, sustain and deepen their faith, to come together to actively witness to this faith, and to act in mission.

---

[12] Steven Neiheisel, PhD, 2009: 3.

[13] compare Manuel J. Cortés, SM, 2007, *The Spirit of the Society is the Spirit of Mary*, Circular I: 10-11.

These communities are not homogeneous groupings. They include people from different segments of society and from a variety of professions and backgrounds. All are welcomed together for the purpose of the mission; and because the mission is common to all, all have the same rights and responsibilities. Each member participates in the community offering their talents and gifts. Direction of or a specific role in the community emanates not from standing or state, but from a person's gifts and talents as well as the call of the community. The diversity of membership, coupled with its inherent range of gifts and talents, creates a dynamic complementarity in the community which is a unique resource for mission.

Formed under the auspices of Mary and in their dedication to her, Marianist communities seek to assume her characteristics both individually and corporately. These characteristics include: a profound trust in God; a deep sense of humility; recognition that one's life is dedicated to service; openness to the Holy Spirit; a genuine sense of welcome and hospitality; compassion and solidarity; and a rootedness in time and place.

In coming together for the mission, Marianist communities strive to be of "one heart and one soul"; uniting to form a "new" family based on "the bonds of mutual friendship" and the Gospel. Thus they take on a distinctive family spirit which pervades all relationships and actions. [14]

It is in and through community that Marianist organizations work to fulfill the mission.

1.3 Engaging the World: being contemporary, being faithful

At the heart of Marianist Spirituality is Jesus, his incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection and the pursuit of an ever faithful union with him and his redeeming mission in the world: *…the most faithful imitation of Jesus Christ, Son of God, become Son of Mary for the salvation of all humankind.*[15]

For Fr. Chaminade, that Jesus would choose to become man, by being born of Mary, so as to redeem the world, is a great "treasure." In Jesus' "holy humanity" he becomes accessible, presenting a tangible way of engaging the world.[16] Marianists endeavor to emulate this engagement. The *Rule of Life* describes it in this way:

Like the Word Incarnate, we strive to be at one with the people of our time and to share their joy and hope, their grief and anguish. However, we remember the Lord's warning to remain vigilant so that the norms, customs, and habits of the world will not tarnish or weaken the power of his word.

This concern to be faithful witnesses is particularly needful for a community which wishes to bring to the world the liberation of Jesus Christ. The more attentive our watchfulness, the greater our apostolic boldness. [17]

To be contemporary in engaging the world, Marianists and those associated with Marianist organizations, need to be able to read the signs of the times and to respond to these with faithfulness and alacrity. It not only requires being immersed in the present but also demands courage, a keen flexibility and an abiding recourse to providence.

In this endeavor to be contemporary, Marianists and those associated with Marianist organizations become a living instrument in helping to make Jesus and his Gospel embraced and

---

[14] *Rule of Life*, §§9, 35
[15] *Constitutions of the Society of Mary* 1891: §6.
[16] William Joseph Chaminade, 1842(?), *Letters*, no. 1269,
[17] *Rule of Life* 2007: §11.

understood in the culture of the day, and showing that Jesus and his Gospel can be applied and lived in the world today.[18]

Marianist organizations always endeavor to be incarnated in time and place so as to ensure the fecundity of Jesus and his Gospel.

2. Marianist Organizational Structure

Organizational structure is the communicational and governance architecture of an organization. How an organization is structured determines how members communicate and interface within the organization as well as how power is disbursed within the organization and how the organization is governed. [19]

The Three Offices

The foundation of the two congregations—the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI) and the Society of Mary (SM)—presented Fr. Chaminade and his collaborators with the challenge of devising a system to structure the lives and work of the religious that committed themselves to the endeavor.

Critical to the efficacy of the system was to ensure that all the aspects (formation, common life, spiritual life, ministry, governance, etc.) of the individual congregations worked together to attain the objectives set out for each of them. It was a system that needed to be responsive to the times, linked to the spiritual nature of the congregations in form and function, and amply stable to allow the congregations to develop and mature. Commonly referred to over the years as the Three Offices, Fr. Chaminade briefly described the system in a letter to Pope Pius VII in these words,

The more characteristic spirit of these groups is to provide a special leader for zeal, another for instruction, and still another for work, while obliging the Superior of the Society to have all the members act together along these three lines without interruption.[20]

As with many charismatic aspects of the two religious congregations, the Three Offices had its experiential antecedents in the Sodalities and was firmly based in Cristo-centric spirituality[21]. Father Joseph Stefanelli, SM, describes the system and its spiritual basis in the following terms:

Rooted in Fr. Chaminade's conviction that all Christians are to be Christ at their proper moment and place in the world, the Offices enable the religious individually and corporately to participate in the threefold functions of Christ — to teach, to govern, and to sanctify — and in his threefold role of prophet, king and priest.[22]

---

[18] Compare John A. McGrath, SM, (2003), *Reading the Signs of the Times, Speaking to a Changing World*, AGSM, Roma: 9.

[19] Neiheisel, 2009: 6.

[20] Chaminade, 1819, *Letters*, no. 110; The contemporary titles of the offices, depending on language, are religious life (zeal), education (instruction), and temporalities (work)

[21] "…the three offices are explicitly identified as the three apostolic concerns of Christ in which every Marianist must be led to participate", Totten, John SM, 1968, *The Three Categories and the Aggiornamento*, §5.

[22] In Ambrogio Albano, SM (ed), *1994, Commentary on the Rule of Life of the Society of Mary,* North American Center for Marianist Studies, Dayton: 1173.

Given this profound spiritual foundation, the Office system goes beyond a mere administrative and governance structure. The system is meant to convey a "wholeness" about interaction and relationships,

The three offices of Religious Life, Education, and Temporalities represent three areas of concern that embrace the totality of the Society and each of its members, both in internal life and in apostolic mission. Each office is concerned with the formation, motivation, and direction of Marianists and those influenced by them.[23]

At each level of administration (General, Unit, and Community) of the SM, a leadership council ("team") is formed. It includes the religious superior and usually[24] at least three assistants who head the Offices. Although leadership/governance is shared, the assistants are subordinate to the superior. They are accountable to him (as well as one another). Yet, by definition, they have delegated responsibilities in the areas that fall to their respective offices and have the ability to act in their leadership role in concert with the superior and the council. With a steady focus on the mission, process and interaction in the council is marked by collegiality, consultation, consensus and subsidiarity.

While the Office system inherently allows for complementarity and specialization, the Offices are not discrete compartments. As they attend to their particular focus, they must do so with the objectives of the other two offices in mind. For example, if the Office of Temporalities is understood to attend to the relationships with the material and practical world, this focus is colored through and through by the concerns of the other offices.

By definition, the composition of the council is mixed. Under normal circumstances membership is balanced between brothers and priests.[25]

The Office system was also employed in the apostolic works of the SM. For the first 150 years or so of the Society, the community council was commonly the council for the apostolate, adding representatives from the work when required.[26] Practically speaking, this was a natural development in that most of the staff of the apostolate were religious. Philosophically, it was also efficacious in that the community was the key agent in the apostolate.

In recent times, with more lay collaborators and greater specialization at executive leadership levels, this has changed. As a result, the overt organizational use of the Three Offices is quite diverse in the apostolic works. That said, many features of the Offices, and the shared leadership system it provides, continue to be found in these apostolic works.

For Marianist organizations, the system of the Three Offices not only helps establish a Marianist identity for the organizations but more importantly, it is a powerful means for the organizations to pursue the mission.

---

[23] *Rule of Life,* §7.16.

[24] While the responsibility for the Three Offices has formally been attended to on the Councils and has been utilized as structure, throughout the history of the Society there has not always been a one to one correlation with regards to the assistants and the three offices (for more detail see Fr. Stefanelli's article on the Three Offices referenced above p. 1181ff.).

[25] If the council composition is not an even number, the imbalance on the Council between brothers and priests can only be by one RL 7.96).

[26] A practice followed even in the time of Fr. Chaminade. Chaminade, 1835, *Letters,* no. 781.

3. Marianist Organizational Processes

Organizational processes include communications and how organizations make decisions. For Marianist organizations, communication and decision-making processes go beyond mere efficiency and must support, promote and reflect Marianist values.[27]

3.1 Person-Centered

Although communications within the organization must promote mission effectiveness, the human dimension, the fact that members of the organization have personal needs and aspirations, must never be lost or relegated to unimportance. Communications within Marianist organizations must have a high regard for the person, valued through an emphasis on person-to-person communication.[28]

People, and their ever-deepening union with Jesus Christ, are central to the mission of the Society of Mary. The most efficacious manner for the mission is recognizing this and acting from it. All other means—structures, institutions, apostolates, rules, etc.—while necessary and appropriate, are mere instruments for the mission. Persons are the priority.

Human relationships in Marianist organizations are critical for person-centered organizational processes. To be mission oriented, these relationships must be bound by mutual understanding forged in personal accompaniment. They are framed with an appreciation that persons grow, develop and change. They are marked by mutual respect, patience, openness, trust, cooperation, attentiveness, courtesy, amiability, and collegiality.

3.2 Decision-Making

Marianist decision-making is consultative.[29]

Indeed, in the practice of a system of shared governance that the Three Offices engenders coupled with the Marianist priority of creating and sustaining community, consultation and dialogue are fundamental in ensuring the effectiveness and integrity of the system. It is a practice that began with Fr. Chaminade, himself. It is a practice that was not easy to form in some of his followers but nonetheless lamented when not practiced:

"…because I have the habit of consulting before commanding and of consulting especially those who are to carry out the command. You were surely permitted to believe that it would be thus with Father Caillet, who for the time being is representing me in Saint Remy."[30]

Participation is elemental in the functioning of community. Consequently, "active collaboration" of the members, "dialogue," and "communal discernment" "in planning, making, executing, and evaluating decisions" all have essential functions in this participation.[31] Consensus and subsidiarity are key features in the consultation and decision-making processes.

---

[27] Neiheisel 2009: 7.
[28] Neiheisel 2009: 7.
[29] Neiheisel 2009: 7.
[30] Chaminade 1824, *Letters*, no. 300. See also no. 301 in which Fr. Chaminade offers P. Caillet some instructions in the Marianist manner of authority.
[31] *Rule of Life,* 7.4; Neiheisel 2009: 7.

While there are different types of decisions[32] and while consultation is the primary means in Marianist organizations to process decisions, there are those decisions that cannot or should not be processed in a wide consultative manner due to the nature of the decisions. Those decisions that require limited or no consultation should be clearly defined and decided with a sense of accountability, faithfulness to the mission, respect for those involved, and a spirit of trust.

3.3 Flexibility

Marianist organizational processes must be flexible as Marianist organizations are called to respond to the signs of the times.[33]

For Marianists there are two crucial constancies: the mission and the universality of the mission (applicable in all times and in all places). As times change, to be able to pursue the mission effectively in an incarnated way, the processes and methods may need to be updated and or reformed. Adaptation and change is necessary in the manner of mission, but not in *the* mission itself, which is constant and universal.

The *Constitutions* of 1839, in addressing education, provides an apt description of this flexibility, widely applicable to Marianist organizational processes:

"The principles of education, well grasped, do not vary; but the procedures whereby these principles are applied and the methods of teaching must necessarily follow the progress of human society and be adapted to its needs and to its wishes. To admit invariability in the form and matter of instruction, would limit to a very short time the service and even the existence of an Institute devoted to education."[34]

Although the *Constitutions* set out the need for flexibility in response to changing times and human progress, it also cautions that care must be taken in embracing new ways:

"However, changes and innovation are made with prudent reserve. These are only deemed admissible in the cases when the methods in actual use have become inadequate, or when the advantages of the new procedures have been universally recognized."[35]

3.4 Community

Community as a process must serve the mission.[36]

Marianist organizations seek to develop and sustain themselves as "authentic communities." All who are associated with the organization join together to support one another in the mission of an ever-deepening union with Christ by living his gospel personally and communally.[37]

Yet, as powerful and efficacious community building is in a Marianist organization, it is not an end in and of itself. Community must also be outwardly focused—attentive to and engaging the mission: *The community itself is a primary instrument to fulfill our mission. We know that the*

---

[32] See *Rule of Life,* Chapter 7.
[33] Neiheisel 2009: 7.
[34] *Constitutions* 1839: §267.
[35] *Constitutions* 1839: §268.
[36] Neiheisel 2009: 7.
[37] See *Rule of Life:* §§5.5, 5.11.

quality of our life has greater impact than our words. Therefore, together we seek ways to bear living witness to our shared faith.[38]

3.5 The Service of Authority

The Cristo-centric focus of Marianist life and mission extends to the exercise of authority. Seeking to emulate Jesus, those who exercise authority in Marianist organizations strive to be of service in their leadership roles. They seek to help those accountable to them in their human and spiritual development and to accomplish the mission.[39] Their leadership is primarily a leadership of animation by offering encouragement, stimulation, and direction through word and deed[40]

This service of authority is marked by a commitment to delegation and is characterized by a sense of mutual responsibility, participation, subsidiarity and accountability.[41]

Fr. Chaminade gives the following counsel to Father Caillet on the exercise of authority:

"It might, in general, be said that the best superior is the one who makes his superiorship the least felt. Is it very easy to recognize the keystone? Let a superior support all the parts of an establishment, so that not a single one of them be shaky, but doubtless by an influence that is so mellow and at the same time so active that he will seem to be going beyond the mere fulfillment of duty."[42]

4. Marianist Organizational Assets

How an organization employs and allocates resources is a reflection of its values and culture. In healthy organizations, there is congruence between values and resource allocation. In other words, resource use and allocation is driven by stated values and are means to achieving the value-based goals of the organization.

4.1 Managing People[43]

In managing people, the Marianist administrator works from the heart, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each person under his/her care, and taking responsibility for their formation.

In Marianist organizations, high levels of performance are expected and accountability is clear; yet, with a sense of justice, people are managed with an understanding of the complete human person: everyone is a fragile human person – everyone is broken and sinful. Marianist administration allows for leadership from the heart.

Marianists view all life as a vocation and each person's life as a vocation. This sensibility calls on administrators to look to each of their employees as people serving the mission, not simply people

---

[38] *Rule of Life*: §67

[39] *Rule of Life*: §45

[40] Albano 1994: 46.

[41] *Rule of Life*: §7.1. Also, see Chaminade 1816, *Letters*, no. 76

[42] Chaminade 1824, *Letters*, no.301.

[43] Neiheisel 2009: 9-10.

performing tasks. It is the responsibility of the administrator to help each group member discern their gifts which point toward organizational contribution.

For the Marianist administrator, the management of people is much about the formation of persons. Employees should not be seen as merely instrumental to the task. Marianist administrators have a larger responsibility to the whole person, for their spiritual as well as their professional development. Administrators discern gifts, develop gifts, and deploy gifts.

The Marianist administrator respects openness, encouraging dialogue within the organization in order to strengthen it. He or she is not afraid of conflict, but is committed to working in partnership with all members of the organization in the family spirit.

4.2 Managing Financial and Material Resources

The material and financial resources of Marianist Organizations are assets of the Society of Mary and the Church in service of the mission.

Marianist administrators are to consider themselves stewards of financial and material assets, not owners. They are therefore called to use these resources prudently and justly to serve the mission.[44]

Practically speaking, this means Marianist administrators must value simplicity and austerity in the use of resources as well as total and open accountability.[45]

In order to build and maintain trust throughout the organization, it is particularly important to insure transparency in the management of material assets. Accountability is the highest responsibility of an administrator in Marianist organizations.[46]

4.3 Networking

Constitutively, Marianist organizations do not stand alone.[47] Although diverse, in their pursuit of the same Marianist mission, they naturally form a complementary network. Thus, they seek to stand together, support one another and be in an ever-developing web of solidarity throughout the world.

That which distinguishes our schools is the complementary institutions, which we strongly endeavor to establish everywhere...[48]

4.4 Option for Persons who are Poor

"The Reign of God and the experience of poverty cannot be separated. It is through and with the poor that God will establish the Reign."[49]

---

[44] Neiheisel 2009: 10. Also, see and compare *Rule of Life:* 28.

[45] General Finance Directory: 10.

[46] General Finance Directory: 12.

[47] Compare Chaminade 1833, *Letters*, no. 694.

[48] *Spirit of our Foundation* III, p. 106 §91 as quoted in Ferree 1966: 133.

[49] Cano-Manuel in Albano (ed) 1994: 930.

The call for Marianists and for all those associated with Marianist Organizations to live the Gospel of Jesus is a call to help establish the Reign of God in this time and place. Their ability to do so is directly related to their ability to embrace persons who are poor and to direct the material and personnel resources available for their well-being:

Seeking to be sensitive to the sufferings and misery of others, we cultivate a special love for the poor, share our resources with them, and offer our personal talents to work together with them. Thus, we commit ourselves to help build a society that is just and fraternal.[50]

5. Spiritual Assets

5.1 The System of Virtues[51]

For Fr. Chaminade the union/conformity with Christ was not to be an intangible goal. Transformation into the likeness of Jesus was tangible, reachable. As an aid to this transformation, as well as a companion process to the organizational system of the Three Offices,[52] Fr. Chaminade promoted a set of progressive spiritual "exercises" to practice and assume the virtues of Jesus.

The System of Virtues is developmental and includes: the virtues of preparation which assist in self-knowledge and self-discipline; the virtues of purification which assist in understanding and overcoming weaknesses and faults; and the virtues of consummation which promote a deep sense of inner freedom allowing for greater dedication and service in mission.

The virtues are interior principles, which not only guide our relationship with God, but also shape how we relate with our neighbors and with the created universe.[53] As such, they are important and fitting developmental and spiritual assets for Marianists and those associated with Marianist organizations.

5.2 St. Joseph as patron[54]

St. Joseph holds a place of privilege for Marianists. As the husband of Mary, he closely participates with her in God's plan of salvation in bringing Jesus to the world. Fr. Chaminade maintains that St. Joseph, in the intimate alliance he shared with Mary, dynamically enters into all the experience and fecundity of Mary's relationship with the triune God. As such, Marianist devotion to him naturally leads to a deeper commitment to Mary and to her son, Jesus. Fr. Chaminade regarded St. Joseph as the second patron of the Society.

Fr. Chaminade spoke often of St. Joseph to his followers in his conferences and homilies. For Fr. Chaminade, he is a rare example of humility, prudence, right action, patience, fidelity, and

---

[50] *Rule of Life*: 27.

[51] For further reference see Quentin Hakenewerth, SM (1986), *Growing in the Virtues of Jesus: The Marianist Method of Virtues for Use in Groups* and Quentin Hakenewerth, SM (1997), *The Grain of Wheat: Dynamics of Spiritual Growth.*

[52] See Stefanelli in Albano (ed) 1994: 1197

[53] See Hospital in Albano (ed) 1994: 1150.

[54] For further reference see Piero Ferrero, SM (2000), *San Giuseppe nella Tradizione Marianista*, Roma. and Javier Anso, SM (2006), *Go to St. Joseph*, SM Three Offices No. 115, Roma.

obedience to the will of God.[55] He exhorted his followers to emulate these attributes of St. Joseph personally and in community.

But it was St. Joseph's paternal care of the Holy Family that inspired Fr. Chaminade's ongoing devotion to St. Joseph, even to the point of taking his name and making it his own. Subsequently, each of the Superior Generals who have followed him, as was mandated in the Constitutions,[56] adds the name Joseph to his own given names. In so doing, he echoes St. Joseph's care of the Holy Family, as he assumes the office of Superior General and the ministerial care of the Society of Mary.

Through his attributes and his care throughout his life for Mary and Jesus, St. Joseph shows by example the way to attend to and sustain the mission. As such, St. Joseph is a model for personal and corporate action for all Marianists and those associated with Marianist organizations.

---

[55] Cf. *Notes d'Instruction* IV, p. 115.
[56] *Constitutions* 1839: §406.

References and for Further Reading

Written and spoken word of Fr. William Joseph Chaminade:

Ecrits et Paroles (1994), Edizione Piemme, Vercelli, Italia.

Chaminade Legacy (2006), North American Center for Marianist Studies, Dayton.

Documents of the Society of Mary:

Rule of Life of the Society of Mary (1981, 2007)
[http://www.marianist.org/PDFs/Rule%20of%20Life/SinossiTutti.pdf]

Albano, A. (ed) (1988) *Dictionnaire de la Règle de Vie marianiste*, CEMAR, Roma.
Albano, A. (ed) (1990) *Diccionario de la Regla de Vida marianista*, Imprenta SM, Madrid.
Albano, A. (ed) (1994) *Commentary on the Rule of Life of the Society of Mary,* North American
Center for Marianist Studies, Dayton

Characteristics of Marianist Education (1996)
[http://www.marianist.org/site.php?use=EdChar2]

Characteristics of Marianist Universities (1999)
[http://marianistuniversities.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Characteristics-of-Marianist-
Universities.pdf]

Constitutions of the Society of Mary (1839)

Ferree, W. (1963), *Seminar on Administration in the Society of Mary*, Marianist Publications,
Dayton.

Landolfi, P. (ed) (1964), *Texts of Capital Importance in a Synthesis of Father Chaminade's
Thought*, Marianist Publications, Dayton.

Ferree, W. (1966), *Texts of Capital Importance in a Synthesis of Father Chaminade's Thought:
Part II*, Marianist Publications, Dayton.

Hoffer, P. (1959), *Guide for Religious Administrators*, Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee.

Guiot, J. (1948), 'Manuel de l'Econome de la Société de Marie', AG, Nivelles.
Guiot, J. (1956), *Guide de l'Econome et de l'Administrateur de Collectivité*, Centre de
Documentation Scolaire, Paris.