

Retirement Celebration for Carol Ramey

October 1, 2016

Remarks by Bro. Tom Giardino

I am honored to contribute my remarks in the name of the Provincial Council and all of the brothers of our Province in celebration of Carol, who is, as one Lay Marianist observed to me: "One of the giants in the Marianist Family...an inspirational leader."

We have already heard many words about Carol and this is as it should be. Good words about a good person...who is good with words...in service of the Word made flesh through Mary...which is ultimately how we all got in to this in the first place!

Now, if you have ever been to one of Carol's presentations with those good words or PowerPoints or handouts, you know that she often speaks of dimensions of the Marianist charism in terms of Head and Heart and Hands. You may have noticed the new Heritage Display of our Founders when you came in. Beneath their photos are quotes from them, each of which contains the word "heart."

This display moved me to focus on Carol's heart, which has beat in unison with our founders for many years and the whole body of the Marianist Family is healthier because of it.

We hear from **Adèle**: "*O my God, my **heart** is too small to love you, but I will see to it that you are loved by so many **hearts** that their love will compensate for the weakness of mine.*" In the paradoxical way that virtue works in the world, this humility of Adèle and Carol has made an immense difference in so many hearts in the English-speaking world of the Marianist Family and beyond. And under the rubric that humility is truth, Carol made sure that Adèle's role had its proper place.

And speaking of healthy hearts, I do remember when Carol was doing her "grand tour" of the European Marianist sites with Fr. Larry Cada when she began this adventure. I was in Rome at the time and they joined us for Chaminade Day at a local Italian restaurant owned by a parishioner of our Marianist parish near the General Administration. We started out with five pasta plates and then Carol started counting the courses [but not the calories!] and we ended the twenty-three courses with a shot of grappa, all of which Carol joined right in with, in her humble way, of course.

Chaminade reminds us: "*Faith, especially faith of the **heart**, is a great gift of God; and it is for that kind of faith that we should always pray.*" It took a believing heart for Carol to jump into a new

work with the Marianist Resources Commission and then NACMS. She believed in herself and she believed in the vision of NACMS with her whole heart. And Carol communicated that vision, which elicited a **wholehearted** response from her staff colleagues over the years. Together with that staff which she empowered, NACMS has been the kind of work that Chaminade called “a work of God.”

Those are easy words to say, but Chaminade and Carol both realized that works of God still need **money**. Carol has had to struggle with budgets over the years, but I believe that she responded with a faith of the heart reminiscent of Chaminade’s words to Fr. Caillet at the beginning of the great work at St. Remy. Chaminade says: *“You are worried about money matters. I think I said in my last letter that Providence would come to your assistance, and I am firmly convinced that it will, provided you conduct yourself with wisdom and in a spirit of faith. After all, is this not the work of God? I want you to work only at what can really be called works of God.”* Carol believes that NACMS is a work of God. Now if only those Provincial Council folks believe that and send more money!

When you look at the gracious and kindly face of Marie Thérèse, you can easily hear her say: *“Let us limit ourselves, my good friend, to doing, each of us, what God would wish us to do.....in our house...let us take care to have the same purpose, the same spirit, and a union of hearts.”* What a wonderful confluence of words: “my good friend...the same purpose...a union of hearts.”

Carol has been our good friend over the years and in that same time, like the wise and practical Marie Thérèse, she has helped us to focus on the **purpose** of Mary’s mission to embody Christ in our world, which is worth the union of our hearts. There is immense power in a union of friendly hearts with a purpose. Carol was able to engage her colleagues on the NACMS staff in that purpose and that is why NACMS is the premier Marianist formation center on planet earth.

And this gives me the opportunity to thank those staff members, past and present, who are here, in particular Dorothy Keyes and Carolyn Perez who have recently retired.

And so, Carol, in the name of the Provincial Council and the brothers of our Province, I again offer you our **heartfelt** gratitude for bringing your head your hands and especially your **heart** to our common mission. Please accept this gift as a memento not only of this day, but of our long partnership that has been immensely fruitful for so many. You have made a difference in our lives.