



# The Marianists

## 200 years of Marianist Educational Endeavors

By **Bro. Donald E. Neff**

Fr. Chaminade was inspired to respond to the turmoil of his times by accepting Mary's challenge **to assist her in her mission of bringing Christ to the world** in a new and dynamic way.

The “challenge” to my life’s mission came from hearing a statement that **2/3rd of the world have never heard of Christ**. Little did I realize that this statement would have such an impact on my life! My challenge was to respond to this missionary “inspiration.” I was inspired to ask for admission into the Society of Mary to take the Good News to youth in whatever way the Lord had planned for me.

For one who had no desire to be a teacher but wanting to follow God’s plan for my life led me into the field of secondary education, school administration and finance. I spent a few years teaching in Ohio and Puerto Rico and at a **very early age was assigned to administrative positions** in Ohio, Puerto Rico, Florida and Australia in addition to having the opportunity to be a school Alumni and Development Director, Province Vocation Director and assist the Mission Office for 30 + years doing summer mission preaching throughout the mid-west and Florida in promotion of our works in India and Africa.

Mary's invitation to assist her in her mission of taking Christ to the world has been a driving force in my life and when I reflect that we, Mary’s family have had an opportunity to touch the hearts of millions of students over the past 200 years in 24 countries all I can say is: **THANK YOU MARY FOR THE INVITATION TO BECOME A MEMBER OF YOUR SPECIAL FAMILY.**

My greatest challenge and blessing was the opportunity to assist in implanting the Marianist Charism in Australia and promoting and encouraging others to participate in our international missionary endeavors.

In reflection with students on their experiences I am always pleased to hear them say they “enjoyed” their Marianist educational experiences, especially the familial atmosphere of the school and the Christ (Marian) centered, holistic, value orientated education appropriate to the times which stimulated them to want to make a difference in the world.

**Marianist Educator** yesterday, today and tomorrow must continue to be sensitive to the needs of the time and educate our students and their families in “creating a better world.” As Marianist educators we are called to be involved in and with community leaders in inspiring them and our students to understand and respond to social issues.

**Chaminade's mission (and ours) is to respond to Christ's challenge “to become one with Christ” and with Mary take the Good News to the world today and tomorrow.**

Donald E. Neff, S.M.