

Conclusion

(74) The Characteristics of Marianist Education are a gift to the Marianist educational community, but they also present us with a task. We receive the gift and undertake the task in solidarity with the whole human family.

(75) This initiative articulating the common elements of Marianist education calls us to work together toward “the enrichment of culture and the transformation of society in accord with the message of salvation.” (RL 72) The call, if heard, will summon forth our best efforts and bring us, eventually, the joyful and satisfying knowledge that the world is better because we have worked hard together. In this missionary spirit—“zeal,” as Chaminade would say—we strive to:

- educate for formation in faith
- provide an integral, quality education
- educate in family spirit
- educate for service, justice, peace and the integrity of creation
- educate for adaptation and change

(76) If these Characteristics of Marianist Education are to be authentic blessings, locally and globally, they must be more than

a momentary flash of light in the shadows of the present times. The present elaboration is not an ending but a critical moment in the journey from our origins. Our next steps will need to be continually and carefully discerned. The gracious promise in these Characteristics will endure, we believe, because they rest on the solid foundation of Marianist spirituality: faith, community and mission animated by Mary's cooperation with the Spirit of God.

(77) The orientation and dynamism of these Characteristics are a complement to the competence, collaboration and generosity of lay and religious educators in Marianist schools, universities and other centers. The testimony of gifted people united in mind, heart and action, with a long-term commitment to education will make a difference for the world in which we live. Chaminade often spoke of "preventive" apostolic action that called upon those involved to labor in faith and hope.^{xx} It is also a sign of our times.

The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.^{xxi}

(78) St. Pope John Paul II has said: "... it can hardly be hoped that children will one day be able to build a better world unless there is a specific commitment to their education for peace ... children have a right to a specific training for peace at school and in other educational settings."^{xxii} Federico Mayor, former Director-General of UNESCO, continues this theme: "Peace-building means taking preventative action The problem is that preventive activities attract neither recognition nor thanks We must be prepared ... to take preventive measures to stop problems from degenerating into conflict. In other words, to establish peace in hearts and minds. In culture."^{xxiii}

(79) A world of hopes and shattered dreams strongly pulls us to this costly venture of living out the promise of the Characteristics of Marianist Education. It is a venture that may require more than we

may think we can or perhaps want to give. Nevertheless, we have a tradition of giving more. In 1839, Chaminade wrote that “we too have been called, as we believe, by Mary herself, to assist her with all our might in the struggle ... of our times.” We—in the tradition of Marianist education—are called by Mary to fill these times with the Good News of Jesus Christ.