



CHARACTERISTIC OF MARIANIST EDUCATION:

## **Educate for Service, Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation**

**A. Inspired by the prophetic influence of Mary, proclaim the goodness and justice of God, denounce oppression and work for the common good.**

(53) Mary's Magnificat provides us with an imperative for justice. The Marianist school confronts society's problems with courage and seeks their solution with optimism and hope. As Christian and Marianist, the educational community announces the goodness, mercy and justice of God, while at the same time denouncing all that oppresses or degrades the human person, in particular regarding the status of women. We remember that Mary was forced into exile as an immigrant. We acknowledge and teach that the degradation of our environment is social injustice. Students learn to recognize and to name both justice and oppression through prayerfully seeking the will of God, through the thoughtful analysis of social conditions, and through personal and communal witness. In the prophetic spirit of Mary, teachers and students together read the signs of the times as constructive, competent critics and agents of change with a "permanent mission" to witness to the gospel message.

## **B. Promote a missionary spirit for the reign of God.**

(54) “We are all missionaries,” Chaminade said, “and we consider ourselves on a permanent mission” to witness the Good News of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission in a dynamic concern for the integrity of all of creation. This concern is manifest in how we treat each other in the classroom and in all school activities and interactions, in how we respect our local environment, through service and immersion programs and within the formal curriculum. Drawing on every available educational resource, we work to transform our schools into living testimonies to the new evangelization.

## **C. Attend to persons who are poor and marginalized.**

(55) The Marianist school lives the Christian commitment to persons who are poor. Our faith inspires abundant opportunities designed to motivate students to a life of solidarity with and service to the economically disadvantaged, the marginalized and those with physical or mental challenges. Staff and students work directly with and for the poor, developing relationships as well as programs of physical, emotional, economic, educational and social assistance. Both the formal and informal curricula of a Marianist school help students understand the causes of poverty and the roots of racial and ethnic injustice and seek to inspire them to undertake thoughtful forms of action that truly respond to these social and moral problems and promote systemic change.

## **D. Promote the common good.**

(56) Marianist education asserts the dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, and so encourages our students to see the value in all people, unconfined by local cultural norms. Beyond personal tolerance and acceptance, Marianist education seeks to enable students to recognize and respond to instances of sexism, racism and classism that seek to control us and to begin to understand the systemic nature of injustice. Marianist schools provide our students both the tools and the motivation to be promoters of the common good and agents of positive social change through civic engagement. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis

clearly draws the connection between the common good, the poor and care for the earth, our common home. Marianist education embraces this connection, instilling in our students a respect for the integrity of creation and a commitment to environmental justice.

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Pope John Paul II committed all of the over 300,000 social, caring and educational institutions of the Catholic Church to a concerted and priority strategy directed to girls and young women, and especially to the poorest, to ensure for them equality of status, welfare and opportunity ...<sup>xviii</sup>

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### **E. Walk the talk of justice within our own walls.**

(57) Proclaiming justice is important, but it is not enough. Justice in society requires institutions that treat people fairly. The Marianist school lives its commitment to human dignity, and to a just and peaceful society, by establishing just internal institutional structures, policies and procedures that promote interactions that are respectful, fair and collaborative. Our schools thus provide our students with powerful models of just institutions. We begin to create a world community by first building a distinctive Marianist community within our school environment, which includes making our schools affordable and accessible to the economically disadvantaged.

### **F. Promote programs of service designed to spark a passion for justice.**

(58) Because education itself is essentially communitarian, schools, including Marianist schools, naturally aspire to serve their local communities through a variety of activities. For Marianist schools, it is our faith that inspires us to service and motivates us to help our students hear and respond to God's call to serve others. Although service has inherent value, Marianist education further embraces it as an important pathway to solidarity with those in need. Service programs include intentional reflection as a means of connecting the experience with Catholic social teaching. Such programs

provide students the opportunity to develop sensitivity and skills for collaboration and leadership, but also cultivate in them the motivation to become passionate leaders and advocates for social justice.



## Quotations from Marianist Sources

*Educate for Service, Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*

(59) “We have taken as our motto the great word, so full of meaning and truth, which Mary addressed to the servants at the wedding feast of Cana: ‘Whatever He shall say to you, do ye,’ and in this view, we embrace the work of the Christian Education of youth, and especially of the poor, the work of the arts and trades, the work of Sodalties, of retreats and of missions. We undertake all works of zeal.” —Letters of Father Chaminade, *no. 1182 to Valenti, October 31, 1839.*

(60) “We work at the direct proclamation of the Gospel and also at the enrichment of culture and the transformation of society ... [in] unity with those who struggle for justice, liberty and dignity ....” —*Society of Mary, Rule of Life 72.*

(61) “One hopes that everyone will enjoy the material and spiritual advantages of the human community .... In that tiny cosmos which is the classroom or the school, the students are progressively initiated into a sensitivity for the common good.” —*Paul J. Hoffer, SM, Pédagogie Marianiste (Paris: Centre de Documentation Scolaire, 1956), 383.*

(62) “Missionary consciousness is especially characteristic of those educators who focus on solidarity. Such an emphasis can really make a difference in any educational institution. Solidarity should be a keynote of Christian education. In our educational programs solidarity means giving high priority to awakening critical consciousness and fostering habits of empathy, dialogue, respect and tolerance for those who are different. It means helping people

recognize that all life is a gift, and that each one is responsible for the stewardship of the material and human gifts he or she has received, for the good of other people.” —David J. Fleming, SM, “Educators and Missionaries in a New Key,” *Circular #10, September 12, 2003, 106.*

(63) “Our educational institutions must avoid forming persons who for lack of critical spirit assure the permanence of an unjust order or who form an elite using positions of prestige for personal advantage rather than providing needed services for the development of society.” —New Call, *Document of the General Chapter of 1976, no. 37.*