



Regional Marianist Family Councils Charter

Introduction

The Marianist Family in North America is comprised of three separate but related branches: Lay Marianist Communities and Lay Marianists, The Marianist Sisters, and the Society of Mary.ⁱ Each branch has its own leadership structures and rubrics of governance.

Integral to the Marianist story is the practice of collaboration not only with each other but also within each branch. Collaboration is understood as “the identification, release, and union of all *gifts in ministry* for the sake of *mission*.”ⁱⁱ The goal of collaborative ministry is to engage all members in the mission of Jesus Christⁱⁱⁱ and the Church, looking to Mary as inspiration and model.

At the recent international meetings of each of the three branches of the Marianist Family, there was a call for the creation and development of Regional Marianist Family Councils. These councils are tasked with developing skills for shared discernment and decision-making, so the common mission of the Marianist Family can be achieved.^{iv} Recognizing that many members of the Church do not have an experience of collaborative ministry or decision making, Marianists are convinced that acting as an ecclesial family is a clear prophetic witness in the Church and the world.^v A Regional Marianist Family Council is one vehicle used to ensure and develop initiatives with the authority and responsibility needed to advance common missionary activities.^{vi}

Sharing our lives and working together, religious, and Lay Marianists develop the conviction that the Marianist Charism acquires its full value only when lived as communities belonging to a larger ecclesial and charismatic family.

Statement of Purpose

Regional Marianist Family Councils enlivened by a collaborative spirit, encourage all members to be apostles for the transformation of the world and to become a *spectacle of a people of saints*.^{vii} Efforts to build a strong network of Regional Marianist Family Councils in North America, who think and work together towards the common mission, are also a sign of solidarity. In this way, The Marianist Family is a prophetic sign in the Church.^{viii}

Composition and Structure

It is recommended that members of the larger Marianist Family in each region be consulted on viable candidates who are willing and able to serve on their respective Regional Marianist Family Councils. Regional Marianist Family Councils strive to be authentic witnesses of the Discipleship of Equals. Therefore, they are composed of representatives from at least each of the following:

- Representative(s) from the Society of Mary: when appropriate the Area Coordinator will be a member, ex-officio
- Representative(s) from the Marianist Sisters, ex-officio (when possible)
- The Area Representative(s) from the MLC-NA, ex-officio

After consultation with members of the Marianist Family in the defined region, members of the Regional Marianist Family Council may also include:

- Representative(s) from any Marianist Sponsored Ministry(s) in the region (when possible)
- Representatives from the various types of Lay Marianists that may reside in their region.

Each Regional Marianist Family Council will discern among themselves who will serve as the Chair and or Co-Chairs, who will serve in each of the Three Offices and any other leadership models that may be unique to the regional culture where the Regional Marianist Family Council resides. The recommendation is that each person who serves on his or her respective Regional Marianist Family Council have a term of two years with a renewal of one term. Regional Marianist Family Councils also strive to have a balance of gender, experience, and commitment.

Together, with representatives from all the branches of the Marianist Family, they work collaboratively to discern and decide upon concrete activities, programs, and missionary endeavors to meet the needs of the Marianist Family in each respective region.

Definition and Geographical Boundaries of a Regional Marianist Family Council

Recognizing that each branch of the Marianist Family in North America has different geographical areas and needs, Regional Marianist Family Councils are determined by the Marianist Family Council of North America. Each branch strives to participate in a Regional Marianist Family Council as active members making concrete decisions. Regional Marianist Family Councils also facilitate and promote the active participation of all the members of the Marianist Family in the decision-making processes.^{ix}

Special attention is given to members of the Marianist Family who do not reside near a Marianist institutional presence. The Marianist Family Council of North America discerns the commissioning or dispersal of Regional Marianist Family Councils, as needed, over time, to enhance common mission activities.

Content of Meetings Of Regional Marianist Family Councils

Among the many things that Regional Marianist Family Councils might undertake is to take time to listen to the challenges and graces of each branch, which is invaluable to reinforce a culture of shared mission and responsibility. As regional communities grow, RMFC take time to prayerfully read and respond to the signs of the times by discussing, discerning and making decisions in creative and unified ways.

Conclusion

Realizing the Marianist Family of North America is vast and diverse; each Regional Marianist Family Council must develop and implement systems of organization that best meet the cultural and historical environment where they reside. The Marianist vocation is fulfilled through the call to live a specific

spirituality and to take up certain ministries that embody it.^x It is from this perspective that mutual relationships are developed among all the branches in the field of mission. To this end, it strengthens Mary's invitation to do whatever He tells you.

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ⁱ While the Marianist Family is comprised of four branches: Marianist Lay Communities, The Marianist Sisters, The Society of Mary and the Alliance Mariale, the Alliance Mariale does not have any members in North America.

ⁱⁱ Sofield, Loughlan and Carroll Juliano, *Collaboration: Uniting Our Gifts in Ministry*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2000. p 17.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} New Times, New Wines: New Paths in Solidarity – FMI General Chapter 2017, Article 1.5

^v Ibid., Article 12.

^{vi} A Man Who Does Not Die: In Mission with the Marianist Family – SM General Chapter 2018, Article 22

^{vii} Chaminade, Blessed William Joseph, *Letter No. 388* written to Fr. Pierre-Bienvenue Noailles, February 15, 1826: Bordeaux, France.

^{viii} New Times, New Wines: New Paths in Solidarity – FMI General Chapter 2017, Article 2.8.

^{ix} Pérez, Félix Arqueros, President of MLC/IO, *Walking Hand in Hand: The Gift of the Marianist Family*, Circular written after the International Gathering of MLC/IO in Seoul, Korea 2018.

^x The World Council of the Marianist Family, *The "Common Mission" in the Marianist Family*, 16 November 11-13, 2021. p 1.