

Being in Community—Talking Points

Opening Prayer

“Marianist Family Prayer”

Mary Andrews (adapted with her permission)

The Marianist Family Prayer Book

God of all time, of all people, of all places,
You have called us to witness the depth of your love through the shared
vision of William Joseph Chaminade, Adèle, and Marie Thérèse.
Through the grace of God, they understood the profound role
Of small church communities in creating a more compassionate society.

Like our predecessors, we ask you to bless our efforts
In building community, the essential context of all things Marianist,
So that the Gospel may be lived triumphantly in the most ordinary
And extraordinary situations.

Let us ever celebrate the birth of the first Marianist Sodality
Two hundred years ago, in Bordeaux.
With the Madeleine Sodality as our legacy, we ask you to fire our hearts
That we will work passionately for local and global justice,
In its veiled faces and ongoing challenges.

We ask you to open our imaginations,
That we will better protect our planet earth and respect the interplay
Of all living creatures that share its space and resources.

We ask you to inspire our minds to become the Christ-bearers and
Peacemakers for which our world is desperate,
Boldly confronting the darkness of violence and greed.

As community builders fed by the unfailing grace of prayer
And encouragement of one another,
We unite our successes in the spirit of cooperation
And offer our sufferings for your transforming grace.

Indeed, we are empowered by Mary, our model of liberation and
courage.
Led by Mary, affirmed by Marianists throughout time,
Together we say confidently, “Yes, God of History! Yes, God of life.”



Closing Scripture

Romans 12:4-5, 11-13

For as in one body we have many
members, and not all the members
have the same function, so we, who
are many, are one body in Christ, and
individually we are members one of
another. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent
in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in
hope, be patient in suffering,
persevere in prayer. Contribute to the
needs of the saints; extend hospitality
to strangers.

We Are a Community of Faith

- Our faith has both personal and communal dimensions. What is the value of Marianist community life for you?
- Our communities live out in depth our alliance with Mary according to our Founders' vision. Describe how Mary's spirit and values are developed in your community.
- Community is a life choice, called forth by the Spirit. How do you experience community as a "gift and task"?

We Are a Community of Life

- Being in community affects our daily lives: personal, social, political, and economic. How has Marianist community life affected the way you live your life?
- Marianist communities are hospitable. How does your community invite and welcome new members?
- Our communities are signs of hope and witnesses of fidelity, equality, and solidarity in today's world. Describe how your community discerns and responds to the "signs of the times."

We Are a Community that Builds Communities

- The Marianist Family is a community of communities. How is your community guided or formed by the larger Marianist community? What are the unique traditions and symbols of your community?
- Each community fosters growth in faith, hospitality, formation, and social action. How are these concerns addressed in your community?
- Formation is an essential way to understand the communitarian dimension of the Marianist charism. How is formation actualized in your community? How does formation foster a focus on mission and the needs of others?

We Are a Community "In Permanent Mission"

- Marianist communities are not an end in themselves. We express our missionary spirit not only within the community but also in our relationships with the world. How do our experiences in community prepare us for mission?
- Mary helped sustain the faith, prayer, and expectation of the Spirit within the first Church community at Pentecost. How is she a model for us to act on the Word of God and to build the Reign of God?
- Singing the *Magnificat* with Mary, our communities seek to stand against injustice and to proclaim a message of liberation and hope. How does your community stand in solidarity with the poor and marginalized? How does it promote ecological values?

We Are a Worldwide Community

- Marianist Lay Communities are communities within the larger Marianist Family. How is your community connected to the other branches of the Marianist Family?
- Through regional, national, and international organizations, Marianist Lay Communities are linked. How can these councils be of service to your community?
- Our relationships with other branches of the Marianist Family are rooted in solidarity, equality, respect for autonomy and diversity, and shared responsibility. How are these values witnessed to the broader Church and the world?

Suggested Song

“Hymn to Mary,” from *Hymns* by Beth Nielsen Chapman, 2004 BNC Records.

Your thoughts . . .

Acknowledgements

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