



# Marianist Soundings

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A publication of the North American Center for Marianist Studies

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The new look of NACMS

# Marianist Soundings

A publication from the  
**North American Center for Marianist Studies**  
Issued in the Fall and Spring

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# Editor's Note

Dan Jordan



“**N**ew times call for new ways.”

Yes, this Marianist saying, adapted from Blessed Chaminade's wisdom, is sometimes overused and cliché, but at NACMS we truly have found ourselves in new times, and this issue of *Marianist Soundings* is a first fruit of our new ways. Cheerfully, and at times reluctantly, we have crossed the digital divide and increased our use of technology and digital publishing. A new website devoted to digital documents might not seem like a grand leap forward, but for those of us in the “print” business—lovers of the written word and physical books—it is as if Neil Armstrong first bounded on the moon, with one small step forward and one giant leap into something unknown.

Yet printing and shipping costs and the expansion of technology in society have ushered in a new era in publishing.

So, let us know your thoughts about our new endeavor and share your own musings or fears related to this shift to digital printing and computer-oriented information. We'd love to hear from you, as *Marianist Soundings* is to be just that . . . a sounding board into issues relevant to Marianists.

This issue of *Marianist Soundings* focuses on education and explores ways that we Marianists educate through word and action. In “Marianist Family Spirit: Developing a Culture of *Home*,” George J. Cerniglia, SM, with assistance from Stephen Glodek, SM, examines education via four traits of a culture of *home*: knowing how to listen, knowing how to welcome, knowing how to be equal and inclusive, and knowing how to hope and to love.

In “Working at a Marianist University and Embracing the Role of Educator” Joan McGuinness Wagner ponders how Mary educated Jesus and plumbs the depths of former Superior General David J. Fleming's 2003 circular on education. Referring to this circular, she states, “Although his letter was directed to vowed members of the Society of Mary, it has implications for all who work in the field of education, those inside and outside the classroom. The early Marianists, as well as contemporary Marianists, embraced the belief that we are all invited to be educators, teaching through example and knowledge.”

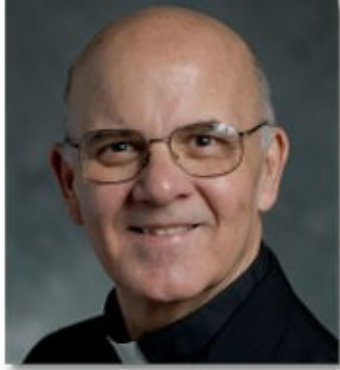
Capping off this edition is Joanne Beirise's book review of *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully* by Joan Chittister. It is a sobering reminder that in the latter years of life our spirituality is shaped by the experiences that we've had, the burdens and blessings that come with years, and the hunger of the human heart to be intimately connected with God.

May God's love and kindness shine brightly upon your face throughout all your years and all the ways you educate.

Daniel M. Jordan  
Editor

# Marianist Family Spirit: Developing a Culture of *Home*

George J. Cerniglia, SM



[*Editor's Note:* Father Cerniglia delivered this presentation to the members of the Chaminade University and St. Louis School community on February 11, 2010.]

George Cerniglia, SM, is completing his ministry as the Assistant for Religious Life for the Society of Mary's Province of the USA. He will be the associate rector at Chaminade University. He also has served as the General Assistant for Religious Life for the Society of Mary and as Assistant Provincial of the former New York Province.

## My Dear Friends,

I am humbled and grateful—and perhaps a little bit intimidated—for the invitation to share some reflections with you this afternoon. Who, in his right mind, would give up a chance to give a talk in Hawaii?

Before beginning, however, I do want to acknowledge that it may not be easy to give full attention after such a wonderful lunch. I am reminded of two short stories of the wisdom of children in such circumstances.

A little girl became restless as the sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

After listening to a long and tedious sermon a six-year-old boy asked his father what the preacher did the rest of the week. "Oh, he's a very busy man," the father replied. "He takes care of church business, visits the sick, and ministers to the poor. And then he has to have time to rest up. Talking in public isn't an easy job, you know." The boy thought for a bit and then said, "Well, listening ain't easy either."

Out of the mouths of babes!

Let me first give you some idea of how I arrived at this topic—"Marianist Family Spirit: Developing a Culture of *Home*." Brother Jerry Bommer, SM, left the choice of a topic entirely up to me. He did indicate the topics of some of the recent presentations. He did say though that I should talk about something which gives me passion and excitement. So I thought of the audience—a group of educators—and looked at the characteristics of Marianist education. The one that stood out for me was educating in *family spirit*. Much has been written in this area, and the descriptions in both the *Characteristics of Marianist Education* and the *Characteristics of Marianist Universities* are quite fine. Sometimes, we can trivialize, idealize, or turn these characteristics into clichés. I hope not to do that this afternoon.

## Family Spirit and Education in the Society of Mary

Family spirit has been a fundamental trait in the Society of Mary, both in its religious life and its

educational activities, from the very beginning. The first Marianists strove to have our schools become an extension of the family home. John Baptiste Lalanne, an early Marianist educational giant, said that “to educate children, we must live with them. A school will never be a house of education unless it is their second family.”<sup>1</sup> And another early Marianist added, “When a school is no longer an extension of the domestic family, then it resembles more a military outpost or a prison.”<sup>2</sup> And long before the feminist movement emerged, Father Chaminade said, “Our works need a father to direct them according to the spirit of the Society of Mary. Become fathers! Better yet, become mothers!”<sup>3</sup>

Let me be clear that there was no intention among the early Marianists that the school would replace the family atmosphere. Rather, the school was to be the extension of that family home.

It seems to me, however, that it was easier to use the term “family spirit” in Father Chaminade’s time than it is in ours. I believe that the phrase “family spirit” for most of us would conjure up similar images in our imaginations.

Now, the image is anything but equivocal. There are nuclear families, single-parent families, stepfamilies, blended families, and young people raised within lesbian and gay partnerships. We even have polygamous families, dramatized on television in the series *Big Love*, which is about a fundamentalist family in Utah that practices polygamy.

So what are we really talking about when we use the term “family spirit” today?

### The Culture of Family Spirit

I believe it might be more helpful to talk about family spirit in the context of developing a *culture*: that is, developing a Catholic *culture*, developing a Marianist *culture*.

For the sake of simplicity, I am going to avoid a definition of culture because it has several

meanings and layers of nuance within those meanings and because I am not a sociologist. Rather, I will speak of some of the “contents” of culture.

Here on this campus both Chaminade University and St. Louis School have a culture. They have a feel. When visitors walk into the buildings and interact with people here, they come away with an impression. That impression is an outsider’s sense of the culture that exists here. Rather than define what it is, one could probably best describe it.

How would you describe the culture here?

Culture begins with a collective understanding that develops within the group. This collective understanding shapes the behaviors of the people in that culture and shapes their perceptions and their feelings. With time, these behaviors and perceptions are just accepted as natural to the group.

In a very unnuanced way, the culture is captured in phrases like: “That’s the way we do things here at Chaminade or St. Louis School,” or “A Chaminade or St. Louis student would never do that.” When you join the Chaminade or St. Louis culture, you learn very quickly these behaviors and perceptions because they are regularly expressed, communicated, and affirmed by rituals, ceremonies, symbols, art, gestures, and physical setting.

Think back on your own experience. I remember my first day at Chaminade High School in Mineola, New York. The principal gave this stern warning about wearing the Chaminade jacket and misbehaving on the bus. The implication was that you are now part of this culture and whatever you do, for good or bad, affects the culture.

Schools have orientation days. What is it that we are orienting the students to, if not the culture of Chaminade University or St. Louis

1. Taken from a summary of Luis María Lizarraga, *Educar: Rasgos de la pedagogía marianista* (Madrid: Servicio de Publicaciones Marianistas, 1997), pp. 11-49.

2. Taken from a summary of Luis María Lizarraga, *La educación marianista: Antología de textos* (Madrid: Servicio de Publicaciones Marianistas, 1995), pp. 40-42.

3. Ibid, p. 41.

School? We socialize them; they internalize it; they communicate it to the next generation—and on it goes.

On a broader scale, we are all members of many different cultures: the culture of our family, the culture of our ethnic background, the culture of our workplace, and the larger cultures of church and society.

I live with Brother Jack Ventura, whom some of you may know. He is a typical Italian-American from the Bronx, New York. We often share stories of what it was like growing up in a New York Italian-American family and how similar our cultures were.

I have had the blessing of visiting our Marianist communities in more than thirty countries. Trying to understand and appreciate so many different cultures has been a great gift in my life. Here is a small example.

I was taken aback one day while presiding at a Eucharist in Nairobi, Kenya. I stood to read the Gospel and everyone else stood as well. After the preliminary dialogue, the community sat down. Why? Because in their culture, they sit while the elder speaks!

Were we to stir together our vision of reality and the world, our criteria and motivations, the mystery we sense, our symbols and myths, our language and expressions, our stories and anecdotes, our artistic and religious expression into a large cauldron, we would get a sense of what our culture is.

### *Developing a Culture of Home*

And so, when Marianist educational institutions talk about “family spirit,” I believe we are talking about the formation of a particular kind of culture in the school. I think Blessed Chaminade would describe it as a “culture of home.” Our schools are meant to be safe “homes” where lessons are learned, discipline is imparted, faith is nurtured, and the whole person is educated—body, mind, and spirit.

The great American poet Robert Frost, in “Death of the Hired Man,” has one of the most famous definitions of home. The poem is a dialogue between a husband and wife about the

presence of an old hired man, a man who had worked on their farm for many years, but who had been fired the previous year and has snuck back onto the property to die.

At one point in their conversation, the husband says, “Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.”

And the wife replies, “I should have called it something you somehow haven’t to deserve.”

Establishing a culture of home, a place where family spirit can flourish, means neither in the literal sense of the quote that we take whomever comes along, nor does it mean that certain kinds of behavior or disregard of rules is tolerated indiscriminately. It does not mean that there are no standards. Rather, it means that those who are welcomed find here a place that they somehow do not have to deserve.

They do have to study to the best of their ability and excel in sports or drama or anything else they undertake here. Deserve always means that I have done something that makes it my right to expect something in return. But they do not have to deserve a safe place. They do not have to deserve respect and dignity. They do not have to deserve just treatment; they do not have to deserve kindness. Most importantly, they do not have to deserve an atmosphere that will teach them faith. They find these things in the welcoming atmosphere of a school that has a culture of home. They do not have to do anything to get these things because they are welcomed into a culture where these attitudes and ways of behaving are part of the way we operate. It is part of the *home*, the family spirit into which they are welcomed.

### *Traits of a Culture of Home*

If family spirit has something to do with building a culture of home, then what are some traits that we have to develop so that our students can experience this culture of home? Let me briefly highlight four of them.

### *Knowing How to Listen*

In a culture of instant everything and multitasking, we are challenged to listen and to listen carefully.

An important task of an educator is knowing how to listen, dedicating time to listening. We need to listen with attention, not only with our ears but also with our heart. A wise pundit once said, "God gave us two ears and one mouth, so that we would listen twice as much as we speak." Good advice, no?

Listening means respecting the individuality of others.

The writer Erma Bombeck (who was a Marianist graduate, by the way) captures the necessity of this trait perfectly. She writes about an experience in an airport and says:

At last there were thirty beautiful minutes before my plane took off—time for me to be alone with my own thoughts, to open a book, and let my mind wander. A voice next to me, belonging to an elderly woman said, "I'll bet it's cold in Chicago." Stone-faced I replied, "It's likely." The elderly woman persisted, "I haven't been to Chicago in nearly three years. My son lives there." "That's nice," I said, my eyes intent on my book. Again, the elderly woman spoke, "My husband's body is on the plane. We've been married for 53 years. I don't drive, you know, and when he died a nun drove me home from the hospital. The funeral director let me come to the airport with him." I don't think I have ever detested myself more than I did at that moment. Another human being was screaming to be heard and, in desperation, had turned to a cold stranger who was more interested in a novel than in the real-life drama at her elbow. She needed no advice, money, assistance, expertise, or even compassion. All she needed was someone to listen. She talked numbly and steadily until we boarded the plane, then found a seat in another section. As I hung my coat, I heard her

plaintive voice say to her seat companion, "I'll bet it's cold in Chicago." I prayed, "Please God, let her listen."<sup>4</sup>

### Knowing How to Welcome

Welcome is a primary characteristic of a true *home* and of family spirit. The style and ability of welcome often defines our way of being and of living in a family. To welcome is to enable a personal encounter, to be interested in the other. When we welcome, we validate the other's presence.

Our *Rule of Life* in the Society of Mary uses a wonderful expression to describe Mary—her "warmth of welcome."

Welcome has to do with the gift of hospitality. I know that our Marianist communities are noted for their hospitality and welcome. But I sometimes cringe when I hear us described as knowing how to throw a good party! Welcome/hospitality is much more than that. In the words of Henri Nouwen:

Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. It is not to lead our neighbor into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment. It is not a method of making our God and our way into the criteria of happiness, but the opening of an opportunity to others to find their God and their way.<sup>5</sup>

### Knowing How to Be Equal and Inclusive

Most certainly influenced by the battle cry of the French Revolution—liberty, equality, and fraternity—Blessed Chaminade insisted that his followers be equal and one. Union without confusion (one heart, one mind) was a characteristic of his followers.

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4. Erma Bombeck, *If Life Is a Bowl of Cherries, What Am I in Doing in the Pits?* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), pp. 196-98.

5. Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), p. 51.

Too often, we seem to emphasize more of what divides us than of what unites us. I am reminded of the two hunters camped in a small clearing deep within a forest, when one of them caught sight of a large grizzly bear peering out from the trees at the edge of the clearing. The man called the attention of his friend to the bear, then immediately pulled from his knapsack a pair of running shoes and began lacing them up. His friend watched him, puzzled, then asked what the man was doing. "When I get these shoes on," he said, "I'm leaving here as fast as I can." "What's the point of that?" his friend asked. "If that bear decides to come after us, you'll never be able to outrun the bear." "I don't have to outrun the bear," said the man, "I just have to outrun you."

Unfortunately, we can sometimes think this way and forget that we are all in this experience together and that we have more than our personal goals at stake.

### Knowing How to Hope and to Love

Sometimes, amid the stresses and difficulties of every day, we can have a negative spirit. But mostly, the task of an educator is to educate in hope and for hope. We have to be witnesses and messengers of hope. The educational setting has to be an environment where all believe it is possible for persons to be transformed and that life has meaning.

A study was taken of 200 young boys in inner-city Baltimore.<sup>6</sup> They were evaluated regarding their future. Each of them was designated as a probable failure in life. Twenty-five years later, another study was made of these same boys, now men. Nearly all of them had made successful lives for themselves and their families. When asked about their success, every one of them began with, "There was a teacher. . . ." The study group found that the teacher was still alive and interviewed her. When asked what magic formula she had used to help these boys achieve their potential, she smiled and said, humbly, "It's really very simple. I loved those boys." Indeed,

we underestimate what we can accomplish when we act out of love—love that is centered in the needs of another, love that has no ulterior motives except the well-being of the beloved, love that is selfless and unconditional, love that is of God.

In conclusion, then, how do we describe the ideal that this culture we are trying to form should uphold?

Look at the first words of Jesus in the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verse 38. The disciples of John the Baptist are following after Jesus, and he turns to them and asks, "What are you looking for?" This question forms a recurrent theme throughout the Gospel. In the beautiful scene with Mary Magdalene in the garden after the resurrection, the next to the last thing that Jesus will say is, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" (Jn 20:15). Mary, thinking him the gardener, asks where he has taken the Lord. And then, Jesus simply says, "Mary!" (Jn 20:16). And she immediately recognizes him. She recognizes him because he has spoken her name in love.

John captures in a single question one of the deepest longings of the human heart: to hear our name pronounced in love by God. That is the goal of what Marianists call *family spirit*. That is the goal of trying, however feebly, to form a culture of home for young people based on the Gospel. The goal is to provide the atmosphere where there is the opportunity for young people to hear their names pronounced in love by God and by us. ☪

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[Note: Brother Stephen Glodek, SM, assisted Father Cerniglia in the development of material for this presentation.]

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6. This material was taken from a 1956 Johns Hopkins University study. The follow-up portion of the study consisted of 180 of the original participants who were interviewed 25 years later.



# Pray with us...



Our Lady, Queen of Peace

God, our Father

Creator of the world, you established the order which governs all ages.  
Hear our prayer and grant us peace in our time as we rejoice in your  
glory and praise you without end.

Mary, Queen of Peace, look upon us kindly.

Through your prayers obtain for us the gift of peace which your Son  
promised.

We ask this through the same Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, Son  
of God, Son of Mary, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy  
Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*Prayers for All Occasions* (Washington, D.C.: Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, 1991), p. 89.

# Working at a Marianist University and Embracing the Role of Educator

Joan McGuinness Wagner



Joan McGuinness Wagner is a lay Marianist who serves as the Director of Marianist Strategies at the University of Dayton. Wagner has served the University since 1991, when she worked for the Center for the Study of Family Development. Previously she worked for the dioceses of Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio.

In 2003 the Superior General of the Society of Mary, Father David J. Fleming, SM, wrote a letter to the brothers in which he reflected on the origins of Marianists as educators. Although his letter was directed to vowed members of the Society of Mary, it has implications for all who work in the field of education, those inside and outside the classroom. The early Marianists, as well as contemporary Marianists, embraced the belief that we are all invited to be educators, teaching through example and knowledge. The following text draws from Father Fleming's letter and is designed to provide a clearer understanding of the beginnings of Marianist education and to leverage thoughtful conversation about the implications for those who work as staff persons at the three Marianist universities—Chaminade, Dayton, and St. Mary's.

## History

Education of young persons has been the primary focus of the Marianists since the beginning of the Marianist Family. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade understood the essential role of education in making a difference in the lives of individuals. With the gift of education, one could expand one's view of the world, increase one's empathy, and practice one's critical thinking in service to the world. Blessed Chaminade was a person of great faith. He believed with skills and knowledge one could more intentionally integrate one's faith to make a difference in society.

From the beginning of the establishment of schools and educational ministries, Chaminade viewed the work of those in schools as a response to a call to vocation. It was a labor of love, service, and leadership. He was explicit in stating that teachers were not just "workers in the educational factories of our times" (*industriels de l'enseignement*). Those engaged in working in schools were to adopt a sense of mission in one's work rather than focusing simply on techniques, information, and practices. Based on Chaminade's faith that affirms the dignity of each person, this great endeavor was to view each student as a unique individual, granting each student personal attention and interest. In practicing this posture, basic human respect and spiritual values would be integrated and sustained. He encouraged creativity and new activities and approaches when working with others. These efforts resulted in an enhanced awareness of a deeper understanding of one's work—appreciating the labor each person contributes to the common good. This was the approach Chaminade cultivated in

the schools, and this approach continues today.

Chaminade was a man of unusual vision. He was not content to simply run schools: his goals were much greater. He sought to transform society by educating the people of his time.

### Elements of Marianist Education

As Chaminade gathered people, he shared his vision of Mary as an educator . . . a teacher . . . a faith-filled woman . . . and mother of Jesus. It was Mary who taught Jesus by modeling kind and caring behavior rooted in her belief in God, and she instructed Jesus in the lessons of life and faith. In addressing the role of Mary for Blessed Chaminade, Father Fleming states that Chaminade believed “She teaches us virtues essential to every educator and formator: a ‘warmth of welcome,’ patience with slow human process, faith and perseverance in a long-term effort, willingness ‘to sow and not to reap,’ the ability ‘not to reject as bad what is not absolutely good.’”<sup>1</sup> In the great tradition of Mary, all those working in the field of education are encouraged to implement these same virtues and behaviors when interacting with those around us.

Marianists, regardless of profession, “seek to contemplate and ponder God’s ways in each person we meet. . . . Through a contemplative stance, we acquire the insight and courage to take creative initiatives. . . . Our educational mission is not a molding in some pre-set form, some abstract uniform ideal, but a collaboration in the ever-new creative action of God in the lives of persons.”<sup>2</sup>

To enhance these skills, areas for development include dedication to a common goal, attentiveness to active listening, and giving one’s attention to the person and moment at hand. This also requires a commitment to dialogue, being open to collaboration, and braiding the multiple strands of this educational endeavor to serve one mission.

Distinguishing aspects of Marianist education are the commitment to assist every person to be fully human, striving always to improve oneself to be of service to the world. This occurs more readily when people feel welcomed and valued. Clearly this is evident and affirmed by many people when they remark on the friendliness and acceptance on Marianist campuses. “We work together to develop a sense of communion and solidarity with all in the educational community.”<sup>3</sup>

Commitment to social transformation includes efforts dedicated to being agents for justice, builders of communities of peace, and stewards of creation; these are indicators of Marianist education. Addressing equality in the workplace, persevering in peace building, investing in nurturing a sense of community that extends beyond campus, and making changes to nurture the earth are avenues to which all in Marianist education can contribute.

People who work with or are acquainted with the Marianists are often attracted to the family spirit, a sense of equality. This, too, has deep roots in the Marianist story. Marianist educational successes are achieved through the efforts of many. The work of vowed religious, lay Marianists, and persons of a variety of faith traditions (or no faith tradition) contribute to the fabric of Marianist education. Commitment to collaboration—complementing our differences while seeking unity—gives the institution strength and provides a powerful

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Fleming, SM, *Circ. 10*, Sept. 12, 2003, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

witness to those around us.

While developing family spirit, a culture of home, is prevalent at all three Marianist universities, I would like to end my remarks by drawing upon images from the Marianist institution that I know the best—the University of Dayton—but the images explored and questions to ponder apply to all three Marianist universities.

### Implications Today

When the University of Dayton was founded, it began through the collaboration of a gardener, a cook, a priest, and a teacher. For more than 160 years, the University of Dayton has been fortunate to have many Marianist brothers and several Marianist sisters employed as teachers, administrators, and staff persons. This institution was built through the dedication of these vowed religious, men and women who not only were employed by the University but also contributed to the mission by creating an environment of lifelong faith, excellence in education, and commitment to service through their constant presence and thoughtful mentoring. Their legacy continues to shape and motivate our campus community. Their hope was to assist new generations of individuals who would commit themselves as stewards of Blessed Chaminade's great mission.

At the foot of the Marianist cemetery on the east side of UD's campus is a monument with the following quote:

#### The Greatest Classroom on Campus

The usual classroom scene of many students and one teacher is here reversed as you, the reader of these lines, stand as a solitary student before a great number of teachers,

predecessors of the Marianists now laboring at the University. Here they lie in peace, still expounding to those who listen the lessons of truth and goodness, and love of the Virgin Mary in whose service they lived and died. May their memory inspire you as their lives inspired so many others.

### The Catholic and Marianist mission and identity sets us apart from other institutions.

- Are these Marianist values and practices important to us individually, as well as to the institution?
- What are our best practices as they relate to our Catholic and Marianist mission and identity?
- What areas require our immediate attention?
- What must we do to ensure this legacy for the future?
- What contribution are you willing to make to sustain this mission?

At this critical moment in the history of the three Marianist institutions of higher education, it is timely to engage in conversation and assess one's commitment to these values. ☐





## Book Review of Emile Neubert's *Mary and the Priestly Ministry*

Reviewed by Kenneth Baker, SJ

New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2009  
xiv + 269 pp., paperback, \$5.00

[*Editor's Note:* The following material is taken from the March 2010 issue of *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* and is reprinted with permission. Special thanks to John Samaha, SM, for bringing it to the attention of NACMS.]

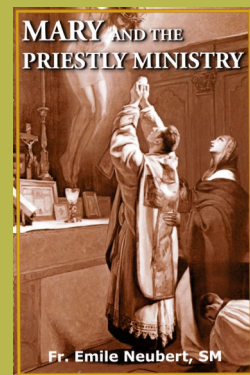
This book, distributed through NACMS, was written more than fifty years ago by a French Marianist in order to promote devotion to Mary on the part of priests, especially parish priests. It proposes a spirituality based on seeking union with Jesus through daily constant prayer to Mary, Mother of Priests.

The material is presented in three sections. In the first part the author develops his ideas about the importance for the priest of living in close union with Mary. He says that because Mary is mother of the Christ-Priest, it follows that she also is the mother of every priest. He argues that the spiritual effectiveness of the priest is greatly enhanced when he works under the tutelage of Mary.

The second part is "Mary Forms the Priest as Another Christ-Priest." The point here is that Mary can educate the priest to be more like Christ. Here he offers chapters on faith, self-denial, poverty, chastity, obedience, and stimulating a sense of yearning for the salvation of souls. An excellent example of this is St. John Vianney, who is now the patron of all priests.

In the third part he writes about performing priestly ministry with Mary. Here Father Neubert says that devotion to Mary helps the priest in offering Mass, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, administering the sacraments, preaching, and giving spiritual direction to others.

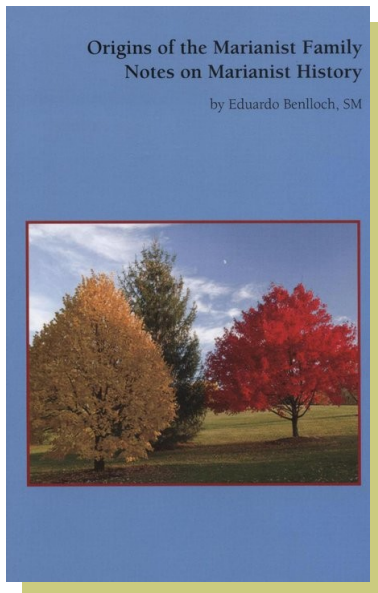
I have read many books on Mariology, but I have never read one quite like this one. The author goes into much detail regarding the life of the priest and shows how devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary can make him a better—that is, a holier—priest. The main point is not to glorify Mary as something like a goddess, but to realize that she is the closest human being to Christ the Lord and that she possesses an awesome power of intercession, which we acknowledge every time we pray the "Hail Mary" and say, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." ☐



New and Recent NACMS Publications

# Origins of the Marianist Family

Eduardo Benlloch, SM



**I**t reads like a Hollywood thriller—and in fact it includes a DVD, called *Where We Were Born*—yet it is the essence of our Marianist history, the true story of our origins, filled with moments of joy, betrayal, and uncertainty. And, it clearly depicts the greatness of our Founder, Blessed William Joseph Chaminade. What is it?

It is *Origins of the Marianist Family: Notes on Marianist History*, a new 364-page publication from the North American Center for Marianist Studies (NACMS). This is the type of story that can only be told well after the fact, long after those involved have received their eternal rest.

Here are the main characters in the real-life drama, which comprises the last third of the book, of how Father Chaminade lost control of his precious Society of Mary:

- William Joseph Chaminade: Founder, hero, devoted to the call of God, sufferer of the cross of Christ, betrayed by several around him,
- Narcisse Roussel: Brilliant, young, persuasive, and deeply flawed, whose trickery leads to a power struggle within the Society of Mary,

- Jean Baptiste Lalanne: Premier educator, intellectually gifted, devoted Marianist, yet a spendthrift whose financial habits bring the Society of Mary to the brink of collapse,
- Georges Caillet: Second Superior General of the Society of Mary, described by a bishop as "greatly drawn to the throne," insecure and indecisive by nature, a leader in Chaminade's ouster from power,
- Jean Chevaux: Part of the triumvirate who leads to Chaminade's removal from office and third Superior General of the Society of Mary.

*Origins of the Marianist Family* chronicles the interconnection among these men and its implications for our Blessed Founder. While parts of this new work are devoted to the Society of Mary, *Origins* also explores the beginning of the comprehensive Marianist Family and the development of the

Marianist Sisters through the life and works of Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon and the numerous contributions of Marie Thérèse de Lamourous to the laity and beyond.

*Origins* was translated by Robert Wood, SM.

According to Father Benlloch:

For twelve years I have tried to explain Marianist history to our novices. What began as some notes on Marianist history (in manuscript form) has now become a book. . . .

Marianist history is not simply a collection of facts or anecdotes. It has to do with the evolution of people, above all Blessed Chaminade and Venerable Adèle de Trenquelléon, their spiritual journeys, and all of the activity that God realized through them. This has to be pondered.

Could this book be considered an interwoven biography of Blessed Chaminade and Venerable Adèle? Frankly, yes . . . a kind of skeleton biography, without literary adornment or fictionalized accounts, but with historic exactness and an attempt to draw closer, even in a somewhat summarized way, to the depth and richness of their interior life. . . .

To have life, we must be rooted. To be grafted into a tradition does not mean we keep looking to the past; on the contrary, I want to help all to be well-rooted so they can look to the future with hope.<sup>1</sup>

*Origins of the Marianist Family* sells for \$19.50, plus postage, and includes the DVD

*Where We Were Born*.

### ***Where We Were Born***

Have you ever wondered what the houses where Father Chaminade lived or Adèle was born looked like . . . or where Marie Thérèse de Lamourous worked? How did they think about their environment?

With the English version of *Where We Were Born*, you can get a better idea of just these matters and more, with the sights and sounds of our heritage.

This work was originally produced in 1997 by the Society of Mary's Provinces of Madrid and Zaragoza and the Marianist Sisters Province of Spain. It was originally created as a slide program, and the International Center for Marianist Formation (ICMF) has produced the program in a DVD format.

NACMS, in conjunction with the ICMF, is including a copy of *Where We Were Born* with each *Origins* book sold to more fully "help all to be well-rooted so they can look to the future with hope."<sup>2</sup> ☐

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1. Eduardo Benlloch, SM, *Origins of the Marianist Family: Notes on Marianist History* (Dayton, OH: NACMS, 2010), pp. ix-x.

2. *Origins*, x.



Sponsorship on the *Origins* project was made possible in part by the International Center for Marianist Formation and the



Association of Marianist Universities

## Book Review

# *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully*

by Joan Chittister

Joanne Beirise



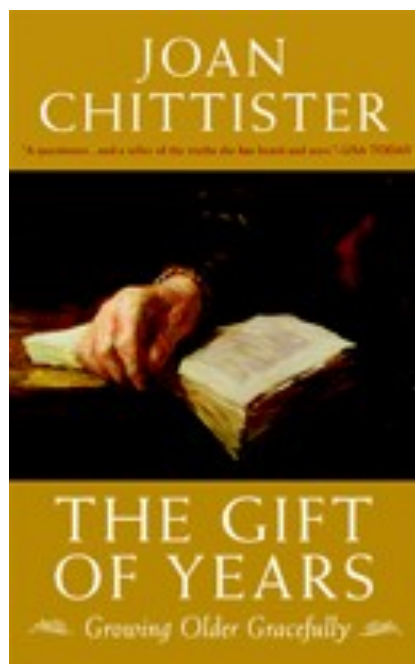
In the introduction to *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully* (BlueBridge Books, 2008), Joan Chittister wonders if at 70 years of age she may be too young to write it. She reserves the right to put out a new edition when she is 90! For now, though, she writes about how it feels to be facing that time of life for which there is no career plan.

Chittister is very much a woman of the world—traveling, lecturing, and writing. As a social scientist she critiques American culture and truly understands what aging men and women are up against. She aims to supply what gerontology lacks: awareness of the spiritual dimensions of the aging process. She writes for those approaching old age, for those concerned about their parents and the issues of older age, and for those who do not “feel” old but who recognize the need to be looking ahead.

As she says, the book is not intended to be read in one sitting, or even in order; it is meant to be taken one issue at a time and to be read over and over and over again. The format lends itself to this advice. The text of each issue (e.g., regret; fulfillment; letting go; freedom; memories, to name only a few) begins with a quotation from a broad spectrum of famous people from many time periods and parts of the world and from a number of religious traditions. This speaks to me of the breadth of her knowledge and is a comment on the universality of the human concern with aging well.

The text then develops two perspectives of the issue being addressed: how, on the one hand, the issue can become a burden or, on the other, how it can become a blessing. Chittister completes each issue (or topic, if you will) with a short summary of just a few sentences that are set off in italics, which allows for a quick reread at any time. Here is an example from the chapter on regret.

*The burden of regret is that, unless we come to understand the value of the choices we made in the past, we may fail to see the gifts they have brought us.*





*The blessing of regret is clear—it brings us, if we are willing to face it head on, to the point of being present to this new time of life in an entirely new way. It urges us on to continue becoming.*<sup>1</sup>

She begins the book by laying out the purpose of life. “Life is about becoming more than we are, about being all that we can be.”<sup>2</sup> This purpose does not end with age, she says; it is most important to become aware that there is a purpose to aging, just as there is in every stage of life. The last stage of life gives one the opportunity to assimilate all the other stages, not just for our own sake, but for the rest of the world, as well. This is an example of Chittister’s Benedictine spirituality coming into view. Even in older age we do not live simply for ourselves, but for others as well. In her text about loneliness, she says the burden of it can be transformed into a blessing by looking around to see who

needs us.

Chittister’s 38 issues are packed full of practical wisdom . . . along with reminders that we still have a task in this last stage of our lives. The afterword of her book addresses what she calls the twilight time with its own tasks, burdens, and gifts. Yet, she says, this is the time for melting into God. At age 82, I found myself very touched by the sadness these last thoughts set off in me, but also by the beauty of the prose. Chittister spent many years as a prioress of the Erie Benedictines, and I suspect that as the spiritual leader in the motherhouse she was of enormous help to so many in their living and their dying.

I find her spirituality solidly Benedictine and her wisdom very deep and rich. She knows what the score is and says it well. I would trust her with my soul. ☐

<sup>1</sup> Joan Chittister, *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully* (New York: Blue Bridge, 2008), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. viii.

## ***Running Giant***

By Louis Reile, SM

In a literary world filled with Jason Bourne, James Bond, and Robert Langdon, we Marianists have our own exciting man of action: William Joseph Chaminade. Yet, there is a critical element that separates our Blessed Founder from the rest. Chaminade actually existed, and the spine-tingling drama—chases, narrow escapes, forced exile, and long-awaited return to rebuild the Church of France—was all real.

*Running Giant*, a top-selling Marianist publication, is an easy-to-read historical retelling of the life and times of Blessed Chaminade that is true not only to



the historical reality of Chaminade’s life but also to the suspense it contained. *Running Giant* has been republished by NACMS. The new printing has updated language that is suitable for today’s readers, yet it retains the integrity of the original work.

This 137-page novel is an especially helpful introduction to the beginnings of the Marianist Family. This book may be useful to teachers in a classroom environment or to promote discussion in small community groups.

*Running Giant* sells for \$10, and it can be ordered by calling 937/429-2521; writing NACMS, 4435 E. Patterson Road, Dayton, OH 45430-1083; or visiting us on the web [www.nacms.org](http://www.nacms.org).

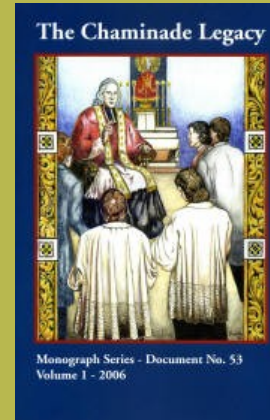
## New and Recent NACMS Publications

### *The Chaminade Legacy* Monograph Series—Document 53

To prepare for its bicentennial of 2017, the Society of Mary has produced a critical edition of the writings and words of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade. Now the first three volumes of this French multivolume work—*Ecrits et Paroles*—are available in English under the title *The Chaminade Legacy*.

The reader follows step by step the evolution of Chaminade's thought and activity and examines the dynamism of a spirituality that, while remaining always open to God's inspiration, must often adapt itself to the human condition, both political and cultural.

The initial volumes focus on the development of the lay movement.



#### *Volume 1: The Sodality of Bordeaux*

The first volume contains more than 150 documents pertaining to the development of the lay movement in the Sodality of Bordeaux, covering the period up to 1828. A few preliminary texts include writings while Father Chaminade was at Mussidan as a member of the Congregation of Priests and Clerics of St. Charles.

The first section presents the Sodality under Napoleon, and the second consists of documents from the Sodality under the Restoration. Texts include the Manual of the Servant of Mary (1804). Other sections cover the State of a Simple Sodalist, the State of Living the Evangelical Counsels, the State of Religious Life in the World, spiritual development among the sodalists, and the expansion and originality of the Sodality.

Volume 1 is 771 pages and sells for \$24.00, plus postage.

#### *Volume 2: Notes for Conferences and Sermons, Part 1*

The second volume of *The Chaminade Legacy* is the initial volume in this series that gathers together Father Chaminade's notes for conferences and sermons. In his own words to the police of Bordeaux, referring to himself in the third person, Father Chaminade says:

These eight notebooks contain very incomplete notes, and some extracts or partial extracts of other works. There is little order or connection among them . . . he jotted down his thoughts on loose sheets of paper. When he thought he had sufficiently grasped his subject, he stopped writing. The majority of these writings were never revised. All of these loose sheets were gathered together by his secretary a few months ago; two of the notebooks are not even yet covered.

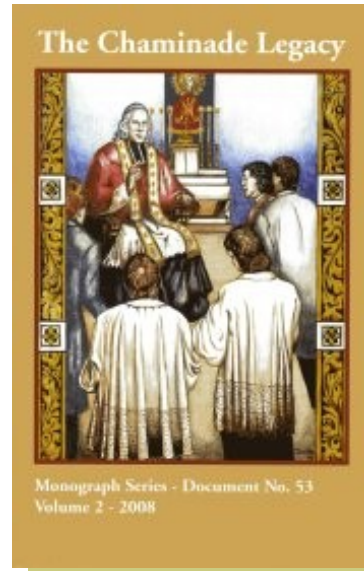
Continued on page 19

## New and Recent NACMS Publications

The same observation may be made for Father Chaminade's other small notebooks. He never wrote out a speech or a conference, only notes to focus his ideas. Most of the time, he did not even record his final thought.

It may be asked what profit we may draw from reading these notes for conferences and sermons. A person interested in theology and the history of theology can find here a living insight into what the Church was teaching during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, right after the French Revolution.

Volume two contains 487 pages and sells for \$15.00, plus postage.

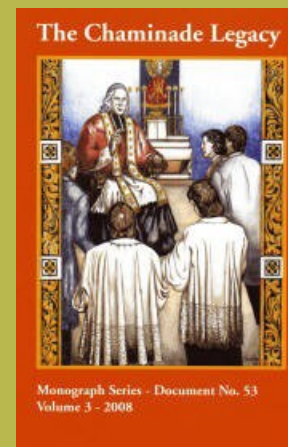


### *Volume 3: Notes for Conferences and Sermons, Part 2*

The third volume of *The Chaminade Legacy* continues to gather Father Chaminade's notes for conferences and sermons.

Volume three includes four notebooks covering the following subjects, according to the AGMAR classification.

- Mysteries of Christ: birth, passion, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, and Eucharist
- Moral life. Preparation for death. Love of God and the spiritual, theological, and penitential life. Prayer.
- Respect for God and neighbor. Seven privileges of Virtue. Confirmation and Baptism. Faith. Witness and hypocrisy. Marriage. Virtues and gifts of the Spirit. Retreats. Family Life. The Word of God. Demons. The Creed.
- The Final ends: death, particular and general judgment, the end of the world, heaven, hell.



Volume 3 contains 620 pages and sells for \$24.00, plus postage.

## January 2010

Pati Krasensky and Carol Ramey attend the Alliance in-service via conference call. Tom Giardino, SM, presents on leadership.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present at the Marianist history class. Topic: 1850-1905 internal crises.

Carol Ramey attends the Chaminade-Julienne Mission Effectiveness Advisory Council meeting.

Sister Audrey Buttner and Beth Habegger come to NACMS to discuss Adèle and her letters.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present at the Marianist history class. Topic: American Province.

Diane Guerra and Joan Suda meet with NACMS staff to discuss web presence.

Carol Ramey and Alison Cawley present to a Small Christian Community connected with Queen of Apostles Community in Dayton, Ohio, on the topic of Marianist international involvements.

Carol Ramey attends a Chaminade-Julienne Planning Meeting for the 160/125 celebration.

## February 2010

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present at the Marianist history class. Topics: Expansion continued, Father Simler as Second Founder.

Father David Fleming gives an in-service to NACMS staff on inculturation and the

Marianist charism.

NACMS presents "Planting the Seeds of Authentic Community" at Food for the Soul at the University of Dayton.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present at Marianist history class. Topic: 1905-1965, stabilization period.

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts two Ash Wednesday services at the Marianist Center and one at the Bethesda Project for the Homeless, which works with mentally ill women. Father Rich Kuhn, SM, presides.

The General Administration of the Society of Mary visits Mount St. John and its ministries, including NACMS.

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

## March 2010

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present at the Marianist history class. Topic: Continuation of stabilization period.

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

Pati Krasensky presents at a retreat for St. Philip Neri Parish. A parish in Basil, Switzerland, conducts a retreat simultaneously.

NACMS presents "Tending to the Growth and Strength of Community Life" at Food for the Soul at the University of Dayton.



The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

Pati Krasensky and Tom Redmond conducts a program for the Holy Name of Jesus Parish.

NACMS presents "Deepening Roots: The Witness of Marianist Women" at Food for the Soul at the University of Dayton.

Marty Solma, SM, visits the Marianist Center in Philadelphia.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey presents at the Marianist history class. Topic: 1965 to the present.

Carol Ramey presents at the University of Dayton's Successful Supervisor Program.

Larry Cada, SM, conducts directed studies with Father Victor Müller, SM, of the Region of Peru.

## April 2010

Carol Ramey and Pati Krasensky participates in an Alliance for Marianist Lay Formation conference call.

NACMS conducts "Harvesting the Fruit of Our Labor," a Food for the Soul program at the University of Dayton.

The fifth cohort of the Marianist Lay Formation Initiative holds its inaugural retreat at the Bergamo Center for Lifelong Learning in Dayton, OH.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present at the Marianist history course. Topic: History/rebirth of Marianist Lay Communities.

Carol meets with the Queen of Apostles Community Steering Committee on ways to be intentionally Marianist as a community.

Carol Ramey and Larry Cada, SM, presents to the Marianist history course. Topic: Structures for communication/Collaboration, wrap-up

## May 2010

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

NACMS presents "Continuity, Renewal, and Possibility: A Springtime Outlook on Marianist Community" at the final session of Food for the Soul for the 2009-2010 academic year at the University of Dayton.

Pati Krasensky meets with the Baltimore Parish Ministry Team.

Pati Krasensky meets with a Marianist lay community in Wildwood Crest, NJ, to discuss the Marianist Lay Formation Initiative [MLFI] offerings and the possibility of an East Coast Family Council.

Carol Ramey presents on Catholic/Marianist Principles to members of the Intensive English Program at the University of Dayton.

Pati Krasensky meets with Sisters Laura Leming and Grace Walle at Cape May to plan a Women's Summit/Conference for the spring of 2011.

## June 2010

Pati Krasensky assists at the Tecaboca Family Program. [The actual retreat dates are June 12-15, but Pati uses the extra days for work with retreat staff and for visitations for MLFI.]

NACMS staff assists at a vacation Bible school at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Baltimore.

Carol Ramey and Pati Krasensky attend the Society of Mary's Province of the USA gathering in Louisville, KY.

## July 2010

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

Dan Jordan and Pati Krasensky attend the Marianist Lay Network of North America's Continental Assembly in Honolulu, Hawaii.

## August 2010

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

Carol Ramey presents to the board of trustees at Chaminade Preparatory in St. Louis, MO.

## September 2010

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

Pati Krasensky and Jesse O'Neil, SM, presents a retreat for families at Mother Seton Academy.

A bilingual retreat is held at Holy Trinity Parish in Glen Burnie, MD.

## October 2010

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

Pati Krasensky presents at the Marianist World Day of Prayer celebration in Winnipeg, Canada.

Pati Krasensky conducts a retreat for Marianist Affiliates on the theme of prayer, which will be based on NACMS' virtual learning prayer course.

Pati Krasensky meets with members of the Society of Mary and Marianist lay communities on the East Coast to discuss a regional Family council.

## November 2010

The NACMS office in Philadelphia conducts a session of Food for the Soul at the Marianist Center.

Pati Krasensky assists at a Family Retreat at Holy Family Parish in Levittown, NY. ☐

# ABOUT NACMS



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