



Marianist

Volume 12, Issue 1
Fall 2010

Soundings

A Publication of the North American Center for Marianist Studies

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



Words have the ability to paint beautiful pictures that brings connection in life: a greeting card that pulls at the heartstrings, the first “I love you” of a lover to a beloved, or the heartfelt “I’m sorry” that transcends a simple two-word phrase.

Words, when properly used, add value and meaning to our lives and our world. Our Blessed Founder, William Joseph Chaminade, was so aware of this that his System of Virtues begins by examining words.

Yet, it also can be true that to put something into words is to limit its potential, to either undervalue the depth of meaning or to provide a framework too broad in scale. Perhaps this is even true of the endearing phrase “the Marianist Family” to describe the interconnection of ordained, lay, and vowed religious inspired by the Marianist Founders under the banner of Mary.

This issue of *Marianist Soundings*, which includes an emphasis on Marianist Lay Communities, explores the phrase “Social Movement Organization” (SMO) as it relates to all within Marianist life. This phrase has been floated as an alternative metaphor to the term “Marianist Family.”

For more on SMOs, read Carol Ramey’s article “Importance of Lay Leadership in the Marianist Movement” and Alexander P. Orłowski’s “Overflowing Obstacles: The Social and Civic Engagement of Marianist Lay Communities.”

So after digesting their words, decide for yourself if Marianist life today is more a model of “Family” or a “Social Movement Organization.” Or, perhaps it is a paradoxical both/and that sometimes is found in Church matters?

What is clear is that we must analyze Marianist words over time to probe the depth of their meaning. This *Marianist Soundings* offers such a moment.

Dan

Daniel M. Jordan
Editor

Importance of Lay Leadership in the Marianist Movement

Carol Ramey



Carol Ramey is the Director of the North American Center for Marianist Studies and a member of the State Community, a Lay Marianist Community.

[*Editor's Note:* The following talk was delivered at the University of Dayton to a group of Marianist Education Associates on May 19, 2009.]

Marianist Movement

I hope to address this topic through three assumptions on my part:

1. Lay leadership is intrinsic to the Marianist Movement, and it's important to remember that;
2. The Marianist Movement, with its heritage of lay leadership, can be an important gift for the wider Church;
3. Lay leadership is particularly necessary; therefore, it is important for the Marianist Movement at this point in time.

Intrinsic, potential gift, and necessary.

Before I launch into these three areas, I would like to say a little about the term "Marianist Movement."

The first time I heard the term was in 1992 at a Symposium on Marianist spirituality. One of the symposiasts was a young woman—a sociologist by training, an activist against the repressive regime in her country of Chile, a Marianist to her marrow, and a wife and mother. She was in Dayton for the Symposium and on her way to Madrid to seek funding for the first International Convocation of Marianist Lay Communities to be held in Santiago. In her paper and presentations, she used the term as her way of integrating Marianist spirituality with her deep commitment to and work for justice in not only Chile, but also throughout the world. Of course, there was some reaction. At that time in South America, movements were often inspired by Marxism, and there was a cautionary tone about accepting the term, ever fearful that the name "Marianist" might be hijacked for political and ideological ends.

I was intrigued by the notion that the Marianist Family could have impact beyond what I was familiar with . . . a network of small faith-sharing communities—some with a sense of external mission, but most focused on the internal mission of creating ways of deepening faith and supporting members during the ups and downs of life. It was an epiphany for me. However, I admit I was reluctant to use it after I heard it because it seemed arrogant to use it when I had never stood up against someone like Augusto Pinochet.

Brother Ray Fitz, SM, recently promoted the term as a way to capture the dynamism and mission-oriented basis for Marianist life—a term, perhaps, better suited for our future than the metaphor of “family” we so often use.

In his presentation, Brother Ray said, “As I have been listening to these conversations, it is becoming clearer to me that the impact the Society of Mary, Province of the United States, would like to have on the Church and the larger society should come through the Marianist Movement.”¹ (This means not only the SM but also the Marianist Sisters and lay folk within communities and Marianist institutions.)

Brother Ray continued:

In focusing this conversation I will be trying a thought experiment—I will be using the term Marianist Movement for what is normally called the Marianist Family. I am doing this for two reasons: 1) As I will explain later I believe looking at the lay and religious communities in the Catholic and Marianist Tradition as a social movement is closer to what our Founders envisioned; and 2) I believe it can help the Marianist Province of the United States respond to the call of the Holy Spirit that is coming through our strategic planning conversations.²

I understand this to mean that a change in language would be important to actions needed—language cannot only reflect reality, but it also can shape it.

So, I find it easy to agree with Brother Ray’s notion that Marianists are called to “move” as well as to be “family” in the best sense of that term. I will use the term, “Marianist Movement,” but perhaps down the road it would be good for many people to talk about the shift from “family” to “movement” and assess what is gained and what is lost. (For example, a family’s healthy traits of mutually supportive relationships and presence do not necessarily have to be part of movements.)

Intrinsic

Now, on to what is intrinsic . . . what was and is fundamental and built in, if you will, about lay leadership both at the start of things Marianist and now. One caveat: for now, I’m talking about lay people in Marianist communities, not institutions. I’ll get to institutions later! And, as I go through this, I think I need to discuss both lay people and lay leadership, and I hope I do not retrace too much well-covered territory. I would ask that you try to notice the vision and intent of what I describe as well as the history.

I will start with further reference to Brother Ray’s presentation. He talked about the Marianist Movement “as an emergent social and ecclesial movement founded during the French Revolution by our Founders and other pioneers.”³ And, he defined a social movement as “a loosely organized effort on the part of a significantly large network of people and groups to change the existing social order in a manner that the participants of the social movement believe is beneficial to the larger society.”⁴ I would add that these networks and movements

¹ Raymond Fitz, SM, “The Marianist Movement and the Challenge of Urban Justice and Reconciliation: An Interim Report on a Conversation,” p. 1. Presentation at the University of Dayton, Feb. 2, 2009. Available at Marianist.com/articles

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p. 3.

⁴ Ibid.

are usually made up of ordinary folk—not the elite or recognized “leaders” within the society—and that the leadership is provided by those with vision and capacity to engage others in that vision.

Brother Ray presented a summary of how both Blessed Chaminade and Father William Ferree, SM, shaped the social movement called “Marianist.”

As for Chaminade, Brother Ray spoke of how Chaminade wanted to recreate the fervor of the first Christian communities in which all were seeking to be disciples of Jesus in the fullest sense. And what is discipleship in its fullest sense? It is a discipleship in which people would “grow in faith and then connect that faith to action for change in the world.”⁵ This would best take place within a missionary project (or movement) that is involved in building an alternative milieu—i.e., communities that would support and challenge its members to the goals of deepening faith and transforming the world.

Brother Ray affirms that we have models in our heritage to draw upon—the “Sodality movement” for addressing the needs of restoring Christianity in France which was to form huge numbers of lay—men AND women—to be Church in a new way, not the reconstitution of the clerics, religious, parishes, etc.), and Father Ferree’s demonstration of adopting “methods of Catholic Action—a lay ecclesial movement—which Ferree joined with principles for apostolic action developed by Chaminade.”⁶ To the point, both the success of the Sodality movement and Catholic Action depended on lay and lay leadership. Their participation was critical, assumed, and intrinsic.

Brother Ray also pointed out that Chaminade’s wisdom was not just for nineteenth-century France or for those of us now under the Marianist umbrella. Brother Ray reminded us that “Pope John Paul II said at Blessed Chaminade’s beatification he was an apostle of the laity.”⁷

I take this designation of “apostle of the laity” to mean that even the larger Church recognizes that lay leadership, as structured and fostered by Chaminade and Ferree, is important, no matter what the “times.”

I have held this conviction for a long time. I have spent the last twenty-one years as a lay leader at a Marianist institution through my role at NACMS. I receive counsel from an Advisors Group that is comprised of both lay and religious. I report to the Provincial Council, and I have a designated liaison from the Council for regular consultations. I have experienced a great deal of trust and autonomy—more than I expected when I first entered the position. However, this job/ministry is just a third of my life. Two-thirds of my time on earth has been spent as a lay Marianist, in various Marianist communities. I’ve held positions of leadership within those communities, some of which had vowed religious members, while others did not. All were completely lay led, although vowed religious often played vital roles as what was called “moderators,” and now is often called a role of “spiritual accompaniment.” Beginning in the early 1960s, the vowed religious were responsible for getting the lay communities going in the United States and in many locales throughout the world, but the brothers and sisters followed the model of Chaminade’s first foundation—the Bordeaux Sodality—fostering lay

⁵ Ibid, p. 8.

⁶ Ibid, p. 10.

⁷ Ibid, p. 8.

leadership and serving the communities, not directing them.

The Marianist communities to which I belonged tried to be as much about “movement” as about “family.” Mission orientation was a hallmark of the communities before phrases like “mission-integration” or “mission-driven” were in the common lexicon. Through these experiences and through my studies into Marianist history and Marianist spirituality, I have come to believe that lay leadership in the Marianist Movement is not primarily about a response to a personnel crisis. It is not just about declining vocations or aging membership in the religious orders and clerical ranks. No, it is intrinsic.

But, a few more glimpses into Chaminade’s intentions.

He wrote in a letter in 1830, in which he explained his sense of mission, “God has deigned to inspire me, now some years ago, with the desire of working for the maintenance of religion in our unhappy country.”⁸ He was called to revivify faith life and the Church throughout France—no small undertaking!

He returned from exile in Saragossa to find a country alienated from religious faith and practice. His approach, as Father Joseph Lackner, SM, has written, was to “replicate primitive Christianity” as it could “respond precisely to the new situation, the new wars, in which the Church found itself.”⁹

Father Lackner explains how the early Christian Church, with small communities focused on the story and words of Jesus, with missionaries sent out to spread the Good News, as well as with practical care for those in need, provided the model Chaminade needed to create an organization for the masses—he needed to involve large numbers of people to accomplish the huge vision he had been given. He saw this as an extension of Mary’s work: Christ born into all places and all times. And, as you have probably heard a hundred times, he knew new times called for new methods. “Who does not see that a new fulcrum must be found for the lever that moves the modern world?”¹⁰ Chaminade acted out of the instinct and inspiration that to permeate the world he would work with those in the midst of it—the laity. It was an incarnational method, following the example of Christ coming into the world through Mary. Its success depended on lay people and lay leadership.

Chaminade was so successful that he had to face the jealousy of pastors in the area who had tried to rebuild the Church with a pre-Revolutionary approach. In the Letter of 1824, called *Answers to Objections that Are Ordinarily Made Against Sodalties Established on the Plan of the One of Bordeaux, on the Form Given Them, and on Their Relations with Parishes*, Chaminade said:

Among the persons who join a Sodality, there are necessarily all kinds. Some are newcomers, whom the zeal of some [current] sodalist has gained to religion; some are just ordinary people who, until lately, avoided the parish church and perhaps would not dare to go there now, but attend the services of the Sodality with pleasure and regularity. They are on their way to returning to God. Still others are fervent Catholics,

⁸ Chaminade, *Letters*, no. 523, to Count Noailles, May 14, 1830; vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 364.

⁹ Joseph Lackner, SM, *William Joseph Chaminade, His Apostolic Intent and His Engagement with Schools, Instruction, and Education: An Historical Portrait*, Monograph Series, Doc. 42 (Dayton, OH: NACMS, 1999), p. 17.

¹⁰ William Joseph Chaminade, *Spirit of Our Foundation*, “Letter of 1824,” p. 235. For more information on the fulcrum quote, visit the open access resources on the NACMS website: www.nacms.org/fulcrum.

true and tried sodalists, who take charge of the highest duties and fill the principal offices of the Sodality. [Highest duties and principal offices=leadership] It is to them we look for good example, to them for the guidance and maintenance of the meetings.¹¹

Chaminade was pragmatic about how best to reach the masses, but he also knew theology and had a profound respect for the sacrament of Baptism. Simply put, we are all Children of God; although we will play various roles in living out the Gospel, each role is honorable and important because of our common Baptism. Chaminade believed we are all responsible for bringing about the Reign of God.

Another writer who helps us understand the importance of the lay to the Marianist Movement from the foundations is Father Eduardo Benlloch, SM. In the introduction to *Chaminade's Message Today* he states that, contrary to some commentary, the sodalities—the lay groups—were not stepping stones to instituting religious orders. He says we cannot understand the richness and generativity of Chaminade's message unless we understand the specific circumstances in the "development of the Sodalities that gave rise to the foundation of the two religious orders."¹² He says, if we were to separate the two orders from the Christian lay groups whom they were to serve, "we would find ourselves with a Father Chaminade who is perpetuated, but reduced to sterility. Where would his pastoral plan and his missionary project be?"¹³ (Note: He says the role of the religious is to "serve," not "lead!") There also are numerous citations from letters between Chaminade and Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, the Founder of the Marianist Sisters, in which he counsels her to worry more about the growth and health of the lay groups than with the religious community.

During the first 60 years of the twentieth century, when the religious orders were very large in number and educational ministries were experiencing a golden age, the image put forth for the different sections of Marianist life was a series of concentric circles with male religious the closest circle to the core of the charism; religious women in the next circle out; lay were in the outlying circle. (See Appendix 1.) During the foundation and today, the image is more a Venn diagram, with the overlapping circles and a shared charism and spirituality in the center. (See Appendix 2.)

So, Chaminade's foundations never would have taken off without laity. How about leadership in the foundation period?

It is clear that the Marianist Movement, from the outset, valued lay leadership. Leaders were identified, developed, and empowered throughout the organization. Chaminade provided the direction, but he was convinced that the lay were up to the task of overturning indifference to religion and forming a new model for Church that would incorporate, in authentic and appropriate ways, the equality, liberty, and fraternity of the Revolution. He trusted lay people and their leadership. Lackner quotes Henry Mintzberg, a management scientist about this design. Mintzberg said that organizations such as Chaminade's sodalities, "hoped to change the world indirectly, by attracting members and changing them."¹⁴ Attracting others ("recruitment") happened primarily through a "contagion of good" spread by current members among those they came into contact with every day. Once in the

¹¹ Ibid, p. 238.

¹² Eduardo Benlloch, SM, *Chaminade's Message Today*, Monograph Series, Doc. 45 (Dayton, OH: NACMS, 2001), p ix.

¹³ Ibid, p. x.

¹⁴ Henry Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management* (New York: Collier MacMillan Publishers, 1989), p. 231.

communities, people were “organized” into various groups—common interest in particular good works or internal service to the community, such as job training, academic courses, free legal counsel, etc. Each small group had a leader; each section had a leader; the entire Sodality had a prefect who, working with Father Chaminade, provided leadership.

This is a bit of a digression, but I was tickled when I read it. Developing leadership didn’t always go well. Sister Marie Joëlle Bec, Superior General of the FMI, just released a circular letter¹⁵ in which she addresses some difficulties among the sisters in turning over great responsibilities to newer community members without adequate training. Sister Marie Joëlle does not make light of preparation or formation, but she quotes a letter from Chaminade to a priest “discouraged by his community that lacked experience.” Chaminade said, “Why do you not place all your confidence in Jesus and Mary, my dear son? Do you think that St. Peter established the apostolic seat in Rome by his education, by his science, his wisdom, and his natural qualities? Do you not believe that this occurred by the confidence that he had in the Master who had sent him?”¹⁶

We, too, should remember that we can count on God’s presence to our efforts.

The point is lay people and lay leadership were important to the Marianist enterprise from the beginning. Chaminade’s inspiration or instincts about all this were overshadowed for many years, but “it’s back!” And by reading Church documents since Vatican II we can see what Marianists have to offer from our heritage and from the resurgence of the lay branch of the Marianist Family.

Gift for the Church

As Scripture says, “The gift you have received, give as gift” (Mt. 10:8-9). I think of that passage as I describe the Marianist Movement. Can we give a gift we’ve been given?

Again, time does not permit an investigation into all the key points found in recent Church documents, but the dominant focus is on a universal call to holiness and lay life as vocation, equal to and with unique and critical responsibilities beyond the “pray, pay, and obey” times of old. Vatican II says lay have an apostolate to “evangelize and sanctify.”¹⁷ Dialogue about the formation of the lay apostolate and descriptions of a specifically lay spirituality have been advanced. Lay are to renew and perfect the “temporal order.” We are going about this work with charity and through giving witness, in families, in parishes, with youth, in our professions, in the civic arena, and on national and international levels. We are to do this as individuals, in associations—and here is the tricky part—under the watchful eye of the hierarchy. Of course, problems abound. The conversation since Vatican II has sometimes been situated in the story of the vineyard . . . all who labor in the vineyard are equally compensated. However, the question arises about who has better access to or influence over the owner of the vineyard—authority and power, voice at the table, money, etc., are still being wrestled with at all levels of Church life and Church-sponsored ministries. Lay vocation and lay leadership are progressing, but not without bumps in the road.

I have to smile when I read these documents because I see that the Church appears to

¹⁵ Marie Joëlle Bec, FMI, *Circ. 24*, May 25, 2009.

¹⁶ Chaminade, *Letters*, no. 725 to Chevaux, Feb. 7, 1834; vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 240.

¹⁷ *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI, Nov. 18, 1965.

have just invented all this, and we know that Marianists have been ahead of this curve for more than 200 years, if not always in practice, certainly in its sense of roots and in the interest in the charism's incarnation in today's Church. Within Marianist organizations and ministries, issues that the Church faces over power and authority surface, for sure. Although I could never say that Marianists have solved these issues, I do think we are on the cutting edge of looking seriously at the problems and may have something to say to the wider Church.

For example, most units of the Marianist Family now have national or regional Family Councils where collaboration and communication between lay and religious occur. Many take on common projects. There is a World Council of the Marianist Family that meets every year. Its membership is the General Council of both the SM, the FMI, the Alliance Mariale, and the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities (IO/MLC) Leadership Team—one representative elected from each language group and a leader-at-large. Leadership of these groups, at all levels, rotates among members, so lay are “in charge” according to the cycles determined.

Also, in 2000, the IO/MLC applied for and received designation of a “Private Association of the Faithful” and now meets regularly with the Pontifical Commission on the Laity. So what? Well, it means that lay Marianists have been invited as representatives to several important discussions—among them a gathering for the Church in Latin America on Ecclesial Movements and a conference in Rome called *Woman and Man: Humanity in Its Entirety*. Attendance at these meetings gives us the opportunity to offer our gift—our organization, our spirituality, our experience,

our know-how. Professor Guzmán Carriquiry, the undersecretary of the Pontifical Commission on the Laity, in several meetings with the IO/MLC Leadership Team, has commented on how intrigued he is with the international organization that includes all the branches and how unique and important the model of inclusive conversations around mission and ministry are for the whole Church. Not many other groups with priests, vowed religious, and lay members have such a dynamic. (There are not even many orders with priests and brothers in equal relationship within the same religious institute.) Most affiliate groups (the common term for the lay branches of religious orders) have not been in existence anywhere near the time there have been lay Marianists, and they are clearly dedicated to living the spirit of the religious order and supporting its works. It is a derivative experience, not a collaborative one. And, we all know that parish councils operate at the pleasure of the pastor. They are advisory, not true partners.

We do have within our vision the makings of a gift for the Church—where interdependence and collaboration are “givens” and each branch exerts power FOR the movement, not power OVER the movement.

Necessary Now!

Finally, some comments on why lay leadership is really important now . . . why it is necessary. Here we have to make a leap: institutions are not communities. While communities have the long history of lay leadership, institutions are in the throes of the transition. Institutions have far wider diversity in populations, faith traditions, cultures, etc. So, not everything I have said about the heritage and current experience of lay leadership can be transferred. But, I think there is enough to be

of benefit. Many efforts are underway to ensure mission integration, and this does have to do with a personnel shortage. The issue has taken on an urgency because the historic reservoir of Marianist leadership is lower.

Back to Brother Ray's talk for some insight. In his presentation, Brother Ray agreed with Peter Steinfels, in *A People Adrift*, that both the Church and the Marianist Movement are on the verge of either an "irreversible decline or a thoroughgoing transformation." Brother Ray went on to say that "If we in the Marianist Movement are to undergo a thoroughgoing transformation then we, in my judgment, are going to have to do things quite differently than we are doing them presently."¹⁸

Key to Brother Ray's scenario of how things "would be done quite differently" is the participation of the lay—not just as "boots on the ground" but as full partners with the religious orders in terms of vision, investment of time and money, planning strategies, implementing action plans, and "owning" the success or failure. He recommends we study other contemporary lay ecclesial communities that "have been able to marshal resources to advance these important projects of the Church for the world."¹⁹

And, right now, we need to look at how we prepare and support good Marianist-saturated leadership among the lay for institutional missions based in Marianist spirit to survive. It is about creating not only a cadre of people who can articulate the elements of the charism, but also creating a milieu so that the current Marianist environment is solid and that the future of such an environment is assured.

Leadership has been valued and fostered, but we find ourselves thinking now,

more than ever, about how leadership is executed by Marianists, lay or religious. Do we have any special characteristics that differ from or add to the philosophies and best practices offered in an ever-growing array of leadership literature? About two years ago, NACMS drew together a writing team²⁰ to help us develop a course on Leadership in the Marianist Tradition. It has run, mostly successfully, through several cycles. Although the readings and case studies need tweaking for various audiences, the five elements of Marianist leadership that were identified seem to hold up. Leadership by Marianists strives to be purposeful, developmental, responsive and adaptive, collaborative, and transformative. I think we could take Brother Ray's scenario for a way to address urban injustice and find all five elements. Sure, these can all be found in the leadership literature to some degree, but there is a sense that to sustain and improve Marianist institutions, the elements must be grounded, not only in effective and value-based methods, but also in pursuit of the virtues of Jesus and Mary and a deepening in a spirituality that holds the mystery of the Incarnation at its center—God in our midst—and, of course, consistently manifesting the special characteristics of our charism.

The importance of lay leadership for the Marianist Movement is pretty simple: There would be no Marianist Movement without the laity (because of the mass movement aspect), and it will not be incarnated to the fullness of its inspired vision without lay leadership steeped in the intrinsic commitment to interdependence and shared responsibility for the mission of any Marianist entity. The question, I think, that is at the heart of ensuring lay leadership for the

¹⁸ Fitz, p. 12.

¹⁹ Fitz, p. 15.

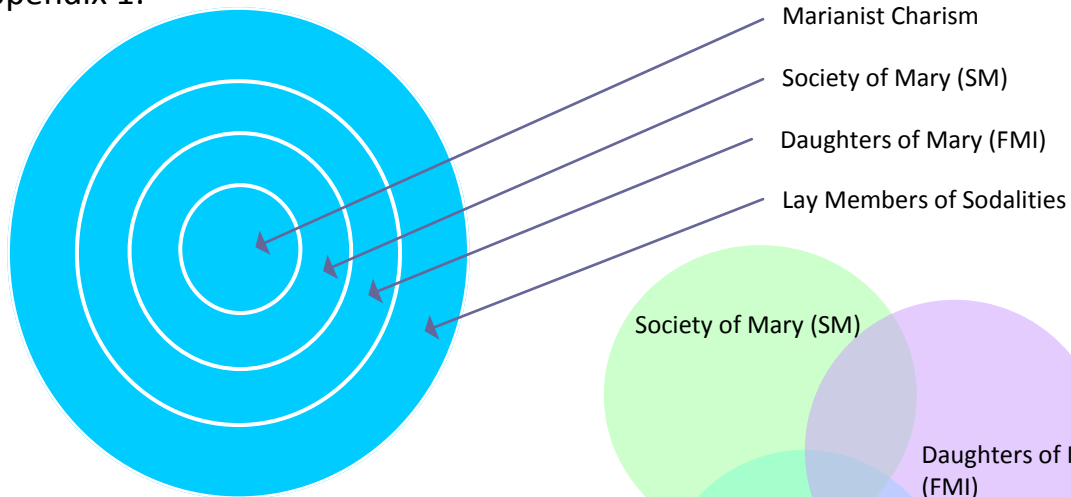
²⁰ "Leadership in the Marianist Tradition," virtual learning community course through the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation. Developed by Dick Ferguson, Gerorge Lisjak, and Kathy Reece.

Marianist Movement is this, Can it be sustained? Will there be stability in a system depending on lay leadership? Even Blessed Chaminade faced this question. He knew he would die and because of the vicissitudes of lay life, ongoing direction for the nascent organization was an issue. He saw religious life as the “director who never dies.” Religious Marianists have well provided a corporate memory, training and formation in the Marianist spirit and apostolic approach, a lifestyle that allows flexibility to respond to various changes, the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability that focus and intensify a long-haul commitment to the enterprise.

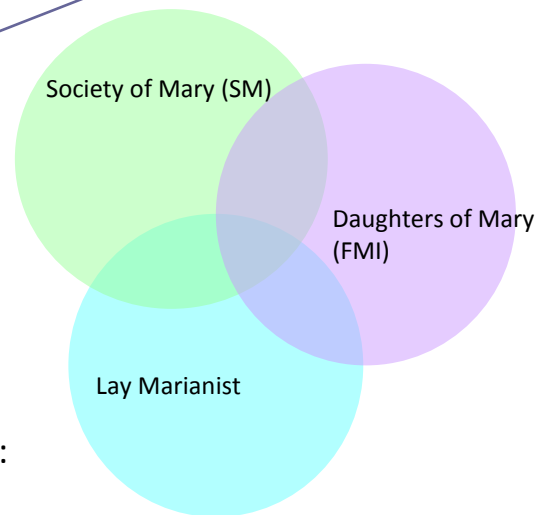
Fairly soon, lay leadership will need to think about how the memory, the formation, the flexibility, and the stability will be built into the system. And Brother Walter Oberster, SM, points out that these will not only be administrative decisions but also spiritual concerns. If the Marianist Movement survives, it will be not only through our efforts but also from the Spirit blowing its breath through us. In the meantime, we can live in the hope Brother Walter expresses at the end of his article.

“Being a Marianist leader is a challenge, but having such a call from a community (or institution) is to receive grace from that call. God will work together all things for the good of that community if the leader will be faithful, Marian, and prayerful. God does keep promises, and Mary will never abandon her children.”²¹ △

Appendix 1:



Appendix 2:



²¹. Walter Oberster, SM, “Marianist Leadership: Some Spiritual Aspects,” *Marianist Soundings* (Dayton, OH: NACMS, Spring 2004), vol. 8, no. 2, p. 24.

Pray with us...

Prayer to Our Lady of Springtime

O Mary, Queen of Spring, guide us to recognize and to appreciate the gift of earth's renewal each year, and to be thankful for the rain that brings new growth.

Help us to realize the fragility of God's Creation, and to do our part in keeping our environment green and growing.

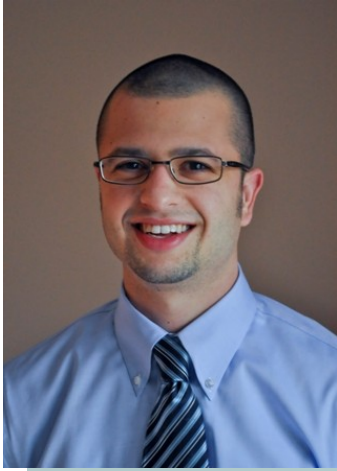
May we respond with positive advocacy to the challenges of environmental degradation, climate change, deforestation, and all threats to Creation. Amen.



Overflowing Obstacles:

The Social and Civic Engagement of Marianist Lay Communities

Alexander P. Orlowski



Alexander Orlowski is a 2009 graduate of the University of Dayton and is currently a student of law at the University of Chicago.

[*Editor's Note:* The following article is taken from Alexander P. Orlowski's May 2009 sociology capstone project at the University of Dayton. Marianist Sister Laura Leming, Ph.D., and Paul Becker, Ph.D., of Dayton's Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, were the advisors on the project.]

Abstract

Since the splash made by Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*, there has been a plethora of research in the area of small groups. This project examines Marianist Lay Communities throughout key points in its recent history as a network of Small Christian Communities which demonstrate some qualities of a Social Movement Organization. Key questions will focus on how its mission and manifestation through social outreach have evolved or remained consistent throughout time, while specifically focusing on the social and civic engagement of Marianist Lay Communities. The methodology employs both quantitative data (community-level survey) and qualitative data (individual-level interviews).

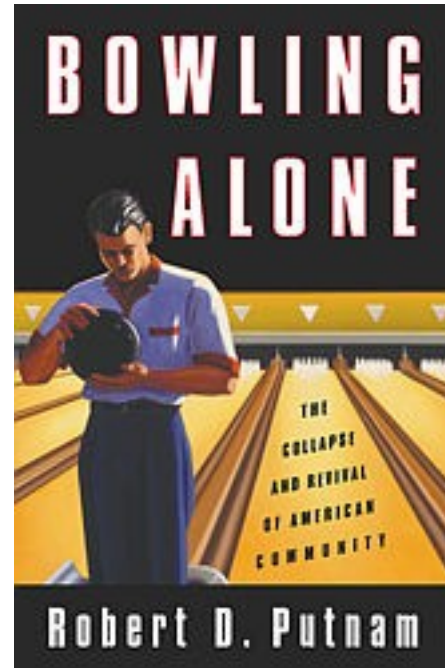
As a post-revolution phenomenon, the original purpose of the Marianist Lay Communities was twofold: to provide small faith-sharing communities for local Catholics, and to begin an effort to re-Christianize France. Since then, the lay movement has grown to include some current 1,700 lay Marianists in a number of Marianist Lay Communities in North America.

Introduction

Father Chaminade once explained, "I am like a brook that makes no effort to overcome obstacles in its way. All the obstacles can do is hold me up for a while, as a brook is held up; but during that time it grows broader and deeper and after a while it overflows the obstruction and flows along again. That is how I am going to work."¹ Chaminade's patient and persistent efforts to establish lay communities of Christian individuals after the French Revolution succeeded. Currently there are 7,000 lay Marianists involved in Marianist Lay Communities worldwide, and the movement continues to grow each year.

¹ For background on the origins of the brook quote, visit the NACMS website: www.nacms.org.

With such a significant number of individuals dedicated to following Father Chaminade and the other Marianist Founders' example of uniting faith with action in order to promote social justice, it is practical to study the means by which they accomplish their social justice goals. If the best means to effect positive social change are identified, they can be put into use as Marianist Lay Communities and other organizations of Small Christian Communities seek to draw upon their faith to influence the world. The ultimate goal for this and other future research in this area is to examine and articulate the set of practices that can be employed most effectively in the future to effect positive social change and respond to critical human needs.



Literature Review

By our very nature, humans are social creatures. We gravitate toward one another and form a plethora of relationships of various kinds—friendships, professional relationships, familial relationships, and romantic relationships—just to name a few. Additionally, besides our intimate public and private relationships, we also engage with one another in wider society. In fact, Father David Hollenbach maintains that the fundamental human right is the right to engage in the public square.² One of the most significant means by which we exercise our right to engage in society is through the formation of small groups united around a common cause or objective.

The Small Group Movement in the United States

Although small groups are by no means new to the United States, they have been recently garnering significant attention from sociologists and political theorists. Following the splash made by Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*,³ researchers became more aware of the sheer number of small groups participating in such a diversity of areas and the number of Americans who are involved in at least one of them. In fact, Robert Wuthnow (1994a) found that forty percent of Americans were actively involved in at least one small group and that fifty-five percent had been a member at one point in time or another.⁴ These small groups collectively focus on a wide range of areas from self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous to faith-based groups rooted in any of the multitude of religions present in the United States.

While small groups may be vastly different on an individual level, they are similar in the fact that they can be defined as a small community of individuals (that may be a subset of a

² David Hollenbach, SJ, *Catholicism and Liberalism: Contributions to American Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

⁴ Robert Wuthnow, "I Come Away Stronger": *How Small Groups are Shaping American Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1994), p. 370.

⁵ Francesca Polletta and James Jasper, "Collective Identity and Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 27 (Aug. 2001), p. 285.

larger organization) that share a collective identity, meet regularly, and are united around a common cause or purpose. A key term in this definition is “collective identity.” Francesca Polletta and James Jasper define collective identity as “an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community category, practice, or institution.”⁵ While much of the collective identity in many small groups is internal to the group itself, some small groups share a common passion to bring about some sort of change to society. Doug McAdam and David Snow outline many contemporary social issues such as civil rights, gender equality, animal rights, gun control, poverty, family values, and welfare reform, and they assert just how difficult it is to not find a small group active in each one of these social movement issue areas.⁶

J. Stewart Burgess (1944) defined a social movement as “a joint endeavor of a considerable group of persons to alter or change the course of events by their joint activities.”⁷ More recently, Sidney Tarrow defines them as “collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities.”⁸ Groups that participate in social movements are, logically, known as Social Movement Organizations (SMOs), which can be defined as “collectives working with some degree of organization and continuity to promote or resist change through a mixture of extra-institutional and institutionalized means.”⁹ This is not to say that all SMOs engage in the same sorts of activities. The degree of their activities runs from peaceful protests to violent demonstrations. Some are more engaged in extra-institutional means while others prefer to work within the confines of established institutions.

Faith-Based Groups and Small Christian Communities

A key subset of small groups in the United States has been faith-based groups, particularly Small Christian Communities (SCCs). Robert Wuthnow has studied extensively the inner workings and larger social focus of these SCCs and acknowledges that a key reason behind their existence is to provide their members with a stronger sense of community.¹⁰

Additionally, he states they are important because they make faith available to everyone and encourage greater individual responsibility for the nurturing of one’s faith.¹¹

However, not all Small Christian Communities are totally internally focused. William Mirola states, “Religion is a political force in that it helps to shape the moral, and occasionally the political and economic order of society.”¹² Indeed, Mirola goes on to assert that religion is a powerful motivator for Social Movement Organizations. He describes how religion provides motivations for participating in social change while also providing for organization and resources. “In sum, religion has the potential to provide both the beliefs and social support

⁶ Doug McAdams and David Snow, *Social Movements: Readings on Their Emergence, Mobilization, and Dynamics* (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing, 1997), p. xviii.

⁷ J. Stewart Burgess, “The Study of Modern Social Movements as a Means for Clarifying the Process of Social Action,” *Social Forces*, vol. 22, p. 270.

⁸ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 3-4.

⁹ McAdam and Snow, p. xxii.

¹⁰ Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America’s New Quest for Community* (New York: Free Press), p. 5.

¹¹ Wuthnow, “*I Come Away Stronger*”, pp. 349, 353.

¹² William Mirola, “Introduction to Social Movements and Religion” in *Sociology of Religion: A Reader* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2001) p. 399.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 401.

necessary to encourage people to act.”¹³ Individuals need motivation to participate in groups that are active in social issues. Those groups also need resources and a form of organization to be successful in their causes. Religion helps SCCs and their members to meet these needs.

Bernard Lee and Michael Cowan (2003) researched how Small Christian Communities are mission-oriented in their social activities. They found that while eighty percent of SCC members said they were concerned with “helping others,” only thirty-nine percent responded that they actually did so, and only eight percent cited actual political involvement.¹⁴ They use the metaphor of being “gathered and sent” to describe the private and public works of Small Christian Communities: “Small [Christian] communities must gather in mutuality. This is the ‘primary group’ aspect of small faith communities. . . . The other side of a small community’s life is its engagement in the larger social world of which it is a part. The understanding that the Church does not exist in isolation for itself alone but rather in and for the world is deeply embedded in the historic Jewish and Christian traditions.”¹⁵

Cowan and Lee extend this idea of SCCs “being sent” in developing the notion of faith’s public life. They argue that SCCs are committed to the well-being of all humanity and are thus “sent” by God to promote social justice and peace. “SCCs can be true to their name only by venturing into the public arena to build relationships with diverse others in the pursuit of the common good of the larger community.”¹⁶

Some researchers have specialized in studying specific Small Christian Communities that have functioned as Social Movement Organizations. For example, William D’Antonio and Anthony Pogorelc (2007) focused their study on the Voice of the Faithful organization (VOTF) that formed in response to the recent sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church.¹⁷ They interviewed and surveyed VOTF members and leaders to ascertain their individual motivations for joining the group, how they individually participated in the group, and how VOTF members collectively engaged in addressing the sexual abuse scandal in the Church. Another more well-established Social Movement Organization that is composed of a multitude of Small Christian Communities deserves further study and analysis: the Marianist Movement begun by Father William Joseph Chaminade, Adèle de Batz de Tranquelléon, and Marie Thérèse de Lamorous in post-revolutionary France.

History of the Marianist Movement

The French Revolution (1789-99) was a dire time for all Catholics in the country. While some priests fled as soon as possible, Father Chaminade elected to remain underground in the country as long as he could, risking certain death in order to continue ministering to the remaining faithful citizens. The government had effectively abolished the institutional Church, and Catholics who sought to remain faithful needed the services of priests, like Father Chaminade, who were willing to risk their lives in order to keep a Catholic presence in the country.

Unfortunately, a bookkeeping error in 1789 labeled Chaminade as having emigrated

¹⁴ Bernard J. Lee and Michael A. Cowan, *Gathered and Sent: The Mission of Small Church Communities Today* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁶ Michael Cowan and Bernard J. Lee, *Conversation, Risk, and Conversion: The Inner Public Life of Small Christian Communities* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), p. 128.

¹⁷ William V. D’Antonio, Anthony J. Pogorelc, and Nancy T. Ammerman, *Voice of the Faithful: Loyal Catholics Striving for Change* (New York: Crossroad, 2007).

and returned to France without permission, and he was forced to flee the country and seek refuge in Saragossa, Spain. As a man who “read the signs of the times,” he knew the importance of continuing his ministry in France. With the new government repressing the Catholic religion, young Catholics were growing up without an institutional Church, and older Catholics were losing connection to their faith without liturgy or the Eucharist.

While Chaminade was still in exile, Father Victor Boyer emphasized the importance of the laity in assisting the mission of priests once hostilities had subsided: “The lay people offer a resource that is infinitely precious for the propagation of the faith.”¹⁸ Additionally, the immediate need was with the laity, not the vowed religious. Common citizens had gone years without a functioning Church. Some structure would be needed to rebuild communities of faith in France.

To respond to this problem, Chaminade envisioned and created a network that would later become known as Marianist Lay Communities (MLCs) to rebuild the Catholic Church in France. He called these Marianist Lay Communities “sodalities.” His sodalities would provide a context where Catholics after the Revolution could come together to share and promote their faith. Chaminade opened participation to all, regardless of social or political standing. However, Chaminade still utilized discretion in seeking “quality” perspective members. Vincent Vasey asserts “by that he did not mean that the Sodality would consist only of an elite”; rather “[Chaminade] saw in the Sodality an institution to create a social impact on the milieu of Bordeaux.”¹⁹ The mission of bringing about social change was a prominent fixture in Chaminade’s mind.

The Mission and Social Outreach of the Marianist Movement

The original purpose of the Marianist Lay Communities was twofold: to provide small faith-sharing communities for local Catholics who had no other recourse for spiritual support after the Revolution, and to begin an effort to re-Christianize France. Since then, the lay movement has grown to include some current 1,700 lay Marianists in North America and 7,000 worldwide. Additionally, the MLCs have been joined by groups of religious sisters (the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, established in 1816) and religious priests and brothers (the Society of Mary, established in 1817).

Nowadays, Marianist Lay Communities have evolved to be small groups of individuals, some of whom have taken a shared public commitment to promote the Marianist charism and to live out its tenets in their everyday lives. Literally meaning “gift,” the Marianist charism is the way of life followed by the global Marianist Family that is characterized by faith, community, devotion to Mary, mission, and inclusivity. However, while the Marianists clearly define their charism, how do they actually utilize it to physically work for social justice?

At the annual Marianist Lecture at the University of Dayton on February 2, 2009, Brother Raymond Fitz, SM, gave a history of the Marianists as a Social Movement Organization. He then predicted how the MLCs, partnered with vowed Marianist religious, could have a profound social impact by the year 2020. In fact, Brother Ray fervently maintains that the Marianists can have a similar impact on society as the women’s suffrage movement or the civil rights movement. He detailed how the Marianist Founders utilized the charism to

¹⁸. Vincent R. Vasey, SM, *Chaminade: Another Portrait* (Dayton, Ohio: Marianist Resources Commission, 1987), p. 90.

¹⁹. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

respond to the social justice needs of their era in nineteenth century France, and also stated the charism can be adapted to address the current social justice needs of the present time and location. However, Brother Ray did not offer any practical evaluation or description of how the Marianists have engaged in their social justice efforts in recent history or how the charism should be adapted to address modern social justice issues. Instead, he offered a challenge to contemporary Marianists to continue to adapt the charism to their particular social justice milieu.

In his *Things Marianist* article, “How Do Marianists Do Social Justice?”, lay Marianist Jim Vogt discusses some basic approaches Marianists take when beginning social justice work.²⁰ The basic theological tenet underlying all of Marianist work in social justice is a reflection of “a call to service” that includes both works of mercy (direct service in alleviating the immediate needs or problems) and works of social justice (changing the political, social, or economic structures or institutions that create the problems). Furthermore, the Marianist approach to social justice is characterized by seven qualities: saying yes, building community, living simply, hospitality, joining voices with the voiceless, interdependence, and passion for mission. Although these seven qualities help to conceptualize how Marianists engage in social justice, it falls short of describing actual practices Marianists use in their efforts.

The Significant Challenge of the Current Marianist Mission

Arguably, the Marianist communities, both religious and lay, face a significant challenge in adapting their charism to modern social justice issues if they truly wish to become a Social Movement Organization with the same societal influence as the women’s suffrage movement or the civil rights movement. As the number of Marianist Lay Communities (MLCs) continues to grow, MLCs will play an increasingly significant role in worldwide social justice efforts. Indeed while MLCs were originally intended to serve the people of one nation, they now extend their reach to the far corners of the globe. However, in order to adapt the charism to current social justice issues, modern MLCs must know how past communities specifically engaged in social justice issues. Have all MLCs throughout history been civically and socially engaged in the exact same ways, or has MLC engagement evolved throughout time? Are some methods of engagement more effective in addressing social justice issues than other methods? Finally, do the majority of communities act in similar ways, or are the means of social justice unique to each community?

This research seeks to continue to articulate the message presented in Brother Ray’s lecture. While Brother Ray detailed the founding of the Marianist movement and a profound vision for the future, he intentionally left out MLC engagement in recent history and how the charism must be adapted to actively and effectively address modern social justice issues. The task for this and for future research is to examine and articulate the set of practices that Marianists currently use and can employ in the future to effect social change as they respond to critical human needs.

²⁰ Jim Vogt, *Things Marianist*, “How Do Marianists Do Social Justice?” (Dayton, OH: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 2008).

Methodology

The methodology for this research combined both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Participants were chosen via a convenience snowball sample. The research began by pursuing individuals suggested by an informant, and each interview concluded by asking the participant if they could suggest any other individual member of a different Marianist Lay Community who would be willing to participate in the research. Special emphasis was placed on noting that a broad range of individuals who were involved in a Marianist Lay Community at any point in time from the 1960s until present day were needed. Most of the research participants were happy to suggest individuals and provide contact information. Out of this snowball sample grew a final sample size of nine research participants representing seven separate communities.

The main objective of each research session was to gain an understanding of the social, ecclesial, and civic engagement of each research participant's Marianist Lay Community. There are a variety of definitions of civic and social engagement, and there is disagreement among scholars on how to quantify each. A good definition of civic engagement is "any action that affects legitimately public matters (even if selfishly motivated) as long as the actor pays appropriate attention to the consequences of his [or her] behavior for the underlying political system."²¹ This definition exemplifies how it is incredibly difficult to gauge an individual or a group's level of civic engagement. In an effort to measure civic engagement on an individual level, Scott Keeter, Cliff Zukin, and colleagues developed a "civic engagement index" composed of nineteen indicators of civic engagement in their book *A New Civic Engagement*, published in 2006.²² They separated the nineteen indicators into three broad categories: "civic (or community) activities," "electoral activities," and "political voice activities." Based on this civic engagement index, I adapted Keeter and Zukin's nineteen individual indicators to a

<p>Civic Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Engaged in a Community problem-solving activity2. Volunteered3. Ran/Walked/Biked for charity4. Raised money for charity	<p>Political Voice Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Contact public official2. Contact the media3. Protest/March4. Sign a petition5. Boycott/Buycott²³6. Canvassed
<p>Electoral Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Volunteer for political candidate or group2. Persuade others how to vote in an election3. Pass out or display campaign buttons or signs4. Raise money for political candidate/group/cause	<p>Ecclesial Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pray for political cause/current event2. Encourage others to join faith-based cause3. Participate in social justice cause4. Contribute to/participate in MLNNA5. Contribute to/participate in another faith-based cause6. Involved in parish-based activities

²¹ Peter Levine, *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens* (Medford, MA: Tufts University Press, 2007), p. 13.

²² Scott Keeter, and others, *A New Civic Engagement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²³ Boycotting is refusing to purchase a product or service from a company because of its ethical or moral standards, while boycotting is intentionally purchasing a product or service from a company because of its ethical or moral standards.

group-level and then added six “ecclesial activity” indicators because by their very nature, Marianist Lay Communities are faith-based Small Christian Communities. The ecclesial activity indicators were chosen by taking related questions from the survey D’Antonio and colleagues administered to VOTF members and by brainstorming other ecclesial activities MLCs might be engaged in. The resulting “civic and ecclesial engagement index” is composed of the following twenty indicators.

Each research session began with an opening conversation that included the research participant signing an informed consent form. After that a twenty-five question survey was administered asking respondents questions on behalf of their community (see appendix A). Thus the surveys constitute community-level data. The first five questions of the survey were general classification questions: name of the community, size, years of existence, and most important activity. The remaining twenty questions related to the civic and ecclesial engagement index.

The second part of the research consisted of a qualitative interview, which solicited individual-level perspectives on the respondent’s MLC. Each interview was digitally recorded (for audio) and lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes. One interview was conducted over the phone because it was impossible for the researcher and participant to meet in person. The interviews generally followed the interview guide found in appendix B. I developed the interview guide prior to conducting the interview to help focus my questioning and ensure each interview followed a relatively similar pattern. While the survey questions were designed to empirically collect data on each community’s civic and ecclesial engagement, the interview questions were designed to get a bigger picture of each community’s activities, motivation, social justice activities, and interactions with the Catholic Church and other members of the wider Marianist Family. Additional probes were asked if something the participant said was particularly interesting or confusing. Most interviews organically turned into a conversation following the list of interview questions centered around the main question of how the community is civically and socially engaged.

The results of the report were generated by examining the similarities and differences between the participants’ surveys and responses to the interview questions. Particular attention was placed on comparing answers from participants who were involved in Marianist Lay Communities in different decades and in different stages of their lives. For example, some of the participants were members of a Marianist Lay Community as college students in the 1970s, while others are adults currently involved in a Marianist Lay Community. Additionally, some of the research participants had a long history with MLCs; I asked these individuals specifically if they could reflect on similarities and differences in the lay Marianist movement between past decades and today.

Results

In order to examine the quantitative results from the civic and ecclesial engagement index, as administered in the survey, each community was assigned a random letter between A and G for classification purposes. Each community’s index score was calculated by counting the

²⁴ Mark Lopez and others, *The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities* (Medford, MA: Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2006).

Figure One

Community	Years	Index Score
B	1	1
G	2	10
C	3	4
F	5	11
E	20	9
D*	21	10.5
A*	38	18

Overall, communities were most likely to participate in the various ecclesial activities than any of the other types of activities, and they were least likely to participate in the electoral activities (see Figure Two). Overall, an average of 5 communities participated in each of the ecclesial activities, 3 in each of the political voice activities, 3 in each of the civic activities, and only 1.5 in each of the electoral activities.

*25

Figure Two

	Average # of Communities Involved in Each Activity
Civic Activities	3
Electoral Activities	1.5
Political Voice Activities	3
Ecclesial Activities	5

Regardless of classification, the most popular activities were: praying for a political cause or current event (every community); volunteering (all but one community); contributing to/participating in the Marianist Lay Network of North America (all but two communities); and participating in a social justice cause (all but two

communities). By far the least popular activities were the electoral activities, canvassing, running/walking/biking for charity, and contacting the media, with only one or two communities participating in each activity.

number of times marked “yes” on each survey. For the two communities that had multiple respondents (A and D), the scores were averaged. Out of a possible score of twenty, the average index score was 9.1. To put this into context, in 2006 Mark Lopez and colleagues found that the average young American participated in an average of 3.7 out of the original 19 indicators in Keeter and Zukin’s original civic engagement index (2006).²⁴ While Lopez and colleagues were specifically looking at Americans under the age of 25, MLC members are of a wide range of ages, so we might expect a different average. Even so, it is a reference point where one may begin to conceptualize how the engagement of MLC members relates to the engagement of average American young adults.

One finding from the surveys is that there is a correlation between the number of years each community has been in existence and the civic and ecclesial engagement index score. Some of the lay Marianists interviewed belong to communities that have been in existence for more than forty years, while some others had just started two or three years prior. Thus, it was interesting to compare the experiences of communities on the two different ends of the spectrum. One individual who had been a lay Marianist for many decades mused, “I would think that the mission and focus of our community has grown, rather than changed, over the years. We started out trying to form ourselves as a community and as Marianists [and we have grown in mission since then].” I sensed a similar experience with the new communities; because they were only a few years old, they were still trying to figure out what it means to be in community together before they concerned themselves too much with actively engaging the world as a group.

²⁵Community A’s and D’s index scores were averaged from two respondents representing each community.

This trend was reflected in the survey data as well (see Figure One). The communities that had been in existence for many years had a much higher civic and ecclesial index “score” than newer communities. For example, one community that had been in existence for nearly forty years had engaged in 18 out of the 20 indicators, while another community that was only a year old had only engaged in 1 out of 20. The sense that I obtained from many of the community members is that new communities (consciously or not) spend the first few years forming themselves as a community before focusing on wider engagement. I conjecture that communities begin their civic and ecclesial engagement in one arena and then expand to other activities throughout the life of the community.

Qualitative Results

As I was conducting the interviews and listening to the digital recordings, four main themes began to emerge.

- First, members of Marianist Lay Communities see their mission and the charism as a way of life, difficult to encapsulate in a mission statement.
- Second, Catholic Social Thought plays an important implicit and/or explicit role in the communities and their approach to social justice.
- Third, the focus and activities of the community are largely directed by the individual members’ personal interests.
- Finally, there are some notable differences and similarities between communities of past decades and communities today.

Marianist Lay Communities’ Mission as a Way of Life

Marianists, lay and religious, draw their inspiration from Mary, who was the Mother of Jesus and the first Christian disciple. An often-quoted scripture passage within Marianist Lay Communities is the Wedding Feast at Cana where Mary instructs the wedding banquet servants to “do whatever He [Jesus] tells you” (Jn 2:1-11). Marianists approach their mission in the same way, to present Jesus to the world and to carry on his mission. Because this mission involves a daily commitment of every aspect of a Marianist Lay Community member’s life, this mission is difficult to express in something like a mission statement. While one lay Marianist interviewed did say her community had a written mission statement, most others did not. Others said their communities substituted a poem or a set of ideas and principles in lieu of an explicit mission statement. An MLC member noted, “We did have a mission statement, but I couldn’t tell you what explicitly it was or where it came from. However, it did contain the elements of sharing our faith, being young adults, and living out the Marianist charism in the world, and you know, all those kinds of things.” I think the important element of this member’s statement is the focus on bringing the charism to the world and supporting one another throughout those efforts. This was a common sentiment amongst the community members I interviewed. Another MLC member expressed that his community has “no pithy statement that tries to capture who we are and what we are about. [However] if you asked our members what we are about, we are striving to be a community that can live faith deeply and integrate their faith with the world around them in the Marianist context.”

The community that did have an explicit, written mission statement also shared these same themes of faith-sharing, mutual support, and bringing Christ to the world through the gift of the Marianist charism. A part of their mission statement reads, “Our mission is to listen, discern, and respond in faith to the needs within ourselves and our world. We seek to be connected to the wider Marianist Family and to respond to the social needs of our world.”

Another MLC member explained, “I don’t think we have an explicit mission statement. What we do have is a poem. We have looked at it over time, when we go on retreat, and we reflect on what it means to our community.” One part of the poem reads, “Sometimes people are like wells / Deep and real, natural (unpiped) / Life-giving, calm and cool, refreshing / They bring out what is best in you.”²⁶ I found this avenue of expression unique because it allowed the community to articulate the common themes of the Marianist mission and their community’s focus as an artistic expression.

Although the mission of Marianist Lay Communities centers around communities supporting one another through faith-sharing and other means in order to bring Christ to the world through the Marianist charism, the core essence of lay Marianists in the MLCs is one of personally identifying as a follower of Christ. One MLC member explained, “A lay community is disciples, walking together with Christ after the resurrection.” These modern-day disciples see themselves as continuing the work of Jesus and the work of Mary by recognizing the apostolic nature of their efforts and accepting the gift and the responsibility of their Christian status. One MLC member was trying to explain this concept of modern-day discipleship to me. She explained, “The best thing you can do [to help the world] is to keep being who you are.”

The Role of Catholic Social Thought

The body of Catholic Social Thought has a long tradition rooted in emphasizing the common good, the dignity of the human person, global solidarity, option for the poor and vulnerable, and other principles. Various popes have published a variety of encyclicals on social justice including *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Workers) in 1891, *Quadragesimo Anno* (On the Reconstruction of the Social Order) in 1931, and many others. Likewise, the Marianists have also oriented their efforts around social justice. In *Things Marianist*, “How Do Marianists Do Social Justice?” Jim Vogt writes, “We are called to build a world which reflects the coming of the Kingdom of God. It also reflects a call to service that includes both works of mercy . . . and works of social justice.”²⁷ He also notes that for Marianists, community building is the means by which Marianist Lay Communities promote social justice. Finally, the Marianists also have developed the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative (MSJC) to help facilitate their social justice efforts.

Many of the MLC members I interviewed explained that Catholic Social Thought had both an implicit and an explicit influence on their respective communities. Some of the research participants noted how their communities had spent time reading papal encyclicals or other Marianist writings on social justice. One MLC member explained, “Catholic Social Teaching definitely impacts [our community] implicitly, and probably explicitly as well. This is

²⁶ While the copy of the poem furnished by the research participant did not have source nor author citation, it appears to be from a collection of poems *Seasons of Your Heart* by Macrina Wiederkehr.

²⁷ Vogt, p. 1.

something that several members of our community care about very deeply and try to live out in their lives.”

Other participants noted that some members in their communities had advanced degrees in religious studies or theology; thus Catholic Social Teaching was a steadfast influence on the community. Still other communities were comprised of a combination of lay people and vowed sisters, brothers, and priests. These community members had explicit training in Catholic Social Thought; therefore, their training and knowledge permeated community discussions. One person who had been a member of an MLC while in college in the 1980s explained, “I know that the Catholic Social Tradition was there, and it was pretty explicit because most of us were pretty well versed in it.”

Individual Members’ Interests and the Community’s Focus

A main purpose of the interview portion of the research was to garner a complete understanding of how each community directed its mission, focus, and activities. I knew that Marianists and, subsequently, MLCs were dedicated to social justice through the building of communities, but I was really interested in how MLCs individually selected which issues they would be concerned with. Did communities select a specific social justice topic at the formation of their community to focus on throughout the duration of the community’s life, or are communities even focused on a specific cause at all? One member explained:

As a whole community, there really isn’t one issue [that we focus on]. We do some MEEC [Marianist Environmental Education Center] things, but that’s because we have members who have a strong interest in it. So we have not settled on one social action type of thing. Each of us individually brings some kind of [different] social action or [social issue] to the group. Everybody is involved in social action in some sort, but we are not always doing it together as a community, but it is interesting that a lot of the [social issues] at least two of us are [involved].

This pattern of individuals’ interests directing the focus and activities of the communities was common amongst all communities I interviewed.

It was surprising that each MLC member I interviewed expressed that her or his respective community had focused its activities because of the personal interests of the members that comprise the entire community. One individual said this had a “constant fertilization” effect on the community, constantly bringing something new, different, and exciting. For example, if one community member was particularly concerned with human rights issues, the community was very likely to be involved in human rights causes, discussion, or volunteer work. One MLC member noted that these social justice topics organically sprang up in the life of the community: “A lot of us were involved in, and still are involved in, social justice issues. So those issues came up [in our community] all of the time, either in discussion or service, for example Habitat for Humanity.” Another MLC member noted a similar experience saying, “We don’t have a lot of structure, but we’ve been together for so long that if we want to talk about something, we just do. If somebody has a specific thing that they are struggling with or something insightful that they want to share, we are comfortable enough to

share it.” Another MLC member simply said, “I think there are causes that people are involved in [as communities] because we are connected in each other’s lives [which brings out] that which is important to us.” One individual strongly noted that it was important for her community not to force any sort of mission or focus. In her previous experience, any community that forced itself to settle on one or two social justice causes ended badly. Instead, she encourages communities to prayerfully wait for whatever may come their way. For example, she said it took Father Chaminade sixteen years before deciding to focus his efforts on education.

MLC members also seem to be more civically engaged than they would otherwise be because of their involvement in their respective communities. I asked the participants if they felt that their community members were more civically and socially engaged on an individual level because of their involvement. Community members’ reactions were mixed; some people wholeheartedly agreed that individual member civic engagement levels increased because of community involvement. Others believed that each of their community’s members were already civically engaged, and that the community just directed that existing commitment to civic engagement. One MLC member explained:

The reason people are more civically engaged because of our community is like this: Because I care about [my community members], I care about what they care about. So I want to know more about what you care about and why it is important to you, and then there is an osmosis process where some of that rubs off on me.

This MLC member really believed that everyone in his community was more civically engaged because, in addition to their own personal social justice causes, they took on the causes of every other member in the community.

Another individual noted that without some members in her community, she personally would not know where to start when approaching a social justice issue. She said:

I had no clue as to where to start [with social issues], but there were other members of our community who just knew how to do it. They knew who the contacts were. They knew what the needs were. They already had the social capital and the ability to engage in . . . social analysis. They were really good at looking at how something fit into a much bigger issue. It was through the support of these community members that we got involved in [various] issues. . . . Issues that affected one person affected all. So if one person was interested in a specific issue, we all got involved in that issue.

This person’s community had accomplished an astonishing variety of projects related to social justice. She was careful to enunciate that the resources within her community—social knowledge, political bargaining, grant writing, and the ability to form partnerships—is what made their community’s social engagement possible. Everyone brought a special skill to the community that compensated for other members’ lack of skill in that individual area. So what they were not able to accomplish on their own, they were able to accomplish as a group.

Sustaining the Efforts

A main complication with engaging in this amount of social justice work and civic engagement is the risk of community burnout and the experience of spiritual dryness or a lack of motivation. One individual expressed, "I think that for the majority of us, we are probably the 'choir,' but the choir needs to be sustained and needs to support each other."²⁸ Another said, "There is not a strong apostolic focus of what we do, but we need each other for support and encouragement to be better human beings." One of the main ways that communities help battle the threat of burnout is simply by being there for one another by faith-sharing and prayer. Eight out of the nine individuals I interviewed said that the most important thing their communities do is some form of faith-sharing, prayer, or just being together. One member summarized, "Social engagement has to be sustained in something, namely prayer. I think it was the prayer of the community that sustained the community through those periods of burnout. Thus, the community really needs to have a strong prayer life."

Another aspect of sustaining the community's efforts besides guarding against burnout is ensuring that the projects the community works on are able to survive beyond the physical work of the community. Adèle once wrote that "one plants and another waters," and this holds true for MLCs today. One person explained, "We got into the pattern of identifying a need, primarily on the local level, and then we would do whatever we could to get that need addressed. We would then collaborate to find partners and then try to turn it over to someone who could sustain it over the long haul and then turn [our attention] to another issue." Other MLCs would choose to partner with existing organizations, such as the Marianist Environmental Education Center or Habitat for Humanity, in order to ensure that after their community's work was done, the effort would continue. Another MLC member emphasized, "We decided that we needed to have a permanent relationship with the local social service agencies." This is significant because by partnering with established agencies, this MLC was able to enhance existing community services and ensure that efforts would continue into the future.

Changes (and Consistencies) from the 1960s to Today

One of the original goals of this project was to examine how Marianist Lay Communities have changed or remained consistent over the past fifty years. Several of the research participants who have been familiar with the Marianists throughout this entire time noted that if anything has changed, it has been the very composition of the Marianist Family. While the Marianist Family began after the French Revolution as a lay movement, an increasing amount of emphasis was placed upon the vowed branches over time. For example in the 1960s the Society of Mary (vowed male religious) used to drop off brothers by the busload at the University of Dayton for their studies. Nowadays, the number of vowed Marianist brothers and sisters is dwindling, and the number of lay Marianists in MLCs is increasing. Simultaneously over that time frame, lay Marianists have retaken more personal "ownership" over the Marianist charism as a way of life for themselves.²⁹ It seems as if the Marianist

²⁸ In reference to the commonly-used phrase "preaching to the choir."

²⁹ Note: I place "ownership" in quotation marks to specify a distinction between physical ownership as in property with personal ownership (or accountability). The Marianist charism is not a piece of property to be hoarded by one group or another, but it does appear that the laity has recently come to more personal ownership and accountability over the charism than in previous decades.

charism was born unto the laity in the early 1800s; then somewhere throughout the course of history, the charism seemed to shift in perception to be almost exclusively that of the vowed religious. One individual outlined:

I think that back in the 1960s and 1970s, the time was that most of the Marianist Lay Communities that were in existence were taken care of by the Society of Mary (the brothers and priests). For example, the SM had a yearly retreat for the Marianist Lay Communities, and there was a dependence on the SM for whatever was going to happen. Now, Marianist Lay Communities are learning still, and taking over the charism for themselves. I mean, I am a lay Marianist, period, wherever I am. If I move to Colorado, I'm still a Marianist lay person. It's not because I'm a friend of a brother or in a specific community. Look at MLNNA; it did not exist in the 1970s. So that is the big thing . . . we had to grow our own organizational structure and find out that there are other Marianist Lay Communities around the United States. We had to learn as lay people that we were lay Marianist people.

Indeed, Marianist Lay Communities are becoming more organized and networked throughout the global community. The Marianist Lay Network of North America was formed in the early 1990s, and in 1993 the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities began to convene every four years in a different part of the world to "promote common reflection on living in the spirit of the Marianist charism, on [their] role in the Church, and on global social justice issues."

One thing that has not changed during the last five decades is the reason people are attracted to MLCs in the first place. One individual stated:

People were looking for ways to be faithful Catholics, involved in substantive political and social issues; while there were charismatic prayer groups, they didn't have the social aspect. Likewise, while there were political action groups, they didn't have the prayer aspect. So Marianist Lay Communities grew out of people looking for ways to integrate those things. People were also looking to recreate the faith-sharing that occurred on their college campuses.

MLCs are a way for people to connect their Bible with their newspaper and to integrate their faith with current events and social action.

Another individual noted, "Marianist Lay Communities originally attracted people who had unrest or dissatisfaction with what has happening institutionally in the Church. For example, [the way] some parishes closed in on themselves, or other uneasiness with institutional things, like bishops' statements." Today there is some of the same sentiment with people presently joining MLCs. They want to remain connected to the Church, but perhaps the primary way they get their faith is not simply through weekly Sunday Mass at their home parish. They seek to connect their faith with action, and they join Marianist Lay Communities in order to gain the communal context that allows them to do so.

Discussion

In addition to the points articulated in the results section, it is important to discuss the findings of this research in the larger context of other scholarship on Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and Social Movement Organizations (SMOs). Additionally, it is important to discuss what these findings mean for the future of Marianist Lay Communities.

Perhaps the foremost point to iterate is that while separate research is conducted on small groups, Small Christian Communities, and Social Movement Organizations, Marianist Lay Communities simultaneously fit each group's prominent sociological definitions, and therefore MLCs cannot exclusively be characterized as one or the other. This makes sense because MLCs exist to combine the purposes of a Small Christian Community with the purposes of a Social Movement Organization. Wuthnow (1994) articulated that the primary purpose of SCCs is to provide their members with a stronger sense of community and provide an arena to enhance their faith. McAdam and Snow (1997) stated that SMOs exist to collectively work through extra-institutional and institutional means to promote or resist change. Collectively, MLCs accomplish each of the tasks of an SCC and an SMO through Lee and Cowan's metaphor of being "gathered and sent." They state, "[SCCs] must gather in mutuality. . . . The other side of a small community's life is the engagement in the larger social world of which it is a part."³⁰ The participants in this research articulated that their communities' civic and ecclesial efforts are sustained in prayer and mutual support.

However, MLCs are not the only group to incorporate the elements of both SCCs and SMOs. William Mirola (2001) argued that religion is a powerful motivator for social change, and D'Antonio and Pogorelc (2007) exemplified this through their study of the Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) organization. Because more SCCs are taking on the characteristics of SMOs, more sociological research should examine the intersection of faith and action exemplified by these hybrid groups.

It also is interesting to note that Bernard Lee and Michael Cowan (2003) found that only thirty-nine percent of SCCs actually reported any activity that would "help others" and only eight percent cited political involvement.³¹ While my present research only draws upon a limited sample of nine participants in seven distinct communities, eighty-six percent of the communities reported some form of volunteering, and fifty-seven percent stated that they had contacted a public official. From this limited sample and data, it appears that Marianist Lay Communities have a higher engagement rate than the average Small Christian Community.

Suggestions for Marianist Lay Communities and MLNNA

A conclusion from this research is that while, as a whole, Marianist Lay Communities maintain connections with other members of the Marianist Family, they largely direct their formation and activities on an individual basis. For example, one lay Marianist articulated that after the members in her current community experienced past communities that failed because they tried to force themselves into one concrete mission or focus area, the present community decided to focus on forming themselves as a community first, and then let social engagement manifest itself naturally. Many of the other individuals I spoke to offered a similar sentiment

³⁰ Lee and Cowan, *Gathered and Sent*, p. 94.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

of allowing individual members' interests to direct the focus of the community without pigeonholing it into one or two issue areas. However, each of the communities came to this conclusion independently, rather than having learned from the experience of past communities.

The Marianist Lay Network of North America has two publications for purchase that offer guidance to newly-formed communities, *Just Do Whatever He Tells You!* and *Just Do Whatever He Tells You . . . Together!*³² While many communities are formed from individuals who are already lay Marianists or under the direction of a member of the Marianist Family, communities seem to be left to “find their own legs” by themselves after an initial formation process. Some communities also maintain a relationship with a spiritual mentor. While the advice and guidance of such individuals is valuable, it is limited to the experience of that one person. None of the community members I interviewed indicated that these publications were in existence when I asked what resources were available to their community. Perhaps if these documents, created from the wisdom and “best practices” of the compilation of past and current communities, were more widely disseminated to aspiring communities, then future communities would be able to learn the best practices of being an MLC without having to “reinvent the wheel” for themselves.

Secondly, while some lay Marianists are members of multiple communities, and the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities convenes every four years, the interaction between the different Marianist Lay Communities is relatively limited. Many communities do not seem to have access to the database of all MLCs (even though they can obtain it through MLNNA), so interaction is limited to personal knowledge of other communities or official large-scale lay Marianist gatherings. If such a list were made available online and updated regularly, communities would gain the ability to interact with other communities to share faith, experiences, and best-practices, and to collaborate with one another in their social justice efforts.

A final suggestion stems from Mirola's assertion that religion can be a powerful motivator for Social Movement Organizations. The Vatican has a rich collection of documents calling for social justice, and Marianists have responded by establishing the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative (MSJC). Many of the community members I interviewed indicated that Catholic Social Thought has either an explicit or implicit influence on their community. For those communities that are only implicitly influenced by Catholic Social Thought, an examination of Vatican and MSJC documents may help them explicitly identify religious motivations to engage in social justice activities.

Conclusion

Marianist Lay Communities are a long-established hybrid of Small Christian Communities and Social Movement Organizations. Originally established to serve the faith needs of one European country, MLCs have grown into an organized worldwide movement that is a force for social justice in a plethora of issue areas. From the environment to contemporary human struggles, MLCs unite their faith with action for justice.

The quantitative findings of this research testify to a wide range of activities that lay

³² Both publications are available via the NACMS bookstore, www.nacms.org/bookstore.

Marianists use to further their social justice efforts. From encouraging others to join a faith-based cause to petitioning elected representatives, MLCs utilize a variety of institutional and extra-institutional means to engage their wider communities. Perhaps my research fell short in the respect that I neglected to ask which methods were the most effective in promoting or resisting social change. However, this research does lay the foundation to further explore the effectiveness of various means of social and ecclesial activities.

The qualitative findings from the research interviews are a rich source of the collective decades of experience the lay Marianists I interviewed have with the Marianist Family. Directed by their individual community members' interests, MLCs are involved in a variety of social justice efforts, as influenced by Catholic Social Thought; throughout all of their efforts, lay Marianists approach their work as a way of life. Finally, some of the research participants detailed interesting similarities and differences between MLCs of past decades and today.

Unfortunately, my research was limited by time and resource constraints. The entire period from project inception to final presentation only spanned fourteen weeks. Therefore the sample size was intentionally small and primarily based on a snowball convenience sample. While these findings can be beneficial in and of themselves, they give rise to a great amount of future research that may be done to expand upon this knowledge.

As a first opportunity for further research, MLCs and VOTF exemplify two distinct entities that are hybrids of the typical Small Christian Community and Social Movement Organization. As more faith-based groups seek to unite faith with social action, more research should be devoted to studying these hybrid groups. Secondly, it would be beneficial if future Marianist-specific research could expand upon this study to include a larger sample of MLCs from all over the United States and beyond. All of the communities in this study were American; it would be interesting to see if communities rooted in different countries and cultures display similar or different social and civic engagement tendencies. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in some countries, MLCs are more active in social and ecclesial change efforts of various sorts. Also, one participant in this study commented that their community founded a new MLC. It would be interesting to further investigate this offspring community and other offspring communities to see how their experiences are similar or different than other MLCs.

Finally as Brother Raymond Fitz challenged in his lecture, the task for current Marianists, both lay and religious, is to adapt the charism to address the contemporary social justice milieu. However, in what ways must the charism be adapted for Marianists to effectively serve the modern world on a similar scale as the Women's Suffrage Movement or the Civil Rights Movement in the United States? The task for future research is to examine and articulate the set of practices that Marianist Lay Communities and other hybrid organizations currently use and can employ in the future to effect positive social change as they respond to critical human needs. △

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Do you have any questions regarding informed consent before we start?

How did your community come into existence? Is there a story/reason behind the formation of your community? Did you invite others to be a part of your community?

How often does your community meet? What do you do during the meetings?

Does your community have either an explicit or implicit mission statement? If so, can you tell me about it?

How is your community interested in social issues? Can you tell me about your community's involvement in social issues?

Is there a specific cause that your community is more involved in than other causes? Which one? What motivated you to get involved in that cause?

Describe, if any, the non-religious social causes that your community is involved in.

What resources were available to your community to address the social causes that you worked on?

How does Catholic Social Teaching influence your community's actions either directly or indirectly?

Tell me about how your community is involved with MLNNA, other lay Marianist communities, or vowed Marianist communities.

How has your members' involvement in your community influenced their social or civic engagement?

Can you tell me how the mission, focus, and activities of your community evolved or changed over the life of your community?

As a community member, were you ever concerned about your community's social, political, or civic activities? If so, can you tell me about why you were concerned?

Any other questions I may have missed? Is there anything else that you would like to add that may shed some light on the mission of your community and how it was engaged?

Do you know of anyone else from a different Marianist Lay Community that might be willing to participate in my research?

Appendix C: Survey Results

	Comm. A #1	Comm. A #2	Comm. B	Comm. C	Comm. D #1	Comm. D #2	Comm. E	Comm. F	Comm. G	Number of Participating Communities
Years Involved	1971-Present	1971-1993	2008-Present	2006-Present	1988-Present	1988-Present	1989-Present	1987-1991	2007-present	
Number of Members	15	25	12	12	9	9	14	27	11	
Civic Activities										
Community Problem Solving Activity	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	~~~	No	Yes	3
Volunteered	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	6
Ran/Walk/Bike for Charity	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
Raise Money for Charity	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	3
Electoral Activities										
Volunteer for Political Group	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
Persuade Others How to Vote	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	2
Distribute/Display Campaign Materials	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	2
Raise Money for Political Group	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
Political Voice Activities										
Contact Public Official	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	4
Contact Media	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	2
Protest/March	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4
Sign a Petition	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	3
Boycott/Buycott	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	4
Canvass	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	1
Ecclesial Activities										
Pray for Political Cause/Current Event	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7
Encourage Others to Join Faith Cause	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
Participate in Social Justice Cause	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	5
Contribute to/Participate in MLNNA	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5
Contribute to/Participate in Faith Cause	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	4
Involved in Parish Activities	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
Most Important Thing Done As A Community	Gather Together and Retreats	Faith Sharing, Support, and Social Justice	Reflections	Gather and Read Scripture Together	Founded New Community	Prayer, Meetings, Socials	Support Each Other	Faith Sharing	Support, Prayer, and social issue involvement	

NACMS joins the Marianist Family in celebrating the 250th anniversary of the birth of

Blessed William Joseph Chaminade



Book Review

Philip C. Hoelle, SM: Servant Priest

By Joseph J. Kepes and Joanne López Kepes
Reviewed by Daniel M. Jordan

When you think of a love letter, the image of two caring people separated by distance is often the image that is conjured. But for Joseph and Joanne López Kepes, a married couple of more than 55 years who live in Dayton, Ohio, their most recent love letter is something quite different: a labor of love for a beloved friend and holy man, Marianist Father Phil Hoelle, whose good works have shaped the lives and spiritual lives of so many.

The Kepeses have penned *Philip C. Hoelle, SM: Servant Priest*, a soon-to-be released 108-page biography about their dear friend who died in 2005 at the age of 93. His life is not only notable for its length but more importantly for what Father did with it during his nine-plus decades. Describing the project, the authors had this to say:

This is a portrait of Father Philip Charles Hoelle, SM, a man for all seasons, a model servant priest and apostle. Having known Father Phil as a personal friend, confessor, and mentor for many years, we feel it is our privilege to have been entrusted with telling something of his life story. It is our prayer that this portrait will do justice in presenting an image of this humble, loving, and quiet man who has inspired so many people. In accepting each person as he or she is, Father made it possible for each one to see who they might become and the good they might be capable of doing.

The Kepeses remind us that it is through the “ordinary events of one’s life that God works and speaks.” So it is a fitting tribute to Father Hoelle that their word portrait of him spans from the cradle to the grave.

As Father Hoelle was other-centered and nondirective by nature, perhaps many within Marianist circles are not aware of his voluminous works, which include helping to establish the Marian Library; a lay-oriented missionary program; Bergamo Center for Lifelong Learning; Christian-Jewish Dialogue; and the Dakota Center, a social-service agency serving inner-city Dayton residents.

Philip C. Hoelle, SM: Servant Priest is a fitting love letter to a man who dedicated his life to doing whatever God told him.

•To order this publication, contact Joseph or Joanne Kepes at 937.434.2580.



Fr. Philip Hoelle, SM

Origins of the Marianist Family

Eduardo Benlloch, SM

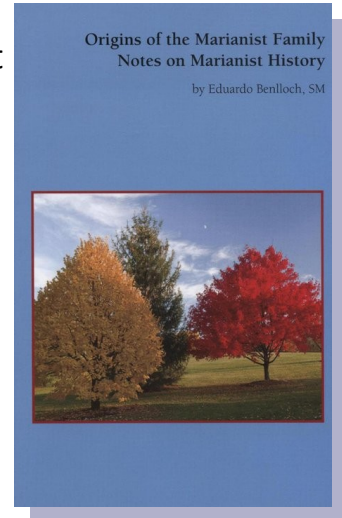
It reads like a Hollywood thriller—and in fact it includes a DVD, called *Where We Were Born*—yet it is the essence of our Marianist history, the true story of our origins, filled with moments of joy, betrayal, and uncertainty. And, it clearly depicts the greatness of our Founder, Blessed William Joseph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



(Continued on page 38)

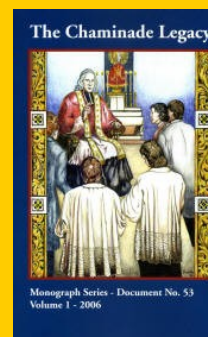
New and Recent NACMS Publications

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 four 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.

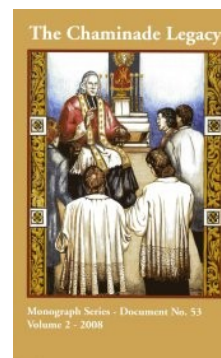
The first section presents the Sodality under Napoleon, and the second consists of documents from the Sodality under the Restoration. Texts include the Manual of the Servant of Mary (1804). Other sections cover the State of a Simple Sodalist, the State of Living the Evangelical Counsels, the State of 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.



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.

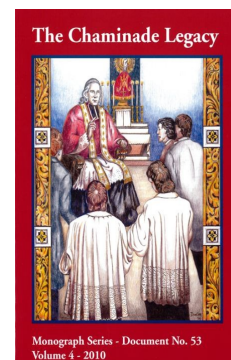
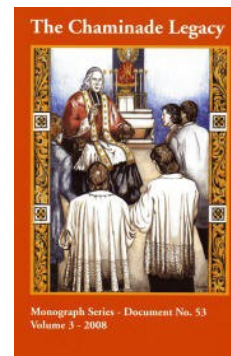
- Mysteries of Christ: birth, passion, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, and Eucharist
- Moral life. Preparation for death. Love of God and the spiritual, theological, and penitential life. Prayer.
- Respect for God and neighbor. Seven privileges of Virtue. Confirmation and Baptism. Faith. Witness 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.

Volume 4: Notes for Conferences and Sermons, Part 3

Volume four completes the documents presented in volumes two and three, presentations made mainly to the members of the Sodality from 1800 to 1809; the French published these as *Notes d'instruction*. As can be seen from the table of contents, Father Chaminade reflects on a wide range of topics, including the sacraments, the virtues, sin, the Christian life, God's mercy, several sermons and retreat subjects, feasts of the Church. . . . These writings witness to the breadth of his ministry and his care for those around him. Volume four contains 636 pages and sells for \$24.00 plus postage.

To order *The Chaminade Legacy* Series please contact NACMS, at www.nacms.org.



(Continued from page 35)

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.¹

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."² △

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

² *Origins*, x.



January

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present two classes to the novices for the Marianist History Course.

Carol Ramey meets with Margaret Alvarez to discuss programs at St. John the Baptist in Tipp City, OH.

Pati Krasensky attends East Coast Task Force meeting.

Carol Ramey attends a Marianist Effectiveness Advisory Committee meeting at Chaminade Julienne.

Marianist Lay Formation Initiative's (MLFI) fifth cohort holds concluding retreat in San Antonio. Pati Krasensky conducts a session on immigration for FMI in San Antonio.

NACMS staff presents a puppet show for the personnel of the Marianist Mission to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Blessed Chaminade's birth.

Reunion of Cape May families in Mineola, NY . . . Chaminade Day celebration.

February

Carol Ramey and Patti Gehred attend the annual Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation Convocation at the University of Dayton.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present two classes to novices in the Marianist History Course.

Patti Gehred and Carol Ramey meet with Allison Hewitt, executive director of development for the SM Province of the United States, to begin year-long formation/orientation to Marianist life.

Tom Giardino, SM, and Carol Ramey provide a two-week training workshop in Dayton, OH, for new directors of international study centers.

Patti Gehred and Alison Cawley present Food for the Soul Program on Father Leo Meyer and the SM Pioneers.

Carol Ramey attends a 160/25 meeting at Chaminade Julienne High School.

Carol Ramey presents to the NE Regional Family Council in-service on the Three Offices.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present at the Marianist History Course for novices.

Patti Gehred and Carol Ramey hold Skype tutorial with Allison Hewitt.

Carol attends a subcommittee meeting on Catholic Identity of the Marianist Effectiveness Advisory Committee.

At Masses, Carol Ramey promotes "Integrating Spirituality into our Daily Lives" at St. John the Baptist, Tipp City, OH.

March

Carol Ramey and Kevin Wisnieski speak at St. John the Baptist Parish in Tipp City, OH, on "Integrating Spirituality into our Daily Lives," part 1.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present two classes to the novices in the Marianist History Course.

Carol Ramey and Alison Cawley speak to St. John the Baptist Parish in Tipp City, OH, on "Integrating Spirituality into our Daily Lives," part 2.

Carol Ramey and Patti Gehred present at Food for the Soul series on Barbe Acarie and Rita Bordano.

Carol Ramey is a guest speaker on Radio Maria, discussing Blessed Chaminade's impact on today's Marianist Family and the Church.

Carol Ramey attends a Catholic identity subcommittee meeting of the Marianist Effectiveness Advisory Committee.

Pati Krasensky meets with Malvern Cape May Families.

Pati Krasensky conducts a retreat for the Elizabeth Homeless Coalition.

Carol Ramey and Patti Gehred present at the University of Dayton's Food for the Soul on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Women's Conference in San Antonio, TX: Carol Ramey joins Jack Ventura, SM, and Isabella Moyer for a session on the Wedding of Cana; Alison Cawley and Jack Ventura present on the women Founders. The Marianist Center in Philadelphia is a conference sponsor.

A parish mission is conducted by Pati Krasensky and Tom Redmond, SM, for St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Highland Park, NJ.

Pati Krasensky conducts a faculty retreat at Pope John Paul II regional school in Willingboro, NJ.

Carol Ramey participated in an SM Sponsorship Task Force meeting.

April

Marianist Lay Formation Initiative Cohort meets in Dayton, OH.

Pati Krasensky conducts a retreat for St. William the Abbot parish in Seaford, NY.

Carol Ramey attends a Marianist Effectiveness Advisory Committee meeting at Chaminade Julienne.

Pati Krasensky meets with Malvern Cape May Families.

Patti Gehred and Carol Ramey meet with Allison Hewitt.

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present two presentations to novices in the Marianist History Course.

Carol Ramey and Patti Gehred present at the University of Dayton's series Food for the Soul.

Carol Ramey participates in an SM Sponsorship Task Force meeting.

Pati Krasensky assists Joanne McCracken with a faculty retreat for Corpus Christi Parish, held in Aston, PA.

May

Larry Cada, SM, and Carol Ramey present two presentations to novices in the Marianist History Course.

Carol Ramey speaks to women at Martha's Day at St. Francis Parish in Parma, OH.

Carol Ramey and Alison Cawley present at the University of Dayton's Food for the Soul on the mothers of the three Founders in the context of Mother's Day.

Carol Ramey participates in an SM Sponsorship Task Force meeting.

Carol Ramey presents on the Marianist charism at a seminar conducted by David Fleming, SM, at the University of Dayton.

June

Pati Krasensky participates in the program Spirit of Saragossa at MRCC in Missouri.

Pati Krasensky trains new program director at Tecaboca and assists with Tecaboca Family Retreats.

Carol Ramey attends a Marianist Effectiveness Advisory Committee meeting at Chaminade Julienne.

Carol Ramey participates in an SM Sponsorship Task Force meeting in Dayton, OH.

ABOUT

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