

***Sharing Our Marianist Stories, Episode 3 Transcript***  
**Brother and Sister in the Marianist Family (Dave Fleming, SM & Marceta Reilly)**

**(0:00) – Dave Fleming, SM**

I think we're supposed to be a charismatic family where we share the gift that God has given to us through Father Chaminade and through our whole history. We share that gift with the Church today. The Marianist family could be a family that models that kind of Church because I think that is the Church that Mary shows us.

**(0:29) – Patti Gehred**

Welcome to *Sharing Our Marianist Stories*, a new podcast brought to you by the North American Center for Marianist Studies, otherwise known as NACMS. I'm Patti Gehred.

**(0:38) – Gabby Bibeau, FMI**

And I'm Sister Gabby Bibeau.

**(0:42) – Patti Gehred**

Today is a very nice interview between Father Dave Fleming and his sister, Marceta Reilly. They actually came in and asked if they could interview each other. It was a great discussion, and it was a really wonderful example of Marianist family *within* the Marianist Family.

**(1:01) – Gabby Bibeau, FMI**

Patti, you did this interview and I listened to it later. And I think what struck me the most about the interview was not only that they're brother and sister talking to each other about their experiences – and that was really fun to listen to them – but also to hear Marceta Reilly talk about how she lives in Kansas, and there aren't a lot of other Marianists there. And she just said, "Well, I'm going to build a Marianist presence here." And so, she did it, and she started different Lay groups. And so, she'll talk about that today, too.

**(1:40) – Patti Gehred**

And she talks about how she was eight years old when her big brother went off into the Marianist Family, and they would look forward to getting the letters and hearing how he was traveling the world. And that is sort of what initially piqued her interest about what this Marianist thing is. But as we'll learn, she developed her own fondness, need and discovery of what it means to be Marianist.

**(2:04) – Gabby Bibeau, FMI**

So, we hope that you enjoy our podcast today and hopefully learn something, too.

**(2:15) – Marceta Reilly**

My name is Marceta Reilly, and I want to introduce my brother, Father David Fleming. I guess one of the things we wanted to do was to talk about what we see as the future for the Marianist Family, and his hopes and dreams, and what I see. And we've had kind of different experiences.

**(2:38) – Dave Fleming, SM**

This is my much younger sister, Marceta -

**(2:42) – Marceta Reilly**

Yes, much younger.

**(2:44) – Dave Fleming, SM**

Who has surprised me in her recent years by becoming a very, very active and participative member of the Marianist Family. She surprised me because it was something new for her... I didn't know anything about until it was already well developed, and it's been a delight for me to see that.

**(3:08) – Marceta Reilly**

You know, for most of my life, I felt like a Marianist. Because David left for the seminary when I was eight, and we were always following him around the world wherever he was. And wherever we went, there was this wonderful Marianist Family spirit. I mean, you *felt* it wherever we went and stayed, and it was such a wonderful gift of church. But it wasn't what I felt in my own parish. And as I grew older, I yearned for that. But I live in Kansas, and there is no institutional presence of SMs or FMI religious, and I wanted to be able to share that with others. So, I just invited people to come and say, "Here's some material that's kind of interesting..."

**(4:11) – Marceta Reilly**

So, we would invite a Father [Alvin] McMenamy and other people. I could see that hunger and they really were attracted to that. And I recognize that – I've now started three little groups – I recognize that we are all in different places of development as far as formation and in Marianist spirituality. But we are hungry for it and... the Marianist Family really fulfills a need, a spiritual need, a deep spiritual need that we have. And in my little rural farming community, our people are very committed to the charism and to the commitment to care, to be a gift to our little parish so that we are the welcoming, we are the people to bring life and caring and that listening, that Marian way of being church.

**(5:21) – Dave Fleming, SM**

And I think there are a lot of people who are looking for a new kind of experience of church, an experience of church that might be more respons[ive] to their immediate felt needs and their confusions and their doubts and their searchings. I think a lot of people really need something like that, and we need a church where people know how to listen, where people know how to enter into dialogue and kind of respect the different speeds of growth and levels of growth of each person. And certainly, a church where people are concerned about the people around them, about the society... which is so often very confused and very difficult. Concerned about the poor, concerned about the suffering, concerned about those who seem to be lost. So, I think we're supposed to be a charismatic family where we share gifts, the gift that God has given to us through Father [William Joseph] Chaminade and through our whole history. We share that gift with the Church today. I think that maybe the Marianist Family could be a family that models that kind of church, because I think that is the church that Mary shows us.

**(6:48) – Gabby Bibeau, FMI**

In this next part of the interview, Marceta asks Father Dave to tell a little bit about his experience with the Marianists in India. Father Dave has spent a lot of time in India, and that's one of the

places that he lives for much of the year. And so, he talks about the different kinds of ministries that they have in India and especially their ministry with the poor.

**(7:16) – Marceta Reilly**

You know, here in the US, mostly Marianists are in schools. But when we went to visit you, when I went to visit you in India, it's really a different way that the Marianists are carrying forth their mission. You want to say a little bit about that?

**(7:36) – Dave Fleming, SM**

Yeah, I think when we Marianists went to India, we came from the [United] States, and it was definitely part of a new movement in the eighties, particularly, to try to be more in union with the poor. And we chose to take up a mission in India, partly because we thought that would be a good way to respond to the needs of the poor around the world, which are so enormous... Not that everybody in India is poor, but there's plenty of poor there. And we said, "If we're going to do anything there, what we want to do is just some kind of direct service to the poor, to respond to the poor." And so, gradually, we had to first train some Indian members. So, that's mainly been my work. I haven't been working directly with very poor people, but with simple Indian Catholics who wanted to serve in the Church and be Marianists.

**(8:32) – Dave Fleming, SM**

And so, over the years, we have tried to work with them that way. And we started, first of all, street children's programs in the slums of the big city of Bangalore. Tremendous poverty, tremendous alienation that they have and tremendous family problems. We try to respond to that in very simple ways. Just listening to them and taking care of them and trying to help them realize that they have a better future that they can create gradually in their lives. So, we started with that, and then we moved into the areas of North India which are very rural areas and where you can – if you're living in big Indian city – you can have very good education and all that. But if you're in the countryside, you might have nothing. You might have some kind of a school that's a school on paper but doesn't really function much at all.

**(9:32) – Dave Fleming, SM**

So, we started about six or seven schools in those areas now in North India in which we really work out and reach out to the poor. And usually along with the school there goes a development program. So, a rural development program that would teach parents, young adults, anybody who's interested some skills that would allow them to earn their living. So, it's really been a response to the poor, and it's still going in that way, I think, with a lot of energy and a lot of hope. A lot of difficulty because, first of all, the work is hard and secondly, it's hard to find the resources to support it. But we really think that's our mission in India.

**(10:20) – Patti Gehred**

In this next part, Father Dave asks his sister about her participation in a Marianist online course called *Community*. I actually was in that course myself, with Marceta and about eight other women, and in that course, this community grew on its own. And they created a community called Our Lady of the Round Table that is still in existence. And Marceta will talk about that and how it has changed and grown through the years.

**(10:52) – Dave Fleming, SM**

You know, you have also had an online community for many years of people who are not even in the same geographical area, but who have really stimulated and developed one another. I think that's an interesting part of what you've done. It's, again, reaching out to people who have the same kind of interests and needs as you do. Can you tell us a little about that?

**(11:16) – Marceta Reilly**

Well, yes! That came from a NACMS course. I took one because you told me I should. And there was such a wonderful group. I think, Patti, weren't you in the group. Yes! And so, at the end of that – it was only five weeks long – and we said, “We can't stop being together,” because we needed each other. So, we said, “Well, let's get together.” And we started doing Lectio [Divina] five days a week over online. And then, we talked about stuff, but we formed a very strong bond. So, the course bonded us, and then it shaped how we met. And then, we met every day and made that commitment to each other, and we've been doing it now for ten years. We've only met face to face twice; once in Ireland because one of our members is in Ireland, and another time David took us on a pilgrimage of the Founders. But our members are in Europe and Canada, US of course, Kenya and Australia... We now have monthly face-to-face video calls, and the time zone is the most interesting thing that we have to combat.

**(12:57) – Marceta Reilly**

We as Laity sometimes have become way too dependent on the vowed religious who have so many gifts to give us. But, in reality, we've got to be the carriers of the charism. Like our young graduates who go out and they just love the Marianist spirituality. But then they get a job that doesn't have any Marianist presence, and I guess I would really encourage them to grow it. So, it's like living the charism and just inviting other people in and exploring if they're interested in the kind of things you'd like to talk about with them. Start small and just invite people... You're just talking to them about the things that you care about, but it doesn't have to start out with being, “Well, we're going to be Marianists.” [Instead] “We're going to be a community first, a caring community, a welcoming community that focuses on your personal spirituality.”

**(14:02) – Patti Gehred**

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**(14:27) – Gabby Bibeau, FMI**

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