



Curia Generalizia dei Marianisti

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Assistant General
for Education

From: Assistant General for Education
To: All Communities and works in the Society of Mary
Re: The Bicentenary of the Commitment of the Society of Mary to Education
Date: July 16, 2019

Dear Brothers and Dear Friends,

I have the joy of announcing to you that during this year, 2019, the Society of Mary is celebrating the bicentenary of its involvement in education.

In 1819, this involvement began modestly on the street *Rue des Menuts*, in Bordeaux, with 15 students. The core group of teachers consisted almost exclusively of religious from the first Marianist community. From this beginning Marianist education spread rapidly beyond the frontiers of France to locations on five continents. At the current moment, the formal education involves 24 countries with 112,155 young people in 97 educational institutions (including three universities), animated by 7,833 educators, both religious and lay.

For further information, you can refer to the report in *SM 3 Offices* for the month of September 2019. This report will give you an historical and inspiring presentation of this initial commitment of the Society of Mary to education.

The General Council proposes that all of us together commemorate this bicentenary, in our communities as well as in our works. This commemoration should take place sometime around **November 3, 2019**. The reason for choosing this date is clear in the article from *SM 3 Offices* mentioned in the previous paragraph.

I am not necessarily asking you to make this a huge celebration. I would simply invite all of the Units to participate in this collective process, which reaffirms our common missionary identity. For that purpose, I would like to suggest several symbolic acts. The celebration, simple as it may be, could include at least two approaches. One approach would be pedagogical and the other would be pastoral and liturgical. Here are some possible ideas for these two approaches.

A Pedagogical Approach

- 1.) As an educational community, we could review and work with one of the two volumes, 1 and/or 4 from the collection *Marianist Education: Heritage and Future*. In them, you will find a discussion of the Marianist Charism and our educational mission. These two volumes discuss the beginnings of the involvement of the Society of Mary in education. They present this history in a simple yet updated manner. In volume 1 you can read and study with interest, the first part titled the *Chaminade's Apostolic Intent in Founding Schools* (pp. 17-70). If you prefer volume 4, you will find the same theme treated but in different words. This section

is entitled *The Sources of an Identity* (pp. 18-113). You can find the digital version of both texts at: www.marianist.org tab – Education.

- 2.) The General Chapter of 2018 asked us to assure that every person who collaborates in our works receive an *initial* and an *ongoing formation* on the marianist charism (cf. CG 2018, #59b). I would, therefore, ask you to reflect and work together on all the themes that a person who joins our works needs to reflect on, at least once, so that his contribution to our mission be the best and that his personal development and his living out of the charism be effective.

A Pastoral and liturgical approach

One or several of the following actions could be undertaken:

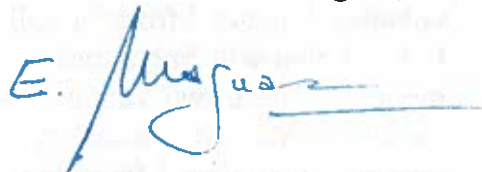
- 1) On November 3, 2019 the date of the bicentenary or another date that is more convenient, but close to November 3, prepare a time for prayer and/or a Eucharistic celebration. This celebration would bring together the entire educational community of that establishment in order to give thanks.
- 2) The religious communities that do not participate directly in the life of an educational community will find another appropriate way to join in the celebration.
- 3) Prepare a festive moment, which offers everybody the opportunity to gather while celebrating the very identity of Marianist educational works.
- 4) Organize several leisure or recreational activities. These could offer the possibility of including charitable actions toward or simply being in solidarity with a school that is different from yours.
- 5) Highlight symbolically all of the special features of the school (e.g. courses, important aspects of our heritage, the name of the school, the particular location of the school...).
- 6) Include in the celebration itself or at some other time of that day, the common recitation of the prayer indicated in *SM 3 Offices*.

A poster, specifically created for this occasion will be available, as of September, on the General Administration website (www.marianist.org). You can download these images and use them during the festivities of that day.

Happy Anniversary to all of us.

Fraternally,

Essodomna Maximin Magnan, SM



Assistant General for Education