



Year of Shared Discernment An Invitation for Reflection and Conversation



Meeting room for Sodality that met in early 1800's, Bordeaux, France, courtesy of George Lisjak

Module 3: To Commit to the Charism

Marianist Spirituality presents a wealth of themes that date back to the beginnings of the French School of Spirituality. These themes include concepts that are often familiar to most Catholic Christians. The mystical body of Christ, developing a personal relationship with Christ, and seeing one's own life in the context of unfolding mystery are a few of these elements. Other important elements are exploring the deep implications of the Incarnation, where we find God through Christ in the smallest and largest movements of our lives. And also the theme of mission, most importantly, in immersing ourselves in the task of personal, communal, and societal transformation so God's love for humanity and the earth are clearly manifest in the way we gather together and respect and love one another. This module is meant to facilitate how it is that you are committed to the Marianist Family and to help focus your commitment.

*Module 3 was written by Tony & Beth Garascia
Shekan Community & Visitation Marianist State Community*



PRAY

Please take a moment to center yourself and remind yourself that you are in the presence of God. This first “Pray” section of each module is meant to be used as a centering tool for each individual Lay Marianist as you open your heart to diving into this reflection and discernment process.

O my God, I have tried to take every means to carry out what you have inspired me to do, and, if I have not discovered completely what I am to do, I am confident that Your Providence, to which I submit my conduct, will help me to do what my blindness has prevented me from seeing.
(excerpt from Commitment prayer of Marie Thérèse Mlle de Lamourous, around 1800)

God, our world needs your creative touch.
Inspire me to work continually to understand your presence,
to work tirelessly for economic, racial, and environmental justice,
to be aware of my own blind spots,
to radically listen to the other,
and to act always with compassion and justice for all.
May the Marianist family grow in love, commitment and community and may
we take up our call to transform ourselves and the world in to
a more compassionate and just community of all living creatures.
Amen.



REFLECT

The “Reflect” section of each module is meant to be used as an individual discernment tool. We recommend that each individual Lay Marianist read through at least one of the Cornerstone Resources below and take time to reflect on them and discern and record responses to the questions below independently. There are other resources for this topic on the master resources list if you wish to delve deeper into this topic.

Cornerstone Resources:

1. [A Manual of Marianist Spirituality](#), by Quentin Hakenewerth, SM - available from NACMS - www.nacms.org
2. [International Lay Marianist documents](#) - Available on the [MLC-NA website](#)
 - [Being in Community](#), Philadelphia, USA, 2001



- [Being Marianist, Being Family](#), circular #1, Isabella R. Moyer, President, International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities, June 2010

Additional resources for consideration are available on the master list of resources.

Reflection Questions:

Excerpt from THE MISSION OF MARIANIST LAY COMMUNITIES, foundational document of the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities.

PRESENT IN THE WORLD

1. 2.1. For us, being present in the world means attempting to know, love, and transform with the heart and the strength of Christ Jesus.
2. 2.2. We recognize everything that is good in the history of humankind and denounce everything that contributes to oppression, violence, and injustice.
3. 2.3. "Clothed in the love of our Savior and the tenderness of Mary," we concern ourselves with the joys and sufferings, the hopes and anxieties of our world.
4. 2.4. Our spirituality animates us and impels us to give realistic and effective answers to the concerns of the world by transforming the many aspects of our lives: personal, familial, occupational, social, educational, political, economic, cultural, and ecclesial.

1. Paragraph 4 above stresses that lay Marianists, in the way we live, have an impact on every aspect of the life we live. Are there specific ways that you have committed to transforming the world as part of your Marianist spirituality? Working for racial justice or environmental justice are two examples of ways you may be committed.
2. Are there ways you could deepen your commitment or stretch yourself to be more present in the world or work on another aspect of justice?
3. What is your story of commitment? How does Marianist spirituality assist you to be involved in the world or help sustain your involvement?



DISCUSS

The “Discuss” section of each module is meant to be used as a tool to foster dialogue and discussion within Marianist Lay Communities. The questions below as well as the “Reflect” questions above can be discussed and shared at a community meeting. However, these questions can still be answered by individual Lay Marianists.

Spend a moment or two viewing the opening photo that introduced this module. It is a photo of the meeting room in Fr. Chaminade’s dwelling, where the first Marianist Lay Community (called Sodality in that day) met to pray and to contemplate what action the community should take after discerning the “signs of the times”. They faced a culture in transition, sometimes violent, a questioning of the structures of the day, both political and religious, and a desire for a deeper spirituality.

1. How does the Marianist spirituality help you and your community face the challenges you have identified?
2. If you have a commitment ceremony in your community, does your commitment ceremony address the challenges you have identified above?
3. Our first animators believed that one’s mission, and that of the community, is often lived out in the day-to-day challenges found in our local and regional communities. What do you see as the day-to-day challenges in your local and regional community? How do you respond to and live the mission in those challenges?

SHARE

The “Share” section of each module is a call to action for individual Lay Marianists and Marianist Lay Communities to share what they are learning with others in the Marianist Family and to build our collective wisdom and knowledge. Please read over the options below and choose at least one of them to share your experiences either as an individual or community.

| | If you are an individual Lay Marianist who is not in an active community : | If you are a Lay Marianist who is engaged in an active Marianist Lay community : |
|------------------|--|---|
| Option 1: | Personally attend or have at least one member of your MLC attend a Zoom meeting hosted by our regional Area Reps (two at each meeting) each month to share dialogue and reflection with other Marianist Lay communities. Here is the schedule with Zoom links to join: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2nd Monday of the month 8-9 pm ET/7-8 PM CT/5-6 PM PT: Zoom Link to Join Passcode: Marianist- 3rd Tuesday of the month 8-9 pm ET/7-8 PM CT/5-6 PM PT: Zoom Link to Join Passcode Marianist | |



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| | - 4th Thursday of the month 10-11 PM ET/9-10 PM CT/7-8 pm PT/4-5 PM HT: Zoom Link to Join Passcode: Marianist | |
| Option 2: | Reach out to discernment@mlc-na.org to request being paired with another Lay Marianist, whom you will meet with, dialogue with and share the knowledge you are gaining from reflection on this Module 2. | Reach out to discernment@mlc-na.org to request being paired with another Marianist Lay community. You and a contact from the assigned community will determine how to share knowledge from Module 2 between your communities. |

LEARN

The “Learn” section of each module is meant to be a reflective piece for communities and individuals to bring back to themselves (often at a community meeting) after sharing their knowledge and learning with others in the Marianist Family in at least one way above in the “Share” section of this module.

What have we learned about other Marianist Lay members or Marianist Lay Communities?

This section might require you to join in conversation with another lay member or Marianist Lay Community. You can do that through attending one of the Zoom calls mentioned in the above Share section or by asking MLC-NA to pair you with an individual Lay Marianist or your MLC with another Marianist Lay Community. This will require some planning and time. But once you have planned how to meet, answer these questions:

1. How do other individuals live out their commitment as a Marianist lay person not currently connected to an MLC?
2. How do other MLCs structure themselves?
3. How are their commitments similar or different than your personal commitment or your MLCs commitment?
4. Is there anything that you learned about how different individuals or MLCs are involved in their local communities?
5. What are the general themes and challenges that individuals or MLCs face that lead them to become more intentional about mission in their local area?

ACTION



*The “Action” section of each module is the culmination of the reflection, interaction, and discernment throughout the entirety of the module. This may be best explored within the time of a community meeting (and can be combined with the “Learn” section). Respond to one or more of the questions or actions provided below with your community or reflect on them as an individual Lay Marianist. **Please pay special attention to submitting an individual and/or community survey so MLC-NA can use your insights from Module 3 as we move forward.***

When you think of how you want to follow up to what you have learned, are there any specific actions that you and/or your community wishes to embrace?

1. Connection:

- 1.1. Is there any action that you want to take to be more connected with other MLCs in your region and/or the country. Who in the community will take responsibility for that action? Would it be helpful for your community to pair up with another MLC? If so, see option #2 in the above *Share* section.
- 1.2. Is there any action that you want to take to be more connected with another Marianist layperson? Would you find it helpful to connect regularly with the MLC-NA At-Large Member for Lay Marianist Engagement or Head of Education to learn about continued formation?

2. Communication:

- 2.1. Is it possible to be in more frequent communications with other MLCs in your region? How will that happen and who might take responsibility for this?
- 2.2. Is it possible for you to be in more frequent communications with other Marianist laity in your region?
- 2.3. Is it possible for you to be in more frequent communications with and learn more about other Marianist laity around the world, through exploring additional online resources, subscribing to global newsletters (Gifts & Tasks and Friday Magnificat) or social media sites ([IO-MLC](#))?

3. Mission arising from Challenges:

- 3.1. Are there any common challenges that you have discerned between your community and other MLCs? Is there a way for you and your community to be in touch around those common challenges?



- 3.2. Are there challenges you have discerned in your interactions with other Marianist laypersons who are connected to a Marianist Lay Community?

4. Commitment:

- 4.1. What can you do inside your Marianist community/circles to commit to the charism?
- 4.2. Are there any similar ways you and other communities celebrate commitment? Are there any possibilities concerning commitment rituals where you and other communities can communicate and collaborate more effectively?
- 4.3. How might you celebrate your commitment to the Marianist charism? Are there rituals that might work for you or others who are unable to be part of a MLC at this time?

- 5. Submit a survey response to MLC-NA so that we can collect your thoughts, insights, and actions moving forward from Module 3.**

| If you are an <u>individual Lay Marianist</u> who is not in an active community: | If you are a Lay Marianist who is <u>engaged in an active Marianist Lay community</u> : |
|--|---|
| Fill in the following: Individual Module 3 Survey to share your thoughts with MLC-NA and other Lay Marianists. | Fill in the following: MLC Module 3 Survey to share your thoughts with MLC-NA and other Marianist Lay communities. All members of active Marianist Lay communities may additionally fill in the Individual Module 3 Survey if you wish. |

PRAY

This closing “Pray” section of each module is a time to gather your reflections close to your heart as you move forward in the days ahead. Be mindful that we are called to be missionaries of Mary, bringing her son, Jesus, into our world today. We are filled with gratitude that we do this work together as members of a community of communities.

Please take a moment to center yourself and remind yourself that you have been in the presence of God during this time.

O God of abundant mercy and love, you always provide us with more than we ever imagined.



Responding to the need brought to his attention by Mary, your Son Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana.

Those overflowing jars are a symbol of your prodigal love for us.

As we reflect on our Founders and two centuries of Marianist life and activity, open our hearts ever more to the life you offer.

Imperfect jars though we may be, make us unafraid to come before your Son with our fears and limitations.

Open our eyes to the needs of the world around us, and prompt our hearts to cooperate with you.

Take the good will and generosity that we display and multiply it a hundred fold for others.



We ask this in the name of your Son, who turned water into wine, Jesus Christ, the worker of miracles. He is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

*Taken from [Bicentennial prayer service](#) honoring our Marianist Founders,
adapted from Jerry Galipeau
Artwork created by Charles Wanda, SM*