



Year of Shared Discernment

An Invitation for Reflection and Conversation



Module 1: We are Called

We are Called focuses on the exploration of our vocation and the call our baptism places on each of us. It will look at our experiences of first and continued invitations to involvement within the Marianist Family.

As you take time to reflect, use the following question as a guiding probe: **Where and how is God calling me and my Marianist lay community?**

The preferred Cornerstone Resource for this module is Chapter 1 of *The Promise and the Path: Starting and Sustaining Marianist Communities* by Thomas F. Giardino, SM, titled 'Understanding the Marianist Charism and its Manifestations.' A Cornerstone Resource is a basic resource the MLC-NA Leadership Council has denoted as holding deep meaning and truth for the topic at hand. While *The Promise and the Path* is the preferred Cornerstone Resource for this module, we have provided two other options as Cornerstone Resources below. There are additional resources provided in the "Reflect" section within this module for a deeper dive into the topics of being called, vocation, and invitation and sustainability in the Marianist Family. If you have already spent time with a suggested resource in the past, we invite you to revisit the resource with a fresh perspective impacted by your own personal and communal growth and through the new conversations with the individuals you are gathered with at this time.

The MLC-NA Leadership Council invites Lay Marianists to focus on Module 1 during September and October 2020. All Lay Marianists and MLCs are encouraged to spend intentional time reflecting on all parts of this module throughout these two months. Please read through Module 1 below to determine the schedule for yourself or your Marianist Lay community.

Module 1 was written by Sarah Gray, Phoenix MLC & Margy Lisjak, Micah Theotokos & 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.

Mary, Our Model

Mary, Mother of God, Our Mother,
You were Jesus’ first disciple.
Help us to be faithful followers of him, too.
Be our model and our guide.
Help us to consider God’s will for us, as you did.
May we say “Yes” to the joy of bringing Jesus into our community,
“Yes” to the wisdom in following him, and even
“Yes” to the sorrow of suffering and standing in solidarity at the foot
of the cross.
Holy Mary, Blessed Mother, pray for us.



*Sarah Carlton
Marianist Family Prayer Book*

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. [The Promise and the Path: Starting and Sustaining Marianist Communities](#), Thomas F. Giardino, SM, chapter 1, pp. 1-18 – Bro. Tom offers a variety of resources to Marianists of all branches and ministries of the Marianist Family, beginning with a fresh interpretation on understanding and speaking about the Marianist charism. \$10/ea - available from NACMS, www.nacms.org
2. [“Guide to Life in the Marianist Family,”](#) pp. 1-4 – Available on the [MLC-NA website](#)
1. [“To Be a Lay Marianist within a MLC, Guide to Life as a Lay Marianist”](#) - a practical supplement, International Team, January 2017 - Available on the [MLC-NA website](#)



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

Reflection Questions:

1. What is your vocation? How does being part of the Marianist Family allow you to live your vocation more fully?
2. What are some of the dimensions, dynamics, people, or events that made the Marianist story come alive for you?
3. In what ways have you struggled with the Marianist story? What were the issues?
4. Given your personal and collective experiences of grace and limitation, what are the challenges that will require you to be most creative in telling the Marianist story to others?

¹

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.

1. What is your definition of a Lay Marianist? How did you form your definition?
 - a. Have you considered the [Guide to Life](#) in the Marianist Lay Community of North America in your definition?
2. Tell us about yourself, how you met the Marianists, and in what way were you invited to consider this Marianist Family as the way you could grow and deepen your own faith commitment.
3. What do you love about your MLC or your Marianist connection and background?

¹ Giardino, S.M., Thomas F., *The Promise and the Path, Starting and Sustaining Marianist Lay Communities*, Dayton, OH, NACMS, 2011, p. 2



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. However, we do challenge you to do more than one of the options below (or all of them!) if you are able.

	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:	Fill in the following: Individual Module 1 Survey to share your thoughts with MLC-NA and other Lay Marianists.	Fill in the following: MLC Module 1 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 1 Survey if you wish.
Option 2:	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 7-8 pm CT/8-9 pm ET: Zoom Link to Join - 3rd Tuesday of the month 7-8 pm CT/8-9 pm ET: Zoom Link to Join - 4th Thursday of the month 7-8 pm PT/4-5 PM HT: Zoom Link to Join 	
Option 3:	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 1.	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 1 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.

If you or your community would like to read through others’ responses to the individual module survey (link) or the MLC module survey (link), please click the links above to read everyone’s responses.

1. Who have you connected with outside your own community or beyond yourself to hear the story of others?



2. How is their Marianist or community experience different than yours? How is it similar? What did you learn from them?
3. In what way will you continue to interact with other Marianist Communities, lay and religious?

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. If you are willing to share your action responses publicly (especially any response to the third question below), please email them to us at discernment@mlc-na.org.

1. At this point in our journey together, what seem to be some promising directions for response to this call?²
2. What is one or a few action(s) that you can individually or as a community commit to doing as you move forward in light of your discernment in this module?
3. In your journal, imagine the letter you could write to a new lay person or community, using one of the following prompts:
 - a. “I’d like to share with you my Marianist story.”
 - b. Identify a challenge you encountered in your journey. Share that challenge and how you moved beyond it.
 - c. Is there a particular prayer, reflection or article that has particular meaning in relation to vocation or calling that you would like to share with others? If so, please also share with us why it is important to you.

² Giardino, S.M., Thomas F., *The Promise and the Path*, p. 2



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.

Prayer for the Marianist Family



Mary, inspired by your readiness to accept all the wonders God would work in you, we offer you our desire to conceive in our hearts, bear in our lives, and bring forth into our world Jesus, Son of God, who became your Son for the salvation of all.

May the Holy Spirit who came upon you and overshadowed you be with us today as we endeavor, members of one Family, to live the Marianist mission of building God’s reign. Amen.

*Bob Bouffier, SM, and Cathy Olds
Marianist Family Prayer Book*