



# IN ALLIANCE WITH MARY

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.- From the beginning of the Marianist Lay Communities (MLC) we have been reflecting on the Marianist charism. In previous International Meetings we have defined our identity, we have discerned our mission and our way of being in community. In this Fourth Meeting we have reflected on the presence of Mary in our lives and in our communities, in order to deepen our understanding of our relationship with Mary and to present her to others.
- 2.- Blessed William Joseph Chaminade throughout his life, and especially at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar in Saragossa, received a powerful Marian inspiration. With Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon and Marie Thérèse de Lamourous, he shaped this inspiration into a new missionary vision for the revitalization of the Church in France by means of establishing lay communities in Alliance with Mary.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.- In every culture throughout the Christian world we see diverse forms of Marian devotion. Marianist spirituality invites us to collaborate with Mary in her mission to make Christ present in our world. This way of understanding our relationship with her has been called Alliance with Mary; it is what unites us with all members of the Marianist Family and leads us to form and build Christian communities.
- 4.- In living our Marianist spirituality, we face the challenges of our times in different places with very diverse cultural and social experiences. Our personal and community lives are threatened by fragmentation and isolation. We Marianists find in Mary a source of strength in these challenging times.
- 5.- Today, attentive to the signs of our times and eager to integrate faith and life, we find in the teaching of our founders and in our Alliance with Mary the path that inspires us to deepen our commitment.

We present this document following the Marianist tradition to know, love and serve.

## TO KNOW

- 6.- Mary is for us an inexhaustible spring of knowledge. Therefore, we strive to discover

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the history and tradition of Marianist Lay Communities this “Alliance with Mary” has also been called “Consecration to Mary” in different parts of the world.



her attitudes in the Scriptures like in the following passages:

- 7.- In the Annunciation (Lk. 1: 26-38) we discover Mary's trust in God and her joyful acceptance of God's will. With her, we say "Let it be done to me according to your Word".
- 8.- In the Visitation (Lk. 1: 39-45) we learn from Mary to be close to and serve others. Despite our own difficulties we wish, like her, to be always disposed to offer the best of ourselves to others.
- 9.- In the Magnificat (Lk. 1: 46-55) Mary sings of God's solidarity with the poor, the afflicted and the marginalized. She is a witness to the transforming power of God that raises the lowly and destroys evil in the world. Following the example of Mary we desire to be valiant witnesses and prophets of the greatness, power and mercy of God.
- 10.- In Bethlehem (Mt. 2: 1-12) Mary gives birth to Jesus and presents him to everyone, the lowly and the powerful. Moreover, she is attentive to all that happens and treasures it in her heart. Following her example we also wish to be a gateway for the entrance of Christ into the life of men and women of our world, enabling Him to be born and to grow in everyone, and to meditate deeply on these events as Mary did.
- 11.- Mary had to flee into Egypt (Mt. 2: 13-23), forced by the violent circumstances of the times, to protect the life of her son. She educates us into a gospel attitude when facing violence. We wish to be in solidarity with all those who suffer a similar situation today.
- 12.- When she finds the child Jesus in the temple (Lk. 2: 50-51) Mary does not understand the plan of God but keeps it in her heart. By her attitude Mary invites us to live the faith of the heart, to accept and carry out the will of God even though we may not understand it.
- 13.- At the wedding at Cana (Jn. 2: 1-11) Mary reveals herself as a woman attentive to the needs of others in each moment and is confident in her Son. Her attitude calls us to listen to the needs of humanity and be open to "do whatever He tells us."
- 14.- Mary stands at the foot of the cross of her Son with the beloved disciple (Jn. 19: 25-27). We want, like them, to accept our own suffering and to be present to the pain of others. Jesus continues to offer us Mary as our mother and she receives us as her children.
- 15.- At Pentecost (Acts 1: 14) Mary is with the disciples of Jesus, praying, supporting their faith and trusting in the coming of the Holy Spirit. She animates us to form united and prayerful communities; and to reach out in mission, open to the action and gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- 16.- To deepen our knowledge of Mary we need to get in touch with her through prayer, formation and our personal living making her present in our lives. Apart from Scripture we seek to form ourselves from other sources, particularly in the documents of the Church, the writings of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, writings in the Marianist

tradition and the documents of the Marianist Family.

## **TO LOVE**

- 17.- Like Mary, lay woman of her times, we are lay Marianist men and women who live in a specific time in history committing ourselves, as we are, to follow Mary's example and to love as she loves.
- 18.- One of the characteristics of our time is the proliferation of and desensitization to violence. As Marianist we choose to reject violence and educate youth and adults in justice, peace and reconciliation.
- 19.- As members of the People of God who are on pilgrimage, living as a specific people in a local church, we live the story with our brothers and sisters. We publicly express our commitment to and love for Mary through expressions of Marian devotion proper to our cultures.
- 20.- Mary, praying woman, calls us to pray in all the moments of our lives and to be united in solidarity with the suffering of others. Mary is our intercessor. She prays with us and for us, and we pray to her as Mother of Jesus and our Mother.
- 21.- Mary remained attentive to the Word and lived the "faith of the heart," confidently accepting the will of God in her life. Following her example we make faith the criterion for our discernment and the centre of our lives.
- 22.- We live a family spirit that is based on hospitality, acceptance and care for one's neighbour, discovering the presence of Jesus in others. As at Pentecost Mary accompanies our communities and makes them open to all, fully accepting of each person.
- 23.- In the same way that Mary is Mother of all, we open our hearts and communities to everyone. Given our multicultural character we are enriched by our differences and focus on community life and mission, promoting an authentic family spirit and open dialogue.
- 24.- Like Mary, we seek to be humble in our individual and family lives so that our communities exhibit simplicity and we are able to place our gifts at the service of the common good.
- 25.- Just as Mary was more concerned about the needs of her kinswoman Elizabeth than her own and went to be with her, we are attentive to the needs of our brothers and sisters.



We commit ourselves to solidarity with the poor in the cause of justice.

### **TO SERVE**

- 26.- We seek, as members of the MLC, to imitate the virtues of Mary in our personal and community lives and place ourselves at the service of the specific society in which we live. Our Marianist identity leads us to witness by our presence and hard work that our Marian devotion, according to Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, is a dynamic devotion that goes beyond ritual and affection; it propels us to mission.
- 27.- Mary invites us to make an alliance with her and give Jesus to the world.
- 28.- Our Alliance with Mary renews our Baptismal commitments. Through it, we choose to live in permanent mission with Mary by walking with her in humility and freedom. By this Alliance we place our trust in the Holy Spirit so that Christ may grow in our hearts and we may make Mary's mission a reality.
- 29.- Because of this Alliance with Mary, the members of the Marianist Lay Communities share a common identity and mission, a way of being in community, and a method of building communities.
- 30.- We express our Alliance with Mary in a community celebration with varied expressions depending on location, respecting our rich cultural diversity.
- 31.- This Alliance is an evangelizing instrument through which we commit ourselves to:
  - Construct from our witness a model of family life that respects the gifts and vocations of each member and where responsible freedom will be the fruit of our love;
  - Develop egalitarian communities, in which all are accepted without exclusion or discrimination;
  - Reaffirm our preferential option for the youth;
  - Take part in the social, cultural, political and economic life in our areas, helping to build the Reign of God in our daily tasks, calling for peace and justice, and denouncing all situations that oppose them;
  - Assume our work as an important part of life's experience where the opportunity is given to us to witness to our understanding of life;
  - Care for life and work for the integrity of Creation;
  - Share with simplicity and humility expressions of faith and community devotion.
- 32.- As members of the Marianist Family composed of Marianst Lay Communities, Alliance Mariale, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and the Society of Mary, we promote the





Marian aspects of the Church. We believe that this Marian model is our gift in the Church and that the Holy Spirit will guide us to contribute to building a new humanity. We hope to be a prophetic sign of our society and of a Church with the following characteristics:

- Inclusivity. Her doors are open to all who seek God.
- Equality. All are heard and encouraged to express themselves as equals, and all have the same rights without consideration of sex, race, education, civil position, or social status.
- Participation. Authority is understood as service without privileges, channels of consultation are opened for decisions and assignments, and no one feels excluded for thinking differently.
- Dialogue. There is an attitude of listening and of interaction among persons and groups before any judgment or condemnation; this permits exploring the limits of human knowledge with firm trust in the Holy Spirit.
- Solidarity. There is increased nearness to the poor and the impoverished in order to bring them the Good News of their dignity as children of God and to assume together reciprocal obligations that enable us to build a civilization of love.
- Sensitivity and affection. All draw closer to people, sharing their joys and their sorrows.
- Patience. Respecting and understanding the stages of growth in others.
- Courage. To stand for justice and truth in order to build the Reign of God.

Finally, we build a Church in which all are responsible for the Reign of God.

**KNOWING MARY BETTER,  
LOVING AS SHE LOVES,  
ACCOMPANYING HER FAITHFULLY IN HER SERVICE OF OTHERS,  
LET US BUILD A BETTER WORLD.**



• *Document ratified by the General Assembly at the Fourth International Meeting of the Marianist Lay Communities which took place in July 2005 in Bordeaux, France.*