



## MARIANIST LAY COMMUNITIES

## COMMUNAUTÉS LAÏQUES MARIANISTES

## COMUNIDADES LAICAS MARIANISTAS

### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LAY MARIANIST and a MARIANIST LAY COMMUNITY

Summary from October 2015 IT meeting

The Pontifical Council on the Laity recognizes Marianist Lay Communities as an “international private association of the faithful.” This designation is based on our statutes and the international document, *The Identity of Marianist Lay Communities*. (See [www.clm-mlc.org](http://www.clm-mlc.org) under Documents)

#### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LAY MARIANIST

A Lay Marianist's identity can be summed up as:

**A Lay Marianist is one who KNOWS, COMMITS TO, and LIVES the Marianist Charism.**

1. **To KNOW** means that the Lay Marianist has learned the basics of Marianist history and charism. This formation includes information about the founders and the common elements of the Marianist charism and spirituality. The specific style and length of this formation may vary from country to country as long as it is consistent with our international documents which can be found at [www.clm-mlc.org](http://www.clm-mlc.org). Usually this process covers a period of time from six months to several years. The formation may include formal classes, periodic talks by experienced Marianists (SM, FMI, AM, or Lay), reading resource material, and active involvement in a Marianist Lay Community. The National Responsible, in consultation with the Regional Responsible, is responsible for the process in each country.
2. **To COMMIT** means that after initial formation, the individual makes an explicit commitment to accept the Marianist charism to guide their life. To be a Lay Marianist is not a private commitment but should be shared with others. Lay Marianists are recognized by the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities (IOMLC) through the National Responsible or their delegate. Commitments are usually renewed annually.
3. **To LIVE** as a Lay Marianist means that commitment is not a one-time event but rather an ongoing lifestyle in which one continues to grow in understanding one's vocation and participation in community life.
4. **MARIANIST CHARISM** includes the pillars of:
  - A. **Faith** – Flowing from one's baptismal promise, a Lay Marianist embraces the vocation to follow Christ.
  - B. **Community** – Marianists value the experience of joining with others to grow in faith. Generally this is done through participation in a local community. When this is not possible, virtual (cyber) communities can fill this need or the individual may propose to honor the value of community through creating community among those who are available in his or her locale.
  - C. **Mission** – Marianists are always called to make our Church and our world a better place. We do not exist only for our own well-being but to respond to those in need both near and far. As a prophetic witness to our faith we seek to reach out to all without regard to status or hierarchy.
  - D. **Mary** – All of our work is done in the spirit of Mary bringing Christ to the world. We seek to have Mary's Magnificat spirit of humility and justice permeate our being.

In order to carry out our vocation as Lay Marianists, it is helpful to have practices that unite us and give form to our commitment. These are often called a “Plan of Life” or “Rule of Life” and include such things as

- Regularly attending community gatherings
- A personal and communal prayer life
- Uniting in prayer through the 3:00 O’clock Prayer
- Supporting the local, national, and international organization
- Connecting with other branches of the Marianist Family

## **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MARIANIST LAY COMMUNITY**

**Lay Marianists normally gather in Marianist Lay Communities (MLCs).**

These communities:

- A. Consist of a group of Lay Marianists who have had some formation.  
Since MLCs value inclusivity and are open to new people joining, there are often people who are exploring the community and in different stages of formation and commitment.
- B. Meet regularly.
- C. Pray together.
- D. Educate themselves about spiritual, moral, and ethical issues of the day.
- E. Seek to deepen their spirituality through discussion and involvement in mission.
- F. Build community by sharing their faith life and personal needs with each other.
- G. Keep connected with the National (or Regional) Responsible.
- H. Are self-sustaining financially and contribute to the needs of the national and international organization.

## **MLC Recognition:**

The process for recognition of a new MLC is:

1. **REQUEST** – An emerging MLC requests recognition through the National Responsible\*
2. **REPORT** – The emerging MLC fills out a report describing their formation. (See report)
3. **VISIT** – The National Responsible or a delegate visits the emerging MLC to give support and assess its viability.
4. **DISCERNMENT PERIOD** – Over a period of one year the emerging MLC and National Responsible discern together the sustainability of the MLC.\*\*
5. **RECOGNITION** – Upon mutual agreement the MLC is recognized by the IOMLC through the National Responsible.

\*In the case of the first MLC in a country the Regional Responsible receives the request and report, visits, and is the primary contact with the emerging MLC.

\*\*This process and Discernment Period may be shortened if other branches of the Marianist Family or nearby MLCs can confirm the viability of an emerging MLC.

## **MARIANIST SPONSORED MINISTRY COLLABORATORS**

In the Marianist world we are blessed to have many sponsored ministries such as schools, retreat centers, parishes, social justice projects, etc. We are grateful to the employees and volunteers in these ministries. These collaborators often receive formation in the Marianist charism so that their work may reflect the values of the Marianist sponsored ministry. If after discernment, the collaborator wants to intentionally commit to being a Lay Marianist and join an MLC, then of course they too would be a Lay Marianist.