

Marianist Lay Network of North America

Strategic Plan 2014

Living the Mission

For an organization to survive, and to thrive, it must periodically take time to evaluate its purpose, goals, and priorities. The Marianist Lay Network, founded in 1993, has served Marianist laity well. However, in response to the signs of the times, and the changing face of our world, church, and Marianist Family, the time is right for Marianist laity to more boldly assume responsibility¹ for its role in the Marianist movement.² Members of the Marianist Family were invited to affirm various aspects of lay life through an interview process. From these affirmations a diverse committee discerned themes, goals, and priorities that expresses our commitment to the Marianist Charism, and breathes life into how MLNNA can support laity in actively and intentionally living the Charism.

What follows in this document is not just a blueprint for leaders of the Marianist Lay Network. It is a charge to all Marianist laity – collectively known as the lay network. This strategic plan calls us to mission and invites us to deepen our identity³ and commitment as Marianist laity. It is aligned with goals of the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities and is consistent with the hopes of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (Marianist Sisters) and the Society of Mary, Province of the United States (Marianist Priests and Brothers).

As we move into this next evolution of MLNNA, this plan sets the stage to invite others to join us, connects us to resources and formation, calls us to mission, and provides a framework for MLNNA to effectively operate as a lay association of the faithful. You are invited to read, reflect on, and discuss this document. You are encouraged to consider a leadership role, or at a minimum, participate in and support opportunities to bring this plan to life!

¹ David Fleming, S.M. "Towards a Marianist Future: A Marianist Spiritual Family?" April 4, 2013 p. 9-10 -- This article provocatively challenges Marianist laity to take a bolder position in the Marianist Family by encouraging laity to "read the signs of the times" and more integrally participation in the common missionary vision of the Marianist Family.

² Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Ph.D. "The Marianist Movement and the Challenge of Urban Justice Reconciliation: An Interim Report on a Conversation" February 2, 2009 -- This provides a historical perspective on the Marianist Movement and examples of how Marianist laity are being moved in contemporary times.

³ "IOMLC: *The Identity of Marianist Lay Communities*," Santiago, Chile 1993; & "IOMCLA Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" p. 2; & "Characteristics of Marianist Lay Communities and Marianist Laity" brochure, www.clm-mlc.org

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Introduction to the Strategic Plan

In July 2013 the Marianist Lay Network of North America (MLNNA) leadership made the commitment to participate in creating a strategic plan and to design a restructured leadership model. A Strategic Plan Committee was formed as follows:

- **Matt Dunn** - Currently serving on the Leadership Team - University of Dayton Graduate. Residing in Dayton, Ohio.
- **Matt Meyers** - Graduate student at Villanova University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and University of Dayton Graduate.
- **Linda Zappacosta** - Member of the Visitation State Community and Marianist lay person for over 40 years. Residing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- **Carol Weiss** - Currently serving on the Leadership Team and a Marianist lay person for over 40 years. Residing in Flushing, New York.
- **Jama Badinghaus** - University of Dayton Graduate, Chaminade Julianne Catholic High School (Guidance Counselor) and volunteer for Mission of Mary Cooperative in East Dayton."
- **Lisa Hutson** - Member of the Visitation State Community for over 25 years. St. Mary's University Graduate, Residing in San Antonio, Texas.
- **Tony Fitzgerald** - Facilitator and a Marianist lay person for over 40 years. Residing in Cleveland, Ohio.

In designing the methodology to accomplish the plan, it was the intent to engage the diverse representation of MLNNA membership in the process. An Appreciative Inquiry Approach was decided upon and over 100 interviews took place including religious-branch representation. Appreciative inquiry interviews looked for what was working well in the MLNNA organization and how MLNNA can better serve membership.⁴ Interviews were conducted by the Committee, current MLNNA leadership, and the Education Committee of the 2014 Assembly. There were 26 interviewers in all.

⁴ "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07" Article 3; & "MLNNA Membership Leadership 2005" p. 1 – provide definitions of MLNNA membership

When we asked appreciative inquiry questions, we touched something very important to the interviewees. They gave heart-felt answers because we asked earnest questions. As the responses were captured and reviewed by the Committee, it was discovered that they fell into five value categories. For each value area, provocative propositions were written to reflect these values. Creating provocative propositions was a key step in the transforming process. The Committee took what it knew and talked about what could be. Goals were drafted to support each value statement/provocative proposition. Each goal was aligned with a membership role of the new Leadership Team and assigned a start/accomplish date for accountability.

The current Leadership Team was consulted throughout the process by reviewing progress and providing feedback.

A new leadership model will be elected/assembled (October 2014) to provide direction for the organization and to be held accountable by membership. The new proposed MLNNA Leadership Team is organized according to the “Three Offices”⁵ of Fr. Chaminade: Zeal, Instruction, and Temporalities. By so doing, the Leadership Council will embrace the concerns of Jesus Christ, son of Mary, as priest, prophet, and servant-leader, that is, by the way Jesus prayed, taught, and worked. The Office of Spirituality (Zeal) encompasses prayer life, formation in the Marianist Charism, community building, and fostering interdependence.⁶ The Office of Education (Instruction) emphasizes rootedness in Marianist heritage, communications, networking, and programing.⁷ The Office of Temporalities involves hospitality, material resources, finances, justice concerns for the marginalized, and stewardship of God’s creation.⁸

The following pages delineate the resulting Strategic Plan. It presents Imperative Goals which are basic, operative and incorporated into the functional culture of the new leadership. It also identifies Frontier Goals which will stretch the service and capacity of the Leadership Team, and ultimately the membership, to fulfill the mission, vision, and key values of the Marianist Lay Network of North America.

⁵ Joseph Stefanelli, S.M. “Our Marianist Heritage” revised edition, 2003. & “Things Marianist: *How Are the Three Offices like an Orchestra*” published by NACMS – Definitions and further information about the “Three Offices” and how they function can be found using these resources.

⁶ Joseph Stefanelli, S.M. “Our Marianist Heritage” revised edition, 2003; & “Things Marianist: *How Are the Three Offices like an Orchestra*” published by NACMS

⁷ Joseph Stefanelli, S.M. “Our Marianist Heritage” revised edition, 2003; & “Things Marianist: *How Are the Three Offices like an Orchestra*” published by NACMS

⁸ Joseph Stefanelli, S.M. “Our Marianist Heritage” revised edition, 2003; & “Things Marianist: *How Are the Three Offices like an Orchestra*” published by NACMS

In a separate document the new MLNNA organization model is presented.

Mission, Vision, and Values Statements **of the Marianist Lay Network of North America (MLNNA)**

Mission Statement

MLNNA energizes Marianist Laity to be vibrant animators of the Marianist charism and to breathe new life into our Marianist vocation and commitment.

Vision Statement

Inspired by the Marianist founders and enlivened with Family spirit, MLNNA supports the Marianist laity in fulfilling our distinctive call of bearing Jesus, son of Mary, to the world. Over the next five years, MLNNA will pay special attention to partnering with Marianist religious and encouraging the generous donation of time, talent, and treasure to our common, collaborative mission.

Values Statements

- *Allowing ourselves to be **transformed by Mary** in order to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, son of Mary, throughout our lives*
- ***Inviting** all to participate in Marianist life*
- ***Building relationships** and community*
- ***Fostering our connection** to the wider international Marianist movement and taking ownership of being an ecclesial movement in the church*
- ***Collaborating** with all branches of the Marianist Family*
- *Offering **formation** support*
- ***Including the poor and marginalized** in both membership and mission outreach*
- *Working towards being **financially self sufficient***

III. Core Values and Supporting Goals

The following five core values come from the numerous interviews of the Appreciative Inquiry process. The goals were drafted to fulfill the objectives, identify who is responsible and accomplish them in a timely fashion. Imperative goals are foundational and will be incorporated into the operating culture of the new Leadership Team. Frontier goals will stretch the service and capacity of the Leadership Team, and ultimately the membership, to fulfill the Mission, Vision, and Values Statements of MLNNA.

A. Invitation to Marianist Family

The MLNNA warmly invites and welcomes all to opportunities for faith experiences in everyday life via prayer, community, mission, and commitment in living the Marianist charism.⁹ Invitation, formation, and support to young adults are a particular focus.¹⁰ The Marianist Family is a world-wide movement of laity and religious.¹¹ Key characteristics of the Marianist Family include mission, community, equality among all, authority being horizontal, inclusivity, hospitality, collaboration between religious/lay branches, and Mary as Christ-bearer.¹² MLNNA especially honors the contribution of Marianist forbearers.

Frontier Goal

1. MLNNA Leadership Team will invite all Marianist laity to participate in the broader life of the Marianist Family, for example, Marianist Lay Communities, Affiliates, Vowed Laity, and make an enduring commitment.¹³ The leadership team will encourage membership to utilize resources including the North American Center for Marianist Studies, and to engage in ministries of the Marianist Family.
 - **Responsible:** Office of Education/**Timing Priority:** Start January 2015 - Ongoing

⁹ "IOMCLA Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" section 4; "IOMLC Kenya: *Future Challenges 2009-2013*" section 2; & "IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Communities in the World and Church*" Nairobi, Kenya 2009, section 2.4

¹⁰ "IOMCLA Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" section 4; "IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Communities in the World and Church*" Nairobi, Kenya 2009, section 2.4, 2.12, & 3.10

¹¹ "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07" Article 2; & "IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Community International Statutes*" 2001, p. 1-5

¹² "Characteristics of Marianist Lay Communities and Marianist Laity" brochure, www.clm-mlc.org & "IOMCLA Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" p.1; & "IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Communities in the World and Church*" Nairobi, Kenya 2009, section 2, 3, & 4

¹³ "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-2007" Article 2; & "IOMLC: *The Mission of Marianist Lay Communities*" Llira, Spain 1997, section 1-6; & Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Ph.D. "The Marianist Movement and the Challenge of Urban Justice Reconciliation: An Interim Report on a Conversation" February 2, 2009; & David Fleming, S.M. "Towards a Marianist Future: A Marianist Spiritual Family?" April 4, 2013

Imperative Goal

2. MLNNA Leadership Team will continually invite individuals to participate in MLNNA Leadership.

- ***Responsible:*** Office of Spirituality/Leadership/***Timing Priority*** Start October 2014 - Ongoing

Imperative

3. MLNNA Leadership Team will embody the key characteristics of the Marianist Family as described above.

- ***Responsible:*** Leadership Team (Chair)/***Timing Priority:*** Start October 2014 - Ongoing

Imperative

4. MLNNA Leadership Team will lead membership to be in collaboration with the religious branches through partnering for Mission.¹⁴

- ***Responsible:*** Leadership Team (Chair)/***Timing Priority:*** Start October 2014 - Ongoing

¹⁴ “MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07” Article 2; & “MLNNA Membership Leadership 2005” p. 2; & “IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Community International Statutes*” 2001, p. 1-5

B. Charism/Formation

The Marianist charism is rooted in the gospels and calls us to “put-on Christ”, Son of Mary.¹⁵ MLNNA offers a process for being formed as a Marianist layperson.¹⁶ Key ingredients of formation include utilizing Marianist resources, such as, Marianist Lay Faith Initiative, North American Center for Marianist Studies, and spiritual guides. Storytelling opportunities, from lay and religious sources, also enhance the formative process.

Imperative

1. MLNNA will connect its membership to initiatives and resources, including those of the religious branches and international sources, to provide ongoing formation opportunities as an integral part of the Marianist journey.

- **Responsible:** Office of Spirituality/Education/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2014 - Ongoing

Imperative

2. MLNNA will encourage the formation of Regional Family Councils as a way of being connected to the broader Marianist Family.

- **Responsible:** Office of Education/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2014 - Ongoing

Frontier

3. MLNNA will work with the Marianist Family Council to draw together the many SM, FMI, and Marianist Lay formators to identify best practices for formation that can be shared across all three branches. In addition identify future Marianist Lay formators.

- **Responsible:** Office of Spirituality/**Timing Priority:** Start March 2015 – Ongoing`

¹⁵ “IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Communities in the World and Church*” Nairobi, Kenya 2009, section 3; & “IOMLC: *In Alliance with Mary*” Boredaux, France 2005, p. 1-5; “IOMLC: *Mission of Marianist Lay Communities*” Liria, Spain 1997, p. 1-3; & “IOMLC: *Identity of Marianist Lay Communities*” Santiago, Chile 1993, section 2

¹⁶ “IOMLC Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*” Section 2; & “Guide to Lay Life in the Marianist Tradition” Published April 2009 by NACMS; & “MLNNA By-Laws 2003-07” Article 2

4. MLNNA (in conjunction with the Society of Mary's Office for Formation and Mission, the North American Center for Marianist Studies - Marianist Lay Formation Initiative, and the FMI) will work with various entities within the Marianist Family to identify best practices of formation which lead individuals to become Marianist laity in various expressions of commitment. (explain the distinctions and value the different levels of commitment)
- **Responsible:** Office of Spirituality/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2015 - Complete October 2018

C. Instrument of Support

MLNNA supports the prayer life of membership by encouraging participation in Marianist gatherings and by making liturgical resources known.¹⁷ MLNNA supports and fosters relationships among membership through various means, such as, assemblies, regional councils, area representatives, and regular media communications.¹⁸ MLNNA also promotes connections with Marianist organizations, for example, MSJC's Adele Social Justice Project, the Live In Faith Experience (LIFE), and the Marianist Environmental Education Center.¹⁹

Imperative

1. MLNNA will support laity formed in the Marianist charism by encouraging participation in assemblies, regional councils, and regular media communications including the use of an effective MLNNA website.²⁰

- **Responsible:** Office of Education/Leadership/**Timing Priority:** *Start October 2014 - Ongoing*

Imperative

2. MLNNA will make a continual effort to be inclusive and supportive of the various expressions of the Marianist Charism both individual and communal.²¹

- **Responsible:** Office of Education/Leadership/**Timing Priority:** *Start October 2014 – Ongoing*

Imperative

3. MLNNA will encourage membership to have connections with Marianist ministries as described above.

- **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/**Timing Priority:** *Start March 2015 - Ongoing*

¹⁷ "Guide to Lay Life in the Marianist Tradition" Published April 2009 by NACMS, p 20; & "IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Communities in the World and Church*" Nairobi, Kenya 2009, section 3; & "Characteristics of Marianist Lay Communities and Marianist Laity" brochure, www.clm-mlc.org;

¹⁸ "IOMLC Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" section 3; "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07" Articles 1-2

¹⁹ "IOMLC: Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" section 3; & David Fleming, S.M. "Towards a Marianist Future: A Marianist Spiritual Family?" April 4, 2013; & "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07" Article 2; & "MLNNA Membership Leadership 2005" p. 2

²⁰ "IOMLC Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" section 2; "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07" Article 2

²¹ "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07" Article 3; & "MLNNA Membership Leadership 2005" p. 1; & "Characteristics of Marianist Lay Communities and Marianist Laity" brochure, www.clm-mlc.org

D. Instrument of Mission

Core elements of the Marianist charism are guiding principles for living the Gospel in mission to others,²² especially the poor and marginalized.²³ MLNNA promotes mission activities individually, communally, and corporately in response to the justice imperative of the Gospel.²⁴

Imperative

1. MLNNA pledges its support to Marianist laity assisting in their formation individually, communally, and corporately, in response to the mission and justice vocation of the Church.²⁵

- **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/Spirituality/Timing **Priority:** Start March 2015 - Ongoing

Frontier

2. MLNNA will encourage membership to prayerfully reflect on the 2009 International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities' document, "Marianist Lay Communities in the Church and in the World,"²⁶ identified as the *Nairobi Document*, as well as, Marianist stories regarding works of justice like those found in the "Friday Magnificat."

- **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/International Office/Timing **Priority:** Start March 2015 – Ongoing

²² "Guide to Lay Life in the Marianist Tradition" Published April 2009 by NACMS, p. 10; & "IOMLC: *In Alliance with Mary*" Bordeaux, France 2005, p. 1-5; & "IOMLC: *The Mission of Marianist Lay Communities*" Liria, Spain 1997, section 1-6; "IOMLC: *The Identity of Marianist Lay Communities*" Santiago, Chile 1993, p. 1-3

²³ "IOMLC Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" section 1; "IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Communities in the World and Church*" Nairobi, Kenya 2009, section 4; & Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Ph.D. "The Marianist Movement and the Challenge of Urban Justice Reconciliation: An Interim Report on a Conversation" February 2, 2009.

²⁴ "IOMLC Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" section 1; & Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Ph.D. "The Marianist Movement and the Challenge of Urban Justice Reconciliation: An Interim Report on a Conversation" February 2, 2009; & "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-2007" Article 2; & "IOMLC: *In Alliance with Mary*" Bordeaux, France 2005, section 17-25; & "IOMLC: *The Mission of Marianist Lay Communities*" Liria, Spain 1997

²⁵ "IOMLC Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" sections 1-3; & David Fleming, S.M. "Towards a Marianist Future: A Marianist Spiritual Family?" April 4, 2013; & Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Ph.D. "The Marianist Movement and the Challenge of Urban Justice Reconciliation: An Interim Report on a Conversation" February 2, 2009

²⁶ "IOMLC: *Marianist Lay Communities in the World and Church*" Nairobi, Kenya 2009

E. Leadership Team

MLNNA embodies a servant-leader model of leadership which listens and responds to identified needs. Its team is composed of Marianist laity who are committed to living the Marianist charism, supporting lay individuals/communities, and connecting Marianist organizations for the benefit of the Marianist Family.²⁷

Imperative

1. MLNNA embodies a servant-leader model of leadership which listens and responds to identified needs.
 - **Responsible:** All Leadership/ Director/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2014 – Ongoing
2. MLNNA promotes leadership skill development and effective communication strategies.
 - **Responsible:** Office of Spirituality /Education/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2014 - Ongoing
3. MLNNA maintains an integrated current data base and National Directory of MLNNA Membership.
 - **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/**Timing Priority:** Start January 2015 - Completed July 2015 - Ongoing
4. MLNNA represents the Marianist Laity in its membership in the Marianist Family Council of North America and *actively engages with the* International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities.²⁸
 - **Responsible:** Director/Office of Spirituality/**Timing Priority:** Start November 2014 - Ongoing

Imperative

²⁷ "IOMLC Peru: *Future Challenges 2014-2018*" Sections 2-4; "MLNNA By-Laws 2003-07" Section 2; & David Fleming, S.M. "Towards a Marianist Future: A Marianist Spiritual Family?" April 4, 2013

²⁸ "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07" Article 3; 7 "MLNNA Membership Leadership 2005" p. 1; "IOMLC: *International Statutes*" section 5-14

Imperative

5. MLNNA conducts a membership appeal to support our mission.

- **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2014 - Ongoing

Imperative

6. MLNNA is transparent in how funds are utilized and distributed.

- **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2014 - Ongoing

Frontier

7. MLNNA will explore and make a recommendation on the possibilities of establishing a membership program (fee based)²⁹ that could possibly include incentives.

- **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2015 - Recommendation complete October 2016

Frontier

8. MLNNA will research and make a recommendation to membership on the possibilities of establishing the responsible use of a paid staff individual(s) (beyond the current secretary) that will sustain the organization and drive it to fulfil its mission, realize its vision and exceed its stated goals. Included in the recommendation will be a proposal for funding.

- **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2015 - Recommendation complete October 2016

Frontier

9. MLNNA will work towards building a reserve fund sufficient to cover annual expenses to maintain on hand at all times. By December 2015, there will be a 3-month reserve; by December 2016 there will be a 6-month reserve; and by December 2017 there will be a 9-month reserve.

- **Responsible:** Office of Temporalities/**Timing Priority:** Start January 2015 - Complete December 2018

²⁹ "MLNNA By-Laws Amended 2003-07" Article 3; & "MLNNA Membership Leadership 2005" p. 1; & "IOMLC: The Identity of Marianist Lay Communities" Santiago, Chile 1993, section 4.2

Frontier

10. MLNNA utilizes the Three Offices structure³⁰ to form its Leadership Team which is composed of representatives inclusive of various regions of the country, demographics, age cohorts, and expressions of Marianist lay life.

- **Responsible:** All Leadership/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2014 - Ongoing

Frontier

11. MLNNA Leadership Team, will with a membership task force, reevaluate its Strategic Plan and determine what is completed, what is in process, and what needs to be added to strengthen membership and fulfill the MLNNA Mission and Vision.

- **Responsible:** Office of Education/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2016 - Complete March 2017

Frontier

12. MLNNA will explore and make a recommendation on the possibilities of forming an advisory panel to support, guide, and enforce accountability of the Leadership Team.

- **Responsible:** Leadership Team (Chair)/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2015 - Recommendation complete October 2016

Frontier

13. MLNNA will meet annually (in person or by video conference) with the Regional Marianist Family Council representative or area representative to listen to concerns, share best practices and build connections to the lay network.

- **Responsible:** Office of Education/**Timing Priority:** Start June 2015 - Ongoing

Frontier

14. MLNNA will complete and provide to membership the progress made on each goal in the Strategic Plan in an annual report.

- **Responsible:** Leadership/Office of Education/**Timing Priority:** Start December 2014 - Ongoing

Frontier

15. MLNNA Leadership Team will participate in a bi-annual retreat that will focus on Marianist charism formation and leadership skill development (Office of Formation for Mission will be considered as a possible resource).

- **Responsible:** Leadership Team/**Timing Priority:** Start October 2015 - Ongoing

³⁰ Joseph Stefanelli, S.M. "Our Marianist Heritage" revised edition, 2003. & "Things Marianist: *How Are the Three Offices like an Orchestra*"

IV. Wishes

The Appreciative Inquiry interviews included significant statements of “wishes” which are listed below for continued consideration.

- › continue essential formation development
- › help define role of the laity (*Assembly*)
- › foster intergenerational connections
- › build vibrant community of communities
- › find ways to be aware and connect with each other
- › encourage regional gatherings
- › pray together regionally, nationally, and internationally
- › provide paid staff person
- › be a voice for change in the Church/world
- › be more open and public about who we are and how to join
- › develop special interest groups, such as, grief counselors
- › foster outreach and programs for youth and families
- › educate regarding need for funding and financial autonomy
- › make MLNNA better known and be more visible, relevant to Marianist laity
- › reduce redundancy Structural Goals Transparency around finances
- › develop leadership formation
- › make Marianist lay formation better known/available
- › connect communities
- › make national Directory known & means for ID communities & hospitality
- › restructure so regional leaders are MLNNA leaders
- › develop young adult track for MLNNA
- › foster mission activities involving all branches
- › drop corporate structure and organize around Three Offices
- › grow in evangelization
- › listen and respond to needs
- › emphasize commitment/consecration

06-03-2014