

## **MARIANIST LAY COMMUNITIES IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD**

### **Questions for Community Reflection**

#### **SESSION 1: What does it mean to be in a Marianist Lay **Community** (MLC)?**

1. Horizontal communities. Marianist communities are known for being “horizontal.” No one person or group has a higher status or power than another. Does the organizational structure of our community reflect this value of equality? Does leadership rotate among members? What different gifts are present among our members? Do we make use of the various talents in our midst?
2. Collaboration with other branches of the Marianist family. What activities have we had in the last year that included SM’s or FMI’s? How do these vowed religious enrich our gatherings? What do we ask of them?
3. Individualism. List three ways that individualism impacts my life? (Consider wanting private space, my own personal possessions, having my way...) What is the “cost” of community? What do I give up as in individual for the sake of the common good?
4. Hospitality. Assuming that a person approaching our community sincerely seeks a faith grounded in Jesus Christ, are there any circumstances that would stand in the way of us welcoming him or her? (Consider age, educational level, sexual orientation...)
5. Prayer. How satisfied are we with how our community prays together? Are our liturgies and prayer services life-giving and celebrative? Do we use a variety of prayer styles and leaders to take advantage of the Spirit working among us in creative and different ways?
6. Recruitment. Do we wait for people to find us or do we actively leave our comfort zones and creatively put ourselves in places in which we might meet people who are seeking a faith community?
7. Formation. If a person shows interest in our community, how do they find out about our values, history, and come to a point of commitment? Is it simply by hanging around for while or do we have an intentional formation process?
8. Financial support. How does our community pay for its own needs? How committed is our community to support the national and international structures that form and sustain MLCs?

#### **SESSION 2: What does it mean for an MLC to be part of the **Church**?**

1. Embrace the spirit of Vatican II. Are we sufficiently educated in the documents of Vatican II and understand the Church as the “People of God.”
2. Involvement in the institutional Church. Although at times we may meet in homes, how do we take responsibility for the larger institutional Church, calling it to become its best self at the parish, diocesan, national, and international levels?
3. Challenging the Church to be more Marian. Mary’s focus was always on Jesus who came not in power and wealth but humility and service. When has our community had the courage to challenge our Church to let go of signs of wealth and power and take up the role of servant leaders?
4. Women. Assuming that the gifts of both women and men are exercised in our communities, are there any steps we can take to enhance the voice of women in the decision making of the broader Church? Are our communities balanced with involvement from both women AND men?

5. Young Adults. Evaluate whether our community is young adult friendly. If we are an older community, what creative ways can we reach out to young adults to either join us, or to support them in forming their own communities?

**SESSION 3: What does it mean for an MLC to be part of the **World**?**

1. Family. In addition to nurturing our own families, how does our community reach out to support the children, married couples, parents, and single adults in our community and nation who are struggling because of lack of money, relationship skills, health, or other barriers?
2. Work. Whether my work is at home, in an office, or elsewhere, what does it mean to do it with honesty, professionalism, and to do my best? If I am the employer, what labor practices and profit do I consider fair?
3. Simplifying our own lifestyle. MLC members are challenged to live simply and to avoid materialism. It's easy to be blind to our own wealth. How to live more simply and share our goods more generously?
4. Charity. While simplifying one's personal lifestyle is a first step, it must be followed by using our resources for the poor. List ways that you and your community are already doing this. Brainstorm additional ways. Pick at least one new way to act on this information.
5. Social Justice. What social and political structures does our community have the power to impact? Consider lobbying, advocacy, getting involved in social justice movements. If we could only pick one social justice cause to put our energy behind, what would it be?