



INTERNATIONAL TEAM / MARIANIST LAY COMMUNITIES
EQUIPO INTERNACIONAL / COMUNIDADES LAICAS MARIANISTAS
EQUIPE INTERNATIONALE / COMMUNAUTÉS LAÏQUES MARIANISTES



7th INTERNATIONAL MEETING.

Message from the International Team to MLCs and the Marianist Family

The 7th International Lay Assembly gathered 98 people from 25 countries on five continents. They formed a beautiful multicolored, multiethnic, multicultural mosaic which expressed our world reality of 6481 lay Marianists who are members in one or more of our 587 communities in 33 countries.

Félix Arqueros Pérez, outgoing President of the International Organization of the MLC, kicked off our International Lay Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, held on August 12-18, 2018.

Felix observed that our first International Lay Assembly was held in Santiago, Chile in 1993—25 years ago. At the same time the SM and the FMI have just celebrated their bicentennial years, and the AM has celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. At these celebration events, each branch has committed to strengthening our Family connections.

In his Circular Felix wrote about the theme of this event: **Walking Hand in Hand As a Marianist Family** (http://clm-mlc.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/Circular_Felix_Arqueros_CLM_Eng.244145202.pdf). He said that today more than ever, we are called to walk hand in hand with God and our brothers and sisters, within the Marianist Family.

“...Father Chaminade certainly dreamed of us this way before Our Lady of the Pillar. He saw us as a Family, in the world and in the Church, working hand in hand to bringing Christ into the world as Mary did.”

There are many lay collaborators of Marianist works who feel and live out our charism, but we must learn to differentiate them from a lay Marianist in an MLCs. Being a lay Marianist in an MLC is a personal choice, a response to a call from God to live the faith in community from the Marianist charism. There is a call and an answer. It is not a job, it is not a pastoral collaboration, it is not a mission or activity. It is a vocational response to God's call and requires explicit membership in our private international association of the faithful, recognized by the Church.”

At the General Session, panelists representing the four branches of the Marianist Family inspired us to walk together in Family as we share our individual gifts and talents.

Domingo Fuentes (SM)

- Br. Domingo suggested three verbs for walking together: sharing, collaborating, trusting
- He named three characteristics for collaboration: stewardship, interdependence, intensity
- He said the laity challenge the Family and enrich us with their vision, their enthusiasm, their commitment

Sr Tere Ferre (FMI)

- Sr. Tere said that we are stronger together, living rhythms and different ways of life.
- We accept that the center of the church is not the religious but the laity.
- We must assume that.

Agathe Senou (AM)

- Agathe proposed more common formation about the Marianist charism.
- She recommended more exchanges through local Family Councils.
- She encouraged sharing experiences across the branches to put the talents in common in view of the mission.

Jim Vogt (MLC)

- All branches must engage in the common mission.
- It means discerning the signs of times and finding the answers together. This is something new and demanding for the laity.
- It is important to see the Family as a spiritual family centered in a secular movement.

These panel discussions challenged us to ask,

- Does this vision of the Marianist family make sense?
- Does this vision motivate us to action?
- Are we willing to give our lives to build it? With the people next to us?

These remarks inspired new ideas about the role for the Laity within the Marianist Family—with more responsibility and in equal partnership with the other religious branches of the Family:

- It was a Call for a more active role of the Laity within the Family
 - To accept more responsibility for animating action within the Family
 - To become a stronger voice of action within the Family
 - To take on more leadership roles within the Family
- It was a Call to share our talents and gifts more freely with the other branches of the Family

This calls for mutual respect and recognition from each of the other branches as we listen, learn, share, and contribute to each other.

From this commitment to living as a Marianist FAMILY, there emerged four priority areas on which to focus our work over the next four years 2018-2022:

- **Formation** - Promote integral formation for initial and on-going formation, through advanced training, to expand and advance the leadership role of MLC's in the Marianist Family and in the Church. The implementation, content, and methods of delivery would be unique to each country.
- **Young Adult Engagement** - Promote and encourage activities for and with young adults and hold meetings with them, at regional and /or international levels, to live out an experience with Jesus through the Marianist Family.
- **Service to the Poor and Marginalized** - Promote concrete programs to put into practice at the service of the poor and marginalized in solidarity with them, and to do social justice work. Create suitable programs, not only for the materially poor, but also for the spiritually poor.
- **Sustainability of the Lay Branch** - Strengthen the sense of belonging to the global MLC and achieve the commitment of Lay Marianists to contribute a minimum of one hour of yearly salary to be able to carry out the activities of the lay branch, nationally and internationally.

These four challenges call us as **Marianist Laity** to be creative in implementing **concrete actions** to move our work forward over the next four years.

- We have to learn to invite, facilitate, and promote active participation of the members of **the other branches** in our decision-making and governing bodies.
- And we, as the lay branch, have to step up to share more equitably in the financial needs of the Marianist Family. This is an obligation and a sign of maturity for us.

Most importantly, because of our common Marianist vocation within the Family, these Challenges call us to contribute to the development of the "Marian face" of the Church. As Felix said in his Circular:

"We are called to be more fraternal than hierarchical, based on the common dignity that comes from baptism; sensitive, like Mary, to the needs of the world, and, with Mary, unconditionally open by faith to what the Lord tells us.

It is the time of the laity. It is time to live our charism without reserve, with passion, and from who we are, to open ourselves to the Church and to our distant brothers and sisters, to the migrant, to the one who suffers.

Let us not get impatient. The Spirit will guide us..."

The International MLC Team calls you to welcome, meditate and share this call that Mary makes to us: Do whatever I tell you ... IN FAMILY.

- Study and discern in our communities and in the family councils this message and the challenges of the Korean assembly.
- Be creative and daring.
- Organize concrete programs to embody them and develop them.
- Share your actions, which can inspire others.

Mary accompanies us from the Annunciation-Visitation, passing through Cana and Calvary, until the feast of the Kingdom.

May God bless all the MLCs all over the world!



Beatrice Leblanc (IO President)

Francisca Mbuzi Jere (Africa Responsible)

Mercedes de la Cuadra (Europe Responsible)

Nidia Rodríguez Salazar (Latin America Responsible)

Marceta Fleming Reilly (North America, Asia, Ireland Responsible)

Domingo Fuentes, SM (Assessor).



First International Meeting in Chile, 1993.



Seventh International Meeting in Korea, 2018.