



September 25, 2004

**TO:** Members of the Province of the United States  
**FROM:** Provincial Chapter  
**RE:** Selecting a Province Mission Statement

## **INTRODUCTION**

At the March 2004 Provincial Chapter session, the Chapter approved a province-wide survey asking the membership for essential elements that should be included in the formulation of a new statement of our Province's mission (Appendix A contains a description of the nature and purpose of a mission statement.)<sup>1</sup> . A majority of the Province membership responded to the survey and provided thoughtful guidance for choosing essential elements to be contained in our mission statement. Those elements, based on the Province feedback, are included as Appendix B.

Following a June meeting, the Chapter Education Committee asked several members of the province to draft sample mission statements that would include the key elements indicated in Appendix B, and conform to the description of a mission statement as described in Appendix A.

At the September 2004 meeting of the Chapter, six sample mission statements were narrowed down to three (Appendix C). At the same meeting, the Chapter agreed upon the following procedure to insure the full participation of the Province in the critique of these three proposed drafts.

## **PROCESS FOR EVALUATING THE DRAFT MISSION STATEMENTS**

### **First Round of Consultation**

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<sup>1</sup> The Chapter reminds the members of the Province that the succinct mission statement must be accompanied by a more fully developed "Vision Statement" that, flowing from the mission statement, spells out the ministry priorities for the next five years

We ask all members of the province to read carefully the description of the nature and purpose of a mission statement (Appendix A) and, in the light of the essential elements of our mission statement (listed in Appendix B), evaluate the three proposed mission statements (Appendix C). We prefer comments from communities, or even better, from gatherings of several communities to those of individuals, though the latter are also welcome. We ask that the comments follow a common format that indicates which of the draft statements is preferred (and why), which are acceptable, and which are considered deficient (and why).

We ask that all comments be sent to the Office of Education at the Provincial Offices in St. Louis by **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004**. Bro. Steve Glodek will present the draft mission statements to the other members of the Marianist Family Council of North America requesting comment also by **December 15<sup>th</sup>**. The Chapter Education Committee will then summarize the comments and preferences and, based upon that information, draft a new single statement of our Province's mission.

## **Second Round of Consultation**

The single mission statement draft will be sent out by **January 15<sup>th</sup> 2005** for a further review by the entire membership of the Province. In the light of the proposal of the Committee on the Future Structures of the Chapter, we ask that where possible members of the Chapter lead gatherings of communities in reflection on the proposed draft.

Feedback from this second round of consultation of the Province membership (this time dealing with only one proposed text) must be sent to the Office of Education at the Provincial Offices in St. Louis by **February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005**. Once again, the Chapter Education Committee will summarize the Province feedback, alter the proposed text in the light of that feedback, and present a draft of a final text to the Chapter for discussion and approval at its March 2005 session.

## Appendix A

# Developing a Mission Statement

### Definition of a Mission Statement

A mission statement is a concise summary of why the organization exists. It states the organization's reason for being, its enduring purpose.

### Characteristics of Effective Mission Statements

**Clear:** stated in plain language without jargon or specialized language that needs to be explained.

**Concise:** not necessarily "25 words or less" but a brief description of the essence of the organization.

**Enduring:** will be as true 10 to 15 years from now as it is today. (The less enduring that the statement is, the more likely it is to contain strategies or tactics rather than stay at the mission level.)

**Distinctive:** expresses the uniqueness of the organization, how it is different from other organizations.

**Motivational:** uses language that captures purpose and emotion, motivating people to commit effort and energy to the organization.

**Appendix B**  
**Province Mission Statement Proposals**  
**Key Elements**

**Foundational**

**Our Marian character**

**Our communitarian character**

**Commitment to formation in faith**

**Situating the Province in the Marianist Family and indicating our distinguishing features (vows, equality of members).**

**Important**

Commitment to solidarity with the poor and marginalized

Commitment to inviting others to our vocation and to multiplying apostles

Commitment to education and to youth.

**Consider**

“Social transformation” and the “dialogue between faith and culture”

**Also**

Importance of prayer and faith—we are a community of prayer, brothers in prayer following the example of Mary.

As religious dedicated to the formation of communities of faith, we ourselves are prayerful communities.

## Appendix C

### Marianist Province of the United States Mission Statement

Draft #1:

As a vowed community of brothers and priests together,  
we are committed to Mary's mission of giving birth to Christ  
in every age through a shared life of prayer and service.  
With the Marianist Family we form communities and individuals  
in apostolic faith  
through a commitment to education and social transformation  
working especially with youth  
and in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized.

Draft #2:

We, the Marianist Province of the United States commit our lives  
to seeing and understanding the mission of Mary,  
Mother of Jesus the Christ and of the Church.  
Through the power of the Holy Spirit and after the example of Mary  
we work to transform and uplift persons, communities and cultures.

As Sons of Mary we imitate her faith and courage,  
her partnership with God: including all people in community,  
her joyful giving,  
her nurturing and her constancy.

We Marianist men of community  
model our behavior on the lives of Jesus and Mary;  
we position prayer and reflection at the center of our lives;  
we commit ourselves to community  
within the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and stability,  
in order to give credible witness to the life of the Spirit

From these communities we are sent  
to advance well rounded learning and change;  
to build communities of faith;  
to nurture faith in each community of which we are a part;  
and to strengthen those most vulnerable to the misuse of power and exclusion:  
youth, the economically poor, new immigrants  
and others who are on the margins of society.

Draft #3:

As vowed religious in the Marianist Family,  
we are empowered by the Spirit and united in Mary's Mission  
to give birth to Christ in every age.

We live in community as equals—brothers and priests—  
seeking to live the most faithful imitation of Jesus Christ  
through fraternal solidarity in a life of prayer and service.

Enlivened by the dynamism of Blessed Chaminade's charism  
we seek to form persons and communities  
in apostolic faith wherever we are.  
We are committed to education  
and advancing justice and reconciliation,  
working especially with youth  
and in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized.