

OCEANIC LAY PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE 4 – 7th JULY, 2010

Outlined below are the key areas that were identified and discussed at the Conference, which was titled 2020 Vision:

Vocation

Definition:

Lay Marists are men and women who, in the course of their lives, listen and respond to the call of God to live the Charism of Marcellin Champagnat.

To be followers of Christ in the style of Champagnat today implies that we commit ourselves to the three fundamental Christian and Marist dimensions; Mission, Shared Life and Spirituality.

God loves each and every one of us and wants us to reach our full potential. To do this God invites us to follow our unique path.

Principles:

- It is gospel based – to make Jesus known and loved, which is our mission.
- Lay Marists follow Christ in the manner of Mary through the example of Marcellin.
- The Lay Marist vocation originates and is developed by viewing one's life in the light of the Holy Spirit.
- This discernment has different stages and opportunities for formal recognition.*
- Each person should be accompanied and supported by the extended Marist family, while respecting each individual's personal rhythm.*
- Community and reflection (prayer) strengthens Marist vocation. Formative communities for Lay Marists are essential.

(Each asterisk denotes one voice opposing the principle)

Desired Actions

- To ignite the heart, embrace the vision and transform the world through telling the story of Marcellin Champagnat.
- To offer opportunities for all people to engage in the story of Marcellin Champagnat
 - eg. For schools (children) to provide updated and engaging resources to share Marcellin's story.
 - Professionally (adults) to offer Marist education programs.

- Individual Adult – to provide core documents and relevant reading materials, reflection materials, formation opportunities – “time to meet with like-minded people” (eg partnership groups).
- Families – informal opportunities to meet others connected to the story.
- Formation –
 - It is necessary to invite lay people to set out on a vocational road.
 - To create Gospel spaces that helps them to grow in personal relationship with God.
 - We participate, in light of the Gospel, with the Christian community in the weekly Eucharist and other Sacraments.
 - We meditate and pray with the Word of God.
 - We share prayer and have times to meet Mary.
- Commitment – we need some formal commitment and recognition (#142 & 141).
 - Some feel the need to request recognition, and others don't

Mission

Definition

Our Charism in Action

Principles

- Through our actions, work, and way of being we bring the loving reality of God to children and young people
- Our mission is lived out primarily with and for those who need us most
- A willingness to identify and respond to the needs of our time
- Being ‘called’ and ‘sent’
- Actions based on discernment and sustained by prayer
- Actions carried out with love, respect and gentleness
- Radically flexible and open to the wind of the Holy Spirit
- Evangelize through presence as Mary did
- It is a communal responsibility

Desired Actions

- Structures that enable quick response to needs (especially crisis’)
- Constantly evaluate that our current activities are true to the charism
- Alert to changing and emerging needs- innovative in our response
- Tireless advocates for the rights of children and young people with a recognized public profile as effective experts
- Politically pro-active
- Creating new ways of sharing life and community
- Working to strengthen and the support the family unit (in its various forms)

- Providing support for those who work on the margins (prayer, resources, respite, sharing expertise)
- Continue to connect with and draw new people into the Marist family
- Making use of all available media to advance and support the mission

Formation

Definition

Formation is a [life-long] process of empowering people to respond to their Baptismal call through spiritual growth and living a shared apostolic life centred on the charism of Marcellin Champagnat (hint: the 3 violets!)

Principles

1. We value the importance of a shared life of community in faith where all are welcomed
2. We recognise the Baptismal call of God that draws us to the Marist Charism *****
3. We will journey together to understand and to live Marcellin's Dream

(Each asterisk denotes one voice opposing the principle)

Desired Actions

1. We encourage and promote specific Marist formation experiences
2. We encourage and promote shared Marist formation experiences
3. To keep the core documents central to the formation process
4. To develop structures to coordinate and guide our formation process in Marist life
5. While acknowledging the importance of local Marist communities we must ensure we make reference to our global Marist lay community
6. To invite all drawn to the Marist life to discern the best way for them to be present and close to children and young people
7. To be prophetic signs of hope to others in all our relationships
8. To explore ways to be in solidarity with those marginalised young people, particularly those who are economically poor

9. To meet regularly in discerning our call
10. To offer a variety of formation processes that respond to, and acknowledge the diverse experiences and understanding of the Marist Charism
11. To respond to the different forms of connection to the Marist life

Shared Life

Definition

Shared Life is Marists supporting each other in the Mission, friendship, life and faith in culturally appropriate and life-giving ways.

Shared Life Principles

- That shared life is one of the three fundamental dimensions of Marist life.
- That the Marists' core value of family spirit inspires our shared life together and is exemplified in the shared meal of the Lavalla table.
- Our shared life is open to change and growth and is always evolving to meet the needs of the times.
- Shared life means providing opportunities for people at all stages of their Marist journey.
- That our shared life keeps Marists connected even when their ministry or where they live is not immediately connected to Marist.
- We provide opportunities for shared life acknowledging that people's life circumstances change and their commitment levels may fluctuate throughout their Marist journey.
- That our shared vision is inclusive of all lay and Brothers.

Desired Actions

- That Marists understand more fully the necessity and benefits of sharing their life with other Marists, for the enhancement of the mission and our individual and collective spirituality through active promotion of this dimension.
- That the Lay Marists of each Administrative Unit commission a group to meet regularly to explore and promote opportunities for Marists to share their lives.
- that each AU seeks to promote a variety of quality options so that Marists, Lay and Brother, can share their lives with each other, e.g. live-in community experiences (long term and short term)

conferences and formation experiences
retreats
Ad Gentes experiences
regular gatherings
others as discerned by the local Marist community
social justice projects

- There are annual meetings of Marists on the topic of shared life

Co-Responsibility

Definition

We Marists, inspired by the Holy Spirit have received the gift of the charism from Marcellin. Therefore we are companions in the Marist life and mission, jointly responsible before God for carrying it forward. Co-responsibility involves all dimensions of Marist life; shared life, mission, spirituality, through planning, decision making, implementing and evaluation.

Principles

1. We hold the certainty that our respective vocations are mutually enhanced by an authentic spirit of co-responsibility
2. Co-responsibility represents a significant shift in our Marist tradition bringing with it both tension and fulfilment during this time of transition
3. Each AU assumes responsibility for determining how co-responsibility is realised with respect to shared life, spirituality and mission**
4. Dialogue about co-responsibility should occur in all levels of Oceania committees
5. We understand ourselves to be responsible to
 - a. God
 - b. Ourselves
 - c. Each other
 - d. Children and young people, especially the most marginalised
 - e. Church and the Institute
 - f. Communities we live and work in
 - g. Future Marists
6. We understand we are responsible for
 - a. Children and young people
 - b. Other Marists
 - c. Charism of Marcellin Champagnat

- d. Future Marists – inviting others
 - e. Formation
 - f. Leadership – identifying, empowering and training leaders
 - g. Developing structures for sustaining and renewing Marist life
 - h. Finance – financial management and sustainability
7. Marists take care of our families in their various forms
 8. The communion between Marists complements and enriches our specific vocations and different states of life. All are welcomed and needed
 9. What we want is to be a source of peace. We wish to draw on our life experiences, seeking to unite and not divide
 10. As Marists, with urgency, we need to build networks of mutual support as a way of making clear the interdependence of all people.*****
 11. As long as we continue walking together, new forms of relationships will emerge and they will demand new structures that will welcome and encourage vitality. Together we can think of how the future will be.

Who will lead the Lay?

- Those who see it as a vocation
- Succession planning for shared leadership
- Formation and on-going training
- Needs to start now!
- Must be funded
- Elected for a time

What might the structures look like?

- Forming an association of lay Marist people in Oceania
 - How could this association be funded?
 - Sustainability and Viability?
- Incorporating co-responsibility at every level of Oceania governance