

A Manuel of Marianist Spirituality



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INTRODUCTION

Sometimes people ask, "Is there really a Marianist spirituality?" We can take this question in two ways. First, does Marianist spirituality have elements other spiritualities do not have? Second, can the Marianist Family be recognized by its spirituality? Does the spirituality we practice really give an identity to the Marianist Family?

The reason I am presenting the above abridged series on Fr. Hakenewerth's much used and favorite booklet is for several reasons. First, if something works, why fix it. So, I will be quoting directly from his book with little or no comment on my own. I will summarize where possible or omit without detracting or degrading from his original information. (In the end, you may just want to read his book.)

Second, for those who are asking the above questions, now is your chance to find the answers here. And third, I hope that this series will also help you in your own spiritual journey through the path of Mary. If she did such a great formation of her own son, Jesus, she could certainly help us.

I will be following Fr. Quentin's outline and presenting them in 12 series: 1-Spirit as Life, 2-Faith of the Heart, 3-Experience of Being Called, 4-

Principles of SM Spirituality, 5-Pervasive Role of Mary, 6-Praying with Faith of the Heart, 7-Transformation in the Image of Jesus, 8-Foundation Virtues: *Preparation*, 9-Entering into Mission, 10-Going beyond Mediocrity: *Purification*, 11-Permeating the World as a Movement, 12-Following Jesus to the End: *Consummation*.

A spirituality is a set of principles, guidelines, and methods we follow in order to live the life of the **Spirit of Jesus** in our own life. A sound spirituality helps us to understand ourselves and the Spirit within us, teaches us about the Spirit's nature and ways, and guides us in living more fully our life from within. It clearly is advantageous to have a manual that explains things - or even better, a good teacher. A spirituality is not an absolute necessity, but it is a great advantage.

Marianist spirituality gives us an identity because it is, so to speak, our face; it shapes our spirit and forms our personality. The uniqueness of our spirituality does not lie in the fact that we have elements which are not found elsewhere. All the essential elements of the life of the Spirit should be found in every spirituality. What is unique is the particular emphasis that is given, the specific methods used, and the particular way of understanding and living the life of the Spirit. Our spirituality identifies us in the sense that it does shape our attitudes, our outlook, and our dispositions.

In other words, through the spirituality that is used in our formation, we develop traits that identify us and make us compatible with one another. We get a kind of family trait from the features of our personality that result from using a common method. The spirituality we use forms our outlook and our attitudes, and we are profoundly marked by them. Father Chaminade, our founder, considered a Marianist as someone formed and identified by the spirituality he taught. Marianists were to be recognized as belonging to the same family by the similar dispositions, attitudes, and virtues that *result from being formed in the same spirituality*.

The second reason for a common spirituality is *we are called to live the virtues of Jesus and to do his works*. This is to occur not only as individuals, but also together as a community. *We are called to be a*

collective witness of the presence of Jesus in this world and to carry out together his transforming works. This is especially important today because social sin, which exists and continued through a collective effort, must be countered by social grace, which exists and is effective through a community. A common spirituality gives us the basis for a common experience of the present of Jesus among us, and it makes possible a collective witness to Jesus and a united effort in doing his works.

The following series present principles, guidelines, and methods Father Chaminade passed on to us as the Marianist spirituality. Naturally, those who feel called to be members of the Marianist Family appropriate this Marianist spirituality to form and guide their spiritual life. Because Marianist spirituality has all the basic elements needed for living the full gospel life, anyone who is open to the Spirit can profit from the spirituality given to us through Father Chaminade.