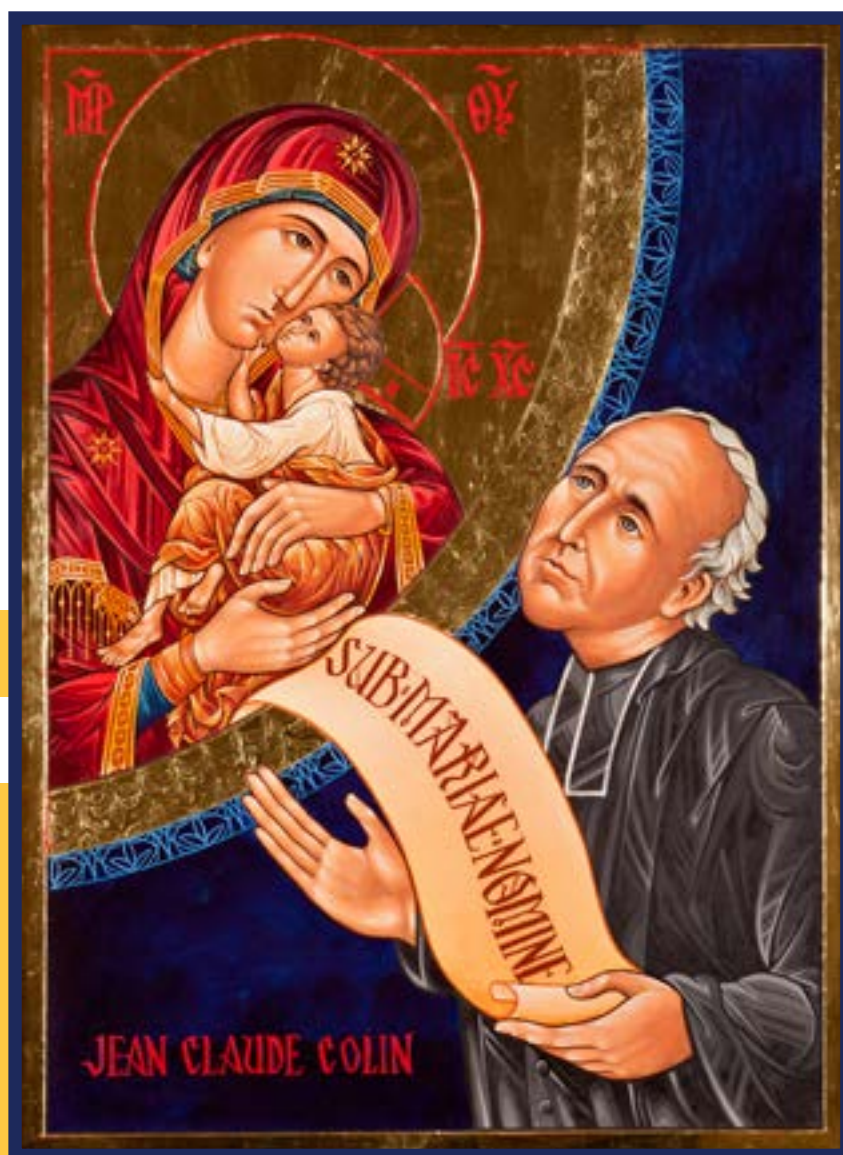


Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education: U.S. Province Schools and Sponsored Schools



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Introduction

Soon after the U.S. Province of the Society of Mary began, a committee was formed to plan for the future of Marist educational ministry. The committee was charged to look at current schools of the Marist Fathers and Brothers and those schools that would like to form a partnership with the Society of Mary. With the help of Fr. Ted Keating, SM, then provincial, and Br. Sean Sammon, FMS, who acted as facilitator and secretary, the committee began its work, which continued under Provincial Fr. Paul Frechette, SM, and developed the following vision and mission:

Vision: To preserve and renew the vision of our founder, Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, for Marist education and to advance that unique mission into the future.

Mission: To provide a framework that will help to preserve and deepen the fundamental characteristics of our Marist schools, establish guidelines that govern what is to be expected from those involved with these communities of learning and faith, create a common language and set of actions that can be used to measure adherence to the larger mission of the Society of Mary, share our common understanding within the Province and wider Society of Mary about the spirit which guides and the principles that animate the programs and progress of schools within our Marist mission and ministry.

Statement of Identity

U.S. Province of the Society of Mary

Mary of Nazareth, the first disciple of the Lord and Mother of the Church, is the heart of our identity as Marists. This remarkable woman of faith has called us to this way of life. We believe that we have been called by a “gracious choice” into the family of Mary. It is her work that we do, and so we commit ourselves to think, judge, feel and act as she did.

As a consequence, these qualities mark us as Marists: mercy and compassion, availability, welcome and hospitality, simplicity manifest in everyday ordinariness and a common touch. We are self-effacing apostles who demonstrate a spirit of joy and respect for others; we are called to be humble and hidden and unknown in the world.

Our spirituality, which is both mystical and practical, responds to the reality and circumstances of today’s world. Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, acting on what he believed to be Mary’s desire, encouraged us to establish a Marian Church, a Church with the heart of a mother beating at its center.

At our best, we are instruments of God’s mercy working to help others taste the boundless love of the Lord, especially those who find themselves on the margins. As Marists, we seek to go where the Church is not. We should enable all with whom we come into contact to experience the gift of reconciliation as well as peace of heart and mind.

Mary is the icon of God’s Spirit. As her fellow disciples, we pray that with God’s grace we become the same.

*Assembly and Chapter
June 2013*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARIST SCHOOLS AND THE SOCIETY OF MARY

“Guided by the Gospel, the doctrine of the Church, and the insights of Father Colin on education, Marists devote themselves to all forms of education, especially among the young.”

[100] Part I: The Ministry of Education in the Society of Mary

Partners Working Together in Mary’s Way

[101] Fr. Jean-Claude Colin believed that the work of education was never just training a student to find a profession. He saw the education of students as a noble and heavenly work, one that Marists were to see as a partnership with God. This partnership was to help form students and to mold their characters, so they could become all God intended them to be. Those who contribute to this noble enterprise are partners in this endeavor.

[102] For almost 200 years, vowed Marists and their colleagues have committed their time, their talents and their sacrifices to contributing to the work of education. The Marist Way has animated the generous work of these people to make their schools like the early Church -- a community animated by the Spirit that continues to make Jesus known while being “one in heart and mind.” Today, the Spirit continues this work through those who accept the call to work in Mary’s Way in Marist schools.

1. The constituencies of Marist schools include the following: students, faculty, staff, administrators, governing boards, parents, alumni, benefactors, vowed Marists directly involved with the school, the Province and the Marist leadership, the local bishop and the local church.
2. All of these groups, each in their own way, share a responsibility for carrying out the mission entrusted to the Society of Mary and accepted by the school.
3. Part of the mission of a Marist school is the way it cooperates with the local church’s mission including the bishop, local parishes and their pastors. The Marist mission of a school always sees itself in the large context of this ecclesial communion of faith.

The Relationship between Marists and the Schools is Dynamic

[103] When Marists share the gift of their charism with others, particularly in an educational situation, it should be more evident in deeds than in words.

1. The relationship between the Marist Fathers and Brothers and the school should be intentional and personal in its approach. A Marist school will not be effective in achieving its mission if its relationship to the Society is merely historical or contractual. The relationship must be about persons: a clear and well understood dialogue between the province leadership and those in charge of Marist mission for the school and the various constituencies of the school (governing board, administration, faculty, staff, students, parents, coaches and alumni).
2. This relationship speaks about the partnership that exists between the Marists and many others who are dedicated, as Fr. Colin says, to working “with God to form Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars.” Together there is a shared responsibility for the implementation of the Marist mission and vision in the school.
3. This insight of Marist mission and vision is consistent with the vision of the Church as established by the Second Vatican Council as well as modern Marist statements about mission and vision. As Marists we do not want to create a shadow Church or a special group. Rather, with Mary as our guide and model, we want to be open to the power of the Spirit in offering a way for co-workers with a variety of gifts, perspectives and experiences to become effective instruments of God’s mercy for the furthering of God’s kingdom.

Accountability in Mission and Vision

[104] Whether at Nazareth or in the early Church, Mary’s relationship to the community of faith was one of listening and obedient attentiveness to her Son and the Holy Spirit. In the same way, a Marist school must learn from her to listen attentively to the voice of the Spirit calling that school community to live in God’s reign. They must be responsible for discerning how the Marist mission and vision apply in a particular time and place.

1. The Province determines and affirms that a school is affiliated with the Society of Mary. The Marists outline what it means to be a Marist school and helps the school understand the Marist mission and direction it takes to accomplish this mission as contained in recent documents of the Society of Mary.
2. The Provincial, the members of the Province involved in education and the school's leadership and governing board work together as partners with mutual respect and support. They foster a relationship of trust and effective communication working together for the benefit of the school.
3. The school's vision and Marist mission are the responsibility of those entrusted with this treasure of the Society of Mary. Likewise, the Marists foster a bond that sustains the school's Marist identity and vision.
4. School documents (including the written covenant between the Province and the school) identify the responsibility of the governing board to set direction, establish policies and ensure programs that build and show the school's Marist identity and mission.
5. Each school has a Marist Way Committee whose membership is given the trust and responsibility of implementing the vision and mission through concrete programs. They are responsible to the board and administration of the school as well as to the Provincial of the Society of Mary.
6. The choice of the board and administrators selected by the school and their missioning by the Provincial of the Society of Mary are important aspects in the partnership.
7. The school and the Province participate in a program of regular assessment and accreditation on a three-year basis to ensure that the school effectively carries out its Marist mission.
8. The Province lists specific criteria, expectations and procedures defining the school's relationship to the Marists and to assess the school's faithfulness in carrying out their affiliation with the Society of Mary.
9. Being a Marist school depends on this accreditation process. The Province publicly acknowledges that the school embodies the Marist standards.

10. The Province commits itself to helping the school enhance its Marist identity by providing Marist resources and by encouraging various programs in Marist spirituality and pedagogy.
11. All members of the school community share in the responsibility for carrying out the mission and advancing the vision of the Society of Mary.
12. In all sponsored schools, while the Society of Mary embraces the responsibility to uphold matters of the faith, the Society of Mary does not have legal or financial responsibilities for schools it does not own.

Sustaining the Marist Mission in the School

[105] Fr. Colin recognized that the work placed before Marists was always God's mission and belonged in a special way to Mary. From her place in the Kingdom of God she has sought a family of men and women led by the Holy Spirit who unite themselves in Christ to work for his Kingdom. Christ alone is the nourishment of our lives. United in this mission these co-workers grow in their spiritual life through prayer, the sacraments and in particular the Eucharist. This privileged time of prayer with the Lord is essential to the success of their endeavors.

[106] Marist schools commit themselves to discerning the presence of God in Mary's way to form companions in the mission of the Society. Part of the ongoing conversion of life each day is to "think, judge, feel, and act as Mary" as these educators listen to the voice of the Spirit in the challenges of providing a Marist education to young people.

[107] Colnian spirituality and pedagogy inspire us to work together in fulfilling the Marist heritage and urges us to build a Marian Church – a servant church, a church that meets each person where he/she is and welcomes them in the name of Christ.

1. Marist educators are formed in the vision and mission of the Society. Governing or advisory boards, administration, faculty, staff take advantage of personal retreats, formation programs in Marist spirituality and instructional programs to develop themselves both spiritually and professionally as Marist educators.

2. Schools provide adult Marist spiritual formation programs for administration, faculty, staff and board members and, as much as they are able, for parents, alumni and benefactors.
3. School leadership groups pray together and use some of their meeting times for Marist spiritual development.
4. The Provincial offers encouragement, resources, opportunities and manpower for orientations, for ongoing learning and retreats for leadership teams, boards, faculty and staff.
5. Echoing the words of our good Mother, Mary, every Marist school fosters an appreciation that “God has done great things for them and Holy is God’s name.” This sense of gratitude is founded in an intimate knowledge of God’s love and attempts to manifest itself in a generous service to others. This is the heart of the Marist mission and vision.
6. This call to mission is based on Mary’s example in the early Church. For a Marist school this is the model for a community of faith, empowered by the Spirit which seeks to be generous in love and service of others to foster an atmosphere where all are “one in heart and mind.”

[200] Part II: Standards for All Marist Schools

Standard 1: Marist Schools within the Mission of the Society of Mary

[201] Marist schools are a part of a long tradition of proclaiming the good news of Jesus in Mary's way. Marist schools must base themselves in the mission of the Society of Mary.

[202] All Marist apostolic endeavors are the work of Mary. They invite others to come to know the Lord Jesus. At the heart of a Marist school is the realization that the journey of faith is to find the "Joy of the Gospel." Therefore, the works of the Society aim to bring the good news of Jesus in Mary's way--a way of humility, caring, listening, forgiveness and justice.

[203] By learning from Mary's presence in the early Church, the Marist mission is simply the evangelizing mission of the Church. This mission says no to prestige, power and ambition. The Marist mission calls people to do good without notice in a manner that is hidden and unknown.

Some practical applications

1. Every Marist school has a clear mission statement that is consistent with the Society of Mary's definition of its own mission as expressed in its Constitutions, the writings of Fr. Colin, the work of General and Provincial Chapters, and other documents. The school's mission reflects the concern of these Marist documents for faith, justice, and evangelization.
2. The appropriate governing body approves and disseminates the mission statement throughout the broader school community. Hiring of school personnel and selection of trustees is mission driven. Orientation of school personnel and trustees includes thorough discussion of the mission statement of the school.
3. The trustees and the administrators are responsible to ensure the implementation of the mission of the school and to ensure that decisions are driven by the mission.

Standard 2: Sharing the Gospel of Jesus

[204] The Marist way of evangelization demands an openness from all involved to search for faith and justice so that the whole world may find a way to come to know the Lord Jesus and the One who sent him.

[205] True to the example of Mary, the Marist heritage seeks a “creative fidelity” to the call of the Spirit who graces co-workers in the life of the Church. The Marist mission is to renew the Church where it exists and to implant it where it does not yet exist through real awareness of the culture and people in each locale.

[206] Marist schools form students to understand they are given a special dignity by God. They contribute in forming the whole person, aiming to build the church through good Christian people, contributing citizens and thinking learners. A Marist education is meant to form men and women in Mary’s way so they in turn will share what has been given to them as a gift.

Some practical applications

1. Those who attend Marist schools have the opportunity to experience Jesus Christ in an atmosphere that respects religious and cultural differences and promotes interreligious and intercultural dialogue.
2. Marist schools foster the development of students as responsible and maturing members of their faith communities.
3. The choice of board, administration, faculty and staff (including coaches and moderators) must be mission driven to fulfill the goals and objectives of a Marist school.
4. School personnel fulfill their responsibilities in ways that reflect the Catholicity of the school and in collaboration with co-workers dedicated to the same mission.
5. A Marist school community reflects that ecumenical respect for all men and women of good will which was expressed by the Second Vatican Council.

Standard 3: Marist Schools Serve the Mission of the Church

[207] For Fr. Colin and the early Marist educators, a Marist school existed in the service of the Church to form the hearts and minds of students in the ways of Jesus Christ. Each Marist school declares its Catholic character and is incorporated in the life of the Church.

[208] Fr. Colin always stressed that the works of the Society were always at the service of the local Church. He wanted his Marists to be seen by the bishop as though they were the bishop's own and the ties between the Society and the diocese not to bring division but unity. Marist schools act in union with and at the service of the local Church. They should always be transparent in their dealings with others, especially the bishop, and see that their work is a gift of the Spirit to a local Church. They should not create a "shadow Church."

Some practical applications

1. Every Marist school publicly declares its Catholic identity in word and in deed.
2. Board members, administrators and school personnel live in conformity with the Gospel.
3. School personnel take great care to clearly and honestly present the fundamental beliefs of the Church relying on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and other approved sources.
4. The school strives to maintain a cooperative relationship with the bishop of the diocese, the diocesan office of Catholic education and the local clergy.
5. Students are encouraged and guided to participate actively in the life of their local faith communities.

Standard 4: Faith Formation

[209] Fr. Colin calls for forming students to help them grow in mature faith. The formation of students should include learning what the Church teaches and putting their faith into practice through the service of their brothers and sisters particularly those who are disadvantaged or who suffer injustice. Here, they concretely meet the face of Jesus Christ.

[210] Learning from Mary, Marist schools help to form students to become disciples who know that they are the object of God's gratuitous love. Everyone is brother and sister. We cannot know God if we do not love our brother and sister.

[211] The Marist Way is centered in daily personal prayer and in the Eucharistic celebration. Marist schools should be first and foremost places of forming disciples.

Some practical applications

1. The governing or advisory board and administrators of a Marist school ensure that the religious programs and curriculum teach the authentic Catholic faith and are formative, stimulating and thought-provoking.
2. The governing or advisory board, administrators and all school personnel understand formation of disciples happens more in interactions and in all the aspects of the school's life than in books. Continuing formation is necessary in Marist and Catholic matters for all personnel.
3. Those responsible for the religious formation of students in classrooms are enthusiastic and well trained in their discipline.
4. The school's liturgical life clearly demonstrates its Catholic character through well prepared liturgies which reflect the school community's shared participation in Christ's mission in today's world.
5. Spiritual programs of retreats and prayer are part of the daily life of the community including prayer in classrooms before or after classes.
6. Governing or advisory boards and administrations make religious formation of all members of the school community a priority in programming and in budget.

Standard 5: Teaching and Acting Justly

[212] Fr. Colin believed that Marist schools were platforms for forming good citizens. A Marist school's policies should always reflect the precepts of Catholic social teaching and foster justice.

[213] Fr. Colin was concerned that Marist schools should remain attentive to the needs of alumni. A Marist school goes beyond the building to include alumni, parents, benefactors, the larger local community and especially the socially disadvantaged.

[214] It is a Marist's special joy to learn from Mary how to be present to many different groups in the school and local community. The local neighborhoods that Marist schools are a part of should be included in the concern, the prayer and outreach of charity.

Some practical applications

1. A Marist school clearly reflects a sense of justice and maintains a respect for the legitimate rights of others in all its dealings with students, employees, parents and the local neighborhood. The entire institution not only teaches justice but also acts justly.
2. A Marist school manifests its solidarity with the poor by offering financial aid based on need and by its efforts to recruit and retain students from families of limited means.
3. A Marist school has effective Christian Service programs enabling students to serve people in need thoughtfully and reflectively. In this service to the marginalized the school seeks to transform the minds and hearts of students through an experience of the suffering and resurrected Christ.

Standard 6: Global Dimension of Marist Education

[215] Marist schools develop in students the ability to assess in a critical manner the values, goals and objectives fostered by the contemporary culture and promotes a commitment to lifelong learning in an increasingly global world. True to their values, Marist schools insure that students understand and promote the human rights of all people, the consequences of interdependence, the safeguarding of human life, the promotion of a “seamless garment” in their understanding of life issues, the protection of the environment and the obligation to foster the good of all even if it means sacrificing wealth or comfort.

[216] A Marist education should aim to help the students confront social injustices such as racism, sexism and intolerance. A Marist student should learn to collaborate with other men and women of good will no matter their creed, race or social standing to help build communities where the dignity of the person is manifested.

Some practical applications

1. A Marist school prepares students to analyze their own contemporary culture with a Christian insight and response, along with the goal of achieving the freedom to work for justice.
2. In response to the current social teachings of the Catholic Church, a Marist education makes students sensitive to areas of injustice in modern society and encourages solidarity with the disadvantaged and dispossessed in the world. Students should recognize the suffering and pain which poverty, racism, sexism and religious intolerance have caused in the world at large and in their own communities.
3. Marist schools in the United States should work toward forming relationships with other Marist educational institutions throughout the world especially those in developing areas.
4. Boards, administrators and school personnel show sensitivity to the needs of others and implement strategies that show how justice can be achieved in daily life.

Standard 7: Educational Excellence

[217] Fr. Colin insisted in his time that Marist schools develop curriculums that were well rounded and educated the whole person. Marist schools should not only succeed in providing spiritual guidance and formation they should also be places of academic excellence. Fr. Colin also recognized the importance of extracurricular programs for the life of the school and the growth of students.

Some practical applications

1. In order to help students reach their full potential and to utilize their talents, Marist schools should offer a challenging curriculum of arts and sciences.
2. The school's curriculum and methodology reflect fundamental agreement with the objectives and pedagogical methods of the Marists.
3. Marist students are guided to acquire the necessary critical skills to evaluate the material they are learning and to use the knowledge appropriately for the good of others and for themselves.
4. Catholic and Marist values should also permeate extracurricular programs. Care should be taken that coaches and moderators know, live and teach Catholic and Marist values.
5. The school administration maintains standards for teachers so they will be adept and up-to-date in the material they are presenting, and the methods used for doing so.
6. Educators demonstrate proficiency in their academic area and seek to collaborate with other departments of the school. They are aware that the most important part of their ministry is to form the next generation of Christian men and women who will worship, serve and continue the mission of Christ.
7. Fostering an educational attitude that stresses the need for ongoing formation is part of the curriculum.
8. The board, administration, faculty and staff are hired and retained, in part, based on their ability to uphold and foster Marist values and vision in the school.

Standard 8: Discerning the Gift of the Spirit

[218] The history of Marist Fathers and Brothers schools in the United States has been a rich and varied one. Some of these schools still serve the needs of the Church today, but many have ceased to exist or have taken on a different mission as the times and circumstances have demanded.

[219] Listening with attentiveness to the Spirit should lead a Marist school to understand the nature of its call and the “signs of the times.” A day may come when the Spirit calls for a Marist school to change its mission to the people it serves or cease to exist.

Some practical applications

1. As part of a larger strategic plan, a Marist school needs to periodically review what group of people they are called to serve and their ability to serve that mission. Care must be taken to include service to the poor and disadvantaged.
2. Continuing the mission always involves dialogue with the local Church and its needs.

MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS FOR MARIST SCHOOLS

(A one-page checklist after reading the above agreement)

1. Does the board annually affirm its commitment as outlined in the document, Standards and Expectations of a Marist Education: U.S. Province Schools and Sponsored Schools?
2. Is Marist Way information presented as part of the board's professional development?
 - a. Is information included in the orientation of new board members?
 - b. Is at least one hour offered per year for Marist information, prayer, discussion?
 - c. Do board members have a basic and growing understanding of Marist schools and the Marist Way?
3. Has the school established a Marist leadership group among the faculty, staff, and administrators?
 - a. Have they attended at least one Marist Educators Conference?
 - b. Does the group meet regularly to help incorporate Marist values in the school?
 - c. Do they have a basic and growing understanding of the Marist Way and foster it at every opportunity within the school community?
4. Are new faculty and staff provided sufficient orientation to the Catholic faith and Marist values?
 - a. Is time set aside in the orientation program devoted to the Catholic faith?
 - b. Is time set aside in the orientation program devoted to Marist values?
 - c. Is time set aside in the new faculty and staff program throughout the year devoted to Marist values?
5. Is Marist Way information included as part of professional development of faculty, staff, and administrators?
 - a. Is time spent on Marist values in the annual retreat?
 - b. Are at least two additional hours completed of Marist-themed professional development each year?
6. Are Marist themes presented on a rotating annual cycle?
 - a. Is the theme introduced to the faculty, staff, and administrators at the beginning of the academic year?
 - b. Is the theme introduced to the school community at the beginning of the academic year?
 - c. Is the theme reflected in various prayers, Masses, etc. throughout the year?
7. Are students instructed in Marist Way themes and values?
 - a. Are the Marist themes and values publicly displayed?
 - b. Are they incorporated into religion or theology classes each year?
 - c. Are they incorporated into Campus Ministry, retreats, and Christian service-learning programs?
8. Are parents instructed in Marist Way themes and values?
 - a. Are the themes and values presented in school publications?
 - b. Are they incorporated into parent education programs, meetings, liturgy, prayer, and service projects?
9. Do publications contain information on the Society of Mary and the Marist Way?
 - a. Does your website list that you are a Marist-sponsored school with an explanation of what that means?
 - b. Does your website provide resources or links to other Marist materials?
 - c. Do student and employee handbooks have an explanation about Marist schools?
10. Are these programs and efforts effective?
 - a. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of these programs and efforts?
 - b. What goals for improvement have you planned for the next 3-5 years?