MSJC
Marianist Social Justice Collaborative

Marianist Environmental Education Center

A Call to Courageous Action on the Climate Crisis

Responding as a Marianist Family to this urgent *sign of our times* in the spirit of Mary and our Founders.

The Marianist Family is deeply concerned about the impacts of the climate crisis and environmental degradation. Urgent actions must be taken to help mitigate the most dire environmental effects of climate change and its impacts on the most vulnerable people in our country and world, including young people suffering from climate grief and anxiety and concerned about their future. We stand with all people of faith and good will, inspired by Pope Francis in *Laudato si* and *Laudate Deum* and Pope Leo XIV in issuing a call to hear and respond to the cry of the earth, the cry of the poor, and the cry of youth. With them, we recognize that environmental and social issues are interconnected. The Marianist Social Justice Collaborative models the need for collaborative work, as justice teams cannot address global warming, racism or immigration in silos. We must join with others in dialogue and seek a just and sustainable future for the common good of all peoples and our planet.

A) Hope & Action In the Spirit of Mary

As a Marianist Family we are inspired by Mary's action at the Cana wedding (John 2:1-12). Mary had faith in Jesus, saying to the servants - and to us - "do whatever he tells you." Through her faith-filled actions in the face of scarcity, a miracle of abundance occurred. Her powerful intercession reminds us to be compassionate and attentive to the needs around us. With her, we trust that Providence will turn lack into graced fullness.

Today we face an unprecedented environmental and economic crisis. Increased warming and environmental disruptions are upsetting the balance of human and natural systems resulting in famines and forced migrations. Efforts to limit global warming have not been adequate to stop the world from reaching a dangerous tipping point. Yet, because we are a Marianist Family, we hope in God's providence. We embrace our call to deep prayer, united with Mary and Jesus, that opens us to the Spirit who transforms us to act with deep care and compassion. Our vision for the future is expressed in the powerful justice prayer of Mary's Magnificat: Luke 1: 46-55, where the lowly are raised up and the arrogant are sent away empty. Through our covenant with Mary, we work together in response to Pope Francis' and Pope Leo's urgent call to care for the poor, disadvantaged and the entire Earth - our common home.

B) Responding to Our Times in the Spirit of our Founders

This time can be overwhelming, causing anxiety and paralysis. Yet our Marianist Family was founded from such a time as this! Our day is similar to the fear and chaos during the French Revolution, when existing faith structures were undone and social needs were unmet. We are inspired by the courageous

lives of our faith-filled founders, Blesseds William Joseph Chaminade and Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon (Mother Marie of the Conception); and Venerable Marie-Thérèse de Lamorous, who formed a dynamic network of lay and religious communities of faith and action to address the injustices of their time.

We need the courage, faith, and action embodied in our Marianist foundations here and now. We are called to build an inclusive community for justice with people of faith and good will and to continually expand our community by hospitality and inclusion, becoming a "spectacle of saints" that Fr. Chaminade envisioned. By joining together as a network of communities, we can extend and multiply individual actions to transform society. This tradition is broadly applicable, as articulated by Marianist Fr. Willam Ferree, a founding twentieth century influence on Catholic Social Justice in the United States, who urged every member of society to contribute to the common good, even though each act might be small.

The Marianist Family Encounters Project (MFEP) collaboration models the multiplication of our individual and institutional efforts. All three Marianist branches - The Daughters of Mary Immaculate, Marianist Lay Community of North America and Society of Mary - and their communities, projects, outreach and institutions have been expressing their commitments and actions in response to the vision of Popes Francis and Leo. And we are poised to do more, through the lens of our Marianist charism and characteristics of education, spirituality, and outreach actions. MFEP integrates the goals of the Laudato si Action Platform, Global Compact on Education, and Marianist Educational Characteristics into the Encounters goals that express our desire for transformation as we put our faith in action.

The world is waiting for our courageous commitment as a Marianist Family. How will *you* answer the call?

C) Putting our Faith into Action for our Common Home

Our Marianist charism impels us to be individuals and communities of prayer and action. In solidarity with other Catholic environmental movements, we express our faith in action for climate justice in the following dimensions:

1) Prayer. Persevering in faith and embodying Mary's hope; praying for our ongoing ecological conversion; pondering in Mary's spirit, aware and mindful of the needs around us from local to global levels, and praying for the people and places impacted.

2) Theological Reflection and Social Analysis. Being aware of what is happening in our world, and the contributing societal structures and systems. Desiring to be formed by Mary, to respond as Jesus did, and to grow in the virtues needed to change unjust structures. This includes a daily examen and ongoing reflections and dialogue with others. Rooting ourselves in the Scriptures that relate to an event and experience, and asking: What would Jesus do in this situation? How would Mary respond with faith and compassion? What can I and my community or workplace do to change the situation? What are the next concrete steps to take?

3) Ongoing Education and Learning. Staying aware of the news, sound science, and contemporary understanding of what is happening in our world and how people and places are impacted. Committing to personal and collective solutions that will best address the issues. Recognizing that we are all educators and models for younger generations and must model sustainable choices, share wisdom, and inspire hope.

4) Building Communities of Encounter and Solidarity. Pope Francis called us beyond our own communities and institutions to encounter others in our midst, as they are. To listen to their needs and concerns and to learn from them. To mutually join together with others of faith and good will, in partnerships of solidarity that broaden our collective impact.

5) Taking Action in Service and for Justice. We are called to implement solutions in all dimensions of our lives: personal, household, community, institutional and collective. Every step we take that reduces our consumption or increases our conservation of habitat, energy, and other resources contributes to healing our Earth and safeguarding the most vulnerable. Acting together also reduces climate anxiety. Intentional choices in our purchasing, in our investments, and in policies we support, send strong messages to companies and policymakers that environment, social responsibility, and governance matter, thus helping to drive systemic change for the common good. Countering our consumeristic culture and practicing simplicity, moderation, and sacrifice and promoting collective civic actions for environmental wellbeing empowers resilient communities.

6) Advocating for Climate Justice. Since Catholics number 18% of both the US and global population, our collective voice can effect change. Let us boldly use our privilege and voice, and overcome our fears in solidarity with our Founders. We can do this by policy awareness and participating in advocacy and people's campaigns. We pledge to increase our action by:

- Voting with conscience, after reflecting on the breadth of a candidate's stance on social teaching through the lens of Catholic social teaching.
- Participating in visits, calls, and writing letters to our legislators/elected officials; as well as comment periods, petitions and campaigns that advocate for just policies.

D) Going Forth. As Marianists, disciples of Mary and partners in her mission, we are called to respond to the urgent signs of our times with audacious hope and transformative action. The environmental problems we face, from the climate crisis to the suffering of the vulnerable, cannot be met with indifference or mere words, but by heeding Mary's Cana invitation: "Do whatever he tells you." As we pray boldly, keep learning, form communities of encounter and solidarity, and courageously advocate for justice, we will enter into the dynamic faith and vision experienced by our Marianist Founders through their times of upheaval and uncertainty. We can live out our Marianist call, nurtured in contemplation, through our concrete intentional choices and daily commitments.

Now is the time to act. We invite you to pray and reflect individually and in your communities and ministries on this document and how you are going to respond. Consider the following questions:

1) What was most striking or inspiring? What is new? What is challenging?

2) In responding to this call to action, where do you have the most energy to start?

3) How will you commit yourself/community/ministry to ongoing ecological conversion Consider:

- How might you seek Christ in your encounters with the faces and stories of the poor, the Earth, and one another?
- What would be the next action steps?
- What support or resources do you need?

4) Consider specific ways for how will you will put faith into hands-on action in each of these areas outlined above in Section C:

- Prayer
- Theological reflection and social analysis
- Education
- Building an expanded community network and alliances for justice
- Taking action
- Advocating, serving, and building community with trust in God's providence

In the spirit of Mary and our Founders, let us not be daunted by the magnitude of the challenge, but be energized by the possibility of grace. The world is waiting for our response as we move as a Marianist family, from concern to courageous commitment. **How will you answer the call?**

A Marianist Family Prayer for Ecological Conversion

Guadalupe Breakthrough,
A Brian Zampier, SM

O God, Creator of all, we praise you for the beauty of our common home. You have entrusted us, your children, with the care of this sacred gift.

In the spirit of Blesseds William Joseph Chaminade, Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon (Mother Marie of the Conception), and Venerable Marie Therese de Lamorous, we turn to you as a family, united in Mary's mission, to build a global community where no one is left out.

We ask for the grace of ecological conversion. Help us to hear the cries of the Earth, the poor, and our youth. Free us from a throwaway culture and a mentality of indifference. Guide our hearts to a new way of living justly, sustainability, and with respect for all Creation.

Empower us, like the servants at Cana, to "do whatever You tell us" from the smallest daily acts to our collective actions.

Mary, walk with us and embolden us with courage and hope as we advocate for the protection of our common home and all who depend on it.

In each encounter, may we, your Marianist Family, be instruments of your peace and healing as together we build a resilient future for generations to come.

We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus, and with the intercession of Mary, the mother of all Creation, and our Marianist Founders, Amen.

- Prayer by Laura Koonce, MSJC/MEEC Integral Ecology Team