

# MUM 2004 - PRAXIS PROMPTS

## *INTENTIONAL ACTION: CONSTRUCTING CATHOLIC IDENTITY IN MARIANIST UNIVERSITIES*

Our principle objective is to serve historical Catholic and Marianist intentions in our respective universities in ways that conjointly promote the reign of God and enhance higher learning.

### *The Characteristics of Marianist Universities*

1. Marianist universities educate for formation in faith.
2. Marianist universities provide an excellent education.
3. Marianist universities educate in family spirit.
4. Marianist universities educate for service, justice, and peace.
5. Marianist universities educate for adaptation and change.

### *Eight Gifts*

1. The stories we share – memory and imagination.
2. Living as a graceful people – realistic optimism.
3. A sacramental view – recognizing the extraordinary in the ordinary.
4. Getting together for good – to be a person is to be in relationship with other persons.
5. Scripture and Tradition – an awareness of how the past impinges on the present while tradition continues to unfold into the future.
6. Risking the leap of faith – investing in more than ourselves through the ways of our hands, our hearts, and our minds.
7. Justice for all – everyone their due, plus compassion.
8. Loving beyond borders – an aspiration of humanity.

### *Praxis*

Praxis is a way of thinking that recognizes

- That our human calling is to make history;
- That we learn through experience combined with our reflection on that experience;
- And that the interaction between action and reflection is continuous.

***STUDENT SESSION - June 8, 2004, Tuesday, 9:30 – 10:30***

The student session is what Dr. Groome might call a creative interpretation – we are going somewhere we haven't gone before with the hopes that some day it will become a tradition. This is the first time that students have formally presented at MUM. Their focus is a reflection on James' Stream of Experience: If we want to know what something like 'Catholic and Marianist Identity' means, then we have to look around to see what is happening in the streams of the lives of our Universities. The students will share with us how they have witnessed the eight gifts currently animating the Marianist and Catholic identity in the stream of experience at each of our Universities. They will reflect on what they see happening on our campuses which say that they are Catholic places, that they are Marianist (five characteristics) places.

***ANCESTOR SESSION - June 8, 2004, Tuesday, 10:45 – 11:45***

This session is what Dr. Groome might call a *retrieval interpretation* – we are pulling things out of our marvelous storehouse of tradition as we share some of our history. Dr. Rosemarie Cutting, English/Communication Studies, Ms. Caroline Byrd, Associate Director of Blume Academic Library, and Br. Herbie Janson, S.M., Mathematics, share their research and writings on the Marianist in God's acre.

***THOMAS GROOME PRAXIS SESSION I - June 8, 2004, Tuesday, 2:00 – 4:00***

In this session, Dr. Thomas Groome, author of *What Makes Us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life*, will lead us, using a praxis approach, to reflect critically on our attitudes and beliefs (our anthropology, cosmology, sociology, commitment to justice, etc.) so that we might explore what the deep structures of Catholic faith suggest around the eight gifts – giving priority to implications for Catholic universities.

***Thinking About Our Basic Beliefs and Attitudes***

- What is your anthropology? What is your understanding of human nature?
- What is your cosmology? What is your understanding of the world, humans in the world, and the world in the universe?
- What is your sociology? What is your understanding of how humans should interact in society?
- What are your attitudes toward time? Focused on the future or past at the expense of the present?
- In what is your heart invested? How is this investment reflected in the ways of your hands, your heart, and your head?
- What is your understanding of justice?
- What kind of world do you want to make?

***Implications of these Attitudes and Beliefs for Our Universities***

- How do your attitudes and beliefs in the preceding areas manifest themselves in your interactions with others at the university?
- What do some of the deep structures of Catholic faith suggest around these themes for Catholic universities?

***THOMAS GROOME PRAXIS SESSION II - June 9, 2004, Wednesday, 9:30 – 12:00***

Now that we have articulated some of our own attitudes and beliefs, in this next session, Dr. Groome will help us explore the wider ripples of the praxis approach within our actions at our universities.

- How might we engage people at the individual universities in conversation around Catholic and Marianist identity?
- How might we socialize people who have been around a while and are familiar with the word 'Chaminade' but don't really know anything about him or the movement he generated?
- How might we socialize new faculty and staff into such an educational philosophy and spirituality?
- What does it mean to hire for mission?
- If someone asks you about working for or attending a Catholic or Marianist university, how do you articulate what sets it apart from other schools?
- How do you articulate the relationship between the first Characteristic of Marianist Universities 'formation in faith' and the second 'providing an excellent education'? Are you comfortable with that order of these two characteristics? Does one subsume the other?

***STRATEGIZING SESSION - June 9, 2004, Wednesday, 2:00 – 4:00***

In this session, Any Hill, J.D., Director of Service Learning, will begin by demonstrating why it is important that we address now the concern about Marianist and Catholic identity at our institutions. Following this and drawing upon ideas and responses generated in the two sessions with Dr. Groome, we will develop at least two strategies, per University, to address the goal of maintaining a Catholic and Marianist identity in our radically secular world. For the first 45 minutes, we will work in an inter-university group to brainstorm strategies. For the second hour, we will work in intra-university groups to agree upon at least two strategies to pursue.

***PRESENTATION OF STRATEGIES - June 10, 2004, Thursday, 9:15 – 10:15***

In this session, we will share the strategies we have agreed to pursue for the upcoming year. This is to be followed by closing remarks by the three presidents.

\* The emphasis in each of these sessions throughout MUM 2004 is to create animated conversations resulting in strategies to be implemented at each university over the next year.