

MIXED COMPOSITION

I would like to begin our course on Mixed Composition and Marianist priesthood – or better, priests within the Society of Mary¹ – with some introductory comments to try to provide some context for us.

The first thing to say is that it is very difficult to talk about priesthood and priests within the Society of Mary without talking about it from the point of view of Mixed Composition. Now, if we were talking about Mixed Composition even fifty years ago and certainly one hundred years ago or in the time of Father Chaminade we would have been talking about three categories of members, the priests, the teaching brothers (or lettered laymen), and the working brothers. Each of these groupings of people, these categories of people, have equal status within the Society as religious, even though their social status in civil society might be different. This was carried over from the Sodality of Bordeaux, which had during its existence various sections for the students and professionals; for the artisans and labourers; as well as a section for priests (and older men – the Fathers of Families – and older women – the Ladies of the Retreat). This union of many “classes” of society within the Sodality was a source of discussion and complaint, but clearly formed part of the thought of Father Chaminade as we can see in what he wrote as “Answers to Objections that are Ordinarily Made Against Sodalities Established on the Plan of the One of Bordeaux....”² The first three objections (or difficulties) touch on the question of gathering “into one society persons of different rank and age.” The first objection touches on the difficulty of social relations in such a mixed group with the suggestion that the result is “shocking confusion.” Father Chaminade’s answer is that “This association is no more a confused group than a well organized society is a mob. [...] There are as many divisions and sections as are necessary, to group the same sort of people conveniently together, without separating them from the whole body of members.” The answer to the second

¹ A Presentation for the Marianist Spirituality Course at the Marianist International Seminary Chaminade, Rome, October, 2006.

² [Charles Klobb, SM; Henri Lebon, SM, ed.] “Answers to Objections that are Ordinarily Made Against Sodalities Established on the Plan of the One of Bordeaux, on the Form Given Them, and on Their Relations with Parishes,” *The Spirit of Our Foundation: According to the Writings of Father Chaminade and the Original Documents of the Society*, Volume III: *Works of the Society of Mary* (Dayton: Mt. St. John Normal School, 1920), section H 212, p. 231-240. [Français] “Réponse aux difficultés qu’on fait ordinairement contre les Congrégations établies sur le plan de celle de Bordeaux sur la forme nouvelle qu’on leur a donnée, et sur les rapports qu’elles ont avec les paroisses,” *L’Esprit de notre fondation: Les Oeuvres de la Société d’après les écrits de M. Chaminade et les Documents primitives de la Société*, [vol. III] (Nivelles: Louis Havaux-Houdart, 1916), section H 212, p. 233-242. See also *Écrits et Paroles*, Volume 1 (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1994), numbers 153 and 154, pp. 643-655, for two versions of this document. Philippe Pierrel reproduces the “second” text which he calls text “b” to distinguish it from the text published in the *Spirit in Sur les chemins de la mission...G. Joseph Chaminade fondateur des marianistes*, « pro manuscripto » (Bar-le-Duc : St. Paul [Marianistes, rue de la Santé], 1981), Annexe II, p. 153-165 ; [English] *A Missionary Journey with William Joseph Chaminade, Founder of the Marianists (1761-1850)*, Monograph Series, 33 (Dayton : Marianist Resources Commission, 1986), Appendix II, p. 81-91 ; [Español] the text was not included in the Spanish edition of Pierrel’s work *Por los caminos de la misión : Guillermo José Chaminade, misionero apostólico*, Espiritualidad Marianista, 3 (Madrid : SPM, 1993).

objection develops the sense of the first from the point of view of unity and the advantages to be gained from different kinds of people learning from one another, "They will mutually aid and assist each other, and realize what one of our poets so happily said, 'We are often in need of someone less than ourselves.'" The third objection compares the Sodality of Bordeaux to older sodalities, which were established on the basis of the same age and rank and accomplished much good for three hundred years; therefore, why change? In his answer to this objection Father Chaminade notes that the undertaking in Bordeaux has had great success for the previous 25 years (and how can one argue with success?). More significantly, however, he says that conditions are different. "Why may I ask, is not the general state of things at the present time, the same as it was heretofore? Why must everyday conditions be met with vaster, and more improved modern methods, than years ago? Who does not see that since the Revolution, a new fulcrum must be found for the lever that moves the modern world? Posed in its simplest form, the objection reduces itself to the examination, whether the new Sodalities offer more abundant means and resources than the old. We believe firmly that they do." He enumerates various advantages. When he reaches the third he says, "Let us now consider their Zeal and their spirit of apostleship. In the old-time sodalities, there was scarcely any other purpose in view than to sustain pious Christians in the way of salvation by mutual edification. But in this age, an age of revival, Holy Mother the Church demands something more from her children. She wishes the concerted action of all to second the zeal of her ministers, and to labor at her restoration. This is the spirit which the new Sodalities inculcate. Each director is a persistent and active missionary and each sodality a perpetual mission."

Some see in this Father Chaminade's response to the spirit of *Fraternité, Egalité, Liberté* that came from the Revolution.³ Others, like Father Vasey, see in this a theological motive on Father Chaminade's part.

"The mixed composition of the Society of Mary, that is, membership of ecclesiastical and lay elements on a basis of equality, seems to some, and quite incorrectly, the result of adaptation to the society that emerged from the French Revolution. The Revolution aimed at the destruction of the former regime, that is, the privileged classes of nobility and clergy ... the Revolution sought the establishment of equality (égalité) ... so that all would be citizens with the same rights and duties...

To understand his ambition of gathering all into one, "union without confusion," or what has been termed his spirit of universality, a principle he extended not only to persons but to the means of the apostolate, a student of history ought to look to the motivating force in his life, faith. [...]

Not the French Revolution, but the Church itself, its composition, spurred him on. He saw his foundations as the Church in miniature, a reflection, among other things, of the Church's own catholicity or universality. The Church had to be Catholic in doctrine, in sacraments, in membership, of all ranks of society, for

³ Mary Lynne Gasaway Hill describes the Sodality of Bordeaux from this point of view in *Stories from the Wake*, Monograph Series, 52 (Dayton: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 2005), pp. 17-43.

it is the continuation on earth of Christ, His Mystical Body. So too the Society was to include all persons, and because it accepted Mary's own mission, open, in principle, to every form of apostolate, to use all means comprised in the term education in the broadest sense. He said clearly that the more closely the Society of Mary resembled the Church, the more perfect it would be and the more closely it would approach its end.

A formula of uniting clergy and lay, such as he envisaged it, was not his invention, but a rediscovery, a putting into practice again of what was always known, namely, that the monastic life as such made no distinction between priests and non-priests. [...]

In sum, the innovation of Father Chaminade was really a restoration. His idea, however, was not so much to recapture a monastic ideal that had dimmed with the centuries but to reach the ideal of the primitive church of Jerusalem where all were of one mind and one heart. This was the ideal that haunted him."⁴

In either case, I have thought about this problem of motivation for some time and have come to the conclusion that there are at least two possibilities: one is that the social and cultural context demands something new, in this case equality of membership because of the views of the people. The other is that an idea which is very good, with sound philosophical or theological bases, which up to now it has not been possible to put into practice, can be implemented because of the change in view of the people. [If you'd like an example, Adelaide de Cicé, sister of the last Archbishop of Bordeaux before the Revolution, felt called to religious life, but could not find peace in any of the existing congregations that she tried out. Eventually with the help and direction of Fr. Pierre Joseph Picot de Clorivière {who was the last Jesuit professed before the suppression, who re-established the Jesuits in France after their restoration, and who figures in Marianist history with his rule of life and interpretation of John 2:5 about the Wedding Feast of Cana⁵} she founded the Daughters of the Heart of Mary without religious titles or religious habit and with a form of community life very un-monastic. I think, luckily for her, that she was able to do this not because she was forced to by events – her ideas pre-dated the Revolution – but because of the climate in society and the church which the Revolution created.]

⁴ Vasey, Vincent R., SM, *Chaminade, Another Portrait*, Joseph Stefanelli, SM and Lawrence Cada, SM, ed. (Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission, 1987), p. 157-159; [Français] *Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade, un nouveau portrait*, Les saints du monde (Paris: Pierre Téqui, 2006), p. 256-258; [Italiano] *Chaminade, Testimone e profeta, un altro ritratto*, P. Monti, SM, Antonio Solda, SM, trans. (Roma: dattilografia, 2005), p. 89-91. There is also an electronic version of the Italian translation. In this version the parts quoted are found on pages 175-179.

⁵ On this point see Jean-Claude Delas, *Histoire des Constitutions de la Société de Marie*, "Introduction", *Études Marianistes*, Volume IV, Novembre 1964 (Fribourg: Séminaire Marianiste) p. 5-34, especially pp. 8ff., and pp. 33-34. [English] *History of the Constitutions of the Society of Mary*, "Introduction," Monograph Series, 19 (Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission, 1975) p. 1-27, especially pp. 2-7 and 25-27. [Español] *Historia de las constituciones de la Compañía de María*, "Introducción", Victoriano Mateo, SM, trans. (Madrid: Ediciones SM, 1965), p. 5-36, especially pp 7-11 and 35-36. See also Jean-Baptiste Armbruster, SM, *L'État religieux marianiste* (Paris: Marianistes, rue de la Santé, 1989) especially Document n. 22, "Le P. de Clorivière, inspirateur de nos fondateurs", p. 383-385. [Español] *El estado religioso marianista*, Espiritualidad marianista, 9 (Madrid: SPM, 1995), Documento 22, "El P. de Clorivière, inspirador de nuestros Fundadores", p. 360-362.

It is clear that the first members of the Society of Mary were made up of these three “categories” of people: Lalanne and Collineau were seminarians (and teachers at Estebenet’s school), M. Auguste Brougnon-Perrière was a teacher (also at Estebenet’s school), Bruno Daguzan and Dominique Clouzet were business men and Jean Baptiste Bidon and Antoine Cantau were artisans (barrel makers).

Today we do not talk about three categories of religious with equal rights. We talk about priest and lay religious or brothers and ordained brothers. It should be clear why we do this. It seems to me in our present world we do not like to make distinctions like those of Father Chaminade’s time. We do not like to categorize people. We much prefer to look at equality and participation, at roles and functions, rather than some essential (and limiting) difference. However, the *Rule of Life* preserves a hint of the earlier reality in the chapter on “community in Mission” in article 69:

- 69 The community fulfills its mission
in a diversity of ministries.
Some of our members have as their chief task
that of preaching the Word of God
and leading the Christian community in prayer.
Others work principally
in the fields of education and culture,
aiming to show
that the human person can be fulfilled
only in response to God's plan.
Through laboring in technical, administrative,
or domestic service,
still others make present in our world
and in our communities
the witness of Christ, the carpenter's son.

We could add Article 70 to develop aspects of the point:

- 70 Our common mission leads us
to an apostolic attitude
in ordinary daily tasks,
in the life of prayer,
and in the acceptance of suffering.
Whatever our service,
we know that the saving grace of Christ
has no limits.
Every member, in his own unique way, contributes
to realizing the one mission of the Society.

We have also preserved in the *Rule* and in our practice the Three Offices, which have as part of their guiding principle things similar to what is talked about in the “three ways” of article 69. Now, it seems to me that one way of talking about membership, preserving insights about our Mixed Composition, is to talk of the three ways of carrying out our mission. Another way to say it would be that some people spend most of their time or life working at the tasks of the Office of Religious Life; others in the activities of the Office of Education; still others at the tasks of the Office of

Temporalities. I like this way of talking about these things because it is clear to me that there are different types of people and different aspects of the mission, and we want to include them all within our Society and Family. It is what I mentioned during Brother Larry Cada's course; there are people who work mainly in the realm of ideas and concepts and culture; there are others whose orientation is towards dealing well with the physical realities of our world – as I said in the course, keeping the cars running, though there is much more to physical reality than that. Some years back Father Lorenzo Amigo would occasionally talk about alternative models of economic development, and we also have given the work of Justice and Peace to the Office of Temporalities.

Over the years, as I spent a lot of time developing a development project – IMANI – in Nairobi, I was also reflecting on how this fit into the Marianist world. Over the course of our history, and if you read the documents you will find reference to this idea, the apostolate has been conceived of in terms of education. You will occasionally find reference to the idea that to talk of education is to talk of practically all of the Marianist apostolate. If you recall Brother José María Alvira's report to the Chapter, he makes a clear case for talking about our apostolic activities as being educative. In the present world education in most places conjures up ideas of schools: nursery, primary, secondary, university, and occasionally technical and vocational schools. But you may recall our discussion of the idea of the Society of Mary as a teaching congregation. In some places this is a viable way of talking, but in the newer implantations there is a tendency in another direction. Also, if you recall, the General Chapter of 2001 gave a task to the General Council, and I believe to the Office of Temporalities. Let me quote from *Sent by the Spirit*:

“48. Study of “Working Brothers”

Blessed Father Chaminade's vision for the Society and the Marianist Family included people with a variety of backgrounds, skills and occupations in the service of the mission. Even though the *Rule of Life* (art. 13) uses only two categories for our religious, there is a growing number of Marianists in our Units, but especially in our new implantations, whose ministries are not easily categorized. We recognize that the Brothers in manual or technical work remind all of us of the meaning and importance of these types of ministries. Given the diverse developments in our different cultures and Units, it is even difficult to specify some of the issues involved. In the Society of Mary, we respect the dignity and equality of each individual, and want to remain open to all.

In view of these developments, the Chapter supports the recommendations of the General Council to continue to foster and study the needs and the future of the religious in these rich ministries”.⁶

One way out of the conceptual problem, I believe, is to talk of a principle enunciated long ago, that the works of the Society are led by one group with the collaboration of the others – this when we talked of three categories. In schools, in my memory in the United States, it worked in this way: there were brothers and priests who taught, the priests were the chaplains and spiritual animators of the school community, and there were brothers who maintained the school building and all its mechanicals and

⁶ General Chapter 32, *Sent by the Spirit: Recreating Chaminade's Missionary Dynamism in Today's World; Envoyés par l'Esprit; Enviados por el Espíritu, Inviati dallo Spirito*, Roma, July 2001, section 48

often ran the auxiliary enterprises and services – the cafeteria and so on. Sometimes there were even technical courses and workshops. In the present age when we have a much less univocal view of the apostolate, a useful way to think of what we are doing is to consider the reality that each of the three Offices, of Religious Life, Education, and Temporalities has an apostolic thrust as well, not only through collaboration but by taking the lead in specific works. It is clear with education (but we must not forget what the rule says about culture either); there are schools and we rightly call the activity, “education.” Within the office of Religious Life, there are formation programs (aspirancy programs, novitiates, ongoing formation), retreat centers, centers of spirituality, even the liaison and work aspect of Marianist Lay Communities falls here, and we also, I believe rightly, call these activities by the name “formation.” The area of competence of the Office of Temporalities, I think, covers the new developments in the area of social and economic development and the area of justice and peace and the integrity of creation. I think we can call the same type of Marianist activity that we name “education” with one office, and “formation” with another; “development” when it comes to the Office of Temporalities. There are some qualities that get well-expressed in this area of development work, particularly the idea of sustainability, which are very close to some of our cherished qualities, having to do with interiorization and the taking of responsibility. When we speak of development we are not only talking about the ability of poor people to make money, but of a number of human qualities and capabilities. The development literature always talks about “capacity building” and the development of “human resources.”

I think all of this was much clearer in our history in the time between 1818 and 1830 before the Society of Mary became essentially and for all practical purposes a “teaching congregation.” Father Verrier in several of his monographs, but especially “A Founder’s Thought on the Apostolic Activity of his Followers,” shows the multiplicity of activities in the Society of Mary – this notwithstanding that Marist Brother, Pierre Zind, in his doctoral dissertation *Les nouvelles congrégations des frères enseignants en France de 1800 à 1830*⁷ includes the SM and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (in somma, the Institute of Mary) as one teaching congregation. Fr. Verrier in his monograph, “A Founder’s Thought...”, points out that the SM was involved in many activities.

“In 1823 at Agen the brothers were working on many fronts. They directed the schools, the sodality of men, the work of delayed First Communions, while his Sisters directed the sodality for their sex and a third order secular. They held regular meetings for a group of girls of from 12 to 15 years, conducted a free school, catechized the women of the working class, gave lessons in sewing in a workshop which they had organized and received women in retreat for eight to fifteen days.

At Bordeaux the Society of Mary conducted a residence, a novitiate, a secondary boarding school. It was occupied besides with the sodality, with the visits to hospitals and prisons and with preaching and other various kinds of work.

⁷ Pierre Zind, FMS, *Les nouvelles congrégations de frères enseignants en France de 1800 à 1830*, 3 tomes, (Saint-Genis-Laval: chez l’auteur, 1969). Note especially the maps.

At Tonneins the Sisters added free classes to their work with the sodality, held meetings for the women of the working classes and conducted a third-order secular. There was also a question of opening a boarding school.

Fr. Collineau is director of the Collège of Villeneuve and in this city he worked at the sacred ministry, at preaching, and at the direction of the sodality.

He [Fr. Chaminade] undertook the remodeling the Madeleine “to execute little by little the project of a mission center.”⁸

We cannot forget the project of developing Normal Schools, or what today we might call teacher training colleges, which spanned the years 1823-1830, beginning with retreats for teachers at Saint Remy and developing into a fully developed teacher training program, the implementation of which throughout France was stopped by the Revolution of 1830.

In this same period there are boarding schools opened, free schools for the poor, and schools of arts and trades. Workshops were set up in conjunction with the schools. “That which distinguishes our schools is that we set up in them accessory institutions by which we try to follow everywhere our former students in order to sustain them after their departure from school in their good habits and the religious sentiments which they received while in school; these institutions consist in the schools of arts and trades and in the pious sodalities.” (L.2.328; Petition to King Charles X, 7 April 1825)

The position of sacristan at Colmar was accepted. An orphanage was accepted at Besançon, and workshops were set up. There were also a number of proposals in which Father Chaminade had an active interest, things he wanted very much to do, but which he was unable to do because of the lack of personnel or for other reasons – direction of the pilgrimage at Verdelaix and at Notre-Dame des Trois Epis, a parish to become a real mission center in Besançon, development of a community of missionaries for the country districts in the Archdiocese of Toulouse.

I should admit to you all at this point that one of my personal themes (everyone has a few personal themes which he or she develops very well – you notice this in preaching, for instance, some priests are very very good on some topics and not so good on others) is Marianist universality and the part of the tradition that goes after the “lost sheep,” those on the margins, particularly of religious things. Another way to say it is that I am very interested in developing relations and collaboration with people of good will. I am very interested in finding ways to develop our possibilities.

Why do I think that the kind of idea I have laid out is more than practical exigency, and thus agree with Fr. Vasey? If we look at the *Grand Institut*, one of the

⁸ Joseph Verrier, SM, « La Pensée d’un fondateur sur l’action apostolique de ses disciples », typographie, Séminaire Marianiste, Fribourg, 1959. Écrit Saint-Boniface, 1951. [English] “A Founder’s Thought on the apostolic action of his Followers,” W. Ferree, SM, R. Hughes, SM, J. Russi, SM, J. da Silva, SM, trans., Monthly Series, Vol. 1, nos. 4-6, 8, (Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission, 1970). [Italian] “Il pensiero di un fondatore sull’azione apostolica dei suoi figli”, Ambrogio Albano, SM, trans., *Quaderni Marianisti*, no. 24 (Società di Maria, 1966)

first rules (if not the first – see Fr. Armbruster’s commentary in *Écrits et Paroles*) we find these guidelines for the program of the novitiate,

“444. Towards the second year of the novitiate, the novices will be shown the three ends of the Institute, which are: prayer, instruction, works.

446. In the first month of the second year of the novitiate, the Head of Zeal in concert with the Mistress of novices will give an exercise to the novices in the form of conferences in which she will explain to them why prayer, instruction and works are the three ends of the Institute.

447. The example of Jesus Christ who prayed, worked and instructed men during his mortal life is the first subject of admiration and imitation which we ought to propose to ourselves, incapable as human nature may be to do anything which really approaches this divine model.

454. The Head of zeal will finally explain to the novices how the knowledge of prayer, of works, and of sowing the seeds of instruction should become their ends, both for themselves and for the salvation others, if they apply themselves to it successively, with order and method under the direction of the Mistress who instructs them, and if they do so with a view to glorifying God in this world.

455. The exercise directed by the Head of zeal as explained from article 446 on, purposes to give the novices a complete idea of the vocation which beckons them and to make them acquire a love for it; each one of them should be attached later to one of the branches of the Institute, only a small number being destined, by grace, to fulfill all of the offices one after the other and to become capable of directing all of them”.⁹

We have three offices because Jesus Christ prayed, taught, and performed works. We know that some people are better adapted to one or the other of these activities of Christ – and superiors need to be capable of managing all of them.

In this regard it is worth quoting article 207 of the *Grand Institut* concerning the mother and office of work, section C, The Work for Exterior Enterprises.

“The Mother of Work should not lose sight of the fact that she is Mother of Zeal and of Instruction in her office, although destined principally to activate

⁹ William Joseph Chaminade, *Grand Institut (Institute of the Daughters of Mary)*, Robert Hughes, SM; Robert Sargent, SM, trans., Documentary Series, 3 (Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission, 1971). Also, sous la direction de Ambrogio Albano, SM, *Écrits et Paroles*, volume V, *Le Temps des religieux*, Document 6 “Institut des Filles de Marie [« Grand Institut »]” (Casale Monferrato: PIEMME, 1996) for article 207: Section 6.26, p. 140; for articles 444-455: Section 6.50-6.51 p. 180-181. Articles 444-455 are also reproduced in *Écrits de Direction*, Volume 1, sections 109-120, and the comparable Spanish and English translations (English: *Marianist Direction*, Volume 1).

work; and by that fact Zeal, Instruction and Work should cooperate as indivisible means in the Institute, although one or several of the three means stand out more eminently in some works than in others. It is this that has caused them to be divided and to be submitted to three different heads”.

If you care to stretch out the ideas further you can talk of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King¹⁰ and the Church whose responsibilities include to teach, sanctify, and govern. We have various other ways of talking about the Church and its tasks. This particular one seems a bit suggestive for our topic.

In 1819, Father Chaminade sent a letter to the Pope, Pius VII, in which he says:

“The more particular spirit of these groups is to provide a special leader for zeal, another for instruction, and one for work, and obliges the Superior of the Society to have all the members act together along these three lines and without interruption”.¹¹

In 1838 we return to the theme:

“The Society of Mary began under the auspices of the Holy Archbishop of Bordeaux, Archbishop d’Aviau, in the capital city of his diocese. Until the death of this venerable Prelate, it was the work of his heart. It includes three classes: (1) that of the educated Laymen whose principal mission is the spread of the knowledge, love and practice of our holy religion by the means of teaching; (2) that of the members devoted to manual labor, which has for its object the opening of schools of arts and crafts for young men of the ordinary classes, to protect or turn them away from the contagion of the world, and to teach them to sanctify their labor by practice of the Christian virtues; and (3) that of the priests, which is the soul and the salt of the other two. When this last class will be sufficiently numerous, it will devote itself outside to the exercise of all the functions of the holy ministry. It is charged with the direction of the Society of Mary and of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary.

¹⁰ In the retreat of 1820 for the members of the Society of Mary, Father Chaminade gave a meditation on the participation through Baptism in Christ’s consecration and thus on sharing in Christ’s functions of offices, particularly priest and victim. The following year he continued the development, using as base a text of St. John Chrysostom, “By the heavenly unction of the faith we receive in baptism, says St. Chrysostom...we are established forever as kings, priests, and prophets.” See John Totten, “The Three Categories and the Aggiornamento,” *St. Louis Province Working Brothers Workshop July 12 thru 15, 1968*, St. Mary’s University, 1968 (Lithographed), pp. 73-75 and also T. Phillips, *You Will Be my Witnesses: William Joseph Chaminade and Christian Witness*, Monograph Series 15 (Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission, 1974), pp. 55-57, 63. [Brother Larry Cada in a note says that in doing some research on the triple offices of Christ as priest, prophet and king, he was unable to find any reference in John Chrysostom’s works in which John Chrysostom mentions all three offices in one place. They are not found together in one place in the bible or in the fathers of the church or in the medieval masters. John Calvin, however, does place them together, perhaps copying another leader of the Reformation. Fr. Dave Fleming wonders if perhaps it is Melancthon who mentions them together. Vatican Council II does mention the three offices of Christ of priest, prophet, and king.]

¹¹ William Joseph Chaminade, *Letters of Father Chaminade*, Thomas Poitras, SM, Trans., Monograph Series, Document 8, 9 volumes, Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission/NACMS, 1976-2004, volume 1, no. 110, 18 January 1819.

The Order of Virgins, most Holy father, which has taken the name of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary, was founded in 1816 in the city of Agen, under the protection of the venerable Bishop of that diocese who is kind enough today to beg Your Holiness to grant it canonical recognition. With the means at its command, it works towards the same ends as the Society of Mary. Consequently, it occupies itself with the work of teaching, with works proper to women, with Sodalties, and with works of charity”.¹²

As I have tried to show, I do not think these ideas are so far away from Father Chaminade’s that we could not put our conversation about mixed composition in the context of mission as expressed through the constant activity of the three offices. I could note that the usual objection to all of these reflections is the very objection that M. Auguste and Father Collineau (and even Father Caillet) made at the very beginnings of the Society of Mary; one did not have an encyclopedic vocation, another said the Society had no focus. I could also note that when the District of Eastern Africa was putting together its program of ministry development about 15 years ago there was a conscious effort to conceptualize the effort as developing one ministry in each of the three offices. Thus, there was development of Marianist Lay Communities in the Office of Religious Life; various primary and secondary schools in the Office of Education; and development programs such as IMANI in the Office of Temporalities. As an interesting sidelight, reporting to the Chapter about the schools was always done by the Office of Education; IMANI and eventually the other development programs, by the Office of Temporalities. The other attempt was an attempt to develop various interrelationships among the activities (and with outside groups as well) to enhance the effectiveness of one another. I believe there is something distinctively Marianist about the development of such a web or network.

It is perhaps important to comment on the tradition that surrounds the Working Brothers, at least briefly. The great success with the working brothers as a group in the SM was the establishment of a community at St. Remy in the 1830’s. It was essentially a community engaged in agriculture. John Totten, SM, sees in the development of this community a means by which Father Chaminade was strengthening this group of persons in the Society. It was successful, and as Father Lorenzo often points out, it is the winners who write the histories. It also seems to me to be an example of what Tom Giardino, SM, once described as a solution that later becomes a problem.

¹² William Joseph Chaminade, *Letters of Father Chaminade*, Thomas Poitras, SM, Trans., Monograph Series, Document 8, 9 volumes, Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission/NACMS, 1976-2004, volume 4, no. 1076, to Pope Gregory XVI, 16 September 1838. The text is also reproduced as Document 5 in Quentin Hakenewerth, SM, ed. *Marianist Origins: An Anthology of Basic Documents for Formation in Marianist Identity* (Rome: General Administration SM, 1990); [Español] *El Espíritu que nos dio el ser: Antología fundamental marianista*, Espiritualidad marianista, 1 (Madrid: SM, 1990); [Français] *Aux sources Marianistes: Une Anthologie des textes de base pour la formation à l’esprit Marianiste*, (Rome: Administration Générale SM, 1991); [Italiano] *Lo spirito delle origini: Antologia di testi fondamentali per la formazione all’identità marianista* (Edizioni SM Italia, 1995).

It helped to enshrine in Marianist tradition a view of working brothers as those who are like the Trappists, what today we might call a house of prayer. They witnessed to the religious values of humility, simplicity, and fraternal love and to a life of poverty and prayer.¹³ Presumably this is because the brothers working in the agricultural program, a kind of model farm, could be and were more recollected and withdrawn from the “cares of the world.”¹⁴ It seems this was possible in mid-19th century France. But it is not possible today if anyone is going to enter into the world of work, with the development of machinery and technology, which is quite sophisticated and requires a person’s full attention. Even more so are attention and concentration needed in the area of social and economic development – those dealing with social issues desperately need but do not easily find recollection, prayer, and a way of re-centering themselves. Besides, our attitude today towards menial jobs is not a positive one; we tend to look on them as a kind of slavery.

People’s aspirations have changed. The areas, which are the special concern of the office of temporalities, require much more education and technical skill and expertise. The image of the working brother as a domestic or silent recollected farmer becomes a hindrance to exploiting these vast areas. This is another reason I think that a focus on the tasks involved in the mission is more helpful than categorizing people.

What I have been talking about are aspects of our Marianist life, which in their inter-relating make up the context and texture of our life. I hope that these comments help us to think and talk about our mixed composition, the role each of us plays in the community, and the attitudes we need to develop in our Marianist life.

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¹³ Hugh Bihl develops this idea briefly in part 2 of *Monasticism and Marianist Religious Life*, (Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission) Monograph Series, Document 10, March, 1973, p. 49-53. He also makes some comments about the witness of the priest members of the Society as well as about the spiritual advantages of an organization along the three lines of capability embodied in the offices/categories.

¹⁴ This idea can be seen in a publication in English, *Documents on the Working Brothers*, which is a collection of articles or extracts of other works, published as part of the “Apostle of Mary Documentary Series” in the United States in the 1940’s and 1950’s. Probably the best study of the “Working Brothers” is the study made by Eddie Alexandre, SM, *Les Frères Ouvriers dans la Société de Marie au temps du Père Chaminade*, (Rêves, Pro Manuscrito, 1984).