

CHARACTERISTICS OF MARIANIST UNIVERSITIES

Marianist Universities Educate for Formation in Faith

(17.) As higher educational institutions, Marianist universities have kept, along with education in the disciplines, a commitment to the development of the whole person, which includes the dimension of religious faith and its personal appropriation and practice.

AGAINST THE SECULAR TREND

(18.) In this century, many institutions of higher education have become primarily job-oriented in nature; not as many of them continue to show a real interest in the liberal arts. Despite this trend, most colleges and universities in the United States explicitly supported, until the 1960s, a twofold educational purpose: the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of character. Catholic universities, however, display an expansive vision of education in their commitment to formation of character as critical to preparing for and living out one's vocation. Curriculum reflects this commitment with its consistent emphasis on the liberal arts, including the disciplines of philosophy and theology. Critical engagement in the liberal arts increases graduates' capacity to respond with understanding and practical wisdom to the challenging questions of contemporary living and to the ongoing invitation to deepen one's religious faith, both in understanding and practice. The stories, histories, indeed the wisdom of the past embodied in the great works of literature, including especially the Scriptures as they have been interpreted and enacted over the centuries, find an important place throughout university life. Thus, Catholic universities send distinctive graduates into civic society prepared to enact their vocations as their response to a call to use their gifts and talents ethically and in service to family and neighbors whether in the work place, the local community, the nation, or the world.

BOTH FAITH AND REASON

(19.) Catholic universities affirm an intricate, mutually enriching relationship between faith and reason, evident in retaining studies in philosophy and theology along

with science as integral to liberal education. Christians over the centuries have engaged with and found value in the intellectual currents of their day to deepen their understanding not only of the created order but also of the Creator. Faithful men and women from every age serve as inspiration and example for contemporary engagement in and development of Catholic intellectual tradition that touches on every field of knowledge. Faith expands horizons in the quest for truth that grounds justice and challenges reason to test its limits in pursuit of the common good. Reason informs faith with an intellectual rigor that summons humility and respect for all perspectives that contribute to our understanding of and commitment to the common good. Indeed, many graduates embody in their daily lives the creativity unleashed when faith and reason are joined in service to the common good.

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN FAITH AND CULTURE

(20.) Catholic universities have a particular obligation to foster dialogue between faith and culture and to embrace the task in its complexity, given the multiplicity of faith perspectives and cultures that comprise our world. Dialogue serves the Marianist mission of educating the whole person when it enables participants to integrate the heart and the intellect as they express an informed understanding of their own faith and culture and engage in active listening to persons of other faiths and cultures, as well as those with no religious faith. To become an actual community of learners requires a dialogue marked by humility and trust among all participants who strive to move beyond simple tolerance toward respectful collaboration in our common educational mission. To the extent that this dialogue is accomplished, Marianist universities will be among those few places in the modern world where both an intellectual and a faith community remain in conversation.

FAITH IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS

(21.) Formation in faith remains incomplete without

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understanding its social dimension. The Marianist founders exhibited a lively faith that attracted others to join them in small communities formed through prayer, study, and service within their own troubled society. Marianist universities continue this work drawing on the wisdom not only of the founders but also the social teachings of the entire Church. These teachings articulate a vision in the light of faith and offer guidance for the transformation of culture in service to the

common good and make abundantly clear that faith is more than personal belief. A strong sense of community, a commonly noticed quality of a Marianist university, helps all its members grasp more quickly the importance of solidarity in the faith-inspired work of cultural transformation.