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MARIANIST FAMILY COUNCIL APPROVES LAY TRAINING PROGRAM, ANNUAL DAY OF PRAYER

At a meeting this month in San Antonio, the Marianist Family Council of North America agreed to form a training and mentoring program for lay leaders to develop Marianist Lay Communities. The Council also reviewed the activities of the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative (MSJC) and called for an annual day of common prayer.

The Family Council of North America consists of six members, two from each of the leadership teams of the U.S. Provinces of the Society of Mary and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, and the Marianist Lay Network of North America (MLNNA). Current members of the team are Bro. Stephen Glodek, SM; Fr. Jim Fitz, SM; Sr. Evangeline Escobar, FMI; Sr. LaVon Kampf, FMI; and Marge Cavanaugh and Jean Canning, MLNNA.

Institute for Community and Culture

The Council continued to consider how to enhance the extent and depth of Marianist Lay Communities (MLC). A proposal developed by a Council-sponsored concept team that met in September 2003 was considered in depth. The Council decided to pursue the recommendation of a lay formation initiative that would offer a one-year program of in-depth training and mentoring to 12 invited lay participants from across the continent. The program was approved for a two-year (two classes) experimental period. The project is called the "Institute for Community and Culture (ICC)" and its goal is to create lay leaders who will be self-motivated and committed to developing MLCs in the fullest sense. The Family

Council will hire a project consultant and identify an advisory board for the Institute in the next few months.

MSJC Activities

For the first time since assuming organizational responsibility for the MSJC, the Council reviewed the activities of the Collaborative over the past year. The Council noted the efforts of the various issue teams and the hiring of a part-time director. The head of the MSJC steering committee will submit a report by Oct. 31 each year. Steve Glodek, SM, will serve as the liaison between MSJC and the Family Council.

Annual Day of Prayer

The Council decided to call the Marianist Family in North America to an annual day of common prayer. All Marianists will be invited to pray during the month of January, and particularly on Jan. 1, the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, in honor of the three founders of the Marianist Family. A suggested prayer for 2004 will be distributed later in December.

Other Items

The Family Council urges all Marianists in North America to collaborate in prayer, formation, and apostolic projects. In areas with a number of communities of lay and religious, collaborations could be encouraged by formation of local Family Councils. We urge the formation of these councils, where appropriate, and invite any councils that exist or are in formation to communicate with the Family Council of North America.

The Family Council submitted an annual report to the World Council of the Marianist Family and expressed the desire for more communication between the World Council and the North American Council.

The Family Council updated its mission statement and charter. A copy of the revised charter is included with this press release.

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