

other authors present at the meeting and the written critiques of the commentators.

I am especially indebted to Father Benloch and Father Koehler for their excellent reviews of my paper. This final version of my paper has been revised according to their critiques and those of the other authors. I have indicated the main places where I have changed my text or where the commentators or authors have interpretations which differ from mine. One short passage of Father Benloch's commentary has been added as an appendix to this paper.

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Opening Considerations About Terminology

The Word Marianist

In this paper, the word *Marianist* – both the adjective and the noun – will refer to everyone in the Marianist Family, not just to members of the Society of Mary or to Marianist religious. Thus, the Marianist spirituality whose history will be traced is the spirituality of both lay Marianists and religious Marianists.

This usage, which has become more common in recent years, is simply the latest phase of an evolution that has been going on steadily since about the middle of the 20th century. Before then, the term *Marianist* was almost never used, neither for religious Marianists nor lay Marianists. Father Chaminade did not use the term. The Constitutions of the Society of Mary and Daughters of Mary composed during the 19th century do not use the term. Neither did Father Simler in his biography of the Founder.

During the first half of the present century, use of the term was still rare. Classics such as *The Spirit of Our Foundation* or Father Neubert's *My Ideal* managed to characterize Marianist spirituality quite adequately without ever using the word *Marianist*.¹ However, when the Cause of Father Chaminade was introduced

¹ In fact, the compilers of *The Spirit of Our Foundation* do use the word in one place when they point out a few of its rare occurrences in the 19th century. Once, in 1837, Father Chaminade was addressed as the Superior General of the Marianists. In 1858, Father Lalanne remarked that members of the Society of Mary could be called Marianists to distinguish them from the Marists. In 1877, an indult that granted a special proper to the Society of Mary used the term. See *Spirit 4*, chapter 2, "The Updating of Monastic Observances", § 14, p. 78.

in 1918, the title of the *positio* included the words *Fundatoris Societatis Mariae, vulgo Marianistarum*. Somewhere in the years between 1915 and 1920, the monumental Spanish encyclopedia *Es-pasa* published the volume in which the Society of Mary and Daughters of Mary were treated and the term *Marianist* was used to refer to members of both congregations.² In 1930, Father Gadiou used the term in the subtitle of his short history of the Society and in the middle section of the book, which treats Marianist spirituality.³ However, these uses of the term were still quite infrequent. This situation started to change around the time of World War II. Magazines and periodicals published in the Society began to change their names to *The Marianist* or *The Marianists*. After the Daughters of Mary restored the vow of stability to their profession of vows in 1947, they gradually began to call themselves Marianist Sisters. When Father Neubert published his biography of Father Schellhorn in 1948, he identified him as a Marianist.⁴ The adjective *Marianist* began to be applied to an ever expanding range of Marianist realities: Marianist schools, Marianist education, the Marianist apostolate, Marianist prayer, Marianist Leagues, Marianist documents, and Marianist Studies.⁵ By the time the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary undertook the revision of their Constitutions at the time of the Second

² I am indebted to Father Benlloch for pointing out this early use of the term *Marianist*.

³ [Louis GADIOU, SM], *La Société de Marie (Marianistes)*, (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1930), part 2, pp. 87-123

⁴ Émile NEUBERT, SM, *Le Père Joseph Schellhorn, Marianiste: Un prêtre de Marie, 1865-1935* (Paris: Centre de Documentation scolaire, 1948).

⁵ The causes for the emergence and spread of the term *Marianist* are complex and have not yet been fully analyzed by Marianist historians. At times the expansion met with resistance. The new term struck members of the Society in some parts of the United States as an unwelcome neologism being foisted on them by a faction of misguided enthusiasts. In their efforts to advance a dubious agenda, they risked heedlessly supplanting the venerable and revered title *Brother of Mary*.

Vatican Council, use of the term was widespread. The 1967 Constitutions of the Society of Mary used the term frequently. It was used freely in the new texts to characterize Marianist identity, the Marianist charism, and Marianist religious life. At the same time the term was used to identify the Family of Mary or comprehensive Marianist Family made up of all persons and groups in all states of life "who recognize their common bond in the Marianist spirit."⁶ Most recently, members of Marianist lay communities have claimed the noun *Marianist* as their own proper name and have begun to call themselves Marianists.⁷

Marianist Spirituality Is a Lay Spirituality

It is often instructive to pay attention to the way changes in terminology signal important shifts in Marianist self-understanding. The short excursus on the term *Marianist* which has just been sketched is a case in point.⁸ The ease with which we now call everyone in the Marianist Family a Marianist is one indicator of the belief and conviction that what we all share as Marianists is of the deepest importance – important enough to have its meaning carried by a single name which conveys the profound value we find in our common Marianist identity.

In this light, our identity as Marianists appears to be even more important than our identity as either lay people or reli-

⁶ *SM Rule*, art. 1.1

⁷ See, for example, the recent report in Spanish, French, and English of the Second International Convocation of Marianist Lay Communities. *II Encuentro Internacional de Comunidades Laicas Marianistas*, 3-10 Agosto 1997, Liria, Valencia, España.

⁸ Some other terms that come to mind are *family spirit*, *filial piety*, *Working Brother*, *education*, *community*, and *Family of Mary*. At times, shifts in usage of terms such as these mark important shifts in Marianist self-understanding. The rise and fall of the term *filial piety* will be examined later in this paper. See pp. 75-83 below.

gious. In actuality, this belief and conviction is not new. Only the terminology is new. Members of Marianist lay communities have begun to call themselves Marianists only recently, but there has always been at least an implicit awareness that deep Marianist identity is not the exclusive possession of members of the Society.

Father Simler chose to publish his famous circular on the characteristic virtues of the Society of Mary on what he called "the Occasion of the First Centenary of Its Origin." The date of the circular was 1894, not 1917. In the opening section of the circular, he pointed out that "the year 1889 inaugurated a series of centenaries" which mark the main events of the French Revolution and its aftermath at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th. It is precisely in this period, according to Father Simler, that the Society of Mary "finds several dates indicating the successive phases of its origin. It was, in fact, during the French Revolution that Father Chaminade, obedient to a vocation which originated in a previous epoch, began his apostolic life and the works of zeal of which the Society of Mary was to be the soul, the center, and the crown."⁹ Simler's viewpoint parallels the one that will be adopted in this paper.¹⁰ The Marianist spirituality whose history is being traced had its origins some 25 to 30 years before the Society was founded in 1817.

⁹ Joseph SIMLER, SM, "Instruction on the Characteristic Features of the Society of Mary on the Occasion of the First Centenary of Its Origin", *Circular No. 62*, July 10, 1894 (ET. Dayton: St. Mary's Convent, 1895), p. 5.

¹⁰ Today, we would take exception to Father Simler's characterizing the Society as the "soul, center, and crown" of the Marianist Family. As Brother García de Vinuesa has pointed out, we have moved beyond such a conception of the Family of Mary. "In fact, not too long ago - in the 1960s and 1970s - the Family of Mary was often represented graphically by concentric circles. In the center, *naturally*, were found the religious of the Society of Mary. Curiously, in such a concept, the Marianist Sisters were not even included. Today, such a falsely hierarchized structure, priest-centered and with little sense of sharing, has been replaced by one that is more integral and democratic, fraternal and equidistant: where all are co-responsible for the whole." Francisco José García de Vinuesa, SM, "The Family of Mary," in *Commentary on SM Rule*, p. 446

This viewpoint presumes that Marianist spirituality is fundamentally a lay spirituality.¹¹ It grounds the spiritual life of both lay Marianists and religious Marianists. Its central features are founded on the new life engendered in all Christians by Baptism. A Marianist does not need to profess religious vows to live Marianist life fully. The spirituality of the first members of the Bordeaux Sodality, who began gathering in 1800 and made their first acts of consecration in 1801, was Marianist spirituality. These first Marianists were lay people. Many of them had begun their association with Father Chaminade several years earlier, during the Revolution. Germs of the spirituality he shared with them can be

¹¹ The two reviewers of my paper and several of the other authors in the Marianist spirituality project disagree with my characterization of Marianist spirituality as a "lay" spirituality. They all agree with the idea I am trying to express (that it is the same Marianist spirituality that is lived by both lay Marianists and religious Marianists), but for various reasons they disagree with the language. Father Koehler holds that what we call Marianist spirituality began with lay people and was transformed by Chaminade under providential circumstances into a new spirituality for religious. Here we have an intuition of the Founder that guided him from Mussidan on. It was not just religious life that was essential for the existence of the Church, but a religious life with a new spirit. Chaminade understood that restoring the former great religious orders was not enough. The Holy spirit was evoking a new Spirit in religious life. The new Spirit involved evidently new structures.

Father Benloch finds the terminology historically inaccurate and anachronistic. The word *lay* was used in Chaminade's time to distinguish the laity from the clergy but not to distinguish lay people from people in religious life. Father Benloch would prefer to say that Marianist spirituality is a fundamentally Christian spirituality, which can be expressed and lived by means of Baptism and Confirmation alone or by means of religious vows as well.

Brother Bihl believes that calling Marianist spirituality a lay spirituality makes it sound as though priests are not important or religious are not important. Father Arnaiz believes that calling Marianist spirituality a lay spirituality leaves one wondering how Marianist religious go about living this "lay" spirituality. Father García Murga doubts that Marianist spirituality is a "lay" spirituality. He thinks the structure of religious life implies a greater involvement in worship and was considered by Chaminade through the vow of stability to be the culmination of our Marianist covenant with Mary.

traced back to his final years in Mussidan. The profession of religious vows does not make any fundamental change in the Marianist spirituality of religious Marianists.

Marianist Spirituality Is Adaptive

The possibility that some Marianists could become religious soon surfaced, of course; but many years passed before this possibility became actual. When it did, the members of the State of religious life in the world and the first members of the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary did not stop being sodalists.¹² These first religious Marianists continued to live the same Marianist spirituality they shared with the lay Marianists who made up the larger part of the membership of the Marianist Family in those early days.

This numerical preponderance of lay Marianists did not last. After the Revolution of 1830, membership in adult sodalities dwindled and the ranks of lay Marianists were reduced to a tiny remnant. On the other hand, religious Marianists were devoting themselves in steadily increasing numbers to Christian education and the burgeoning ministry of teaching. They adapted to the ever changing conditions according to which the French government permitted religious congregations to operate as legal educational associations authorized to conduct schools. Increasing emphasis was placed on the religious identity of Marianist religious, that is, their membership in a government-authorized teaching association. Most new members of the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary became Marianists because they

¹² It is noteworthy that the membership rolls of the Bordeaux Sodality continue to register payment of dues for all the early members of "the little Society" until the year 1826. The Head of Temporalities paid the dues in a lump sum for all the members of the Society of Mary. Priests and Teaching Brothers paid twice the amount paid by Working Brothers.

wanted to join a religious congregation devoted to teaching. Almost none of them had ever been adult lay Marianists, and very few of them had experienced Marianist spirituality outside the context of religious life or a school conducted by Marianist religious. However, Marianist spirituality showed itself broad, supple, and deep enough to suit this new cohort of Marianists and inspire them in their life and work which was so different from that of the Bordeaux sodalists.

Father Chaminade died in 1850. During the next 100 years Marianist spirituality flourished and spread across the world. It was carried mainly by the successes of the Society of Mary which proved to be one of the accomplished teaching congregations to emerge from 19th century France.¹³ Marianist spirituality continued to adapt. It was rich and fecund enough to ground the life and work of several thousand Marianist religious teachers and to influence the faith of an even greater number of students of these Marianist educators. By the time the word *Marianist* emerged in the mid-20th century, Marianist spirituality had taken root and was thriving on five continents. It had adapted to the varying conditions found in geographically and culturally diverse locales around the world.

Today, we are able to look back on the spread of Marianist spirituality in time and place from its humble beginnings in Bor-

¹³ Brother Bihl commented on the fact that in several places in my paper I say that we in the Society of Mary moved into education, that we were a success in becoming a teaching congregation, and that this success was good. Brother Bihl, on the other hand, suggests that this success was *not* good. Worldly success is not always good from the viewpoint of faith. With our worldly success we became inflated with ourselves and lost the need for faith because we were successful. Perhaps there is a relation of cause and effect, for example, between our increasing success in schools and our gradual discontinuation of using the System of Virtues. Sometimes, worldly success is an obstacle to our faith. Why did we lose Marianist lay communities for so long? If they are essential to our identity, it means we were out of touch with our identity for more than 100 years. Why did we lose our identity for 100 years?

deaux. We can see how it adapted from being a vibrant spirituality for lay people to being a spirituality for religious as well. We can see how it adapted to the apostolic work of education. We can see how it adapted to meet the diverse needs of locales throughout the world. And most recently, we can see how it resumed inspiring the life and work of a growing number of lay Marianists, who once again outnumber religious Marianists.

The Word Spirituality

Another term which has emerged and gone through an evolution during the course of the 20th century is *spirituality*. The word refers to the understanding and practice of the spiritual life as it is experienced by a person or group. In current usage, the term extends beyond the strictly Christian context.¹⁴ One can, for example, speak of Hindu spirituality, New Age spirituality, or even the spirituality of the occult. However, in this paper, the term will refer to Christian spirituality.

It is possible, moreover, to distinguish two allied meanings of the word. It can refer to the life and practice of all Christians, as in the title of Pierre Pourrat's *La Spiritualité chrétienne* or Louis Bouyer's *A History of Christian Spirituality*. On the other hand, the term more commonly implies a centering of the spiritual life

¹⁴ Strictly speaking, the term *spirituality* did not emerge in this century; it re-emerged. The term was used for a short time in 17th century France with a meaning which resembles the one in use today. The word was used interchangeably with *devotion* and *piety* to express the personal, affective relationship with God experienced by the original adherents, the *dévots* and *dévotes*, of the profusion of spiritualities that flourished among French aristocrats in the first half of the 17th century. After religious enthusiasm, quietism, and mysticism became the target of ridicule and suspicion in the early 18th century, the word *spirituality* fell out of use and disappeared. It lay dormant for about 200 years. See Philip SHELDRAKE, SJ, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), pp. 34-36.

found in a particular time, place, group, spiritual tradition, or Christian mystery. With this narrower meaning of the word, one can, for example, speak of the baroque spirituality of the Counter-Reformation, the spirituality of the Rhineland mystics, Franciscan spirituality, liturgical or sacramental spirituality, Incarnation-centered spirituality, anthropocentric spirituality, or a host of other spiritualities. In this second sense of the word, a spirituality encompasses and focuses on special aspects of the Gospel which are given emphasis through devotions and practices, kinds of prayer, the approach to one's relationship with Christ, theological and doctrinal understandings, attitudes taken towards people, the human community, and the world — all of which when taken together distinguish this particular way of living and experiencing the Christian life from others. A spirituality is one embodiment of what Christian scriptures call life in the Spirit or the Christ life. It stands to the fullness of Christian life as the personality of an individual stands to the fullness of his or her human life. It is the collective Christian personality of a group of Christians who journey together along a specific Christian way.¹⁵

When the effective breadth and versatile usefulness of the word *spirituality* is examined today, it is somewhat surprising that its recent history is so brief. Before World War I, the word in its present sense was almost unknown. Father Chaminade and our Marianist forebears never used the word as they passed on to us the precious heritage of Marianist spirituality.

It was only in the years during which Henri Bremond was

¹⁵ Father Arnaiz makes creative use of the metaphor of a *camino* or way to represent and bring into relief the characteristics of Marianist spirituality. See [José María ARNAIZ, SM,] "Camino marianista de vida cristiana," *Marianist International Review* no. 13.2 (July 1992). Also in Lawrence CADA, SM, editor, *The Promised Woman: Proceedings of the International Symposium on Marianist Spirituality, May 5-13, 1992, Dayton, Ohio, USA*, Monograph Series No. 37 (Dayton: NACMS, March 1995), pp. 565-97. ET. "The Marianist Way of Living the Christian Life," in *ibid.* pp. 535-64.

turning out the successive volumes of his monumental *Histoire littéraire du Sentiment religieux en France* (1916-33) that the word experienced a comeback. Certain Catholic theologians and church historians in France began using the word in respected periodicals such as the *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, founded in 1920, and the prestigious *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, the first volume of which appeared in 1932. Books were written to explain spirituality and thus added to the expansion of the use of the term. Bremond himself uses the term when he marshals his arguments for regarding the followers of Cardinal Bérulle as constituting not just one of the schools of the spiritual life that arose in France, but as *the* French School. According to Bremond, these masters of the spiritual life were not simply a school of theology, but a true school of the interior life, of *haute spiritualité*, who took great care to exploit fully and exclusively the magnificent premises laid out by Cardinal Bérulle.¹⁶

The term was favored by writers seeking to blaze a new trail in the field of ascetical theology. The regnant doctrine, found in widely used manuals such as Adolph Tanquerey's *The Spiritual Life*, envisioned a fundamental division between the ordinary spiritual life of most Christians and the uncommon spiritual life of the few Christians favored with extraordinary gifts of mystical prayer. Ordinary spiritual life, in this conception, is made up of the way of the commandments and the way of the counsels. Christians in the way of the commandments advance in holiness by observing the commandments and receiving the sacraments. Some ordinary Christians enter the state of perfection, which in-

¹⁶ Henri BRÉMOND, *Histoire littéraire du Sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, 11 vols. (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1916-33), vol. 3, p. 4. "Nevertheless, all remained unswervingly faithful to the original tradition, content to work out the implications of the magnificent premises set forth by Cardinal de Bérulle. Truly a School, not of theology, but of the interior life and the highest spirituality." vol. 3, p.1 of the ET.

cludes religious, who practice the evangelical counsels, and bishops. In contrast to this spiritual life common to most Christians, the unusual spiritual life of those who receive rare extraordinary gifts of mystical prayer is seen as completely exceptional and reserved for very few.

Advocates of the new vision hoped to move beyond this theory of a bifurcated spiritual life by emphasizing the continuity of the Christian life in all its variety and phases. According to writers such as Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, God offers the graces of mystical prayer to everyone. The concept of mysticism should not be limited to exceptional and rare phenomena, but should be regarded as the goal of all Christians.¹⁷ For these writers, the more fluid and comprehensive term *spirituality* encompassed the wider scope, variety, and continuity of the spiritual life of all Christians.¹⁸

In the decades since the Second Vatican Council there has been a sea change in Catholic theology away from the non-historical syntheses of the past to a greater reflection on human experience as an authentic source of divine revelation. This transformation has moved the study of the spiritual life away from

¹⁷ SHELDRAKE, *Spirituality and Holiness*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁸ As use of the term expanded, it began to be used as a synonym for *spiritual school* or *spiritual tradition* to designate the most well-known spiritualities. This second sense of the word did not advance as rapidly, because Catholic theology was still dominated by the neo-scholastic approach with its love for unchanging universals and over-arching unities. There was little room for a theological account of the wide variations of the experience of holiness among Christians of various times and climes. Even Bouyer, who advances far beyond the ascetical theology of the manuals, is reluctant to speak of the differences of spiritualities despite the convincing and insightful descriptions he gives of those differences. He carefully contrasts the particular historical circumstances and unique personalities of major figures which lead to the rich diversity of spiritual traditions, but he stresses the essential oneness of Christian spirituality and cautions that "we must be very reserved about speaking of spiritualities in the plural." Quoted by Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, p. 90. See also *ibid.*, p. 47.

the static approach of ascetical theology or spiritual theology to an experience-based and historically-conscious study of Christian spirituality. There is great emphasis on "the historical concreteness of revelation in Jesus and subsequent Christian tradition" as well as "the personal assimilation of salvation in Christ by each person within changing historical, cultural, and social circumstances that demand new approaches to Christian conduct. As a result of these shifts in perspective, the realization has emerged that specific spiritual traditions are initially embodied in people rather than doctrine and grow out of life rather than from abstract ideas."¹⁹

This paper will take advantage of the cogency and expressive power of both the words *Marianist* and *spirituality* as they are used today. There is an obvious anachronism in transposing these terms to the times of Father Chaminade and the early Marianists. Furthermore, this choice of terminology will, of course, introduce bias into the account. These opening considerations are meant to unpack some of the tacit presuppositions embedded in this biased terminology. Using the terms seems, with these caveats in mind, worth the risk. We know that all history is biased history; and, what is more important, we are convinced that the Marianist spirituality of which we speak is, just as it has been for the generations of Marianists who came before us, our gift from God.

The Word We

I end these opening considerations with a few words of explanation on how I am using the word *we*. Ordinarily, in formal writing, I do not use the word. It seems oddly discordant in the impersonal tone of scholarly studies studded with footnotes. At

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33

times it can sound pretentious, suggesting the papal *we* or the plural of majesty. At other times the word seems patronizing or presumptuous. I, the writer, presume that you, the reader, agree with me and give me leave to speak for both of us. Even when none of these objections apply, use of the word *we* is ambiguous. Who exactly are these unnamed "we" to whom I am constantly referring?

In this paper, the word *we* refers to present-day Marianists. I assume the stance of one Marianist speaking to other Marianists. I presume that we share the same concern about the future of the Marianist Family, and I have taken the liberty of using the term *we* because I believe we also share a common interest in exploring together the story of our Marianist spirituality. It is not simply a departure from standard writing style. I offer my telling of the story of Marianist spirituality and invite you to listen and, if any of you chooses, to respond with additions and corrections or with your own telling of the story.

As I say in the title, this version of the story is "a short history." It is intended as a rapid survey of the state of the question as it now stands. In our various ways, most of us agree that the Marianist world is passing through a time of change. Old patterns and paradigms are being replaced by new dreams and new visions. But there is still much uncertainty. We need to discern more fully the directions in which Providence is prompting us with the signs of our changing times and with the intuitions that come from being penetrated with Marianist spirituality. One aid in this discernment is a grasp of the history of Marianist spirituality from the vantage point of the present. How do we Marianists of the late 20th century see our Marianist past? How do we understand the origins and evolution of Marianist spirituality up to the present? What light does this understanding throw on the ways Marianist spirituality will be embodied in our future? How do we perceive our own role as the present generation of

the Marianist Family responsible for handing on the torch of our charism to those who will come after us?

This paper, then, is not just a scholarly study. I will, of course, point out what appears to me to be the best scholarship to date, but I will also be searching the past of Marianist spirituality for clues to its future. Where are we going? Where is God calling us? Where is Mary leading us? These are questions we all care about. This common care and concern is here conveyed by the expressive power of the word *we*.

The Modern Era: Matrix of Marianist Spirituality

Marianist Spirituality Is a Modern Spirituality

When we look back at our foundation amid the dramatic events of the French Revolution, we add the perspective of two extra centuries to the outlook of Father Chaminade and the first Marianists. We can situate the Revolution at or near the midpoint of the Modern Era, the climax of a vast historical process that had begun some two to three centuries earlier and which finally seems to be drawing to a close in our own day.¹ Historians assure

¹ For the last 50 years or so, various experts have been suggesting that the Modern Era is now in the process of ending or has already ended. While the Modern Era may, in fact, be winding down, none of these suggestions has persuaded me that the Era is already over. To give just one example, *postmodernism* is the name that is usually given to the theories and thought of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and certain other intellectuals. This label has always struck me as odd, because these thinkers are or were still fully engaged in the philosophical and epistemological questions that have dominated the second half of the Modern Era. What do human beings know, and how can they be certain that what they know is true? Is metaphysics possible? Is any knowledge objective or certain? Or is all truth hopelessly relative, not much more than some kind of rhetorical trick or disguised power play? These thinkers have taken Modern relativism farther than it has ever gone and in brilliant new ways. They are surely post-Nietzschean, post-Existentialist, and perhaps post-Structuralist, but are they really *post-Modern*? They seem still to be very much *in* the Modern Era rather than *after* it.

I believe the question of whether or not we are still in the Modern Era is an important one for Marianists. In this paper I argue that Marianist spirituality is a Modern spirituality that arose within and as a response to the historical and cultural circumstances of the Modern Era. The evolution of Marianist spirituality