

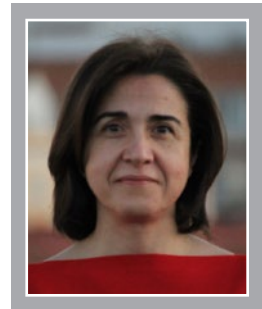
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## Sharing mission

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“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. There are varieties of activities, but the same God who does the work in all of us”  
(1Corinthians 12, 4-5)

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I am Montse Giménez, I work at the Cardenal Cisneros University Centre in Alcalá de Henares (Marist Iberian Province, Spain). I started teaching in 2000. I have overseen the Sub-Directorate of Educational Research and Research (2006-2014) and, up until this academic year, I have led the Direction of the Centre (2014-2023).

At this moment of closure, sharing my experience is a personal exercise of reflection that will surely help me more than the readers of these lines. In any case, I will try to present some of the ideas that have come to my mind.

### **Always with others**

No mission can be understood in isolation. In fact, I have learned to distrust those who raise flags of individualism and extreme ego. We can do nothing alone. Working as a team, listening, delegating, trusting..., the more people participate in the processes, in decision-making, in the implementation of new projects, the better. It does not guarantee success (although it is most likely), but whatever we achieve, we will have done it together.

### **Multiple paths**

In line with the above, I am convinced that different points of view contribute to the development of institutions and, by extension, to the development of societies. From the general principle of respect for human rights, no one opinion is more valuable than another. I have enjoyed the diversity of approaches; listening to others and their reasoning allows us to build stronger projects. When there is a determination to dialogue, to understand, to search for common ground, a shared process is generated and what results from it is experienced as a collective achievement.

### **Knowledge**

Decision-making and the configuration of the lines and objectives that will mark our actions must be based on knowledge. The Marist tradition has made us enormously strong. Our experience in the field of education can and must be enriched by knowledge of other areas and their advances. Certainly, strategic vision, emerging needs, future challenges... must be present in our decision-making and in many cases, in order to achieve this, we cannot rely solely on good will or our previous experience. We must be willing to learn and know more and time and time again.

### **Common good**

The cultivation of the identity values of family, closeness and presence are fundamental in our organization. We like to be recognized as a center where we are called by name. And it is important that we continue to do so, but we must be careful not to confuse familiarity with excessive protectionism. Our organizations need to nurture the growth of individuals, while challenging them to go beyond themselves. For this reason, the advancement of a culture of the common good is essential, compatible with individual respect and the closeness that leads us to empathize and respond to the needs of others.

Our gaze must be able to focus simultaneously on the past (in order to take root), on the ephemeral present and on the future; and it is in the latter that our commitment to the common good must embody (and we can and must do so, joining forces with other institutions and charisms).

Our strategic lines are dominated by our commitment to social justice, energy sustainability, care for our common home, respect for human dignity, the fight against poverty and the censure of human rights violations. If all this is so, if we really believe it, we must be sure that they are considered when we take any decision.

### **Commitment**

We invite, especially new educators, not only to be respectful of our ideology, but also to be happy with what we are and what we do. Ideally, we should not offer jobs, but we should be able to offer development options so that paid work is also a reason for them to commit to the shared vision and connect them to their own mission.

Engagement is an individual choice; we cannot force it. It is true that organizations can provide contexts for development, invite people to share their mission, favor spaces for meeting and getting to know each other... But we can only rely on commitment based on freedom. We need





committed people, understanding that there can be different impulses and that this diversity makes us more open and welcoming institutions.

### **Honesty and mutual trust**

I have learned a lot (and continue to learn) from people. And beyond the skills that each of us has brought to the table, what I have valued most has been mutual trust. Without it, it is impossible for me to work. And I believe that it is generated with honesty, recognizing what we know and what we do not know how to do, assuming the risks of decisions together, convinced that we share a vision and that we are working for the common good over and above our personal preferences or interests. This trust is reflected when priority is given to the other, when the objectives of the institution that we forge and share are what really guide what we do. This “I trust”, as well as providing enormous peace of mind, seems to me to be fundamental for building together and moving forward. As you can see, we are back to the beginning: always with others, and if we trust each other, so much the better.

### **Two questions for our reflection:**

Together we share the leadership of our mission. So the questions I pose are a suggestion for any of us:

- Do you feel really committed to the mission of your center and in what can it resonate?
- Can you connect your role/responsibility to the common good (that which is above your own interests or those of the institution, that which connects us to the world and its needs), in what?



The opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Marist Institute.

If you would like to share your ideas, reflections, or experiences about servant and prophetic leadership with the Commission as a result of these reflections, write to [fms.cimm@fms.it](mailto:fms.cimm@fms.it)

