
How a marist leader develops the mission?

“For the Marist leader to develop the mission they need to be constant in clearly articulating the mission and vision and unfailing in bearing witness to them”.
(Marist Voices, chapter 21 - Br. Chano Guzmán Moriana)

Frank Malloy
National Director of Marist Schools
Province of Star of the Sea, Australia



For the past 7 years, Dr. Frank has served as the Chief Executive Officer of the “Marist Association of St. Marcellin Champagnat”. For 25 years, he has held senior leadership positions as a Director of Schools for the Sydney Archdiocese. He is married to Tracey and has three children, Matthew, Rebecca, and Bridget, as well as two grandchildren, Isabelle and Evelyn.

At the invitation of the editors, it is a privilege to share some thoughts on How a Marist Leader develops the mission? In considering this question, important in answering “how” is acknowledgement that key characteristics of good leadership are abundant in many areas of human activity and endeavour.

Critical for all leaders is a clear understanding of the mission of their organization. Equally important is an abiding commitment to sharing a common vision. Leaders who use the terms Mission and Vision interchangeably or in a confused manner, inevitably struggle to lead. The words can become cliched and misused to the detriment of efficacy of mission.

Two key questions which assist the leader in constantly reflecting internally and with those whom they lead in the organization are:

- 1. Why do we exist?** The Mission statement must answer this question.
- 2. What is our shared dream?** The Vision statement must answer this question.



For Marist Schools Australia our Mission statement is intentionally brief in answering the first question.

We exist to support the Catholic Church's evangelizing mission to make Jesus known and loved and to ensure quality education in the Marist tradition through our schools.

Mission statement Marist Schools Australia

Our shared dream in fulfilling this mission is reflected in the answer to the second question.

Our vision is that our schools are faith filled communities of high quality, contemporary evangelisation in the way of Mary, with proven excellence in achievement for all young people.

Vision statement Marist Schools Australia

For the Marist leader to develop the mission they need to be constant in clearly articulating the mission and vision and unfailing in bearing witness to them. Libraries are filled with the books written on leadership, so in this short article the following points have been distilled from scholarly literature, lived experience, and careful observation through a Marist lens.

A Marist Leader develops mission with courage and audacity by:

1. Waking each morning with a prayer to Jesus, with the intercessions of Mary our

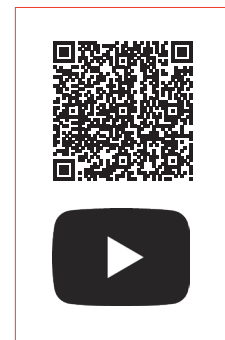
Good Mother and Saint Marcellin, to prosper in the day's work ahead the mission and vision of the Marist work, school, or ministry which they lead, committing anew to the three Marist virtues of Humility, Modesty, and Simplicity.

2. Reviewing the day each evening with purpose as in The Examen or Review of the Day1. In what ways was God present in my actions and decisions today? When did I fail to think, listen, or act in ways Jesus teaches us? Was I distracted or not faithful to the mission and vision? For those occasions ask for God's forgiveness and strength to face the new day.
3. Recognising the face of Christ in every person they encounter, whatever the circumstances.
4. Affirming with gratitude Mission aligned qualities and achievements among those you lead in overtly greater proportion to identification of shortcomings or failures.
5. Referring explicitly to the Mission and Vision as a reference point in collaboration, discernment, and decision making.
6. Utilising well developed discernment and decision making processes which include:
 - Seeking to empathise with the lived experience of the people involved or impacted.
 - Seeking to understand the reality through detailed analysis of information, listening, dialogue, and exploring causes and consequences.
 - Reflecting on the situation in light of the Gospel, Church teaching, and our Marist intuitions.



- Drawing on reason, human knowledge, and tradition in exploring appropriate options and making a decision.
 - Reflecting on the decision at a later time, considering the impact on people and if alternative approaches have emerged that invite a new discernment.
7. Operationalising the mission and vision in the collaborative development of strategies, goals, targets, and evidence measures of success in a 3 to 5 year cycle, specified and widely reported annually.
 8. Ensuring the dignity of work through annual professional and vocational goal setting and reflection processes with all staff members and participants in the organisation.
 9. Intelligently reading, reflecting, and communicating signs of the times and happenings in society with integrated close reference to the mission and vision of the organisation and its aspirations to influence in a variety of mediums.
 10. Preferring the mission, the vision, the work, and other people by avoiding the personal pronoun in verbal and written communication as much as possible, a servant witness to the mission.

Being a Marist Leader is a privilege and a challenge. The enormity of the responsibility and complexity of the role can only be undertaken with absolute trust in God, for as Saint Marcellin said, “It is really God’s work we are doing.”



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