

Empowering Youth Through Faith and Service

Matthew 25. "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (Mt. 25: 40)

These words of Christ offer us all a powerful directive to live by, as every one of our Marianist students and graduates knows. We teach this passage in the classroom, and we reinforce it with many and varied service projects throughout the year. Students from our schools organize food drives and clothing drives, toy drives and collections for several charitable organizations. They teach religion classes to local grade-school children in the Parish Religious Education Program. They help maintain bird sanctuaries and nature preserves. They visit nursing homes and food pantries– in all of these activities learning that "faith without works is dead." (James 2: 26)

St. Joseph's Mission has long been one of the Province's premier service opportunities. Spearheaded by the Province's own master carpenter, Fr. Garret Long, St. Joseph's Mission responded to the dire need for rebuilding and restoration along the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In February of 2006, twenty students and five Marianists traveled to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, to assist with carpentry, painting, and even food services at St. Stanislaus College Prep, a school that sustained heavy damage from the storm surge. Subsequent years saw continued work at St. Stan's, as well as home rebuilding in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward. When Superstorm Sandy hit the Greater Metropolitan area, students and Marianists involved with St. Joseph's Mission focused their efforts on local relief and rebuilding projects. Most recently, St. Joseph's Mission participants have helped with a number of construction projects for the Sisters of Life.

It's not uncommon for our graduates to pitch in on our various Marianist service projects. Nor is it uncommon for our graduates to remember their many forms of Christian service during their high-school years as key components in the formation of their faith.

At the Wedding Feast at Cana, Mary instructed the servers, "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2: 5) – a favorite New Testament quotation of Blessed Chaminade's. As Marianists, we hope to empower our students with a strong and vibrant faith, so that they are ready and eager to do whatever Christ tells them.