

**NCVR Board Meeting**  
**May 19-20, 2016**  
**Chicago Illinois**

**Present:** Sisters Maryann Seton Lopicolo, SC, Mary Dolora Keating, RSM, Louise Hembrecht, OSF, Mariette Moan, ASCJ, Mary McGarrity, IHM, Sr. Marilyn Kerber, SNDdeN, Marlene Weidenborner, OSF, and Nancy Mathias, OSU.

**Excused:** Eymard Flood, OSC

The meeting began at 3:00 p.m. with the installation of the officers: Sister Maryann Seton Lopicolo, SC as president, Sister Mary Dolora Keating, RSM as vice-president, Sister Louise Hembrecht, OSF as secretary, and Sister Mariette Moan, ASCJ as treasurer. The regional representatives were introduced: Mary McGarrity, IHM, from the East; Sr. Marilyn Kerber, SNDdeN, from the Midwest and Marlene Weidenborner, OSF from the South. Sister Eymard Flood, OSC, from the West.

Sister Nancy Mathias, OSU, past president was introduced to the new members. She gave a flash drive with NCVR data and information from Joyce Candidi, OSHJ, past secretary to Sister Louise Hembrecht, OSF, current secretary.

Several points of business were mentioned and briefly discussed:

- the necessity of sending out membership forms with a letter from Sister Maryann as soon as possible;  
(the completed forms / checks will be sent to Sister Louise with the checks then sent to Sister Mariette)
- the Scholarship application form. It was noted that not all scholarship funds are used. The regional chairs were going to make sure that vicars are aware of the funds;
- the need to check the website on a regular basis. There is a need to change the password -perhaps after the new membership forms have been received;
- the request that the pictures which Sister Joyce took of our visit to Rome be posted on our website.
- the Mission Statement was reviewed. Sister Maryann reminded us of the need for transparency. We have been appointed by our Bishop and are his representative in our dealings with the religious in our dioceses;
- the need to have international religious feel that they belong;
- the challenge of keeping the Directory up-to-date as vicars retire or take new ministries and new vicars are appointed;
- the challenge of limited budgets;
- the importance of the prophetic voice of religious;
- the need to increase the quality of relations with the local bishop;
- the fact that many religious do not have any representation with the Bishop. Many dioceses are without vicars for Religious. It was suggested that the need be articulated by the Sisters in the diocese.

- vicars who are not members of NCVR;

Sister Maryann presented a reflection on the Mission Statement. She used the wheel as the symbol of our role. As religious, we share a common call, but the spokes of the wheel could represent the various groups that we serve. As vicars (representatives, delegates, etc.) we are gatherers. The Bishop is really the hub.

Those present introduced themselves mentioning their background, their skills, their relation to the religious in the diocese, and some of the challenges they face. (many of these are listed above).

**Minutes:** The minutes of November, 2015, were approved and accepted.

**Agenda:** A slight change was made to the agenda – moving the prayer to before supper. The meeting recessed for supper.

**Prayer:** Sister Maryann led us in prayer.

**Reports:**

### **Reports from the Officers of the National Conference of Vicars for Religious**

#### **Sister Nancy Mathias, OSU Past President**

Sister Nancy reported that much time was spent since November preparing for the Rome Board report. Because Pope Francis changed retreat dates for the Bishops and thus the dates for the Board's travel to Rome had to be changed not all the Officers were able to go to Rome.

Sister Nancy also spent time preparing for the elections of the new officers of the Board.

#### **Brother James McVeigh, OSF Past Vice President**

Since the last meeting, I assisted Sister Nancy, President, regarding the following:

- Preparations for Elections, checking in with Sister Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, SC, who at Sister Nancy's request had agreed to handle the nomination and election process.  
After Sister Maryann was nominated for an office, I agreed to handle the actual election. I received and tallied the ballots and reported the results to Sister Nancy and Sister Maryann.
- Was in frequent contact with Sister Nancy regarding input for the Board's presence at CICLSAL especially after they changed dates.
- Continued to be in touch with Sister Mariette regarding the website.

My roles within the Eastern region as member, chairperson, and vice chairperson, and my years on the National Board as the Eastern Region representative and then as Vice President were and experience that I cherished and will never forget. The wisdom, inspiration, and spiritual blessings that I received from these experiences will never be forgotten. The friendships and relationships that I was blessed to have as a result of these experiences will forever be part of the fabric of my life. For the other outgoing Board members, do great things in your diocese and to the new Board I am confident that you will continue the tremendous assistance that NCVR has been to its members.

I am always here to assist NCVR in any way – principally by prayer and love but in any way that I can.

Please keep me in your prayers as I begin my new ministry on July 1<sup>st</sup> to our secondary schools as Franciscan Mission Coordinator to keep our mission and charism alive in our schools! God bless and keep smiling.

**Sister Joyce Candidi, OSHJ**  
**Past Secretary**

Sister Joyce reported that she had accomplished the following:

- Compiled the report on the National Board visit to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, April 87, 2016, and sent this report to the current president, Sister Nancy Mathias, OSU.
- Prepared and sent to Sister Nancy Mathias a flash drive containing all of the secretarial documents to be passed on to the new NCVR secretary.
- Continued to update the National Directory electronic file document.
- At the request of the President, sent information to all members on various issues.
- Prepared an annual Secretarial expense report from May 2015 to May 2016.
- Requested reimbursement for miscellaneous secretarial expenses from November, 2015 to May, 2016.

**Sister Mariette Moan, ASCJ**  
**Treasurer**

Sister Mariette presented an extensive financial report to the Board. She explained the checking account and CD.

Interest was .04% percent. Money is not earmarked for any purpose, concerned about investing money.

She presented the reasoning behind maintaining CD set to mature in August and closing out and migrating funds to checking account. Motion to co-mingle money pass.

Sister Mariette said that there could be an increased scholarship distribution. Ways to accomplish this were discussed,

Other ways to use the money were discussed including inviting LCWR and CMSWR, CMSM representatives to the annual meeting, pay of travel and board. Paying for board and travel did not meet approval. Paying to the Assembly registration was approved.

Sister Mariette also talked about ways to utilize website and hyperlink application. This information will go out in a letter.

## **Reports from the Regions**

**Eastern Region:** Sister Mary J. McGarrity, IHM.

Many of the members contacted Sister Mary McGarrity after the Board's visit to Rome to thank us for representing them. They are waiting to hear about our meeting with CICLSAL and were very happy that Sister Joyce, Sister Eymard and Sister Mary had the opportunity to meet our Holy Father and that he personally stopped to speak with us. We have several beautiful pictures of this momentous occasion which they look forward to seeing.

In preparation for our meeting in October at Wappingers Falls, NY, some have contact me to offer assistance in planning. Due to the resignation of our Vice-chair, Brother James McVeigh, OSF, we will be holding an election to fill that office at our next meeting. Some members have asked for input from CLINIC on the issues surrounding immigration and we are hoping to include their input at our next meeting.

**Midwest Region:** Sr. Marilyn Kerber, SNDdeN

Marilyn reported that there are sixteen members of the National Conference of Vicars for Religious in the Midwest Region and that about half of them are active in the Conference. Communication between the Vicars is mainly via conference calls and the that most important part of those calls is simply "catch up" with what is going on with each Vicar and what is happening in the Dioceses served.

There was an attempt to arrange a face-to-face meeting in Minnesota but the meeting did not happen because finding a time that worked for the majority seemed nearly impossible and most Vicars had economic restraints. The plan is to use "Go to Meeting" for the next call in meeting. There was a question as to why more Vicars do not participate in the Conference and in the conference calls. It was noted that the plans for the 2015 National Assembly, hosted by the Midwest Region was accomplished by Conference calls.

**Southern Region:** Sister Marlene Weidenborner, OSF

Prior to our meeting I contacted the Vicars for Religious in the Southern Region to see if they had any information or concerns to share with this Board. While I heard from several Vicars, in their typical low-key style, they reported that much is going on, but little is newsworthy! No one raised concerns that they might have.

Dioceses seem to be involved in activities for the Year of Mercy. For example, the Diocese of Galveston-Houston had each religious submit what he/she is doing to commemorate this year. These results were then incorporated into a prayer service that was held with their Cardinal at a luncheon in April.

One of my concerns is that we do not meet as a Region, but that is definitely the will of the Region. Part of the reason is financial. Another part of the problem is that most of the Vicars are now serving part time in their positions. While there are forty-four dioceses in the Southern Region, the responsibilities of the Vicar have been retained by fourteen Bishops, rather than appointing another Vicar. This in part may well be because of the small number of religious ministering in the diocese, or it may be an economic reality. Still within the Region there are nine religious priests who serve part time in the role, one permanent deacon, one lay woman, and twenty-three religious women who carry the title of Vicar or some derivative.

My contact within the Region is principally electronic, although telephone communication does occur when I am aware of a reason for this connection. I am happy to welcome new Vicars to the Region when I learn of their appointment.

The spirit which is evidenced among the members of the Southern Region at the National meetings is very good. The national meetings tend to offer a supportive network to our members, and we have had very good attendance the last several years.

It will be our turn to serve as “hosts” of the national meeting in 2018, and, quite honestly, this gives me great pause. Perhaps by then this Board will have developed a plan that will encourage involvement, participation and even more networking.

At the Board meeting, Sister Marlene expressed concern that she is seldom aware when there is a change in Vicars or when new Vicars are appointed. Sister Mary J. McGarrity, IHM, Chair of the Eastern Region offered to share a form with her that may be beneficial.

### **Western Region:** Sister Eymard Flood, OSC

In addition to her duties as Chair of the Western Region Eymard is in the midst of her Congregation’s Chapter preparation. She did not send in a separate regional report for this Board Meeting. Sister did send preliminary plans and recommendations for the 2017 Assembly, to be hosted by the Western Region, March 19-21, 2017. (March 22<sup>nd</sup> is a travel day).

### **Old Business:**

The report to Rome was discussed as well as the follow-up report. Sister Mary McGarrity gave an enthusiastic account of her impressions and recommendation that the trips continue. CICL-SAL is concerned with the U.S. having three conferences of religious especially the situation of the two conferences for women religious in the United States. The NCVR was asked to help address this issue since the diocesan vicars serve members of both conferences. Discussion pointed out that there is not an easy solution and beyond our role as representative of the Bishop.

It was suggested that we invite the leadership of both conferences of women and the conference of men to our March meeting, explain what we were asked to do, perhaps send reflection questions ahead of time and that Sister Maryann facilitate a meeting between the two. In the end Rome may need to act.

### **New Business:**

Sister Maryann announced that Sister Janice Bader of NRRO has been elected to leadership in her congregation. Sister Maryann will write a congratulatory letter and send flowers for her installation.

The Bishops are asking for suggestions for a qualified candidate to lead the NRRO.

Prayer: Year of Mercy

### **2017 Annual Assemb;u**

Much of the rest of the meeting was spent planning for the 2017 annual meeting.

In addition to discussing schedules and speakers, there was discussion about expanding the role of Fr. Hank Lemoncelli. Perhaps he could be asked to be more direct or more specific, something that comes from the heart of what he does.

What's his experience of working with Pope Francis, the "Francis effect"?

How is Francis teaching us to put feet under the Gospel?

New forms of consecrated life – bright colors of some, new forms popping up, canon 579 will be revised.

New forms have to be clarified, not just new groups; can be part of consecrated life, but not of religious life, an ecclesial movement

**Some of the things that need to be done:**

Sister Maryann has a multitude of letters to write, speakers, conference presidents,  
Contact Connie with change in meeting dates

Assist Southern region with its bank account

Schedule to Maryann.

The meeting adjourned the afternoon of May 20<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sister Louise Hembrecht, OSF  
NCVR Secretary  
July 1, 2016

Next Board meetings:   Thursday, Nov. 17 (3 pm) – Saturday, Nov. 20, 2016 (travel day)  
                                  Thursday, May 18 (3 pm) – Saturday, May 20, 2017 (travel day)