

NCVR Board Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2021 via Zoom

1:00 pm to 3:30 pm (ET)

Present: **Sister Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, SC (President)**
 Sister Elizabeth Ann Vasquez, SSCJ (Vice-President)
 Sister Mariette Moan, ASCJ (Treasurer)
 Sister Gilmory Kay, RSM (Secretary)
 Sister Ann Strohming, OSF (Eastern Region)
 Maria Reinagle (Midwestern Region)
 Sister Kathy Warren, OSF (Western)
 Sister Celeste Larroque, SEC (Southern Region)

- 1. The prayer was prepared by Sister Maryann.**
- 2. The minutes of September 1, 2021 were re-sent to those who did not receive them.**
- 3. Regional Updates**

Eastern Region

Sister Ann updated the Board on the virtual October meeting of the Eastern Region. There were 12 attendees with 4 new members joining for their first regional meeting. Sister Ann Lacoer, Maronite Sister of the Holy Cross shared her experience and learnings from the perspective of a Vatican appointed commissary. The Eastern Region held elections and Sister Ann David was re-elected as president. Sister Anna Nguyen, SCC was elected secretary. Sister Pat Wormann, OP was elected treasurer. The participants discussed potential educational webinars would aid our ministry. The suggested topics were the following: records that should be kept in the vicar's files, immigration information and resources and Kenedy Directory applications and changes.

Southern

Sister Celeste updated the Board on the Southern Region meeting. The members shared about involvement in the Synod. The Southern Region held elections. The region elected Sister Celeste as the new President. At the meeting, the members discussed topics for the Spring Assembly and webinars These topics are included in the Southern Region minutes. Some of the suggested for future webinars were: Consecrated Virgins, recruitment of religious from other countries to work in the USA, non-Latin Rite religious groups and the role of the vicar, and the role of the vicar when a new community requests to enter the diocese.

Midwestern

Maria shared that Sister Eva Marie Ackerman, OSF joined the Midwestern region. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati is in the process called Beacons of Light which is a consolidation of parishes to aid the priests. It is not a top down process with collaboration with religious and priests. The Archdiocese hired a deacon to head up the Synodality. They are organization to solicit more input from each deanery and try to meet the deadline so that the parish consolidation can move forward.

Western-

Sister Kathy shared about the recent regional meeting on September 28-30th. It was a wonderful to be in person at a retreat house. There were 6 people in person, and 3 on zoom. The main speaker was Rhonda Gruenwald from the National Vocation Ministry in Houston, Texas. She shared some encouraging news and trends in vocation ministry. Sharon Euart, RSM answered questions from the members in likeness to the question period at the National Assembly last year. Sister Kathy raised a question that came up concerning finances. The treasurer asked about how to have a bank account. The question if it is possible to branch office to the national office bank and in the name of the bank.

4. Officers' Reports

Sister Maryann- Reservation at Jesuit retreat house was cancelled. Officers met a couple of times. Host region will still sponsor the assembly. Maryann contacted the speakers to inform them of this decision. We still need a bishop. Bishop Milesic will be a speaker. He will be in dialogue with Sharon. We had orientation for new vicars, we had 6 new vicars. We had our webinar, hosted by Jack Kingsbury. NCVR is invited as a guest that meet prior to the USCCB meeting. Maryann met by zoom to Commission on Religious Life, CCLV also met prior to the USCCB meeting.

Sister Elizabeth- Sister Elizabeth is preparing for the spring meeting. Sister attended the Religious Vocation Conference. Sister Elizabeth shared the words of Sister Mary Johnson, SNDdeN, who thanked the vicars for their help in writing the book on *Migration for Mission*.

Sister Mariette- Sister Mariette shared that the Archdiocese of Hartford is still having IT issues and the office is experiencing mold issues. Sister Mariette helped the Eastern Region with their virtual meeting. Sister Mariette prepared the power point presentation for the New Vicars Orientation. Sister Mariette stated that members on the National Board can use the NCVR Zoom account. The login information will be provided. Sister Mariette will send out a link to view the *Synodality* webinar for those who were not able to attend. Sister Mariette helped with the setup and sent a check to Father Jack Kingsbury. Sister Mariette will send a survey monkey asking for feedback for the webinar.

Sister Mariette suggested that the minutes placed on the website should be more formal. We should avoid first names only. This would apply to both National and Regional minutes. This would include schedules placed in a regional section of the website.

Sister Mariette explained why it would be difficult to have a branch of the national bank. Sister Mariette is not in favor of giving ATM or account access to the regional officers. Sister Mariette suggests that the treasurer close the account, receive a check for the funds and send it to the national treasurer. The deposit will be ear marked for the region. Sister Mariette will send the checks as needed. If a region has a treasurer, the treasurer can request a check from Sister Mariette. Sister Mariette recommends against getting a religious community involved in handling their regional finances. Each region can have their own treasurer. Each region is independent in relation to the National Board. Sister Gilmary suggests that we explain the different financial differences at orientation, especially in regard to the W-9 issues from certain diocese.

Sister Gilmary- Sister Gilmary shared about the preparation and execution of the *Synodality* webinar by Father Jack Kingsbury. The participation of many vicars was greatly appreciated. Sister Gilmary explained that the Pastoral Center offices are now located temporarily on the Campus of Catholic University and that the offices are experiences some IT and phone issues. The Archdiocese of Washington will have the religious participate at the Archdiocesan listening sessions and encouraged religious to participate in their local parish communities.

5. Webinar

Each member of the Board provided feedback to Father Jack Kingsbury's webinar on the *Synodality* and the facilitation of the webinar. Several of the members spoke of how the webinar was helpful with problem solving. The members appreciated the concrete examples of how to be a good facilitator. Members appreciated his use of scripture.

The Board discussed other topic for future webinars. We want topics that are relevant to our work. Suggested topics were the following: immigration law, exclaustation or separation from the institute issues, workers compensation for religious, Kenedy directory applications and inclusion, procedure for dissemination for documentation that come from CICSAL, what documents should be in a Vicar's office file.

Sister Gilmary can contact Ms Madeline Obler from the USCCB for a future conference on the Kenedy directory. Sister Gilmary will look into having Ms Obler speak via webinar.

The regions can send suggested topics and Sister Gilmary will maintain a running list of topics. Sister Mariette suggested that the webinars could be formal as we had with Father Jack or a topic that is informational that a fellow vicar could host.

6. National Assembly 2022

Sister Maryann used the schedule from last year as a template for the upcoming Assembly. The keynote conversation will be a discussion between Bishop Malesic and Sister Sharon Euart, RSM. Sister Maryann had sent Sister Sharon suggestions for talking points. One of the suggested points was the importance of the role of the Vicar for Religious in a local Church. Sister Sharon suggested that it might be better for one of the vicars to be part of the conversation on the role of the vicar. A board member or another vicar could be part of the conversation with Sister Sharon and Bishop Malesic and a vicar.

First Day: March 28

Sister Karen suggested that the opening does not need to be as long because of virtual format. The Opening welcome will be up to 15 minutes and then the President's address will be 15 minutes. Maria pointed out that it is typical that members log on later than the starting time. We will need to tell the members to be on time so we can start at 1:00 pm and finish the opening section by 1:30 pm. The Keynote discussion will be from 1:30-2:30 followed by the breakout groups from 2:30-3:00 pm. There will be a break at 3:00 pm. At 3:30, there will be a conversation with Sister Sharon and Bishop Milesic At 4:00, a panel of Board members will address previously submitted case studies from the regions. This will give the members a chance to see how the Board works together. A question was raised about having breakout sessions to discuss case studies. To accomplish the same goal of interaction, we can reserve time at the end of the case study for interaction with the members. There was a suggestion that we focus on best practices instead of individual issues because we have a tendency to focus on the same issues. Sister Maryann suggests having two best practices and then have discussion on each.

Second Day: March 29

We will have Sister Stephanie Still, PBVM from NRRO speak on the National Religious Retirement Office. Sister Sharon will follow at 1:45 to present on canonical questions from the vicars. On the registration form, we can include a section for canonical questions. There will be a break. We should have sufficient number of questions to submit.

Wednesday: March 30th

We will have the opening at 1:00 pm. At 1:15, Sister Rosemary Rese, lsp will present from CICALSAL. She has taken the place of Father Hank Lemoncelli. She has not confirmed this time since this will be a busy time for CICALSAL with Conferences of Religious who will be visiting in Rome during this time. An alternative would be to have Sister Rosemary submit a video with a synopsis of timely topics. Of special important to our membership is the promulgation of the elusive *Mutual Relations*. At 1:45, there will be a panel of international sisters. The sisters presenting are: Sister Elizabeth Guerrero, Sister Grace Duc Le, and Sister Mary-Reginald Anibueze. Each sister will have 15 minutes to present. We will send them conversation starters. After a break, we will have a

conversation with them. We will have RFC and NRVC give a presentation. AT 4:00, we will have business meeting with reports from the officers. We have the closing and the passing of the key to the Southern Region. We will need to look at places to have our in-person Assembly next year.

NCVR involvement in Synod (USCCB)

Most vicars are involved in different ways. As a conference, the USCCB expects us to have a response from other vicars and religious in the country. Our conference will set up listening sessions for our members. We can have it by region or with the whole membership. Our NCVR response will be included in the National Continental response. Sister Maryann shared the results of her Synod meetings with the Board. She will share her material with the members. The chairperson of the regions can send the materials to each vicar in her region so that the vicars can determine how to receive responses from the religious in their individual dioceses.

Having the vicars themselves participate in a listening session for the NCVR would be valuable so that the voice of men and women religious working in the Church may be included in the Continental response. The return date for our response to the USCCB is August. We will plan to do something in the spring after the Assembly. We will have an open webinar after the vicars have the experience of the listening session on the local level.

We will need a committee to help coordinate the responses and write the final report.

7. Rome

Is it feasible for the Board to go to Rome in the Spring with so many of us involved in the Synod on *Synodality*. We will need to discuss what other options are available. When we do go, we will need to have clear agenda items that we want to bring to CICSAL and the other dicasteries of the curia. We could plan to have the topics before the Assembly so that it is all set by the time a decision is made about Rome.

Sister Mariette reports that there have been changes to Canon Law, Book VI on sanctions and penalties. These changes have real consequences for members of consecrated life. We need to make sure our membership is aware of these changes and the ramifications. This could be the topic for our next webinar. Sister Mariette is open to doing this for the members or finding someone who could present to the membership via webinar. Some of the questions that the webinar would answer would be: What is the role of a vicar when there is an allegation? What is a vulnerable person? This could be a topic for January or February. There is a new procedural handbook published by CLSA for canons that pertain to Consecrated Life.

Bishop Checchio asks if we have a listing of the vicars. It would be helpful to have a list of the names of all the vicars and of those dioceses where there is not vicar. Each region could have a listing of which dioceses in their regions have vicars and those that do not.

8. New sites for 2023 Assembly

Sister Maryann suggests we search for new retreat houses or motherhouses that would be a good location for our 2023 Assembly. We want something in the central time zone to aid the travel of members. Chicago was a good location because it was a hub. Maria said that her community has a yearly gathering and they come to Cincinnati because it is drivable and less expensive. Maria will look around for places in Cincinnati. The Eucharistic Congress will be in Indianapolis because of the high percentage of those who could travel by car. Indianapolis is another possibility for our future Assembly. Another place would be at Mundelein Seminary.

The Board discussed whether future Assemblies would be hybrid. There was a caution about promoting virtual Assemblies because it may discourage in person participation.

The next meeting will be January 25, 2021 at 1:00-3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Sister Gilmary Kay, RSM
Secretary