

Vicars for Religious Regional Meeting

September 28-30, 2021

Pro Sanctity Retreat Center, Fullerton, CA

We Have Been Called to This Hour

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Members Present on site: Lane Akiona, SS.CC, Mary Frances Coleman, RSM, Rosina Conrotto, PBVM, Ellen Hess, VDMF, Joan Patten, AO, Kathy Warren, OSF.

Members present Via ZOOM: Rene Backe, CSA, Maria Carlos-Valdez, EIN, Sharon Casey, OP. Joining via ZOOM at 6:00: Sharon Park, OP.

The meeting was called to order by Kathy at 3:10. The opening prayer, prepared by Gloria, called us to reflect on and share insights from a selection taken from Pope Francis' Let Us Dream: the Path to a Better Future and a selection from Joan Chittister's Now Is The Time.. The prayer closed with a recording of "We Have Been Called to this Hour" by Cathy Nelson.

The first item on the agenda was the sharing of successes and challenges faced during the past year. Highlighted among them were:

- Challenges related to the pandemic – no in person meetings, salary reductions, furloughs.
- Decline in the number of religious.
- Challenge of developing a Council of Religious that is diverse and reflective of the ethnic composition of the diocese.
- Issues related to compensation of religious vs. compensation of lay persons holding the same or similar positions.
- Maria shared that she had received a grant from the Hilton Foundation to conduct a survey of religious in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.
- Rene noted that the Extension Society sent each Sister in her diocese \$1,000 to distribute to those most in need.

The session concluded at 4:45 with a closing prayer using verses from the recording by Cathy Nelson and was followed by a social.

We reconvened at 6:00 for a ZOOM presentation on Vocation Ministry (see attachment) presented by Rhonda Gruenewald. Rhonda shared anecdotes of work she has done with dioceses and with vocation ministers. Her message to us as consecrated persons was: "be a witness".

The session concluded at 7:00 and was followed by supper and a social.

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

The day began with Lane presiding at Mass in the Pro Sanctity Retreat Center followed by breakfast.

The meeting started at 9:15 with opening prayer prepared by Rene. Kathy shared 2 additional verses from Cathy Nelson's recording.

The first item on the agenda was to de-brief the session led by Rhonda Gruenewald.

Observations included:

- Rhonda showed great enthusiasm for her ministry.
- Materials are a wonderful resources for parishes.
- Emphasis on forming relationships was appreciated.
- The program is evolving.
- It was noted that there was no mention of single life as being a vocation.

Next, Kathy reviewed our responsibilities for the upcoming National Assembly which is being held at the Jesuit Retreat Center, Cleveland Ohio, March 28-31, 2022. Specific assignments are reported later in these minutes.

Kathy shared the list of questions for Sharon Euart, RSM Executive Director of RCRI that surfaced at our May 20, 2021 regional meeting.

At 11:00 Rene Backe, Sharon Casey and Sharon Park joined the discussion via ZOOM.

Sharon began her presentation by reflecting on the questions Kathy had submitted to her. (See attachment for Sharon's response to our questions). The following are highlights from her presentation:

- Re. transformation, completion, transition, fulfillment. . . many of the terms are interchangeable.
 - She noted that fulfillment is a more positive iteration of historical completion.
 - Transformation indicates something "new". It may consist in a change in direction of mission and ministry. Maybe even in change in charism.
 - Regarding completion, Sharon emphasized that it is imperative that all corporate documents are clearly stated in the dissolution clause.
- Regarding Associates: Sharon was clear in her statement that Associates are not members, nor co-members, nor Associate members. The term "member" is not to be used in relationship to Associates. Associates are called to be supportive of members

and can be involved in legacy planning but are not to be involved in anything pertaining to canonical governance and are never to have a congregational leadership position.

- In terms of planning for the future: begin planning before you have to ask the question, “when should be begin planning?” She referred us to Fidelity to the Journey: New Paths of Hope RCRI’s 2021 publication. Planning takes a long time and entails many issues: members’ accepting the plan, grieving and letting go of so much.
- In terms of the definition, role and responsibilities of a Commissary, Sharon referred us to page 60 of Fidelity to the Journey: New Paths of Hope

Following questions and clarifications that surfaced, the session with Sharon ended at 12:15 and was followed by lunch.

At 1:30 those on-site reconvened for the business meeting.

Business from the National Office:

Kathy shared that the National Office asked for topics of interest to Vicars that can be shared by ZOOM: the following suggestions surfaced:

- Update on the Synod. How are religious involved?
- Updates on Immigration law.
- Issues related to exclaustation: if a salary is earned what are the tax implications since the person on exclaustation is still a member of her/his community?
- What about workers’ compensation for religious?
- What are the on-going “best practices?”
- Is there a procedure for the dissemination of documents related to religious life?

Sister Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA, Ph.D., J.C.L. is preparing a presentation for RCRI and asked for statistics from the dioceses represented in our region:

- Are Vicars dealing with institutes on their completion or on the need for a commissary? 1 YES
- Do any Vicars in your region serve as commissaries? NONE
- Are there any congregations in your diocese who have commissaries? 3 YES
- Has any congregation in your diocese been suppressed? 1 YES
- Are Vicars finding support/and understanding from their Bishops in terms of the future of religious life? 1 YES
- What did you hear during the on-line conversation from LCWR with its emerging futures project? All expressed gratitude to LCWR.

Business Meeting:

The following decision was made by those present:

Regional dues have been increased to \$50.00

2022 Regional meeting:

October 11-13, 2022

Election of Officers:

Vice-Chair: Rene Backe
Secretary: Joan Patten

Conversation ensued about the role of treasurer and the channeling of finances. The following options were offered:

- Channel the accounts through the arch/diocesan finance office. This option presents the most challenges.
- Channel the accounts through the congregation of the person holding the office. **Ellen** is willing to be treasurer and she will check with her congregation about this option.
- Channel the accounts through the National Office. If neither of the above options materialize, Kathy will check with the National Office to see if this is possible. However, this seems to be a remote possibility.

Planning for the National Assembly:

- Prayers and Liturgy. Kathy noted that *Glory and Praise Booklet #2* is available at the retreat center and can be the source of music used for prayers and Liturgy. It was decided that we will NOT prepare a prayer/Liturgy worship booklet. The following assignments were given:
 - Monday Opening Evening Prayer: Kathy and Mary Frances will prepare this prayer and use the video Anthony Mary had prepared. Joan will edit the video for a shorter running time. The theme of the evening prayer is, *Building Relationships* and selections from Synodal readings will be used as well as the song: “Santa Maria del Camino”.
 - Tuesday Morning Prayer: Rosina and Gloria will prepare this prayer with the theme, “Now is the time” using readings from Pope Francis or from the Synod document itself. Time will be built in for faith sharing.
 - Tuesday Evening Liturgy: Rosina and Gloria will prepare the Liturgy around the theme of forgiveness.
 - Wednesday Morning Liturgy: Ellen will prepare the Liturgy using “Sing a New Church” as the theme
 - Wednesday morning Opening Prayer: Kathy and Mary Frances will prepare the prayer using selections from “Now is the time” and readings from the Synod.
 - Wednesday evening Closing Prayer: Joan and Maria will prepare the prayer with the theme of gratitude and include the ritual of passing on the key to the Southern Region.

Tasks:

- **Kathy – related to national Assembly**
 - Ask Mariette Moan if she will be the musician during the National Assembly.
 - With Mary Frances prepare Monday Opening prayer and Wednesday morning opening prayer.
 - Arrange for sign-up sheets for readers and for Eucharistic Ministers.
 - Receive and process requests for financial aid for the Assembly
 - Ask Maryann for an estimate of costs for our registration and Room and Board.
- **Kathy – other tasks**
 - Send Rosina Sharon Euart's presentation.
 - Ask the National Office about handling treasurer responsibilities for the region.
 - Respond to tasks given by the National Office.
 - Ask the National Office about discontinuing memorabilia at the Assembly.
- **Joan**
 - Send a memo to region members about submitting a ministry related photo.
 - Edit the video prepared by Anthony Mary.
 - Send region members the questionnaire about National Assembly participation.
 - With Maria prepare the Closing prayer/ritual for Wednesday evening of the National Assembly.
 - Send Rosina the outline of Rhonda's presentation.
- **Mary Frances**
 - Review the responsibilities of a treasurer with Ellen.
 - With Kathy prepare Monday Opening prayer and Wednesday morning opening prayer for the National Assembly.
- **Maria**
 - With Joan prepare the Closing prayer/ritual for Wednesday evening of the National Assembly.
 - Send your survey to Rosina to attach to the minutes
- **Ellen**
 - Check with your congregation about channeling finances through your congregational offices.
 - Prepare the Wednesday morning Liturgy.
 - Send Rosina a self-photo.
- **Rene**
 - Send Rosina a self-photo
 - Check the by-laws for the responsibilities of vice-chair
- **ALL**
 - Send a ministry related photo according to the directions that will come from Joan.

- Complete the survey regarding the National Assembly and send it to Joan by the date indicated.
- When asked please confirm what you will bring or will provide for the regional memorabilia.

A reminder to all: Realizing that everyone is very busy, we respectfully request that you honor the deadlines set on any materials you receive. This facilitates the work of the person receiving the information.

Following a blessing on newly elected officers and an expression of gratitude to out-going officers the meeting adjourned at 3:45.

At 4:00, those remaining on site left for a tour of the Cathedral and evening prayer prepared by Joan, led by Bishop Freyer and prayed in the Christ Cathedral Chapel in the Sky.

Following prayer, dinner was enjoyed at Pepito's restaurant.

Thursday, September 30, 2021

Following breakfast those remaining joined the parish community for Mass in the parish church.

Departure followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosina Conrotto, PBVM
Regional secretary