

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF VICARS FOR RELIGIOUS  
NATIONAL BOARD MEETING**

Felician Sisters Mother of Good Counsel Convent, Chicago, Illinois

May 18-19, 2017

Minutes

**Present:** Sisters Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, SC, Louise Hembrecht, OSF, Mariette Moan, ASCJ, ,  
Marlene Weidenborner, OSF, Eymard Flood, OSC.

**Excused:** Sisters Nancy Mathias, OSU, Mary McGarrity, IHM, Sr. Marilyn Kerber, SNDdeN.

**Prayer:** Sister Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, SC, President of NCVR opened the Board Meeting with a prayer

**Minutes:** The Minutes from November 17-18, 2016 were approved. Sister Marlene Weidendorner, OSF commented that St. Petersburg has a new bishop.

**Agenda:** The agenda was reviewed and we decided to follow it but keep it fluid.

**Officers' Reports**

Sister Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, SC, President

- Participated in a meeting in Washington DC March 2-3 on the results of the latest study on International Sisters in the United States published by CARA and Trinity Washington University through the generosity of the GHR foundation. A link to the document will be added to the website.
- Follow- up call with Kathleen Mahoney, Ph.D. Senior Program Officer, GHR Foundation on CARA study on International Sisters in the US. She would like to have the Vicars for Religious involved in the implications of the study looking at these points:
  - Get the study into the hands of more people
  - Help create a study /reflection tool with a study guide; have a delegate from NCVR help with this
  - Develop strategies for better integration; tailor for different audiences
  - Look at multi-faceted learning model to accompany the study as a trial learning experience
  - GHR will observe and share the experiences and learning; move to implementation
  - How can the Vicars use this in regions? Inter-diocesan event?
  - Next call at end of May to move ahead
- Prepared for May Board meeting; revised drafts of several Manual pages
- Sent out to members information on the *Fourth Encounter of New Forms of Consecrated Life* to take place in Rome in June 2017.

Sister Nancy Mathias, OSU, Vice-President

Since the March assembly:

David Arnold, Attorney at Law, informed me we lost our tax exempt status because we failed to file an informational tax return. That requirement was not passed on to our current treasurer by the previous treasurer. Our organization now must file a new application. I forwarded all the forms and information to Sister Maryann, our president and will work with her on this project where needed Mr. Arnold was the attorney who processed the original application for us four years ago.

Tried to be helpful to Sister Maryann when she asked for advice.

Sister Louise Hembrecht, OSF, Secretary

- Sister Louise reported that the Proceedings have been mailed to all NCVR members and the speakers from the Assembly. Ninety-five copies were printed, ninety were mailed. She also shared a listing of responses from the Assembly regional gathering discussions. This will be collated and the collation included in the Summer Newsletter.
- Sister Mariette suggested asking the Knights of Columbus to print enough Proceedings to send to all the Bishops this year with a letter encouraging them to participate in the anniversary year and include a survey of religious in their diocese. We all agreed. (Sister Mariette will follow through with the Knights. Sister Maryann will write the letter in the near future.)
- In early June forms will go out for Membership Registration for July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 membership.
- Sister Louise was asked to send an electronic copy of the logo to Sister Maryann for use on all NCVR materials.

Sister Mariette Moan, ASCJ, Treasurer

- Sister Mariette gave an oral report. She reported on money in the NCVR account and said that she has not yet received the bill for the Felicians from the Assembly. She raised a question about the amount of money to be kept in the checking account and asked if some of the funds should be invested. She suggested Eugene Harris of North Haven, CT as someone to help with investing. It was also decided to invest about half the funds.
- Sister Mariette will complete the forms for Recognition for Exemption that had lapsed.
- The Board members present also decided not to charge for the Resource Manual in the future since it is on the website and Sister Maryann has multiple printed copies. Any future cost would be considered part of the \$125 registration fee.

### **Reports from the Regions:**

The regions were not asked for reports at this time, but Sister Eymard from the western region had the following prepared:

Having recuperated from the assembly in Chicago we each returned home with feelings of gratitude. We thank you all for your assistance and support.

I collated the evaluations and detailed the responses to the various categories.

We are currently preparing for our Fall Assembly. To date we do not have vicars appointed for San Diego and Los Angeles. We expect them by July 1, 2017.

### **Collation of Responses to the Discussion at the National Assembly**

*This is no longer an era of change, but a change of era. (Pope Francis)*

Each region reflects the vitality and strength of the Conference. Looking at your region, its

- number of full-time and / or part-time Vicars / Delegates
- levels and modes of participation
- growing number of diocesan contact persons
- geographic reality

### **Comments made**

There are many more part-time members than full time vicars

(2 out of 12 present at the National Assembly from the Midwest; 1 out of 21 in the South)

Some come to everything

Travel and distance are a problem for some.

### **What are the challenges you face in the near future?**

- Distance is a major concern in most regions
- Language problems and the need for multicultural understanding
- Time with those interested in various forms of Consecrated life

### **How does this affect the integrity and service of your Region?**

- Discussion on meetings via technology and face-to-face meetings. Technological meetings are a possible and often necessary solution, but face-to-face meetings are better
- Helps with best practices
- People still appear pleased because of connections, collaborations, relationships, communication
- Gratitude is often verbalized

### **How are the members of consecrated life in your region truly served by the Conference?**

- The Conference enriches those who attend and through them those unable to attend
- The Conference is a conduit for resources
- Networking

### **How can the Conference help to address some of these challenges?**

- Call Religious to take more positive steps
- Continue mentoring new members of the Conference

- Contemplative listening Being present to one another
- Use Technology more
- Increased role in vocation ministry (how can NCVR assist); Seminary education
- Shared Wisdom
- Have a canon lawyer available during the national assemblies to answer questions/concerns
- Provide guidance on Social Justice Issues
- Continue to send pertinent information from the National Board
- Continue to address issues surfaced at the national board
- Continue to offer break-out sessions

### **Are there new ways of serving to be explored?**

- Communication of new information from the Conference; e.g. new Brothers' Day
- New types of technology; zoom, livestream, closed Facebook for discussing issues that arise
- Raise up awareness of the Consecrated life
- Meeting schedule, single topic, processing, table talk
- Contemplative listening; Provide hope
- Share “best practices” / good news in small groups at the opening of the Assembly (or at a social time)

### **Other**

- What are ways to encourage Bishops to have Vicars?
- Ask Bishops who do not have a vicar – how can I be of service?
- A survey – How many members of Consecrated Life in your Diocese?
- Would you be open to having your Religious invited to our event (next Diocese)
- Include the request for a Vicar for Religious in Mutual Relations
- Will our role disappear
- Serve all, not divide (the two Conferences)
- Part-time nature of the ministry

There was discussion on how this collation could best be used, is there follow-up needed, perhaps at the 2018 General Assembly?. The collation will be included in the Summer Newsletter.

### **International Sisters**

There was some discussion about the international sisters in our dioceses. It is important to include them but have them tell their stories at diocesan meeting – building relationships.

Do the international sisters have an affiliation among themselves? Whatever this accomplishes, it is may be more than what we have for them.

There are various levels of involvement depending if they are here for ministry or for education with a plan to return to their home country.

Language is certainly an issue, but more is needed – inculturation.

Sister Eymard shared her personal experience – survival, education and ministry.

### **Technology**

We briefly talked about the various kinds of data bases that are available and being used. Could technology be used at the Assembly to a greater extent? How might it be helpful?

Sister Mariette is going set up a closed group Facebook page to facilitate discussion among NCVR members. She will also set up Zoom technology. More will be coming out about this in the near future.

### **Widening the tent**

Members are open to having the leadership or their representatives (e.g. from LCWR, CMSWR, CMSM, RFC, NRVC, NRRO, CONSECRATED VIRGINS) attend the National Assembly. There were strong feelings that members of these groups do not belong on the NCVR board. We discussed that they would need to pay their own way (transportation and room and board.) We would waive \$200 out of the \$525 (Speakers' fee portion)

### **FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2017**

**Prayer:** Sister Maryann opened the meeting with a Gathering Prayer to the Holy Spirit

We reviewed the 2017 General Assembly:

From standpoint of the West, it was very successful, but they were disappointed that the speakers did not take up the theme. The recommendation was to ask the speakers in the future to do so. It is helpful when the speakers provide questions for table discussion. Sometimes the opportunity for questions and answers is also valuable (written questions so that the speakers can prepare). It was stressed that the questions are not meant to be commentary on the presentation but a means of taking it further.

We also talked about open questions from the floor – what do I do now – what's the best advice I can give session. Perhaps the Board members could facilitate this session with a roving microphone. We also talked about an open forum or table discussion – what are the pressing issues.

Break-out sessions also came up. Do we need time amongst ourselves to discuss challenges – need to focus on a topic e.g. lack of a leadership pool that some communities are experiencing.

We suggested having a panel presentation instead of a presentation given by one person. Perhaps something like “Survey Monkey” could help to find out what the audience hopes to hear.

We mentioned the difficulty of missing the business meeting and how important the business meeting is. This will be especially true in 2018 with elections.

We suggested asking the new vicars if orientation was helpful and asking if there are other questions that were not answered. We could use more visuals, power point, show website. Maryann will follow up in September with them.

The Board members present thanked Western Region for the excellent theme and the development of it.

## **2018 Assembly**

Southern Region is in the midst of planning for the 2018 General Assembly. The theme that they suggested is **From Gratitude to Hope**

### **NCVR Celebrating 50 years**

Possible speakers were also discussed. It was suggested to have a video, “Voices of History,” of all the living past presidents (a picture of the deceased with a little about the years they served.) The overall focus would be how NCVR has progressed over the years. Each section would be about five minutes long. This would serve as a history piece at the beginning of the Assembly. Then it would be used in smaller segments throughout the Assembly.

We also talked about what we would be asking of the speakers. It is our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we want to celebrate that – maybe some focus on the meaning of history in life today – but we also want to have a thrust for the future – perhaps some thoughts on what consecrated life might look like in years to come.

We developed a **Tentative Agenda**. Please note that all speakers are tentative – they have not be contacted yet. (Sister Maryann will do this in the near future.) We decided to have entertainment for the Social the last evening. Suggestions were made. We also decided to ask Sister Connie for suggestions.

## **Tentative Agenda**

Sunday, March 18, 2018

- 2:30 p.m. New Vicars’ Orientation
- 4:00 p.m. Opening of the Assembly
  - Welcome and Prayer (Southern Region)
  - President’s Address – Sister Maryann Lopiccolo, SC
  - Voices of History Video – Past Presidents
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner
- 6:45 p.m. Sister Mary Johnson, SNDdeN (tentative)
- 8:00 p.m. Introduction of candidates (possibly Sister Margaret Downing will introduce)  
Social

Monday, March 19, 2018

7:00 a.m. Liturgy with Felician Sisters  
Breakfast  
8:45 a.m. Morning Prayer  
9:00 a.m. Sister Mary Johnson  
10:00 a.m. Break  
10:30 a.m. Process time / sharing / take away  
11:30 p.m. RFC: Sr. Ellen Dauwer, SC  
Noon Lunch  
1:30 p.m. NRRO  
2:00 p.m. Sister Nancy Schreck, OSF or Sister Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA (tentative)  
3:00 p.m. Break  
3:30 p.m. Speaker / process  
4:30 p.m. Break before dinner  
5:10 p.m. Dinner  
6:45 p.m. Small group sharing – case studies  
8:00 p.m. Social, Movie

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

8:00 a.m. Breakfast  
8:45 a.m. Prayer  
9:00 a.m. Cardinal Tobin or ? (tentative)  
10:00 a.m. Break  
10:30 a.m. Father Hank Lemoncilli, OMI  
11:00 a.m. Communities in transition – LCWR and RCRI  
Noon Lunch  
1:00 p.m. Regional Meetings  
2:00 p.m. Break  
2:15 p.m. National Board Meeting – Business Meeting (Elections)  
3:30 p.m. Passing of the Torch to the Eastern Region  
4:00 p.m. Liturgy, Bishop of Chicago ??  
5:00 p.m. Banquet  
7:00 p.m. Social -Entertainment

A list of tasks was reviewed.

### **Election Process**

Since this is an election year, it was suggested to ask Sister Margaret Downing from Savannah if she would be willing to chair the election process.

**Registration Incentive**

We talked about giving an incentive for the registration for the next Assembly if their forms were postmarked by January 25. We will have a lottery and choose one for free registration.

**Forms**

We reviewed and revised and suggested adding the logo to the following forms:

Checklist for the Assembly

Speakers Acceptance

Task Assignments

Scholarship

Sister Maryann will incorporate the suggestions; the revised forms will go into the Resource Book.

Respectfully submitted,

Sister Louise Hembrecht, OSF

Secretary, NCVR