

## Report on the February 2018 NRVC Board meeting

The NRVC Board met at the Toddhall Retreat Center just outside St. Louis, MO, from Sunday February 11, through Tuesday, February 13.

1. **Finances:** The board reviewed the finances of the organization. At present, we have no more grant monies coming into the organization. The Hilton grant has been completed, and the organization is solely dependent on membership dues and generated funds from workshops and convocation to support itself. The staff and the Board are carefully watching our pennies, especially as we plan future activities for NRVC. Grant proposals are also in the works.

**Budgets 2018 and 2019:** The Board is attempting to adopt a two-year budgeting process, one for convocation years and one for non-convocation years. Each year is so financially unique that we need two approaches for budgeting in the alternating years. The board has already approved a budget for 2018 and looked to tweak it to reflect more concrete realities. It began looking at preliminary figures for 2019. No decision was made for 2019, and it will be re-visited in August.

2. **Development Workshop Follow-up:** Mark Teresi, the Director of the National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations, gave the board a mini Development Workshop last October. Each board member had homework as a result of that in-service. Time was spent updating the group on each Board Member's assignment since our last meeting.
3. **Strategic Planning:** Brother Ronnie, Father Toby, Sister Kristin, and Sister Sharon gave an update on the work of the Strategic Planning Committee. The board spent time reviewing and revising the outline of the proposed strategic plan to which the Member Area Coordinators (MACs) had offered their input on Saturday, February 10. The overall plan, with the input and suggested revisions, generated a great deal of energy in the board. We will continue to move forward to secure additional feedback from 12 significant stakeholders on the revised plan outline during the remainder of February and March. Representatives from Johnson, Grossnickle & Associates will meet with the Strategic Planning Committee again on April 4 in Chicago.

International Vocation Office in Rome: While the board is still committed to creating an international vocation office in Rome, our members are not sold on it. Comments during the input from the MACs indicated clearly that our membership doesn't understand our plan. We need to do a better job informing them of the need for the office and that the funding for the office will not come from their dues or the current NRVC budget. Rather, the

international office will only come from the reception of a grant to NRVC for the erection of such an office.

4. **Committee Reports:** The board heard reports from its three standing committees:
  - A. **The African-American Religious Committee:** The board voted to change the name of this committee from the Black Religious Committee to the African American Religious Committee. This group, under the direction of Sister Gayle Lwanga Crumbley, R.G.S., is planning a vocation event for young African Americans in Lafayette, Louisiana, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving 2018. More details and letters of invitation to participate will be forthcoming.
  - B. **The Cultural Diversity Committee:** The Cultural Diversity Committee, under the leadership of Sister Anna Marie Espinosa, I.W.B.S., met on Saturday, February 10, before the full board Meeting. The group is still working to implement the NRVC/CARA Multi-cultural Study. As a result of their initial meeting in Baltimore, the group has encouraged the creation of new workshops dealing with the issue of interculturality, and now there are workshops and multi-year programs being offered by NRVC. The “Roots of Racism” workshop, to be held February 18-21, is just one of them.

The committee is also gathering a list of resources to post on the NRVC website as a clearinghouse for recommended resources on the topics of multiculturalism and on becoming a more multi-cultural community. Lastly, the group has produced a list of 10 “good reads” it encourages on the topic.
  - C. **Family Study Committee:** This Committee has no board leadership at present. The board has decided to seek an NRVC member to lead the implementation of the results of this study. It is also determining how to best address to main two questions omitted from the study. The board will take up this issue at its August meeting.
5. **Code of Ethics:** After several sub-committees have updated and revised the NRVC Code of Ethics for Vocation Ministers over the last several years, the board approved the final draft with only minor revisions. It will now be formatted and added to the Vocation Director’s Manual for distribution.
6. **New Program and Communication Coordinator:** NRVC has hired Mr. Charlie Holden-Corbett as the first Program and Communication Coordinator. Charlie will mainly serve as assistant to Sr. Debbie, but he will also lend assistance to the staff in communication matters, e.g. Facebook and website updating. Charlie will begin his new work on a part-time basis on February 25.

## 7. Staff Reports:

- A. **Member Relations and Services Report:** Sister Debbie Borneman, SS.C.M., via Zoom, reported that NRVC membership is on the rise even though we have lost several communities for various reasons. Membership is nearing the 1,000 mark!
- i. **Convocation Planning:** The board reviewed many of the details of the preparation for our convocation 2018 to be held in Buffalo, NY, from November 1 - 5. It is a special one given that NRVC is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary! The board set member and non-member rates for convocation, and began finalizing a major set-piece of the event: a live-stream panel with representatives of the young church to be held at Canisius College on Saturday, November 3. College students from several of the Catholic Universities in Buffalo are being invited to participate. It should be an energizing conversation.
  - ii. **Convocation Awards:** The board approved a recipient for the Harvest Award, the highest award given by NRVC, and set in motion a plan to solicit nominees for the Outstanding Recognition and Mustard Seed Awards beginning with the March newsletter.
- B. **Database Manager's Report:** Mrs. Marge Argyelan gave the board an update on the work she has been doing to help streamline a number of data processes at NRVC. She also offered to assist the board and the overall organization using the large amounts of data that are now available at our fingertips with our in-house database.
- C. **Staff Assistant's Report:** Miss Debbie Prieto offered the board a peek into the daily workings of the NRVC office and the myriad tasks that it takes to keep NRVC humming on a daily basis.
- D. **TrueQuest Communications:** Mrs. Patrice Tuohy, CEO of TrueQuest Communications, gave her report via Zoom to the board. Patrice continues to track readership and subscriptions to Horizon magazine and participation in NRVC's Vocation Match. Both interest and use of both continue to be high. TrueQuest also participated in the International Session on Vocations this past summer in Rome and is continuing to assist NRVC in monthly communications pieces. Other items covered included:
- i. **Vision** - Online Ad Reservation form was launched and has already brought in several ad reservations. It also has added a new column: Why discernment matters.
  - ii. **HORIZON** – Subscription prices were increased as of January 1 to help defray the cost of publication.
  - iii. **Giving Tuesday** netted almost \$1,000.
  - iv. **Google Ads** – TrueQuest received a grant for NRVC from Google. As a result, we realized \$120,000 worth of Google ads. It has helped promote NRVC and VISION. Now we are part of “grant station” and will delve into how that might assist VISION and NRVC in the future.

- v. **Gateway for Vocation** – A meeting was held with the Archdiocese of Chicago, Notre Dame University, the IHMs and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart. This task force continues to make headway and is in a good place to generate vocation awareness materials for the parish level. We are still hoping for a major grant to underwrite the cost of meeting time and materials. Until then, the major work of the task force can only go so far.
  - vi. **Salt and Light Collaboration** - Talks are in process regarding collaboration with VISION and NRVC. Salt and Light will help with the live stream broadcast of the conversation with the young church at Convocation 2018. Conversation also continues with Deacon Pedro regarding World Youth Day 2019 in Panama. Our hope is for NRVC to have a presence similar to that in the past. Given our challenge with fund raising, the World Youth Day Committee might be willing to assist us in underwriting the set-up of another “Vocation Café.”
  - vii. **NRVC Website** - TrueQuest is working on obtaining an infographic for the NRVC website similar to that on the VISION website. NRVC staff and Ideaport continue to collaborate to website issues/needed changes.
  - viii. **Annual Contract** - TrueQuest is giving NRVC an additional 45 hours per month of work than it is charging NRVC. It will submit a contract for the present year to Sister Sharon for review realizing our funds are still limited.
  - ix. **Contact by NBC**– A reporter for NBC contacted Sister Sharon concerning creating a video piece on vocations, particularly on those coming to contemplative orders of sisters. Sister Sharon attempted to broaden the conversation, and now they are looking to expand the concept to all vocations to religious life. TrueQuest provided some statistics, and the dialogue continues. Several member communities are being offered the opportunity of being interviewed on camera and becoming part of a documentary on religious life.
- E. **Executive Director’s Report:** Sr. Sharon reported...
- A. **Fundraising Needs:** NRVC’s greatest need is fundraising. Currently, four grants have been submitted. Approximately sixty letters have gone out to help sponsor Convocation 2018. NRVC also needs a Development Director to assist with this effort. Our national mail appeal has not produced the results we had hoped in the years of our grant. The board made the decision to mine the current donor base generated thus far and not to proceed with purchasing more lists or doing more mass mailings.
  - B. **Revisiting the 2009 GHR Study:** Sr. Sharon met with Sr. Mary Johnson and Mary Gautier regarding future collaboration that would update the NRVC/CARA 2009 landmark study. Possible plans are to

begin the revised study this year and to have results published in our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The revised study would include questions on the impact of multiculturalism and social media. The study will run about \$85,000.00 initially, plus implementation costs.

- C. **Quickbooks Online:** The NRVC Finance Office is now running Quickbooks Online. This gives instant access of the financial records of the organization to the finance office, the Executive Director's office, the board chair, and the Finance Committee chair.
- D. **The Impact of Young People:** What is crucial for NRVC at this moment in time is our encounter with young people and learning from them. Another look at our (religious communities') past is not going to help them make a difference in the world. NRVC hopes to engage young people in all that it hopes to do – convocation, discernment materials, studies, etc.

The board had lengthy and engaging conversations about each of these topics presented by Sr. Sharon.

- 8. **NFCRV Office:** Brother Ronnie that Mark Teresi had resigned from full-time with "The Fund", effective January 1, 2018, but that he has been keeping the office going two-days per week, Wednesdays and Fridays. A lot is still happening as he continues to solicit prospective donors and works to process applications for grants.

While nothing has been publicly invited, we have had 3 applicants come forward to be considered for the full-time position.

Brother Ronnie and Mark are setting up preliminary interviews with these 3 candidates for March 7 in Chicago. Sr. Michele Fisher and Mr. Bill Booth, both from the NFCRV board, are joining Brother Ronnie for the interviews.

- 9. **Grants to Member Areas:** NRVC wants Member Areas to take full advantage of the \$1,000 available to them for programming each year. The current policy is that Member Areas must apply for such grants 90 days ahead of the event. The board voted to change the time requirement from 90 days to 30 days ahead of the event. It wants to encourage Member Area programming in any way it can; it doesn't want to discourage it in any way.
- 10. **Board Membership:** The board annually reviews its membership list and term limits for the coming year in anticipation of calling for nominations and naming new members to the board. At this point in time, the board will need to replace at least two board members, one due the end of a six-year term and is non-renewable and a second through an unexpected resignation for community reasons. The board established the following timeline:
  - A. Call for applications / applications on file – *March 1, 2018*

- B. Dates to accept nominations or self-nominations – *March 1 - May 15, 2018 with approval of major superior*
  - C. Interviews – *between May 15 – May 30, 2018 with current board members*
  - D. Selection method and date –*Zoom Meeting to evaluate and select candidates on Wednesday, June 13, 2018*
  - E. All nominees informed of the board’s decisions - *by June 15, 2018*
11. **Strategic Planning Follow-up** – The finalized Strategic Plan will be announced at Convocation 2018. The next step is implementing the Plan. The board voted to remain at the hotel in Buffalo to take the first step in implementing the Strategic Plan. An expected grant from the Conrad N Hilton Foundation will, hopefully, pay for this cost.