
Statement on Diversity

As followers of Jesus, we have been and continue to be shaped by the vision of the Reign of God. This vision offers the promise of a world in which diversity is respected, honored, and seen as a gift of a loving Creator. In observing the 500th anniversary of Christianity in the Americas, we are aware that diversity has not often been seen as gift and blessing. Reflecting on our experience today, we acknowledge and are challenged by the reality of diversity that exists in society, the Church, religious life, and those in discernment.

Conscious of this reality, the National Religious Vocation Conference chose "Encountering Diversity" as its 1992 Convocation theme. Participants reflected together on their experience, beliefs, and hopes regarding the reality of diversity. They engaged in a process which gave rise to a draft statement on diversity which the National Board refined to be used as a tool for discussion and further action.

We, the National Board of the NRVC, hope that this statement will challenge us:

1. to grow in our awareness and acceptance of diversity,
2. to acknowledge and address the resistance within ourselves to embrace this reality, and
3. to commit ourselves to the challenge of conversation called for by the Gospel.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is neither male nor female; for all are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

As vocation ministers, we claim diversity as a gift from God which cannot be ignored. Though at times painful to do so, we choose to embrace the energy which diversity gives us in living the Gospel of Jesus. Therefore:

- We believe that diversity at its deepest level is a source of transformation and unity.
- We recognize diversity as a creative force in generating new life.
- We reverence the mystery of God's call to all persons to share their unique gifts and talents for mutual enrichment.
- We acknowledge the diversity of communities and their charism, individuals, and their gifts within religious life in the Church.
- We believe that each person is shaped by a diverse background of religious, socio-economic, educational, physical, sexual, and cultural experiences.
- We celebrate the diversity of local communities which urges us to develop new relationships within the global community.

As we encounter diversity, we resolve to address divisive attitudes and behaviors in ourselves, our congregations, our Church, and our society. In so doing, we commit ourselves to creating a new communion in response to the Gospel mandate "to make all one in Christ Jesus."

Published by the National Board, 1992