

Attachment April 2010 Provincial Minutes

1. The CARA August 2009 Report on Recent Vocations to Religious Life

This report is a result of a survey that was conducted with those who have entered religious life in the past 15 years.

The following points from the CARA study were shared by Brother Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, Executive Director of NRVC, National Religious Vocation Conference (USA) at the Vocation Conference:

- People who want to look at Vocation Work for their congregations need to ask 2 questions:
 1. Why do we want vocations?
 2. If we do, what are we willing to sacrifice?
- There are 8 challenges facing religious communities today:
 - Ageing and diminishment
 - Visibility
 - Community life
 - Multiculturalism
 - Generational differences and attitudes
 - Ministry content and where people minister
 - Polarization
 - Apathy, pessimism, fatalism
- Generally speaking, those who have entered religious life in the past 15 years experience and think of their work and what they were involved in before they entered as ministry, i.e. they think of having or "doing ministry" in their lives as a given. Therefore, when they come asking for community, and hear professed members saying, "We are about ministry and not about sitting around talking, praying and singing kumbaya", it creates a disconnect. Their request is a challenge to the professed and the answer they receive, as stated above, can be heard as a rebuke to those looking at religious life. What they are really looking for is the communal aspect of religious life.
- For those communities with high numbers of sisters living alone, there is a direct correlation that they will not have high numbers of people entering.
- Six "best practices" of vocation promotion:
 1. Being proactive
 2. Creating "a culture of 'vocation'" (in general)

3. Having a Vocation Director or team
4. Use of media for vocation promotion
5. Having a discernment program
6. Targeting age groups

1. Presentation from Canadian National Formation and Vocation Directors Conference in Toronto included the following points:

- In general, we need to be aware of 2 kinds of Catholics emerging in the Church:
 1. John Paul II Catholics who proclaim Jesus triumphant to the world
 2. Vatican II Catholics who proclaim self-emptying Jesus to the world.

We need and are both and so are the people who are looking.
- What is being observed is that young people don't know what they don't know about religious life.
- Those entering say that the Internet is a great resource for them. Once a contact has been made through the Internet, companionship is important for them. For some, a gentle befriending was more helpful than a direct question.
- What witnessed to them was the intentional coming together of religious, a visible connectedness, i.e. around prayer, ministry, issues.
- What is difficult for those entering/coming into a community is when their life experiences before entering are not recognized, or it is assumed that they didn't have a prayer life and work already that was a ministry/vocation for them.
- What helped them was when the person calling them did so with an attitude which did not impose the vocation question on them, but offered it as an invitation.
- Helpful questions and attitudes to bring to Vocation work:
 - a. Where does what you do meet the pain and the suffering of the world in the very fabric of your being?
 - b. Modern life is marked by speed and noise. Make friends with silence. Silence gives the tiniest opening where God can whisper to your heart.

- c. God has given us life and so is going to know what gives us joy.
- d. Albert Schweitzer said to a graduating class: "I don't know what all of you will become, but I do know that those of you who will be truly happy are those who have figured out how to commit yourselves to service and to serve."