

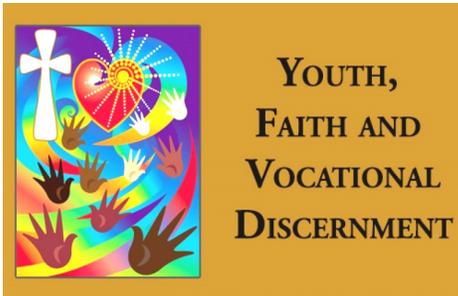


# The National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors (NAVFD)

June 2017

## BISHOPS, YOUNG PEOPLE, FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

In the next General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in October 2018, bishops from across the world will gather to focus on young people, faith and vocational discernment. In preparation for the Synod, Pope Francis has written a preparatory document and a letter to young people (both available on the Vatican Website). Young people ages 18-29 are called to share their views on life, faith and experience of Church.



Pope Francis invites dioceses, parishes, and various communities to participate in the process and he encourages all of us to walk with young people, accompanying them in their faith journey and in their life searching. Interestingly, the commitment to accompaniment is also the central focus of our NAVFD Conference to be held in Hamilton, Ontario in April 2018.

In the preparatory document for the Synod, Pope Francis states: "Accompanying young people requires

going beyond a pre-conceived framework, encountering young people where they are, adapting to their times and pace of life and taking them seriously." He continues, " This is to be done as young people seek to make sense of the reality in which they live and utilize the message which they have received in words and deeds in their daily attempts to create a personal history and in the more-or-less conscious search for meaning in their lives."

The preparatory document is of immense value to vocation and formation directors, pastoral ministers, youth ministers, teachers and chaplains in schools, colleges,



and universities and for parishes and other faith communities. It is replete with very practical ideas, points for discussion, and other helpful suggestions as we engage with young people in light of the Gospel for our times. For those of us working in vocation ministry it is GIFT indeed.

Mary Rowell, CSJ

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*This is the last NAVFD newsletter until September. All of us at NAVFD wish you some time for resting in the Lord and all of creation this summer.*



## LANDSCAPE OF RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS IN CANADA

Héctor Acero Ferrer, Project Manager

Summer greetings to all religious congregations across Canada!

As we move on to a new season, we can confidently say that spring bore its fruits in our “Canadian Vocation Ministry Study.” In addition to many responses to our Congregational Surveys (of religious institutes and new members), we have received words of support, and encouragement from many of you. There is an overwhelming optimism in religious communities across the country, which we already see through our written communication and personal interaction with Canadian religious from coast to coast. The Canadian Church is looking forward to the strategic plan for religious vocations that will emerge out of our research!

The months of May and June were dedicated to designing a plan for our focus groups, which will take place this summer and fall. We have chosen four key locations throughout Canada: Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, and Saskatoon. These focus groups are occasions for us to gather with newer religious, hearing their stories, yearnings, challenges, and hopes for the future of religious life in Canada.

We firmly believe that the “Canadian Vocation Ministry Study” is vital to ensure the sustainability of religious life in Canada. If you have any questions, or wish to participate in one of our focus groups or to receive the congregational surveys, please do not hesitate to contact me, Project Manager, Héctor at [navfd.research@gmail.com](mailto:navfd.research@gmail.com).

We ask for your prayers and support as we continue this important research. Have a blessed summer season!

**2018 Conference:  
To Accompany in  
Joy and Hope  
April 22-25, 2018**



**Look for the registration  
package for Conference 2018  
which will be available  
July 15th on our  
[vocations.ca](http://vocations.ca) website.**

### KEEPING VOCATION BEFORE OUR EYES: “HORIZON CIRCLES”

Pictured above, a group of senior Sisters of St. Joseph in Peterborough, Ontario keeping “vocation before their eyes” and in the heart of the Congregation. These sisters have warmly embraced the practice of meeting every 3 months in an “Horizon Circle”. Before each gathering the group selects an article of interest from the recent edition of “Horizon”, the international vocation journal. They reflect on it, pray with it and bring their insights and ideas to the meeting of the Circle. Thank you, Sisters for leading the way with this initiative. “Horizon Circles”, begun in Ireland, create a wonderful and non-demanding way, to keep “vocation alive” and help create a “Culture of Vocation” in our communities, parishes and youth gatherings. NAVFD invites you to consider forming an “Horizon Circle”, perhaps an inter-generational one! If you are able to do this we will welcome news of your Circle, ideas and photos. Please take some time to consider the great possibilities of this initiative.

