



The National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors (NAVFD)

September 2017

AMID THE UNCERTAINTIES – CALLED TO HOPE SUMMER 2017 RETREAT FOR RELIGIOUS 55 AND UNDER

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability (Acts 2:1-5).

This passage was instrumental in our opening ritual of the retreat. It reminded us that though we have come from six provinces, represented two Rites, and born in six different countries; we could understand one another's language as Religious, 55 and under, serving the People of God in Canada. The group of 20 participants ranging in age, gender and years in Religious life, gathered at Queens House in Saskatoon, SK July 13-18, 2017. The passage from the Acts of the Apostles, ends with the line, "what does this all mean?" (2:12) Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI led the group in reflecting and praying about the deeper questions as younger Religious amid the uncertainties in the 21st century. The sessions focused on; struggling to name

the present moment in Religious Life, Call to Community, Reflecting on our Vows, and Trying to Name and Accept the Challenge for Today. In addition to the formal in-put, the days were woven together with communal prayer options, silence and sacred cafes that invited further conversation and reflection.

The group was very grateful to gather and share in prayer, silence and community. These are some reflections from the participants:

- *I leave here filled with hope, hope for the future of Religious life. I have met some wonderful people passionate about being Religious. It was wonderful to connect with my peers and share experiences and learn from each other.*
- *I have experienced a real excitement and feeling of clarity and support from the talks and the sharing on this retreat.*
- *A good experience to be with other younger Religious to journey with deep reflections given by Father Ron Rolheiser.*
- *The energy gained by us being together keeps our hearts open to God's call.*
- *A joyful community sustains a Religious vocation and I found a joyful community here.*

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➤ *Though our numbers grow smaller, this gathering gives witness to the reality that God continues to call people with depth and joy to religious life today. Prayerfully considering the present and future of consecrated life in Canada with sisters and brothers from a variety of congregations was a great blessing.*

It was clear that there is a desire to offer another opportunity for this group, and others who were unable to attend. So we are delighted to announce that we will offer a retreat again July 12th -18th, 2018 at Queens House in Saskatoon. Father Ron has also offered to lead us with a new topic that will invite us to risk more boldly with the



Holy Spirit as younger Religious. More information to come in the following months.

We are very grateful to our collaborators that helped make this retreat possible; NAVFD for their support and promotion of the retreat through their publications, and to Queens House for the exceptional hospitality and willingness to receive the regis-

trations. Thank you to Father Ron Rolheiser for his passion, commitment and presence with us. I personally would like to thank those who joined me at the retreat and who live their Vocation as Religious with such hope. Also, to those who prayerfully supported and encouraged me to dream this into being, especially my SNJM community.

As we look to our future, we do so with hope and may the words *Veni Sancte Spiritus* echo in our hearts.

Sister Michelle Garlinski, SNJM

CONFERENCE 2018 TO ACCOMPANY WITH JOY AND HOPE

As you know, our keynote speakers are Gérald Cardinal Lacroix and Sister Nathalie Becquart, xau who will inspire all those who attend the NAVFD Conference from April 22-25, 2018 at the Sheraton Hotel in beautiful downtown Hamilton, Ontario.

Our conference gets off to a great start with the presence of **Rev. Tom Rosica**, CSB currently the Chief Executive Officer of Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation, Canada's first national Catholic Television Network. Rev. Tom will speak about Pope Francis' pastoral letter re youth

evangelization.

Registration packages are now available on our website vocations.ca.



*Something NEW: The registration fee is **waived** for one new member of any religious congregation when someone else from the congregation is attending the conference. Please note on registration page.*

Something else NEW: For the first time in NAVFD's history, simultaneous translation in English/French will be used for the keynote addresses.

We look forward to welcoming everyone to Hamilton!

LANDSCAPE OF RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS IN CANADA

Héctor Acero Ferrer, Project Manager

Greetings from the team of the “Canadian Vocations Ministry Study”!

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all those religious congregations that took the time to complete our surveys during the past few months. Your cooperation allowed us to reach the challenging goal we had set for our research –more than 50% of the religious institutes participated.

This overwhelmingly positive response rate – especially in the context of a national survey of this scale – will certainly help us understand the changing reality of religious vocations in our country.

This summer was also an opportunity to collect the qualitative data required by our research. Through three excellent focus groups, led by the researchers of *CARA - Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate*, we were able to compile the vocation stories of tens

of newer religious from across the country. The sites of these focus groups were

the groups.

As we move onto the fall season,



Toronto Focus Group

we can confidently say that we are well underway to presenting the results of our research at the 2018 National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors Conference to be held in Hamilton

Saskatoon, Montreal, and Toronto. In addition, we are hoping to conduct our last focus group in the East Coast early this fall.

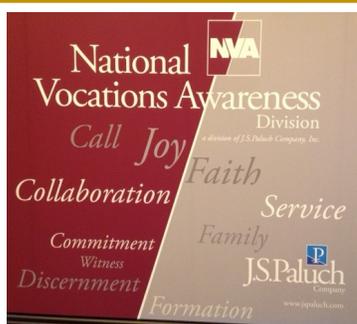
It is through the combination of quantitative and qualitative data that we will be able to develop a strategic plan that can enhance vocation animation in Canada.

This dream is becoming a reality thanks to all the congregations who have encouraged their newer members to complete the surveys and participate in

next spring. Stay tuned for more information about our research and our participation in the conference! If you have any questions, or wish to participate in one of our focus groups, please do not hesitate to contact me, Héctor Acero Ferrer, Project Manager at navfd.research@gmail.com.

As we continue this important research, we ask for your prayers and support.

Have a blessed fall season!



Ray Douziech, C.Ss.R. and Nancy Sullivan, CSJ of NAVFD were privileged to attend the 30th Annual J.S. Paluch Vocation Seminar held in Chicago in August.

Stay tuned for October's newsletter to read more about it.