



The National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors (NAVFD)

December 2018

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS GREETING

My early childhood memories of Christmas are with me today and prove to be a great teacher in how I prepare for the coming of the Child in this day and age. One early memory was how I was going to buy my mother a Christmas present. All of my childhood enthusiasm went into this project. Putting money aside from my allowance; doing odd jobs for the neighbours; helping a friend deliver his quota of newspapers etc. All of this was done as I dutifully filled my little jar of coins so I could make that most important purchase. Every time I added a few coins I would empty the jar on the bed and recount the precious loot.

This Advent I search for this childlike enthusiasm so that I might find the magic of the spirit of giving. With all of the years of experience of living many Advents you

would think the task would be easier. It isn't. We must "work at" being childlike in our relationship with the Lord.

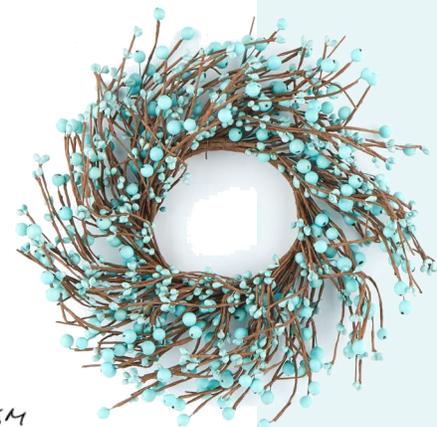
Preparing ourselves to kneel before the crèche on Christmas Eve and present the Child with His gift, ourself, is no easy task.

However it is worth the effort. The smile on my mother's face when I presented her with my treasure is with me to this day. Imagine the Child's gratitude.

The Board of NAVFD wish you all of His Graces as we prepare

to once again give of ourselves to the Lord for Christmas. Trust me it is worth the effort. Keep counting your precious coins as you put them into your jar of life.

Br. Denis Claivaz on behalf of the Board of NAVFD



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WALK WITH ME: ENCOUNTER, ACCOMPANIMENT AND INVITATION

The 2018 NRVC Convocation gathered participants in Buffalo, New York recently under the theme *Walk with me: Encounter, Accompaniment and Invitation*. For those engaged in Vocation Ministry, or in Congregation Leadership, this theme is a familiar one, and a challenging one. Each speaker spoke of the challenges we encounter to be open, inclusive and welcoming in the face of so much fear, exclusion and violence. We were invited to examine our own responses, approaches, and engagement with the theme. Kevin Di Prinzio, osa, reminded us that the “encounter itself is ultimately about meeting the presence of Christ here and now.” He led us through the process of Lectio Divina and offered it as a tool for encounter which can help us listen to, be present with, to stretch our hearts, and to invite others to experience the presence of Christ.

Dr. Hosffmann Ospino and Sr. Xiomara Mendez, op, each in their own way challenged us to examine our own biases. How much do our attitudes, expectations, and behaviours keep the other outside of our experience? In speaking about immigration, in particular the Hispanic community of the US, do we recognize those who live among us as being part of our communities of faith, or do we see them as separate, as “add-ons.” It was stated that we have an obligation to be present in the places where the young people are. There is much for us to reflect on in our own context here in Canada as we pride ourselves on our multi-cultural society. Two key insights for me were to see *accompaniment as prophetic solidarity* and to have a *radical respect for difference*.

Lastly, we were reminded that at the heart of our vocation is communion. Sr. Mary Pelegrino, csj, spoke with a vulnerability that comes from witnessing an act of violence, as she did, perpetrated against her

neighbours at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. Sr. Mary reminded us that separation is a myth. Using Parker Palmer’s *Tragic Gap*, the space between what is real and what we hope for, between corrosive cynicism and irrelevant idealism, we are called to be present in this gap to offer truth in love.

To view some of these presentations, please visit the NRVC website: <https://nrvc.net/508/publication/8623/article/18127-highlights-from-2018-convocation>

This Convocation provided us with richness of diversity upon which to reflect, so it was fitting that our Sr. Mary Rowell, who embodies diversity on many levels, professionally, personally, and nationally, received an *Outstanding Recognition Award* for her efforts in this difficult, ambiguous, and life-giving ministry of Vocation and Formation.

Sr. Joanne O’Regan, CSM

Vocations on the move: a change of mindset

- * Move from a pastoral care of recruitment to a pastoral care of discernment and accompaniment
- * Move from a pastoral care of expectation to a pastoral care of call, proposals and questioning
- * Announce the Gospel of Vocation by supporting all vocations
- * Make pastoral care more vocational
- * Becoming an ongoing discerning Church

By Sr Nathalie Becquart, xmcp at
NAVFD Conference 2018, Hamilton, ON