



The National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors (NAVFD)

September 2019



RELIGIOUS FORMATION CONFERENCE

The Religious Formation Conference (RFC) in the USA is excited to announce their 2019 Congress October 24-27 in Louisville, Kentucky under the theme, "Being Signs of Courageous Hope."

For more information: <https://rfccongress2019.com/presenters/>

NAVFD BOARD MEETING

The Board of NAVFD meets twice yearly with the next meeting being on Oct 7 and 8th. If you have something you would like the Board to address at their meeting, kindly contact Sr. Nancy Sullivan at navfdco@gmail.com.

CALLING TO NEW HORIZONS

As you know, our conference will be taking place in beautiful St. John's, Newfoundland from April 29 to May 2, 2020.

Keynote speakers are Dr. Richard Gaillardetz, "I Call you Friends': Toward a New Theology of Vocation"; Sr. Margo Ritchie, "Where is This Place Called Here?" and Fr. Daniel P. Horan, "Discernment, Vocation and Formation in the Thought of Pope



Francis." Attached to this newsletter is a brochure regarding the conference which you are encouraged to print off and distribute far and wide so that many people will be aware of the conference and make plans to attend.

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Here are just some of the members of the local Conference Planning Committee in St John's planning to make this conference the best one yet.

L to R: Bernadette Doherty, pbvm; Maureen O'Keefe, RSM; Eileen Penney, RSM and Earl Smith, SJ.

Chair of Conference 2020 Planning Committee Anne Walsh is hard at work. (right)



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HABITS OF THE HEART

Michelle Garlinski, snjm

Habits of the Heart was the title and focus of our third summer retreat as younger/newer Religious 55ish and under in Canada. We gathered at Queen of Apostles Retreat House in Mississauga Ontario. This group of 37 participants represented 19 Religious Communities, were born in 10 different countries and included various stages of Religious Life from Candidate to over 25 years professed. Once again, we were blessed to have Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI offer knowledge and wisdom as a companion on the journey with us.



their joy & love for their vocation and their day to day dedication. This left me with a renewed hope for young religious here in Canada.

What struck me particularly was the reflection on the polarization of our church and our world. More and more we hear of the extreme right against the extreme left and vice versa. As religious we are called to stand in the middle. It left me thinking “what am I doing personally to bridge the gap? What am I doing to reach

out to those I perceive as narrow minded? Does what I say build unity and peace, or does it cause even more division in our already fragmented world? Can we invite someone whose options get under our skin for supper? Can we as a community enter into dialogue with those who do not share our vision of the church but are still a part of it?

Sr. Arlene van Zyl, fmm, who lives in Ottawa and participated in the retreat for the first time this year, shared her reflection of the experience: *“I was thrilled to hear that there would be a retreat for younger religious from across Canada in Mississauga this year, just a train ride away! It has been on my heart to encounter other like-minded young religious, so this retreat was a real gift!*

The fire I heard and saw in many of those I met enflamed the fire within me; I was so encouraged by

“What an amazing and freeing experience! I praise our loving Abba for His Spirit who continues to guide the church and religious of today.”

We are truly grateful to God for the opportunity to gather, share and celebrate our vocation as Religious women and men serving the people of God in Canada and beyond. Thank to Fr. Ron, the planning team, NAFVD for its ongoing encouragement and our Individual Congregations for the many ways they have supported this retreat. See you next summer!

THE SURPRISING JOURNEY OF PRAYER

SAVE THE DATE for religious 55ish and under

The retreat will be an opportunity to reflect in prayer on the blessings of both the hills and valleys of our religious vocations. Sessions will include Scripture, time for silent prayer, community sharing and opportunities for personal conversations.

Guiding our retreat experience will be Sr. Bernadette O’Reilly NDS and Fr. Larry Gillick SJ.
Sunday July 26th (evening)- Saturday August 1st (morning) Queen’s House of Retreats, Saskatoon, SK

RESEARCH GATHERING—Oct. 9, in Toronto and at another time in Halifax and Edmonton, there will be gatherings of invited folks to talk about the results of the NAVFD national survey *Recent Vocations to Religious Life in Canada*. Questions considered will be ‘What is the survey saying?’ and ‘Where is the hope?’ and ‘How can the results of this research be used in our ministry of vocation and formation?’ among others.