



The National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors (NAVFD)

January 2019

VOCATION ALIVE! RECENT VOCATIONS TO RELIGIOUS LIFE IN CANADA: A NATION WIDE STUDY

In 2017, the National Association of Vocation and Formation Directors (NAVFD) were able, with a very generous grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, to conduct a country-wide study of recent vocations to religious life in Canada. The study revealed that while the numbers are smaller than in the past vocation is indeed alive and well in our country!

The study process included, surveys, in both French and English, sent to all leaders of religious communities in the country and to every newer (from the year 2000 to date) member of a religious community. To obtain further detailed information from newer members, focus groups were conducted in Saskatoon, Montreal and Toronto. The last stage of the research involved interviews with Congregational leaders of communities where “seeds” of new life are emerging and where those seeds now seek further nourishment. The results of the study correspond closely to similar studies carried out in Australia, France, Ireland and the United States. Below are some of the highlights of our Canadian research:

Things most helpful to those discerning the possibility of religious life

- Visits to communities, meeting with members of all ages for prayer and hospitality
- Spiritual direction
- “Come and See” experiences

- Discernment retreats
- Meeting with a Vocation Director
- Live-in and ministry experiences with members
- Websites and social media

Most rewarding aspects of religious life

- Pursuit of personal calling
- Growth in relationship with God and spiritual development
- Direction provided by the Congregation (charism and formation)
- Community life
- Communal practices of prayer/liturgy
- Ministry

Things that positively influenced the decision to enter a particular community

- Institute charism
- Prayer life
- Community life
- Types of ministry
- The example of member’s lifestyle
- Practices regarding the wearing of religious habit (significant for some and not so for others)
- Location and/or internationality

Most challenging aspects identified by new members

- Differences between new and established and older and younger members
- Cultural differences
- Ecclesiological differences
- Size of community
- Obedience

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The characteristics of congregations that are attractive to new members

- Deliberate attention to vocation ministry – including having a vocation director and team, attractive website and vocation materials, clear identity of charism and ministry
- Opportunities for members of all ages to interact with young people in meaningful activities
- Openness and flexibility in working with candidates and new members of different cultural backgrounds
- Authentic community life (small communities of between 4-7 members) and communal prayer
- Openness to change and willingness to adapt to new realities

“Take-Aways” for religious Congregations

- Make vocation animation a priority at all levels
- Work to have all members embrace a “culture of vocation”
- Be true to the charism of the Institute, to community life and to communal prayer
- Be open to change
- So, some very important and interesting results to help all communities as we continue to discern possible new membership and our commitment to that. Vocation is indeed alive!

MEMBERSHIP FEE FOR 2019:



It is that time of year when we ask that members renew their membership in NAVFD by completing the attached form and mailing it with their membership fee. We are always interested in having new members join us. An interest in vocation or formation ministry is the criteria. Membership includes a page on our popular website vocations.ca for your congregation, organization or diocese among other perks. You would also be supporting the work of NAVFD. The registration form is attached to this newsletter.



HABITS OF THE HEART—SURVIVING AND THRIVING AS A YOUNG(ER) RELIGIOUS TODAY

with Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

This retreat is for Religious 55(ish) and under, serving the people of God in Canada (or with some affiliation). The time will include input, silence, communal prayer, and conversation. The retreat invites us to ponder the habits of our heart that we need to embrace or abandon, to live and respond whole heartedly as younger Religious today in our communities, church and world.

Fr. Ron Rolheiser OMI, will walk with and lead us on our retreat.

Place: Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre, Mississauga ON

Date: July 14 - 19

Cost: \$775 (or \$875 with ensuite bathroom) **Deadline for Registration:** June 1

For information contact. Michelle Garlinski, SNJM mgchocha@me.com or text/call 204-688-1785

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VOCATION/FORMATION DIRECTORS (NAVFD)
MEMBERSHIP FORM**

For each congregation, diocese or organization, membership in NAVFD is for one person, includes a presence on our vocations.ca site and costs \$210.

Memberships for additional members from the same congregation, diocese or organization cost \$100 per person.

Congregation/Diocese/Organization:							
Title:	Sr.	Br.	Fr.	Mrs.	Ms.	Mr.	Other
Name:							
City:			Province/ State:				
Tel:							
Email:							
Congregation/Diocese/Organization website:							
Your Position:							

If there was the option of paying the membership fee online using a credit card, do you think you would do so? Likely Yes Likely No

Please make cheques payable to NAVFD and mail to:

NAVFD
c/o Sr. Nancy Sullivan
574 Northcliffe Ave.
Dundas ON L9H 7L9

Any questions? Contact Sister Nancy Sullivan at navfdco@gmail.com