



The National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors (NAVFD)

January 2021

THE POWER OF A PERSONAL CALL—LE POUVOIR DE L'APPEL PERSONNEL

Kristine Fernandes, CSJ



A few months ago, I joined Sr. Mary Rowell, CSJ to talk about vocation in Canada. Sr. Mary presented some of the key findings

of the NAVFD commissioned study – “Recent Vocations to Religious Life in Canada” and I spoke about my experience as a newer member of my religious community.

In 2017 NAVFD (National Association of Vocation and Formation Directors) and CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) conducted a study to get a better understanding of vocational trends in consecrated religious life in Canada. The study focused on members who entered religious life or professed perpetual vows since 2000. Members from 173 Religious congregations across Canada participated in it. The findings of the study were published in 2018 and have been presented numerous times since then. I was pleased with the results of the study and felt they provided good insight into what influences a person to join a particular Religious congregation as well as the challenges and joys that they face. Overall, the study re-affirmed my feeling of hope for religious life.

Il y a quelques mois, j'ai joint Sœur Mary Rowell, CSJ, pour parler de la vocation au Canada. Sœur Mary a présenté certaines des principales conclusions de l'étude commandée par l'Association nationale des responsables des vocations et de la formation (NAVFD) - "Recent Vocations to Religious Life in Canada" (Vocations récentes à la vie religieuse au Canada) et j'ai parlé de mon expérience en tant que nouvelle membre de ma communauté religieuse.

En 2017, l'Association nationale des responsables des vocations et de la formation (NAVFD) et CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) ont mené une étude pour mieux comprendre les tendances en matière de vocations dans la vie religieuse consacrée au Canada. L'étude a porté sur les membres qui sont entrés dans la vie religieuse ou ont fait profession perpétuelle depuis 2000. Des membres de 173 congrégations religieuses au Canada y ont participé. Les résultats de l'étude ont été publiés en 2018 et ont été présentés à de nombreuses reprises depuis lors. Je suis satisfaite des résultats de l'étude et j'estime qu'ils donnent un bon aperçu de ce qui pousse une personne à rejoindre une congrégation religieuse particulière ainsi que des défis et des joies auxquels elle est confrontée. Dans l'ensemble, l'étude a réaffirmé mon sentiment d'espoir pour la vie religieuse.

En 2017, deux mois seulement après mon entrée au noviciat, j'ai été invitée à participer à cette étude. J'étais toute

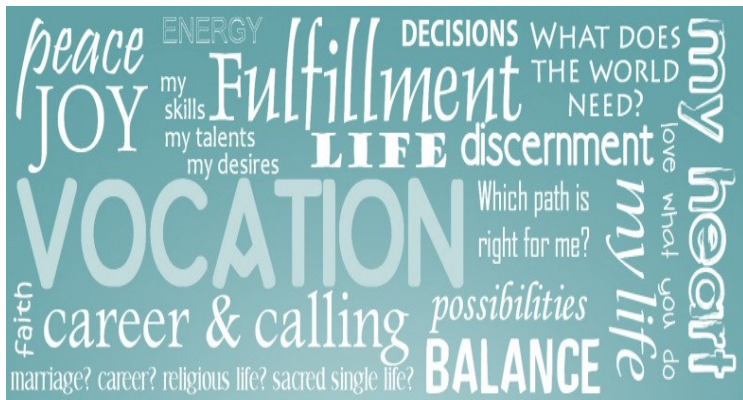
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Back in 2017, just two months after I entered the novitiate, I was invited to participate in this study. I was brand new to religious life and the joys and challenges of this lifestyle were all fresh and new. A couple of years later, in 2019, I deepened my commitment and professed religious vows for the first time as a Sister of St. Joseph of Toronto. As I prepared for the talk with Sr. Mary Rowell, I went over my survey responses to see if any of my answers had changed. I realized that the only thing I'd change was the way I ranked the challenges and rewards of religious life.



In 2017, what I found most rewarding about religious life was the time and opportunity to learn about myself and explore who I am and who God is calling me to be. Now a few years later, as I gradually get acclimatized to this lifestyle, I've come to realize that my supportive community is what I find most rewarding about religious life. In the presentation Sr. Mary uses a quote that I think expresses so well my experience of religious life. She quoted Sr. Virginia Herbers, ASCJ who says *"The most rewarding part of religious life is community living. Being surrounded by women who have given their entire lives as a gift to the service of God's people, returning home each evening to a praying community, waking up each new day to launch into a mission founded on a common charism."*

In novitiate my biggest challenge was reshaping my social life and adapting to this counter-cultural lifestyle. These days I find a bigger challenge is maintaining a balance between ministry, community life and prayer time. I have to make an intentional effort to schedule community time. Like many other newer members, I live in an inter-generational community and that means our energy levels vary. During the day I'm out and about busy with ministry work and often it flows into late evenings, especially when it involves young adult related

nouvelle dans la vie religieuse et les joies et les défis de ce style de vie étaient tous nouveaux et frais. Quelques années plus tard, en 2019, j'ai approfondi mon engagement et j'ai prononcé mes premiers vœux religieux en tant que Sœur de St-Joseph de Toronto. Alors que je me préparais pour l'entretien avec Mary Rowell, j'ai passé en revue mes réponses au questionnaire pour voir si certaines de mes réponses avaient changé. J'ai réalisé que la seule chose que j'aurais changée était la façon dont j'avais classé les défis et les récompenses de la vie religieuse.

En 2017, ce que j'ai trouvé le plus gratifiant dans la vie religieuse, c'est le temps et l'occasion d'apprendre à me connaître et d'explorer qui je suis et qui Dieu m'appelle à être. Aujourd'hui, quelques années plus tard, en m'acclimatant progressivement à ce mode de vie, je me suis rendue compte que ma communauté de soutien est ce que je trouve le plus gratifiant dans la vie religieuse. Dans la présentation, Sœur Mary Rowell utilise une citation qui, je pense, exprime si bien mon expérience de la vie religieuse. Elle a cité Sœur Virginia Herbers, ASCJ, qui dit : *"La partie la plus gratifiante de la vie religieuse est la vie communautaire. Être entourée de femmes qui ont donné leur vie entière comme un don au service du peuple de Dieu, rentrer chez soi chaque soir dans une communauté de prière, se réveiller chaque jour pour se lancer dans une mission fondée sur un charisme commun."*

Au noviciat, mon plus grand défi a été de remodeler ma vie sociale et de m'adapter à ce style de vie contre-culturel. Aujourd'hui, mon plus grand défi est de maintenir un équilibre entre le ministère, la vie communautaire et le temps de prière. Je dois faire un effort intentionnel pour planifier le temps communautaire. Comme beaucoup d'autres nouveaux membres, je vis dans une communauté intergénérationnelle et cela signifie que nos niveaux d'énergie varient. Pendant la journée, je suis très occupée par le travail du ministère et souvent, il se prolonge tard dans la soirée, en particulier lorsqu'il s'agit d'un ministère lié aux jeunes adultes. Quand je rentre à la maison, encore énergisée après le ministère, les sœurs se préparent à aller au lit. Cette lutte pour trouver un équilibre entre la vie communautaire et la vie ministérielle est devenue un peu plus facile ces derniers mois grâce à la pandémie en cours et aux restrictions sur les réunions sociales. Les réunions qui me tenaient hors de la

ministry. By the time I get home still wired-up after ministry, the Sisters are getting ready for bed. This struggle to find a balance between community life and ministry life has become a bit easier in recent months thanks to the on-going pandemic and restrictions on social gatherings. Meetings that used to keep me out of the house in the evenings now take place virtually over Zoom or other video-conferencing platform. The Sisters in my house join me in these virtual gatherings and after I've logged off, we unpack my ministry experience together. Their active participation in my ministry has enhanced our community conversations and their deep listening and insights allows me to gain a different perspective. When the in-person meetings re-start, I will miss this shared community time. Community living is a challenge, but it also brings great joy.

As a newer member, I often get asked about the future of religious life and why I joined a congregation that has a significant age imbalance. I am excited about the future of religious life and it is my personal vocation call and pursuit of that call that fills me with hope for the future. I was busy living my life caught up in my career while did a bit of volunteer work on the weekend. My call to religious life was unexpected and took me by surprise, the most surprising was where it happened. It wasn't at church or while I was praying but at a pub when I was out with friends. (But that's another story for another time.) I still get amazed at how I ended up as a Sister of St Joseph of Toronto. However, when I pause and reflect on my life, I can clearly see how God was gently nudging me along, patiently waiting while I explored other paths until I was ready and open to listen. When I started discerning religious life, I was a bit apprehensive about joining a community where most of the members were not only from a different cultural background but also significantly older than me. However, my attraction to the charisma and spirituality of the Sisters of St Joseph of Toronto was so strong that it gave me the courage to move forward. That attraction which has been re-affirmed many times over, combined with the amazement of my vocation call is what gives me hope for the future. Religious life is evolving, and I am delighted to be a part of that evolution. I believe God is still calling women and men to holiness --- and I am filled with abundant hope.

maison le soir ont maintenant lieu virtuellement sur Zoom ou une autre plateforme de vidéoconférence. Les sœurs de ma maison se rejoignent aux réunions virtuelles et, une fois que je me suis déconnectée, nous déballons ensemble mon expérience du ministère. Leur participation active dans mon ministère a amélioré nos conversations communautaires et leur écoute et leur compréhension approfondies me permettent d'acquérir une perspective différente. Lorsque les réunions en personne reprendront, ce temps communautaire partagé me manquera. La vie en communauté est un défi, mais elle apporte aussi beaucoup de joie.

En tant que nouvelle membre, on me pose souvent des questions sur l'avenir de la vie religieuse et sur les raisons pour lesquelles j'ai rejoint une congrégation qui présente un important déséquilibre d'âge. Je suis enthousiaste quant à l'avenir de la vie religieuse et c'est l'appel personnel à la vocation et la poursuite de cet appel qui me remplit d'espoir pour l'avenir. J'étais occupée à vivre ma vie, prise dans ma carrière, tout en faisant un peu de bénévolat les fins de semaine. Mon appel à la vie religieuse était inattendu et m'a prise par surprise, le plus surprenant étant le lieu où il s'est produit. Ce n'était pas à l'église ou pendant que je priais, mais dans un pub quand je sortais avec des amis. (Mais c'est une autre histoire pour une autre fois.) Je suis toujours étonnée de voir comment j'ai fini comme Sœur de St-Joseph de Toronto. Cependant, lorsque je m'arrête et que je réfléchis à ma vie, je vois clairement comment Dieu me poussait doucement, attendant patiemment que j'explore d'autres chemins jusqu'à ce que je sois prête et ouverte à écouter. Lorsque j'ai commencé à discerner la vie religieuse, j'appréhendais un peu de rejoindre une communauté dont la plupart des membres étaient non seulement d'un autre milieu culturel mais aussi nettement plus âgées que moi. Cependant, mon attirance pour le charisme et la spiritualité des Sœurs de Saint-Joseph de Toronto était si forte qu'elle m'a donné le courage d'aller de l'avant. Cette attirance, qui a été réaffirmée à maintes reprises, combinée à l'étonnement de mon appel à la vocation, est ce qui me donne de l'espoir pour l'avenir. La vie religieuse évolue et je suis ravie de faire partie de cette évolution. Je crois que Dieu appelle toujours les femmes et les hommes à la sainteté --- et je suis remplie d'une espérance abondante.

THE POWER OF A PERSONAL CALL

WEBINAR: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27 | 1:00PM CENTRAL, 2:00PM EASTERN



ReligiousFormation
CONFERENCE

Not everything can be fixed or cured, but it should be named properly. As we enter a new year, what is our present moment in

terms of the issues we face within religious formation? What are our underlying assumptions about our world and our church? Where does our hope lie? In 2021 and beyond, what should be our agenda moving forward? This webinar will be an exercise in naming and will explore our response as believers in Christ's Good News.



Fr. Ronald Rolhheiser entered the novitiate of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and professed his First Vows in September 1966. Ordained to the priesthood in 1972, Ron continued his education, receiving a B.A. (University of Ottawa, 1969), B.Th. (Newman Theological College, 1973), M.A. (University of San Francisco, 1974), M.R.Sc. (University of Louvain, 1982) and Ph.D./STD (University of Louvain, 1983). During and after his own studies, he taught theology and philosophy at Newman Theological College, n Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Keeping an active speaking schedule, his retreats and workshops have inspired many. [<< CLICK TO REGISTER >>](#)



CONFERENCE 2021

APRIL 26, 27, 28, 2021

Our Conference is only a few months away now. Are you getting excited? It promises to be the best online conference ever.

We have three dynamic keynote presenters—Dr Richard Gaillardetz, Sr. Margo Ritchie and Rev. Daniel Horan as well as nine interesting workshops, a mesmerizing AGM and a facilitator (Sr Elizabeth Davis) who brings out the best for participants to be able to absorb. Registration packages in English and in French are attached to this newsletter. We ask that you pass on the information about our conference around the world as we are no longer limited to only those who are able to travel to Newfoundland. We are delighted to be partnering with Carly Silberstein and her colleagues at Redstone Agency (<https://www.redstoneagency.ca/>) who will help us to take our planned in-person conference online.



Carly Silberstein

BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!!!! NAVFD'S STRATEGIC PLAN STARTS NOW!

Building on various initiatives over the past few years and in light of having been in existence for over a dozen years now, the Board of NAVFD determined that it is time to embark on a strategic planning process to consult many stakeholders in order to set direction for NAVFD for the next five years and beyond.

To this end, we have recently secured the services of People Development Ltd (<https://www.pdltd.net/>) and will be working with Debbie Castle and Judy Johnson to move us through the process. We will be calling on you as members and friends of NAVFD for your input and we look forward to your participation in the process over the next nine months.





55ISH AND UNDER RETREAT VIRTUAL 2021 AUGUST 8 -14,

An invitation Towards Hope
Sister Mary Rowell, csj

To learn more about the 55ish and Under group, visit our website blog site at aroundthewell.ca.

55ISH AND UNDER RETREAT VIRTUEL 2021 8-14 AOÛT,

Une invitation à l'espoir
Sœur Mary Rowell, csj.

Consultez le site Web aroundthewell.ca pour plus d'informations.

MEMBERSHIP/ADHÉSION



Being a member of NAVFD entitles you to receive the monthly newsletter, participate in NAVFD webinars, receive a lower rate on conference registration and have a presence of your congregation, organization, diocese on our website vocations.ca. The main reason though for becoming a member is to support the ministry of NAVFD which fosters a culture of vocations across Canada. Thank you for your support!

The membership form is attached for you to complete and mail or email to navfdco@gmail.com and then either mail the fee or send it through PayPal in the **Donate** section of navfd.info which is:

<http://navfd.info/donate/>.

An interest in vocation or formation ministry is the criteria for membership.

Être membre de l'Association nationale des responsables des vocations et de la formation (NAVFD) vous donne le droit de recevoir le bulletin d'information mensuel, participer aux webinaires de la NAVFD, bénéficier d'un tarif réduit pour l'inscription aux conférences et avoir une présence de votre congrégation, organisation, diocese sur notre site web vocations.ca. La raison principale pour devenir membre

est de soutenir le ministère de l'Association nationale des responsables des vocations et de la formation (NAVFD) qui encourage une culture des vocations à travers Canada. Merci pour votre soutien!

Vous trouverez ci-joint le formulaire d'adhésion que vous pouvez remplir et envoyer par courrier ou par courriel à navfdco@gmail.com et vous pouvez alors envoyer les frais par courrier ou utiliser PayPal dans la section « **Donate** » de navfd.info, soit: <http://navfd.info/donate/>.

Un intérêt pour la pastorale des vocations ou de la formation est le critère pour devenir membre.

ONLINE WORKSHOP FOR FORMATORS, VOCATION DIRECTORS, CONGREGATION LEADERS



Trail-Blazing Formation – Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

“Do not follow where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Friday, **FEBRUARY 26** and Saturday, **FEBRUARY 27** 2021

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE op

PRESENTERS: MARY ROWELL csj & PETER BISSON sj

Please see the next page for full information!

Virtual Formator Workshop

Trail-Blazing Formation – Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

*Do Not Follow Where the Path May Lead,
Go Instead Where There is No Path and Leave A Trail*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Friday, February 26 – Saturday, February 27, 2021

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Timothy Radcliffe, OP

Session Presenters:

Sr. Mary Rowell, CSJ

Rev. Peter Bisson, SJ

This is an online event
via
Zoom Conferencing

This virtual Formator Workshop will provide an opportunity for vocation and formation ministers to dialogue and learn from one another on topics relevant to these unprecedented times:

- What is the impact of COVID-19 in the ministry of formation?
- How will we work for justice and equality in a COVID-19 world?

Presentations by our speakers will also offer participants a chance to gain new insights and to then pose questions for response during the Speakers Panel.

Registration is Now Open - Cost: \$100.00 (CAD) per person

Participant Name: _____

Religious Institute and Initials: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (C) _____ (W) _____

Payment Options:

By Cheque: Print and complete this form and mail with payment to:

The Southdown Institute
Attn: Susan Davy, CSJ
18798 Old Yonge Street
Holland Landing, ON L9N 0L1

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For further information, please contact Sr. Susan Davy, CSJ: sdavy@southdown.on.ca

Sponsored By: The Southdown Institute



AGENDA OVERVIEW

Friday, February 26, 2021

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (ET)
Welcome
Workshop Overview
Social

Saturday, February 27, 2021

10:00 am (ET) Opening
10:15 am (ET) **Keynote Speaker:**
Rev. Timothy Radcliffe, OP
Small Group Discussions
Large Group Discussion
12:00 pm (ET) Lunch
1:00 pm (ET) **Presentation 1:**
Sr. Mary Rowell, CSJ
Small Group Discussion
Presentation 2:
Rev. Peter Bisson, SJ
Small Group Discussion
Panel Discussion
4:45 pm (ET) Closing
5:00 pm (ET) Workshop Ends

An Invitation Towards Hope

Virtual Retreat
for Religious 55ish and Under
who minister or are associated
through their community to
the Church in Canada.

August 8 – 14, 2021

Retreat Leader: Sr. Mary Rowell, csj
- bioethicist - spiritual companion - facilitator
- ecological leader – educator -



Our hope is in Jesus Christ.

This retreat will give us space
as we continue to live through
the COVID-19 pandemic,
to name the struggles of the present
as we continue on with hope
as Eucharistic people.

How do we contemplate
and take action as Church
and support each other as religious?

Cost: \$150
Registration Opens: March 1