

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT NOVEMBER 2017

Our national and world context

As a national organization committed to core values of Catholic faith and Identity, it's important to keep the larger world in mind as we look at our NRVC mission. This isn't an exhaustive list, but it gives us a chance for reflection and prayer.

Severe weather continues: Hurricanes and related storms have wreaked havoc on many coastal areas. These climate events cause me to not only pray but to consider my geo-footprint, and how we care for Mother Earth. I was lucky my family in Houston was rescued by boat.

Las Vegas shooting: This traumatic event has evoked agonizing questions: What more could have been done, and what more can be done to further minimize the risks of such violence? Answers do not come easily.

Earthquakes in Mexico: Again people are questioning how to prevent the amount of suffering caused by these natural disasters.

North Korea: The heated rhetoric between North Korea and the U.S. makes me wonder if a war is brewing. I always wonder who really wins in situations like these, and as a Franciscan with the vow of nonviolence, I believe war is never an answer.

Health care: The good news is that access to health care is still alive and has not been overturned.

I continue this report with a verse from Philippians in mind, "Brothers and sisters: Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." May these words guide the work of NRVC.

Media coverage in Global Sisters Report, NunDay online videos

During our previous board meeting, I received a call from the National Catholic Reporter's Global Sisters Report. Amid the bustle of the Paluch Seminar, our communications consultant, Patrice Touhy of TrueQuest Communications sat with me and prepped me for the interview. If you have not seen or read it, it can be found at the following link. Thank you board member Father Toby Collins, C.R. for the photo we were able to supply for this story, [Q & A with Sr. Sharon Dillon, executive director of the National Religious Vocation Conference](#).

I'm also delighted to share with you this 1-minute video of me speaking on ["How do you live out the gospel in your role as executive director of National Religious Vocation Conference?"](#) This was made by A Nun's Life Ministry to help create awareness about the lives of Catholic Sisters. I helped make a second short [video on "What is my hope for vocation ministry?"](#) at A Nun's Life's video workshop October 27-28 in Toledo, Ohio. Several NRVC members and the NRVC publications editor were able to take advantage of this excellent pilot video training program.

Member Area Coordinators meeting

Our Member Area Coordinators met at the Felician Motherhouse September 11-13, thanks to the superb organizational efforts of Sister Deborah Borneman, SS.C.M., our director of member relations and services. I was able to attend the first evening and enjoyed my first chance to meet almost all of the member area coordinators. We have a great group helping in the leadership of the NRVC. Thank you also to Maureen Cetera, director of finance and operations, and Marge Argyelan, database administrator, who told about their roles in the national office. All of us are deeply grateful to member area coordinators for their commitment and hard work.

Catholics on Call Partners Conference

The annual Partners Conference for Catholics on Call was held at Catholic Theological Union September 21-22, 2017, and most of the attendees were members of NRVC. Frank Mercadante, of Cultivation Ministries (who gave an NRVC workshop on youth outreach in 2016) spoke on “Unexcused Absence: Why Millennials Are Disconnected from the Church and What We Can Do About It.” I was invited to respond to his presentation after each section.

National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors convention

The annual convention of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors was held in New Orleans from September 21-28, 2017. The keynote speakers were excellent, Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano, Bishop of Bridgeport, Connecticut and Father Michael Schmitz, the director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Duluth and Chaplain for the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. They focused on traits needed to be a healthy and holy minister in the church. I gave a report to over 400 priests about the NRVC. Father Charlie Johnson, a new board member, who also belongs to NCDVD was one of the many friendly faces in the crowd!

During the conference I was fortunate to stay with the Sisters of Mt. Carmel, whose hospitality was a slice of heaven at the end of each day. Since I was in the area, Brother Ronnie Hingle, S.C., our board chair, showed me a little of the Louisiana town where he grew up, and the two of us worked very hard on business for the board and on a grant application.

Finance Committee meeting

The Finance Committee met on October 3 at the Cenacle in Chicago, hosted by NRVC member Sister Janice Bemowski, R.C. We discussed and reviewed the budgets in depth. Thanks to everyone’s hard work, there are some great suggestions coming forward from this committee. Many thanks to those who serve on this committee: Maureen Cetera, director of finance and operations; Sister Janice Bemowski, R.C.; Sister Anna Maria Espinosa (board liaison); Melissa Keane-Smetana; Geraldine Smrcina; and Keith Zekind.

While NRVC's efforts to secure support for its work are separate from the work of the Finance Committee, our development efforts receive great attention the staff and board and are ongoing.

Networking continues

- The process of helping usher in a Rome-based International Vocation Office continues to unfold.
- I am holding monthly Skype calls with Sister Pat Murray at the International Union of Superiors General (UISG)
- I will attend a UISG Vocation Meeting in Rome in December, along with a board member (to be determined) and Patrice Tuohy. The UISG is sponsoring an international Congress on Vocation Ministry in anticipation of the 2018 vocation-themed bishops synod.
- I attended a video training workshop sponsored by A Nun's Life in Sylvania, Ohio Oct. 26-28.
- I attended a Paluch Family Foundation Gala on October 17.
- Will attend the Religious Formation Conference November 16-18.
- I will attend the final part of the National Catholic Youth Conference in November
- I will attend a conference of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in November

Appreciation

I continued to be humbled by the number of organizations and connections NRVC has and by the respect it has earned. Thank you to all of you who have helped advance vocation ministry in ways that I don't even know about. My heart is filled with gratitude. I feel blessed to be of service to the NRVC , and I know we continue our journey to remain mission focused and financially sound as we begin the new strategic planning process. And so NRVC moves forward, spreading the good news about religious life, and inviting a new generation to consider where God's call might lead.