



DELAWARE VALLEY MEMBER AREA

Delaware Valley Member Area Zoom Meeting Minutes June 5, 2023 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Members present:

Sr. Akeneta Lalakoubouma, RA, Sr. Anita Bolton, CSR, Sr. Carol Ann Nawracaj OSF, Sr. Cathie Meighan, SSJ, Sr. Diane Tomkinson, OSF, Sr. Helen Sanchez, MPF, Ms. Kim Walker (Sisters of the Redeemer), Sr. Michele Fisher, CSFN,

Opening Prayer: “Christ Has No Body Now But Yours” video led by Sr. Carol Ann Nawracaj, OSF

NRVC Updates

- **Summer Institute** (in person) – July 5-24
 - Register on [NRVC Store](#)
- **Word Youth Day** – August 1-6, Lisbon Portugal
Note: Sr. Cathie Meighan, SSJ will be traveling to World Youth Day as a companion with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. There will be ongoing faith based groups continuing throughout the year for those who attend the Youth Day. If anyone else will be attending WYD, please contact Sr. Michele.
- **Fall Institute** – Virtual workshops
 - Orientation For New Vocation Directors** – Oct. 9-13
 - Behavioral Assessment 1** – Oct. 17-19
 - Accompaniment and Communication with Young Catholics** – Oct. 24-26
- **Winter Workshop** (in person)
 - Behavioral Assessment 2 – Redemptorist Renewal Center, Tucson, AZ n Dec. 2-3
- **NRVC Board Update**

At its April 2023 meeting, the NRVC board made the following changes to its leadership:

Board chair: Sister Nicole Trahan, F.M.I.

Vice chair of finance and development: Mr. Len Uhal

Vice chair of membership and data (until her term ends in December 2023): Sister Belinda Monahan, O.S.B.

In addition, the board accepted the resignation of Sister Marichui Bringas, C.C.V.I. (2020-2023) and appointed the following individuals to serve as board members beginning in December, 2023: Brother Joseph Bach, O.S.F., Sister Margarita Hernandez, S.P., Friar Mario Serrano, O.F.M. Conv., Brother Edward Shields, F.S.C., and Sister Gail Trippett, C.S.J.

- **Eucharistic Pilgrimage 2024** – see NRVC website for details. Since the Eastern Route of the pilgrimage will pass through our Member Area, we may want to get involved. Something to keep in mind for this year’s ongoing planning

Member Area Business

- **Member Area Finance report** – At present we have a balance of \$3,936.82 in our account, minus \$100 for the donation we are sending to the Franciscan Sisters of Philadelphia in memory of Sister Christopher Marie Wagner, OSF.
- **Member Area Dues discussion:** In light of the significant amount of funds remaining in our account at this time, we will not collect Member Area Dues until such a time when our funds reach the \$1,500.00 mark. We will then decide how much to ask from each participating community. In the meantime, we will use existing funds as appropriate for our activities and will ask for a participation fees or donations for things not covered by NRVC funds.
- **What our NRVC funds are to be used for:**
 1. Education/formation for members (speaker stipends, etc)
 2. Activities and events that are **created and sponsored by** the Member Area
 3. Promotional materials that are used in common by all participating Member Area communities (postcards, prayer cards, give-aways for events)
 4. Other requests for funds can be discussed by the group and voted upon, as long as they adhere to the guidelines.

Requests for funds need to be made early to allow the NRVC Office to process the request. Forms for these requests are available in the Member Area Coordinator handbook.

Group conversation

- Taking information gleaned from the 9 people who completed the Member Area Survey and the eight people present for the meeting, about 60% of members are saying that opportunities for collaborative events are what is most essential and most important for our members. About 20% stated that professional development is important and the remaining 20% were looking for opportunities to network with others and share resources.
- Looking at the written input from the survey, it seemed that offering collaborative Discernment Retreats was a priority along with one or two

significant on-line events and the possibility of taking responsibility for the Gift of Mission Program for high school age youth.

- According to the survey and those present at the meeting, 50% of participants expressed a willingness to be part of working committees to prepare, plan for and coordinate events on behalf of the Member-Area. The other 50% expressed a “maybe” response!
- Results were pretty evenly divided as to the number of meetings we should plan for the year. After a good amount of discussion, the group seemed to lean toward quarterly meetings, two hybrid (in-person with part of the meeting by Zoom, and two by Zoom. Planning committee meetings would take place as needed, most likely by Zoom. Members will be invited to take responsibility to help plan and prepare for meetings.
- Meeting times are always a challenge, especially with more members taking on various traditional ministries, like education. We agreed that the opening and closing meetings, which would be in person and involve more “substance” would run from 10AM-2PM. The virtual meetings can rotate between afternoons and evenings to try to accommodate everyone’s schedules.

Next Steps Moving Forward

- We will plan to offer two **Discernment Weekends** (men and women combined) over the coming year, one in Pennsylvania and the other in New Jersey. Sr. Cathie Meighan, SSJ will reach out to the SSJ Spirituality Center in Ocean Grove, New Jersey and Sister Michele Fisher will reach out to the Mother Boniface Center and the IHM Spirituality Center to see if there is any availability. Ms. Kim Walker sent out a list of retreat centers, so if we need to look farther, we have more options to explore. **Anyone willing to be part of the planning committees for these retreats, please contact Sister Michele by July 1st.**
- Sister Michele will reach out to Sisters. Mindy Welding and Ruth Harkins, Scranton IHM, former vocation directors, to see if they can offer interested group members a tutorial on the “Gift of Mission” Program which was created by Sr. Ruth Harkins. After the program, we can decide if this is something we want to pick up as a member Area and continue to offer.
- Since many individual Congregations will have activities planned for things like National Vocation Awareness Week, Consecrated Life Day and National Catholic Sisters Week, we decided to take advantage of World Day of Prayer for Vocations (April 2024) as a time to try to host another virtual event. If there are possibilities for other collaborative events surrounding any of the other days, please send the information to Sister Michele to distribute to the group.
- Sister Michele offered to host our first in-person/hybrid gathering on **Tuesday, August 29 from 10AM-2PM** at the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth convent in northeast Philadelphia. Please mark your calendars! **Anyone interested in planning the schedule and events for the day, please contact Sister Michele by July 1st**

Other Opportunities for Involvement

- In the course of our conversation about collaborative activities, various events that are taking place in the coming months within our Member Area were mentioned. The following events and contact information follows below:
- **FIAT Days** in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia - for girls in 7th-12th grades – June 30-July 2, 2023 at Mother Boniface Center. Contact Sister Florence Enechukwu, MSHR at sr.fenechukwu@archphila.org
- **Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Czestochowa** – Aug. 10-13, 2023
<https://czestochowa.us/ministries/walking-pilgrimage/>
- **55th Annual Polish American Family Festival** at Our Lady of Czestochowa Shrine, Doylestown, PA
September 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12, 2023 from 12 to 8 PM
<https://czestochowa.us/newsevents/festival/>
- **Abbey Fest** - Saturday, September 16, 2023 at Daylesford Abbey
<https://theabbeyfest.com/>
- Young Catholic Professionals – see what’s happening in your diocese:
youngcatholicprofessionals.org
- Please let Sister Michele know of any other opportunities for involvement in your dioceses, ministries or Congregations.

Delaware Valley Member Area Survey

- **We are seeking member input regarding important information for future planning. If you have not already done so, kindly complete the survey at the following link by June 15th:**
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKbdmv5HTibvPHvX03q09-sQQBKDUGcPRN4wMuwikNLC28kA/viewform?usp=sharing>

Next meeting – In Person/Hybrid

Tuesday, August 29 from 10AM-2PM at Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth Convent, Philadelphia. Parts of the gathering will also be available by Zoom

Closing Prayer – Prayer from the words of Pope Francis for the XX Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life prepared by Sr. Carol Ann Nawracaj, OSF

The meeting concluded at 8:35 PM

Respectfully submitted by Sister Michele Fisher, CSFN

Sister Michele Fisher, CSFN