

# CATHOLICS ON CALL PARTNERS CONFERENCE -- SEPTEMBER 2012

*Group Discussion – Notes from Newsprint*

## **What did you hear today that was new for you?**

- Young people come for community and ministry, but not for the church.
- Young adults are attracted to religious life, not necessarily ministry.
  - Call to discipleship (at baptism); want the life, not the Church.
- Community vs. Church; very American
- It's too late to go back to "how we all discerned our call" to religious life/charism shapes life rather than corporate ministry
- Baby boomers generation: some lack theological training (trained instead to be nurses, teachers, etc.)
- Lay Ecclesial Ministers (LEM)—direct ecclesial service vs. religious life—ecclesial way of life (link the two)
  - Characteristics of a religious movement → applied to new affiliations
  - Hurt by "ecclesial" assessment
- More men than women entering religious life—further question: diocesan vs. communities?
- Vocation as who we are, not what we do – call to balance of being and doing

## **Is there anything you disagreed with today?**

- Presentation lacked diversity—attention to diversity in all its forms—put sociology and theology together from a more multicultural perspective.
- Insufficient reference to sources she cited/insufficient number of sources used—the NRVC is from 2009—3 years old
- Education can be a bridge, not a barrier.

## **What can you apply to your ministry with young adults?**

- Fair and just wage –for both religious and non-religious; sustainable life
- Call to discipleship—focus on this; may help volunteerism
- NRVC Follow-up DVD – "Moving Forward in Hope;" What's next?
- Communication in religious orders and different generations
- Transparencies in ALL organizations
- Invite young adults then walk them through process—How do we keep and nurture that? How do we transform ourselves?
  
- Not "recruiting" but "walking with," especially today with different charisms speaking to "identity"
- Can we do this for ANY young adult—even if they want marriage? Introduce them to our charisms and help them live as disciples?
- Openness!

- Are we willing to invest in the internal work required to model...
- Celebrate diversity; willingness to evolve and integrate; letting go; reclaim the passion; listening and responding compassionately, NOT blocking the Spirit; flexibility
- In an effort to invite (drawn picture of a flame) in and Empower others and reverence our commonality.
  
- Vocations are happening (Rich places—promotion); missionary outreach with laity; foster community with laity and religious
- Ecclesial work and study
- The need for TR process. Is our call still relevant in the culture/calling?
- In China—problem with vocation; theological teaching not available; no support for Sisters
- Process for formation
  
- Deep respect for the diverse expressions of religious life and as prophetic religious we could be being called to be “bridge builders” between the polarities of Catholic identity today.
  
- The Vocations Young Adults Want
  - Need paradigm shift, especially in religious communities right now; we’re doing maintenance. Lacking in sense of welcoming, openness to millennials sometimes.
  - Possibility of religious men and women who would otherwise live alone, living together and valuing and offering community in that way
  - We’re all consecrated in baptism—varying ways that plays out in different vocations
  - Intentional, temporary? Communities
  - Ecumenical options—what does future membership look like?
  - Focus on discipleship first
  - Return to “double” monasteries, also including laity?
  
- We have to have face time with young adults! We cant’s just be based on studies!
- Awareness of difficulty for individuals hoping to do lay ecclesial ministry—economically, etc.
  
- Making connections (e.g. between religious communities and LEMs)
  - For example: parish running group
- Offer what you already do well...gathering space, spiritual formation/direction, “neutrality” → unity!
- Formation: mentor/apprentice relationship
  
- Millennials are looking for spirituality and identity in religious life
- How do we translate academic terminology to “young adult speech” to pick up on when young adults are struggling with these issues and minister to them?

## **What would you do differently after today?**

- Be more aware of cultural diversity—help young adults think of alternative ways to live beyond religious life.
- Religious congregations must work together with LEMs (and offer what LEMs need spiritually)
- Healing: Be agents of Hope and Healing, acknowledge suffering and woundness

## **Additional Questions**

- Does celibacy discussion ignore chastity?
- How do we deal with cultural realities among lay ministers?
- How do we balance experience vs. education?
- Shift to living singly—further question: rise in associates/affiliates?
  
- How do we counter resistance to permanent commitment as a cultural issue?
- How can we nurture newer members in the reality that we deepen rather than limit our freedom through permanent commitment?
- Agree that religious life is in transition. How can we be open to the spirit and “get out of the way”?
- Religious communities have to ask how they will face the future: Do we refound? Have we met our mission and do we pave the way for a new generation? Tension between keeping identity of religious community and ministering to new needs.
- Multi/Bi-Vocational, being prepared for many ministries, adaptable for today’s world
  - How do we bridge generational gaps in community, in the workplace, in parishes?
  - How do we create genuine Christian community?
  - Catechesis—What do they know? What’s lacking?

## **Other Comments**

- Need for continuum of ages in congregation
- Do we put “catholic” first? = case of identity
- Largest denomination in USA = Catholics
- 2<sup>nd</sup> largest = fallen away/searching Catholics
- How do we minister to the 90%?
- Do we love the singer or the song?
  
- Add to presentation—the larger context of religious life (including) inculturation vs. counter cultural, professionalism, individualism, partnering in community (super small communities), economics, competition for pool of available people
  
- Common life vs. community life
- Uniformity
- What I want/need vs What community wants/needs
- Institutions turned over—new call to support/facilitate new forms of life.
- History—Gifts of not settling—moving on; fidelity to our roots
- Job vs. ministry; intent and mission