



NRVC
National Religious
Vocation Conference

2022 CONVOCAATION CALL BEYOND BORDERS

HANDOUT TO ACCOMPANY THE VIDEO PRESENTATION BY **FATHER VÃNTHANH NGUYỄN, S.V.D.**



Vocation in the Age of Migration: Equipping the Saints for Mission and Ministry

FATHER VÃNTHANH NGUYỄN, S.V.D. invites us to reflect upon: In our age of migration, the possibility to go beyond borders is enormous and limitless.

Before/after watching the video on the NRVC YouTube Channel (tinyurl.com/4utnn9d5), read the fourth chapter of Ephesians, which provides a catalog of virtues to emulate, and review the selected topics and quotes below from the presentation to ponder the significance of our own story of call and endless response to be stretched beyond borders.



Scan for
video

The changing face of the Church

- Current statistics indicate that Christian migrants, refugees, or immigrants are the largest population of people on the move, totaling 49 percent of all migrants, or about 105 million people. If every Christian migrant is a potential missionary, migration could have enormous prospects for evangelization and vocations.
- With the shifting Christian demographics there will also surely emerge a new way of doing theology, whereby the voices of all people shall be heard, especially those on the margins: women, people of color, and the poor. Doing theology and even interpreting scripture from a global perspective is important and necessary so as to be both credible and attractive.
- This transformation brings ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity to our liturgical and sacramental celebrations, influences our religious devotions, and even alters the makeup of most formation houses and programs in the U.S.
- The most common ministry for international sisters, many of whom are in pursuit of an education, is parish ministry. On any given Sunday, an estimated 8,500 foreign-born priests are preaching from U.S. pulpits or otherwise serving in the U.S.
- Those attracted to religious life come from all over the globe. Diversity in the Church is not solely a contemporary experience. The Church has been diverse since the very beginning when it wisely recognized that diversity did not threaten unity but could be a gift and a blessing.

FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION

How would you rate yourself/your community in developing the following intercultural behaviors:

- + Ability to tolerate ambiguity, empathize, and respect other customs/traditions
- + Knowledge of more than one perspective and more than one's first language
- + Knowledge of different interpretations of the same cultural reality
- + Knowledge of general dynamics of intercultural communication
- + Openness to other cultures with the desire to learn and engage in more cultures
- + Humility about what you don't know
- + Understanding that intercultural humility is a way of life, not a problem to be solved

As leaders, educators, community members, and vocation directors,
we are urged to respond boldly to these changes if we are to be
worthy ministers of our calling.

—FATHER VÃNTHANH NGUYỄN, S.V.D.

(Continued on reverse side)



From multiculturalism to interculturality

- Interculturality is a concept different from multiculturalism and also distinct from people of different nationalities simply co-existing side by side. Rather, interculturality involves interacting with each other and thereby mutually respecting and enriching each other.
- Unlike in the past, diversity is not a thing to overcome but rather an essential component to foster. This can be an hour of great opportunity in our Church and our religious communities. As people of God, we must learn to pray together, work together, and live together as an intercultural (not just multicultural) Church.
- In the age of migration and cultural diversity, vocation ministers are constantly being challenged to go beyond borders. It's not easy being a vocation minister today.
- According to the author of Ephesians, the work of ministry is not limited to a privileged few in leadership roles, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers. Rather, the work of ministry is carried out by all the "holy ones" (or baptized believers), whom the leaders have equipped. The ultimate goal of equipping believers is to "build up the body of Christ" (4:12).
- The 2021 CARA Study on the Cultural Diversity in Vocations to Religious Life in the U.S. found that most religious members say their religious institute is already succeeding at being open to those of different cultural backgrounds. The people who take exception to this view of reality are the members who are the sole person of their ethnic background in their community.

FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION

Members of religious institutes play a vital role in welcoming and encouraging newer entrants to their religious institutes. How can newer entrants and professed members work together to develop a habitus of virtuous living by being aware of cultural heritage? How can we avoid the tendency to see our own culture as better or more valuable than the cultures of others, and be open to trying new things, eating new food, and appreciating new customs?

Take a closer look at the following challenges experienced by sole members of their ethnic background from the 2021 CARA Study on the Cultural Diversity in Vocations to Religious Life, p. 116. How can you develop inclusive spaces, new invitations, and intentional time to build relationships with positive interactions? What are some ways you can unlearn patterns of dominant behavior that exclude others?

- + Members I live with not understanding my culture (49%)
- + Not feeling understood by members of my institute (32%)
- + Feeling isolated or lonely (28%)
- + Members I live with not accepting my culture (28%)
- + My food not being welcomed in my community (23%)
- + Feeling I am asked too much to accommodate my culture to fit in the dominant ethnic/racial cohort of my institute (13%)
- + During my initial formation, my formator requiring me to accommodate my culture to that of my institute (20%)

Learn more by reading the 2014 NRVC/CARA Study on Incorporating Cultural Diversity in Religious Life and the 2020 NRVC/CARA Study on Recent Vocations to Religious Life.

In our age of migration, the possibility to go beyond borders is enormous and limitless. The author of Ephesians gives us a catalog of virtues to emulate. In whatever capacity we have been commissioned, we are urged to lead a life worthy of our calling "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2-3).

—FATHER VĂN THANH NGUYỄN, S.V.D.