



DELAWARE VALLEY MEMBER AREA

Delaware Valley Member Area Zoom Meeting Minutes December 10, 2024 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Members Present: Sr. Anita Bolton, CSR, Sr. Anita Quigley, SHCJ, Sr. Cecilia Nanni Costa, FMIJ, Sr. Chero Chuma, CSJP, Sr. Christine Ma, MSBT, Sr. Jean Rhoads, DC, Sr. Kieran Williams, IHM, Sr. Laura Downing, IHM, Sr. Maryanne Tracey, SC, Sr. Michele Fisher, CSFN, Mrs. Nancy Costello (for MSC Sisters), Sr. Pat Stringer, OP, Sr. Sophia Marie Peralta, SCC

From National Office: Sr. Debbie Borneman, SSCM

Welcome

Sr. Anita Quigley, SHCJ, Member Area Coordinator, welcomed everyone to the gathering and served as facilitator for the meeting,

Opening Prayer:

Sr. Pat Stringer, OP invited us to pray with our Blessed Mother during this season of Advent expectation, and in particular with Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas, whose Feast Day we celebrate on December 12. We enjoyed a lively rendition of the song: "*La Guadalupana*" typically sung for this Feast Day.

Question for Reflection

Sr. Anita Quigley invited members to share their reflections on the following questions:
As we enter this Jubilee Year of Hope, what is the reason for your hope? Why do you do what you do?

NRVC Updates

- **Feedback from participants who attended Convocation 2024**

There were seven members present who attended Convocation 2024 in Minneapolis. Their comments were very positive and included the opportunity to network with others, the spirit of communion and community that was palpable, the very personal signs of welcome and hospitality (choosing lanyards, interaction with members of NRVC Staff), the beautifully prepared and well celebrated liturgies, the powerful symbolism of the *ofrenda* table and banners as the centerpiece of the liturgies and conferences, the quality of the speakers and their powerful and challenging and inviting messages, the opportunity for new and first-time members to be given a good framework and lots of excellent information, the time of simply being together with others who have a passion for religious life, a chance to honor each one's personal vocation and story as well as learn more about the people we minister to. Overall, it was a wonderful experience and we look forward to Convocation 2026!

- **Updates from Sr. Debbie Borneman, NRVC Director of Mission Integration**

We were very fortunate to have Sr. Debbie present with us for our entire meeting.

Sr Debbie reminded those who attended Convocation to be sure to complete the evaluation forms. Links for the form can be found on the NRVC website. It is important to put your name on the form so that Sr. Debbie can address any specific concerns with you or be able to clarify comments or ideas.

Sr. Debbie commented on three areas from the convocation that had raised some common concerns/comments.

- a. **Meals at Convocation** – Some attendees asked that a light breakfast be included in the Convocation package. Sr. Debbie shared that each meal costs \$60 per person. In trying to keep Convocation prices affordable to as many members as possible, the choice to serve only one meal per day was made. From the hotel, there was easy access to local restaurants and grocery stores for participants to purchase what they needed.
- b. **Convocation Banquet** – In a spirit of “Walking Humbly Together,” a meatless, vegetarian entrée was planned, however, the presentation of the main course left questions in some participants’ minds that something was missing. It was a good exercise in perspective.
- c. **Supporting our Brother Priests** – The presence of so many religious priests at Convocation was edifying. The participation and procession of the priests at all the liturgies was in line with the Feast Days being celebrated as well as a testimony of their commitment not only to their priesthood, but to religious life and to the service of vocations in the Church. We were grateful that so many of our brother religious priests and two bishops chose to be present for Convocation.

Nominations for new NRVC Board Members are now being accepted. Sr. Debbie acknowledged the presence of several past NRVC Board members who were present at the meeting and encouraged members to consider Board service or to nominate someone they believe would be a good candidate for Board membership. Information about the Board and nomination forms are available on the NRVC website. Each NRVC member may submit one recommendation for the Board.

At its spring meeting, the National Board selects new members for a three-year term from the recommendations. The Board seeks to bring skills and experience to the Board to help ensure a balance of gender, geographical, and cultural representation and to image the breadth and diversity of religious consecration in the Church through its new appointments.

The National Board will meet April 9-13, 2025 in Mesilla Park, NM. It will begin planning for Convocation 2026. If any member has thoughts about possible themes or speakers, please contact any of the Board members.

[Download the NRVC Board recommendation form](#)

[Download the NRVC Board self-recommendation form](#)

- **2025 NRVC Membership Renewal**

It's time to make sure you are registered for NRVC membership for 2025. Please contact Sister Dina Bato, SP, or Sister Kathleen Branham, OSF to check your membership status. Refer to the NRVC website for additional information about forms of membership. Misericordia Scholarships are available to religious congregations who many not be able to assume the full cost of membership.

- **Winter edition of HORIZON Magazine**

The Winter edition of HORIZON magazine will soon be sent out. It will contain the keynote addresses from Convocation with the exception of Ann Garrido's presentation. Two Convocation videos will be released with handouts in early 2025.

- **Jubilee Year of Hope**

All members are encouraged to keep up with the Church's Jubilee Year of Hope and to try to attend Diocesan or parish sponsored events as well as those sponsored by other religious congregations or groups.

- **Talk-It-Up-Tuesdays (TIUT)**

"Talk-It-Up-Tuesdays" will once again be offered this coming semester beginning on January 28. These are peer-to-peer sessions addressing various topics of interest. If you are willing to be a presenter, please contact Sister Dina Bato. Sessions are 60 minutes via Zoom and include an opening prayer, 20 minutes of input, 20 minutes of small group sharing and 20 minutes of large group interaction.

- **Celebrate important national/international events:**

Consecrated life Day (Feb. 2), National Catholic Sisters Week (March 8-14), Religious Brothers Day (May 1) and World Day of Prayer for Vocations (May 11)

Invitation from Sr. Debbie Borneman for Delaware Valley Member Area to host a 2-day workshop in Fall 2025.

Sr. Debbie was pleased with the response from our area to host a Fall Workshop for 2025 and will get back to us after the New Year to begin planning for this

The following possible venues for the workshop include: San Rafaela Retreat Center, Haverford, Malvern Retreat Center, Malvern, the IHM Spirituality Center in Immaculata, PA, The Mother Boniface Center (MSBT Sisters) in northeast Philadelphia, The Norbertine Center at Daylesford Abbey and the Filippini Sisters Retreat Center in Mantoloking, NJ.

- **Financial Report**

Sister Michele Fisher reported that a \$500 donation from our Member Area was given to NRVC for a Convocation Sponsorship. This was agreed upon at our June meeting and then arranged through Mrs. Maureen Cetera at the National Office

In November, we purchased several items from the NRVC Store including: "Listening to the Call" prayer cards, "Litany for Vocations" handouts and "I Hope You Come To Find" (English and Spanish) prayer cards. Fifty Fun Facts About Religious Life handouts, Ten Questions People Ask brochures, and "Religious Life Today" booklets. Total purchase was \$123.00.

- At present, the Delaware Valley Member Area has a balance of \$ 3,363.82 in our NRVC account. That includes our current expenditures.

Local Updates

National Vocation Awareness Week activities/requests

- **St. Hubert High School for Girls, Philadelphia, PA – Classroom Visits – In=Person or Zoom**

Mary Tomczuk, campus minister, invited women religious to come and speak with the Junior theology classes for National Vocation Awareness Week.

Sisters Mathilde De Lucy and Sr. Elizabeth Kovacs, SCC participated on Monday, November 4th and Sister Jean Marie Pisula, CSFN and Sister Madeleine Davis, SCC participated on November 5th along with Sisters Helen Sanchez, MPF and Michele Fisher, CSFN on Zoom.

Sister Laura Downing had also participated later on in the week.

It was suggested that if this activity is scheduled for 2025 that perhaps it is held for only two days and not the entire week as it may get too repetitive for the students. Also, to have better control of how many Sisters are present in each classroom and to make sure everyone is able to share. Perhaps no more than two Sisters per classroom.

- **Senior Retreat on Life Discernment for St. Hubert High School**

This retreat has been scheduled for Dec. 13 at the Life Center and lower church of Resurrection of Our Lord Parish in Northeast Philadelphia. Mary Tomczuk, campus minister and Sisters Carol Ann Nawracaj, OSF and Michele Fisher, CSFN worked together to plan the retreat. Sisters Sophia Marie Peralta, SCC, Marie Angeline Weiss, SCC, Marietta, OSF and Laura Downing, IHM will be present to assist during the retreat day.

Young Adult Activities/Events

- **“The Well” November 23, 2024 Conference for Young Adults, Philadelphia**
Sisters Anita Quigley, SHCJ, Cathie Meighan, SSJ, Christine Ma, MSBT, Diane Tompkinson, OSF, Helen Sanchez, MPF, Jean Rhoads, DC, Laura Downing, IHM, Liz Sjoberg, DC, Luciana D’Cruze, MPF, Michele Fisher, CSFN, and Fr. Jeremy Hiers, OSA were among our NRVC members present for the event. We were able to have an exhibit table (free of charge to religious) where we were able to display an NRVC poster and some prayer resources and give-aways from our various communities. It was a great opportunity to network with young adult participants, volunteers and staff as well as other religious congregations.
- **Rosary For Vocation Discernment – Thursday, October 17 at 7 PM**
Sr. Pat Stringer, OP and members of the NewarK vocation group organized an on-line vocation rosary with several young adults participating by leading the prayers and reflections.

Plans for a Spring Young Adult Retreat Day

- As determined by a vote after our October meeting, group members voted to have Saturday, March 29, 2025 set aside as the date to offer our Spring Young Adult Retreat Day. Sisters Anita Bolton, CR, Cecilia Nanni-Costa, FMIJ and Mrs. Nancy Costello, Cabrini Sisters, volunteered to work together as the core planning team for this retreat.

Sister Anita Bolton will check into the possibility of using the Transformation Center at Redeemer Valley Farm as the retreat venue. Any other interested planners are welcome to join the effort!

Conversation about a future collaborative Discernment or Life Awareness Retreat

- Sister Diane Tomkinson, OSF had spoken with Sisters Anita Quigley, SHCJ, and Michele Fisher, CSFN, Member Area Coordinators, about the possibility of hosting a full weekend collaborative Discernment or Life Awareness Weekend specifically for discerning religious life. Sister Diane had participated in one of these retreats sponsored by the Northwest Member Area right after Convocation and was eager to spread the word about the success of the event. We will pick up on this topic at our next meeting.

Other announcements/updates

- **Sisters of the Redeemer 100th Anniversary**
Sister Anita Bolton, CR, announced that their congregation will have a special 100th Anniversary celebration on February and will be hosting Sister Mary Pat Garvin, RSM as the keynote speaker. Congratulations to our CR Sisters!
- **3 on 3 Basketball Tournament**
Religious are invited to attend and/or participate in a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament sponsored by the Philadelphia Archdiocese Office for Ministry with Young Adults/Czestochowa Young Adult Group on March 1, 2025. More details will be forthcoming

Next meeting

Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 12 at 10AM via Zoom. Sister Cecilia Nanni-Costa will be the leader of prayer. Sister Michele Fisher, CSFN, will send out the Zoom link a week before the meeting.

Please mark your calendars and save the date of Friday, June 20, 2025 for our next in-person meeting to be held at Mount Nazareth (Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth) in northeast Philadelphia. At our February meeting we will ask for a planning team to coordinate the day.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sister Michele Fisher

Sr. Michele Fisher CSFN
Member Area Coordinator

Your Delaware Valley Member Area Co-Coordiators

Sr. Anita Quigley, SHCJ aquigley@shcj.org
Sr. Michele Fisher, CSFN sorellamichele@aol.com