



the *Associate*

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A WORD FROM NACAR *Board of Directors*

Pope Francis and NACAR wrestle with “Creating the Future in the Now”

Did you realize that Pope Francis and NACAR are asking similar questions? Jesuit Father Thomas Reese reported that the pope hosted a weeklong meeting in March for 300 young people invited to Rome in order to prepare for the October 2018 Synod of Bishops. He wanted to begin a “listening process” to hear what they had to say. He said “Too often we talk about young people without asking what they think” (See Thomas Reese, National Catholic Reporter, March 20, 2018¹). After a week of discussions among these participants, a 16-page final document was produced entitled “Young People, The Faith and Vocational Discernment,” Rome, March 2018². Included in the statement was feedback from online Facebook groups from around the world. One conclusion at this meeting, states Reese, is that “young Catholics call for an authentic, empowering church.”

As a result of the 2015 CARA study, NACAR had determined that the 2018 theme for *The Associate* and other website resources would be “looking forward” as the associate movement evaluates its growth and future development. Regional associate groups as well as individual congregations are examining the invitation process to the young/other, discernment, formation and maintaining the centrality of the institute’s charism in the contemporary world.

Included in this issue of *The Associate* are a few articles which illustrate approaches to practices which are innovative as well as ideas to challenge members to think through their current approach. Through regional meeting conversations at BACAR (Bay Area Conference of Associates and Religious), OPAL (Ohio Pennsylvania Associate Leadership), Tri-State (Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky Associate Leadership) and TEXLA (Texas Louisiana Associates) we can vision the future with regional neighbors. Through the insights of Dr. Marisa Guerin, Sister of St. Joseph Paula Drass, Associate Kathy Wade, Associate Ann Gotfryd and Associate Mark Piper, we can ponder the implications of their words. Other updates come from the “Presentation People,” the “gifting” from the Green Bay Franciscan Associates and the “Strawberry Luncheon” of the Sisters of the Holy Names, etc.

NACAR joins Pope Francis in asking questions regarding our future with the hope to coalesce the responses. All NACAR members are invited to share their “listening process” as associates-religious create the future in the now.

Associate Conni Dubick, Dominican Sisters of Peace, NACAR board member



1 <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/when-pope-francis-asks-young-people-what-they-think>

2 <http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en/news/final-document-from-the-pre-synodal-meeting.html>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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MISSION

The North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR) is a membership organization that acts as a catalyst to serve, empower and promote the associate-religious relationship.

VISION STATEMENT

A vibrant, viable organization that collaborates with regional partners to promote association in all its forms.

FEATURED ARTICLES

RESISTING THE TYRANNY OF INCLUSION	3
FAITH IN A PETRI DISH	5
PRAYER FEATURE	6

NACAR BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

TECH TIP: DROPBOX	6
POSTER CHALLENGE	7
NEW MEMBER BENEFIT	8
NACAR RETREAT	9
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHES FIRST NOVEL	10

REGIONAL GROUPS

REGIONAL GROUPS: TEXLA	11
REGIONAL GROUPS: OPAL	12
REGIONAL GROUPS: TRI-STATE	13
REGIONAL GROUPS: BACAR	14

NACAR CONGREGATIONS

PRESENTATION PEOPLE	15
MEANING IN A SIMPLE STORY	16
SHARING THE STATE OF THE HEART	17
WELCOMING NEW ASSOCIATES IN CALIF.	18
AUTUMN BLAZE TREE INDOOR LIFE	19
CHARISM CHECK IN	20
PREACHING TRUTH WITH OUR EMAILS	21
STRAWBERRY DAYS	22

NACAR

COMING EVENTS	23
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	24
FAQs	25

Resisting the Tyranny OF INCLUSION

Marisa Guerin, Ph.D.

(This article is a revised and expanded version of a recent blogpost with a similar title at <https://www.guerinconsulting.com/blog/>, prepared by Marisa Guerin at the request of NACAR.)

There can be such a thing as too much inclusion.

Sometimes people go overboard with an excessive sensitivity to the participation of everyone in everything – which is neither necessary nor helpful to an organization. It's what some call “the tyranny of inclusion.”

This article explores this dynamic with particular application to religious congregations, including their relationships with their associate members. In writing this, I do not intend to direct your attention to exclusion; instead, I'm highlighting the realistic value of working with differences.

As a social scientist with long experience consulting to religious communities, I come to this perspective from my grounding in organization theory.

When an organization or religious institution is working right it generates various processes or teams or roles for different purposes, and then it makes sure to coordinate collective action when needed. A well-balanced system depends on trust and on the willingness of members to respect the authorization and stewardship of others in the areas under their responsibility.

In the attempt to balance differentiation and integration, there are two risks of error – one is too tight, the other is too loose. The first error is “under-differentiation” – that is, involving everyone in everything or setting up far too many teams or groups or leader roles for coordinating things. The result is slower action and less empowered people, and confusion about decision authority. (Some healthcare and government systems come to mind.)

The other error is “under-integration” – having lots of distinctive roles or delegated responsibilities but failing to make sure that individual efforts are coordinated for the greater good. The result is wasted or redundant resources, missed opportunities, and people who feel isolated or only weakly affiliated with their organization. (Some grass-roots activists and justice organizations might fit this description.)

Obviously, the potential for the “tyranny of inclusion” to appear is with the first error, under-differentiation. The word “tyranny” offers a clue to the fact that this dynamic is not logical but emotional. When the value placed on equal voice or consensus in decision making becomes absolute, it may be a sign of over-reaction to a past history of authoritarian leadership, or a fear of the dehumanizing or corrupt dynamics that can be observed in some business settings. Those are reasonable anxieties, although they should not be given free rein but managed prudently.

What is also possible, however, is that the desire for inclusion is an unconscious defense against the anxiety of recognizing actual differences in the status, power or authority of the members. For some in religious communities, any discussion of authority is fraught; there is a positive allergy to the idea. If that is the case, the rigorous attachment to inclusion can serve to neutralize the rights or responsibilities of leaders. I am not referring here to the normal processes of consultation, discernment, and communal decision making that many communities employ, but rather to the situation one recognizes by the angst and tension that arises when the process is hijacked to control the outcome.

In my consulting experiences with religious communities, most of which have strong communal practices, I have observed the “tyranny of inclusion” at work quite often. A particular version of this issue arises

... continued on page 4

In meetings that might include both vowed religious community members and the lay associates who are affiliated with them. I have never encountered a religious community that didn't approach this identity distinction without a pretty high level of awareness that this is a controversial topic. I think it is exceedingly difficult for them to find the right balance point.

What would be optimal, of course, would be a pathway that on the one hand, celebrates the shared belonging of both vowed and associate members to the charism of the religious institute and its overarching, unifying spirit; and on the other hand, respects the fundamental difference in the vocational lifestyle of vowed members and associates, who have different rights and responsibilities with respect to the canonical congregation.

The tyranny of inclusion shows up in community groups that insist on the complete inclusion of associates in all congregational matters, even those obviously most relevant to the inside "family" life of the vowed community, such as finances or senior living arrangements. These groups can display a strong negative judgment towards those who question the appropriateness of such inclusion. In these circles, this point of view has the power of "political correctness" which shuts down other perspectives.

In their defense, it may be that these communities are acting from a deep intuition, from a moral or relational plane in which the bonds between the vowed and associate members are valid in themselves as human and spiritual connections. However, this view does not give legitimate standing to the formal structures and conditions of their connection, especially the canonical

differences that the Church recognizes.

The resistance to some differentiated space and opportunity for separate voices often comes from the dominant group, very possibly because in their strong desire to be united, they would rather not face the small or large differences that realistically need to be understood. Making it okay to have distinct perspectives and different prerogatives, AND THEN listening and integrating these differences into a respectful and creative solution for the whole leads to exactly the feelings of solidarity that were the original hope. The paradox is that "You can't get there from here" if you fear the reality of difference.

The same dynamic can be at play in the broader society when we think about how best to fulfill the promise of inclusion in the experience of workplace diversity with respect to culture, race, gender, faith or class. Blindness to differences out of a desire for harmony does not work; what is more difficult but much ultimately enriching is an honest recognition of differences and a genuine valuing of those varied gifts.

How to resist the tyranny of inclusion? By striking an authentic balance between respecting difference and embracing unity for the good of the whole.

Faith IN A PETRI DISH

Mark Piper, director of association, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Midwest West Community

The Cultures of Formation Conference, held in March at the University of Notre Dame, was a gathering of nearly 600 people joyfully anticipating the 15th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. I was pleased to attend. When the bishops convene in October this year, they will address, “the process by which a person makes fundamental choices in dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit (Preparatory Document II.2).” This conference was co-sponsored by the USCCB Committee on Doctrine and the McGrath Institute for Church Life. Those of us gathered hoped to reinvigorate the ways that the church accompanies young people toward the fullness of Christian life. Given that this conference focused on young people (16-29 years old) I knew that I would be more tangential than the campus ministers, catechists and other evangelizing folks around teenagers and young adults.

I was happy to be joined at the conference by fellow NACAR board member Conni Dubick. What Conni and I both took away from that Cultures of Formation conference was certainly accentuated when we listened to Sister Theresa Maya speak on “Cultures of Encounter.” Many adolescents and young adults leave the church for reasons relating to no belief in God, no mentorship or guidance in their faith, no longer having close friends who are religious/Catholic. I agree with one presenter that religion dies in silence. Think of what enriches you in your associate group; while not discounting sacred silence, are your prayer gatherings, liturgies or meetings a source of sustenance for your own spirituality and enlivening the charism to which you’re associated? You’re able to share your spiritual thoughts and feelings relatively easily thanks to your prayer group or larger associate community.



This conference on formation led me to reflections on how we relate to the younger generations. Do we discuss the church or our charism with our children or grandchildren? Have we been invitational to them about all the church has to offer, or specifically have we invited them to some of our associate gatherings? Even more basic than talking about association or making it known that we’re here if they have questions

of faith and religion, do we sit down and listen to them, hear their stories and simply choose to be with them as they articulate what they think, feel, or believe? It’s hard to create cultures of formation or encounter if we don’t offer formation, or we chose not to encounter those who are different than us (which includes different ages).

There is obvious concern for the future, but for those of us desirous of following Jesus Christ, we’re also saddled with hope. The concern being, if folks leave the church at 13 (the new average age of departure according to St. Mary’s Press and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) they are not likely to associate with anything central to religion and from that they certainly won’t themselves become associates to our institutes and congregations. But there is hope, too. That hope is you and me and God’s ability to provide. We can ensure our associations, particularly our local groups are animated by the charism and from that authentic places of encounter and formation. But it’s not enough to be authentic, we must be invitational too, a big theme in the conference. What good is it in preparing a feast if we eat by ourselves because we haven’t invited our friends and neighbors to join us? And invitation to us: let’s be those cultures of formation and cultures of encounter.

Prayer FEATURE



Associate Dennis Cho, Dominican Sisters of Peace, Columbus, Ohio

Dear God, please help me to be the best neighbor I can be to all my sisters and brothers both locally and globally.

Teach me compassion to see my brothers and sisters and their lives as they truly are being lived; to see if they are in need of anything I can help with.

Teach me compassion to feel with my sisters and brothers, their pains and their joys; that as I empathize with them I become more aware of how to serve them.

Teach me compassion to act – to do what is good and helpful and beneficial for my brothers and sisters. Help me not to be afraid to step-up and step-out on behalf of the less fortunate.

Dear God, in a small way I understand the effects of what I do on the world around me. Please help me to better understand my impact on the world. Teach me to care for all your creation which supports all life.

Amen.

TIP Tech Tip

Lisa Olson, communications consultant

Many of us are working remotely or working on projects with others who are not in the same geographic location. It can be frustrating to send files back and forth via e-mail and difficult if the files are large. There are many file sharing applications, but I prefer to use Dropbox.

Like many cloud services, Dropbox allows you to back up files to the cloud, but you can also sync files between computers and share files with others. You can even request files from those who don't have a Dropbox account. Everything you put in Dropbox is private, and you control sharing.

After you upload files to Dropbox, there are several ways to share files and folders. You decide if you want people to be able to edit the files or only view them. If you want them to be able to edit the files you need to put them in a folder and share that folder with edit privileges. Changes of the contents of that shared folder are synced with all members of the folder. This is important as others can also delete your file if they have edit privileges. If you want them to be able to just view, download and/or comment on the file or folder, you can share either with view privileges.

You can collect files by creating a file request and sending a link to anyone from whom you want to collect files. Those submitting files in this way don't need to have a Dropbox account. I find this very helpful when gathering large files, such as video clips, from others.

You can also work with people and share ideas in real-time with Dropbox Paper. I haven't used this yet but it can be a great way to work with documents, such as to-do lists and agendas, among team members.

A 2 GB Dropbox account is free and you can earn free space by referring others. I use Dropbox a lot, so have a paid plan that allows for 1 TB of storage for \$99 per year. There are also a few other plan options.

If you need to share files remotely, I would encourage you to check out the features of Dropbox at www.dropbox.com. It is, in fact, how we complete each issue of *The Associate*!



Poster Challenge

Two individuals accepted our challenge to create their own poster quote pondering what it means to be a member of NACAR. Thank you to Associate Kathy Noether, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (Carmel by the Sea) and Director of Associates Carol Braun, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes (Growing and Opening Ourselves in New Ways). Their entries will appear on the NACAR website and on Facebook, as well as on the cover of the 2018 annual report. **You are still able to send in a poster board with your quote and an original image to info@nacar.org.**



Through NACAR's leadership we confirm one another in "prayer, mutuality, inspiration, support, and friendship".



*Growing
And
Opening
Ourselves
In
New Ways*

*North American Conference
of Associates and Religious*

New Member Benefit

ONLINE COURSES AT REDUCED COST

Sister Rita Woehlcke, director of associates, Sisters of St. Joseph, Chestnut Hill

Anxious to respond to the call for leadership development so evident in the 2015 CARA Study, NACAR is pleased to announce a new member benefit made possible through collaboration with West Midwest Mercy Ministry Grants and the University of Dayton's innovative Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF). With the award of a \$3,000 grant from the Sisters of Mercy, West Midwest Mercy Ministry Grant, NACAR can partner with VLCFF to make online courses available at reduced cost to all associates who are members of NACAR or whose congregations are members. This is a pilot program designed to meet the needs of congregational associate leaders, their local leaders and members. We will be seeking funding to continue this program for at least two more years.

The VLCFF has its roots in the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives, which mobilizes the resources of the University of Dayton for partnerships with the church that create and implement innovative pastoral initiatives designed to meet the needs of the church and to articulate faith within the context of contemporary culture. Both nationally and internationally the VLCFF offers over 90 e-courses and e-seminars reaching into 182 Catholic dioceses in over 40 countries, with enrollment of more than 8,000 e-learners in 550 course sections each year.

Individuals from NACAR who take a VLCFF course pay \$50.00 per course/\$40.00 per seminar. An individual from a non-VLCFF partner pays \$105.00 per course/\$80.00 per seminar. In addition, a number of courses are available in Spanish. We invite you to go to the VLCFF website vlcff.udayton.edu to peruse the variety of courses.

NACAR will be updating you closer to the fall on how to take advantage of this incredible opportunity to learn and grow in faith and leadership. In the words of one of the international participants:

"I have just completed the Catholic Belief course. It was awesome. I've learnt so much in five weeks. Thank you VLCFF."

Levana V Gouveia-Persaud · Georgetown, Guyana



BEGINS
'18
FALL

Sisters of Mercy
Hermanas de la Misericordia

NACAR
North American Conference
of Associates and Religious

Virtual Learning Community
For Faith Formation
UNIVERSITY of DAYTON

ONLINE COURSES FOR ASSOCIATES

VISIT NACAR.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION

Pursuing Peace

CO-CREATING BELOVED COMMUNITY



Front row, from left, Erin Middleton, Chanin Wilson, Jeanne Connolly, Lisa Schmidt, Anne Carey, Sister Elena Almendarez. Second row: Connie Kann, Catherine Gundlach, Cathy Leak, Grace Mendez, Carol Braun, Kathy Herrington, Linda Anderson, Sister Louise Lears, Judy Borland. Third Row: Barbara Torio, Sister Karen Sames, Kathy Noether, Lori Ritz, Sister Anne Kelley, Kathi Goodman, Amy Kulesa, Sister Audrey Doetzel, Pamela Captain. Back row: Suzie Wright, Carrie Hansen, Sister Ruthanne Reed, Sister Dorothy Rolf, Debbie Dillow, Liesel Rupprecht, Lisa Mitchell, Ann Hein, Linda Pearson, Eileen O'Shea. Not pictured: Libby Riggs

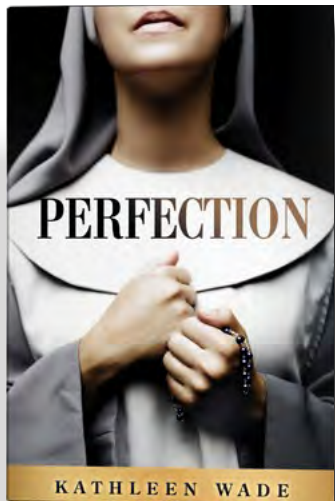
Associate Judy Borland, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary

Forty people, from California to Maryland, gathered at the beautiful Siena Retreat Center, on Lake Michigan, in Racine, Wisc., from May 21–May 24, 2018. We came together for a NACAR associate leadership retreat entitled “Pursuing Peace: Co-Creating the Beloved Community” facilitated by Sister of Charity Louise Lears. Perfect place, perfect time, perfect people—perhaps one of the most important and effective leadership retreats of my lifetime.

We went deep from the start. Most of the time this seemed effortless; that is not to say that it wasn't work. The trust that was there from the beginning allowed us to explore our leadership experiences both positive and negative. We looked at what feeds us as associate leaders, how we are nourished, how we nourish others, where is our resistance and where is God in all of it? How is association relevant in our religious communities and in our world today? How are we church? What

difference do we make in a world where social justice, racial and social intolerance, and violence have become the norm? How do we live and promote and breathe into our world a culture of compassion, love and welcome? Religious communities throughout history have led the way to caring, healing, teaching—the great equalizers. As associates, are we part of this way of being God's presence and meeting the needs of people today? Are we still waiting for the vowed members of our religious communities to tell us what to do; being the change we want to see? We, the participants, and Sister Louise, agree that we have greater and lesser levels of achievement in this lifelong quest. We agree that the commitment and much of our collective wisdom is cause for hope and light to people today, tomorrow and into the future. We agree that this time together was healing and energizing. As a beloved community, we left Racine with new wind in our sails to be gift to our communities and to our world.

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHES HER *First Novel*



Many will remember Kathy Wade as the featured speaker at NACAR's 20th anniversary celebrations in Wisconsin, California and Canada. Few were aware, however, that during those same years, she was also busy writing a novel! The book, titled *Perfection*, was recently published and is available online at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Kathy recently stepped away from her position as director of leadership-development programs for women religious and their associates, a position she's held since 2010. She continues to consult with religious communities and their associates.

A Mercy Associate since 1997, Kathy was a member of the Sisters of Mercy in Cincinnati for a little over a decade. Though *Perfection* is fiction, it is set during the 1960s, and Kathy has drawn from her own life experiences, navigating dramatic changes during that turbulent decade. A writer and teacher of writing, who enjoyed a 30-year career in the classroom, Kathy has created a compelling story. Early readers report that *Perfection* is hard to put down!

Kathy says, "After you've read *Perfection*, you'll see why the 1960's in America were a time of division within the family, the church and the nation. If you did live through that decade, this book will resonate with you even more. Once you've read *Perfection*, you'll be able to answer: Why would a young woman enter a convent in 1960? What was it like? Why would she leave?"

REVIEWS OF *Perfection*:

"An intimate re-living of one of the most volatile decades in modern American history."

"For those who grew up Catholic during that tectonic shift in the Church following the changes wrought by Vatican II – particularly for those who felt the allure of religious life – *Perfection* is a refreshing book, reflecting the questions that dog those on a path to personal faithfulness. For everyone else, *Perfection* is simply a tender love story – not just between a man and a woman, but within a family, among friends, and most importantly, between our authentic selves and that Divine mystery most simply called God – calling us home to the full embrace of love itself. Read this book, but be forewarned: Its engaging prose will make it hard to put down."

"Honest and searching, *Perfection* is one young woman's surprising spiritual adventure into her life's true work. Kathy's richly observed characters and intelligent storytelling will charm and inspire you."

TEXLA

Regional Group Meets for First Time



Associate Janet Mayorga, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston, Texas
Cojourner Joan Cordes, Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, Minn.

The first regional group in the south, TEXLA, held their initial meeting in Houston, Texas, at the Villa de Matel, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

TEXLA (Texas and Louisiana) was originally formed by Joan Cordes, cojourner with the Sisters of St. Francis of Rochester, Minn., and Janet Mayorga, co-chair, associate of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston, Texas. Sister Deenan Hubbard, director of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word Associates in Houston, invited their associates to become familiar with NACAR and was instrumental in providing accommodations for all to meet.

After several months delay due to the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, TEXLA was able to hold an informational meeting on March 10. Thirty-five participants attended representing seven congregations. Throughout the day attendees were given an opportunity to share their own charism and thoughts as to what would be the most important steps to further the development of TEXLA. Although this was only a one day gathering, all were energized in planning the future of TEXLA.

A decision was made by all to meet either semi-annually or annually for a weekend in order to further share our strengths and resources and to inspire new ideas and ministries. As society becomes more mobile, we may find ourselves living far from our own individual congregations. This is an important opportunity to meet and share our ministries. We will continue to reach out and welcome all those who wish to join with us in this new endeavor.

Creating the Future in the Now

FORMATION OF ASSOCIATE CANDIDATES

Pittsburgh Passionist Associate Dan Carney

On April 28, 2018, OPAL (Ohio Pennsylvania Associate Leadership), in affiliation with NACAR, sponsored a workshop, "Creating the Future in the Now" for members of religious communities and associates.

The workshop was presented in the beautiful Villa Maria facilities of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary in Villa Maria, Penn. The OPAL co-chairs, Sisters of Humility Associates Deborah Zawislán and Patsy Richards, designed the workshop with the assistance of a core team of sisters and associates who were instrumental in founding OPAL.

Patsy introduced the theme of associate formation and Associate Conni Dubick, Dominican Sisters of Peace, summarized NACAR formation/discernment resources. Four panelists, Associate Nancy Donnelly, Sister of St. Joseph; Associate Paul Layshock, Dominican Sisters of Peace; and Associates Terry Supancic and Karen Curtis, Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, presented thoughts on

the meaning and aspects of formation, tools, resources for formation, and the opportunities and challenges to formation in a changing and unknown future for associates and religious.

Between and after the presentations there were spirited table discussions offering the opportunity for exploring the experience, tools and methods of formation used in the various communities of associates and religious. There were many questions concerning challenges faced and overcome and challenges yet to be resolved. No one was likely to have left without a collection of talking points and takeaways for their respective communities.

Passionist Father Mark Ward, rector of St. Paul's Monastery in Pittsburgh, delivered a moving homily in the closing celebration of Mass.

OPAL is in the process of planning for future workshops and weekend programs as this new group emerges as a regional resource.



Associates and religious gathered for a workshop in Villa Maria, Penn., on April 28, 2018.



Members of the Tri-State Conference of Associate Leadership value the relationships that have developed.

Personal Experiences **HIGHLIGHT TRI-STATE RELATIONSHIPS**

Jane Schaefer and Carolyn Meyer, associate co-directors,
Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana

The Tri-State Conference of Associate Leadership is committed to the support, and enrichment of associate leaders in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. As leaders within the associate relationship, we are committed to advancing the mission and charisms of our respective religious communities. We gather twice a year, dedicating ourselves to the business associated with belonging to an organization, followed later in the year by a day of retreat and renewal. Business meetings begin and end with prayer as we believe and affirm the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing each of us together.

A real treasure of this group has been the sharing of personal experiences, ideas and dreams for the future. Each of us brings the uniqueness of our ministerial experiences captured by the founders and followers of the communities we serve. We are Franciscans, Ursulines, Notre Dames, Divine Providence, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of Charity, Benedictines, Medical

Mission Sisters, Dominicans and Poor Handmaids. Also important to our business meeting is an update on what is happening at the national level (NACAR). We have been privileged to have Mary Jo Mersmann, NACAR administrative assistant and former board member, and Conni Dubick, former president of the NACAR board of directors, as members of Tri-State.

In the second half of the year we take time to be together in a day of retreat. These days are often led by one of the sisters or an associate from our local communities. Service-oriented ministries can often lead to burnout. As associate leaders we have made a commitment to refresh our body, mind and spirit so as to better serve those called to the associate relationship. In many ways, we have become family, reaching out to each other in times of celebration and heartbreak, trial and error, fear and wonderment. Directors have come and gone, but the friendships have remained.

Let the Call Be Heard

BACAR EXPANDS DIALOGUE

Associate Kathy Noether, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur,
BACAR co-director

In the March 2018 issue of *The Associate*, Conni Dubick reminded us of Joan Chittister's inspirational words when she spoke at the 2002 NACAR conference. Joan continued earlier this year at the Fourth International Oblate Congress expanding the theme for all oblates throughout the world in an almost parallel address. Inspired by the reading of these two presentations, BACAR used Joan Chittister's address for our quarterly discussion group on May 19, 2018, incorporating the same title and including a link to the Joan Chittister's address: "Let the Call Be Heard."

Since we knew there was a wealth of material to cover, so we outlined Chittister's four questions with team members each taking a question for reflection and discussion. Judy Borland facilitated the discussion beginning with an introduction and overview of the address.

Why do you exist? Carmella Huser began with the first question, referring to our call of love as defined by our commitment to one's self and one another. She explained that unless we can spread love, the world will not know love.

Where do you come from? Marilee Hearn followed with this question, rephrasing the message. We all have this call and indeed are meant to share this with one another through our charisms and gifts beginning with companionship and branching out to those we come in contact with in our daily lives.

Who are you? Kathy Noether expressed the next question with an activity of identifying one self by listing ten gifts that one sees as a personal reflection of who you are. After listing these gifts, we grouped them, defined the one characteristic that best mirrors our inner space, and then shared that with partners and then the larger group.



What must we do? Elizabeth Avalos delved into this question which brought a rich discussion of actions that not only individuals could take, but also BACAR as a collective presence. This led to a seed for our next meeting to continue and formulate a plan of action.

The interchange was dynamic and brought more ways to interact across congregations and within individual communities. It was evident that the most important part of the address was the telling of stories, sharing who we are, and realizing we can be effective as a group that thinks and works together. We looked at these questions Joan challenged us to discover when she stated: "The truth is that (we) are in the process of discovering again in new and vibrant ways what it means to hold a charism in trust for the church." Her questions set the stage for us to take action through sharing and solutions.

The time spent in reflection and discussion was rich and reminded of us our deep commitment to the individual charisms embedded in each of our congregations. It is also true that this affirmation inspires each of us to continue the call with renewed energy and focus, particularly as we share compassionate goals.

Presentation People

ADAPTING HOW WE ARE ENGAGING OTHERS

Brooke Nicholson Grote, director of mission advancement,
Aberdeen Presentation Sisters

As many of us are challenged with decreasing numbers of vocations, paired with the desire to grow and deepen the love of the mission and charism of our congregations in others, we began looking at ways to change and adapt to how we were engaging others.

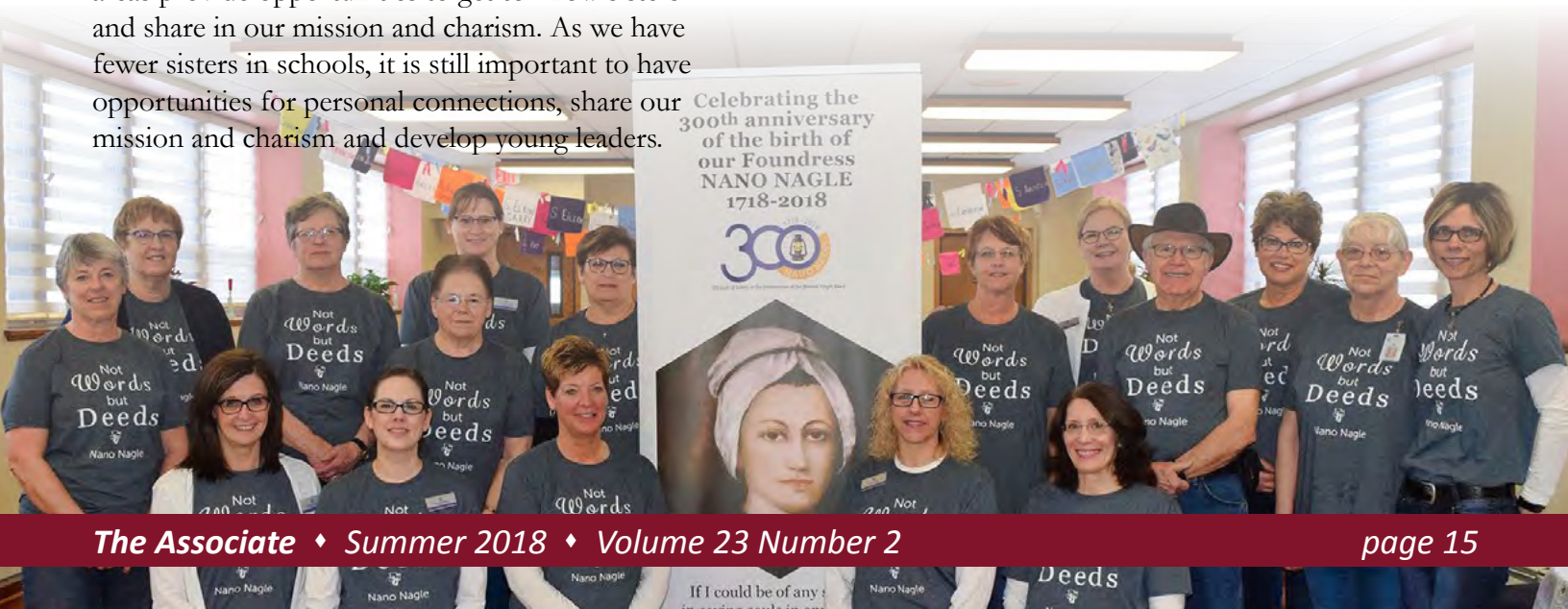
In 2012, our International Presentation Association gathered and coined the term “Presentation people.” We identified Presentation people as employees, cojourners (associates), donors, former members, volunteers, event attendees and anyone who shares the spark of our foundress, Nano Nagle. We made an intentional decision to begin referring to those partners as Presentation people. The response was immediate. We saw positive shifts in body language and a heightened sense of pride. Our sisters did a great job of reinforcing to employees and cojourners the importance of walking together on this journey, stressing that the “we” includes all of us. We are encouraged in this movement. Though the number of vocations is not increasing, the Presentation network is growing.

Another area of connection is engaging younger people—casting a wider net and then cultivating the “sparks of Nano” as they are identified. We engage a younger audience through a growing college internship program and volunteer opportunities. Both of these areas provide opportunities to get to know sisters and share in our mission and charism. As we have fewer sisters in schools, it is still important to have opportunities for personal connections, share our mission and charism and develop young leaders.

We have started to reevaluate our cojourner relationship. Once the concept of Presentation people was in place, we grappled with the question: How is a cojourner different? We believe it is summed up in one word: commitment. This realization led us to re-examine the cojourner commitment and we are taking the following steps:

1. Identify leaders among the cojourners who are willing to help facilitate orientation and formation of new members.
2. Increase technology options (closed Facebook, regular zoom calls, e-newsletter) to better connect with cojourners.
3. Promote the cojourner relationship to specific groups, beginning with employees at the convent and employees of sponsored ministries.
4. Create ownership of a particular social justice project(s) to help increase morale among the members, while promoting the cojourner relationship and mission of the sisters.

We believe that there is considerable potential in refreshing the program and actively inviting others to join us. This will be a great vehicle to connect with our partners at a deeper level as we move into the emerging future together to help create a more just and loving world.



MAKING A FOREST LOOK NOT LIKE A FOREST

Meaning in a Simple Story

Associate Ann Gotfryd, Congrégation of Notre Dame

A pale blue T-shirt is at the center of my story. It was given to me as a gift after a weekend session that I facilitated in San Antonio, Texas, for associates of the Sisters of Divine Providence. The T-shirt is comfortable and is covered with images and words. The front boldly announces WE ARE PROVIDENCE FAMILY EST. 1866. On the back a collection of phrases surrounds the black outline of the steeple of their Sacred Heart Chapel. In various fonts the spirituality of the community is put into words: Love one another; admire the goodness of God; let us have confidence.... There are more than 20 expressions which speak loudly of the charism of the congregation. It is a shirt that I sometimes wear to my tai chi class.

I wear different T-shirts to class that celebrate rock bands and sports teams, depict cartoon characters, or commemorate special events. Apart from the time a young man recognized the lightning bolt of the Grateful Dead, most of what I wear does not generate conversation. However, over the last months several individuals have asked questions about my Providence family shirt. One woman told me she had enjoyed reading the back as she did her foundation exercises in the row behind me. And last week something new happened.

Pat introduced herself with the words: "I have noticed your shirt from last week and believe that you won't mind me asking for your advice." She went on to talk about her struggle to find extended care for her mother within a Catholic context. We talked a bit about the challenge of caring for aging parents and I was able to share my limited knowledge and experience. A short while later as we were having our tea break the man beside me turned to me. He referenced a radio program he had just heard and told me about the work he and his wife have been doing in support of children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. He explained that they have been involved for over 20 years and spoke about the struggles they had had with their two adopted children. I was both encouraged and humbled by these conversations. In and

of themselves they were about sharing information and ideas. But as I was drawn deeper into the experience I began to see that there had been much more happening.



Ann Gotfryd wearing her Providence family shirt at a tai chi class.

A number of years ago I gave a talk in St John's, Newfoundland. I spoke about the challenge of making our associate life visible to others and told a story from my camping days. I was with my sons as a park ranger explained some safety tips. She said that the first thing they should do if they got lost was to make the forest look not like the forest. She explained that for children in a brown and green forest this means carrying a brightly colored ribbon or piece of fabric that can be tied onto a branch to signal their presence. This helps those who are searching find them more easily. I suggested to the associates that we too need to be found and we have to discover ways to make it easier for those who are searching. I asked: against the backdrop of secular society, how can we signal our presence to others? I now have one answer to my question.

As an honorary member of the Providence family, my blue T-shirt was that signal. As an associate of the Congrégation of Notre Dame (Montreal) whose spirituality is drawn from the Visitation, I hope to take this message back to my own community.

SHARING THE STATE OF THE

Heart

Associate Nancy Davis, Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

AN INTERVIEW WITH SISTER OF ST. JOSEPH PAULA DRASS

It doesn't take much to sense the charismatic spirit of Sister Paula Drass, associate co-director for the Congregation of St. Joseph in Pittsburgh, Penn. "We live our charism," she says, "neighbor with neighbor, neighbor with God—without distinction: union with others, active and inclusiveness," she describes in a recent interview. "When our congregation members and associates gather, we 'share the state of the heart.' That is a practice that bonds us," she adds.

Sister Paula has been working with the associates for over 30 years, serving as liaison to associates when on the leadership team and now as co-director. She says that what continues to energize her is that every time she is with a group of associates, she finds them inspiring as they share their hearts—talking about their lives and how they live out the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

She is especially proud of how through the years associates have stepped up and taken leadership positions. Even over the phone, I could sense a smile, as she talked about associates serving on pre-chapter committees for this summer's chapter. "Back in the 1980s," she notes, "Sister of Mercy Rosemary Jefferies spoke at a congregation meeting and helped us sort out the differing roles of vowed members and associates, especially at chapter: associates with official roles attend chapter in consultative and prayer roles." "This year we have six to eight associates strongly applying those roles," she adds, "One of the inspirations for greater associate involvement stems from the five-year plan associates make."

Initially associates developed their plan, usually around four topics: spirituality, formation, relationships and apostolic ministry, and then presented the plan to chapter for confirmation. Several years ago they reversed their approach, getting the sisters' chapter plan first so theirs could better align with the congregation's. Now, they feel a greater sense of collaboration, working right with the sisters in pre-chapter planning.

I asked how the associates work with the Sisters of St. Joseph in apostolic ministry. Several associates are able to work hand-in-hand with the sisters. Paula describe three of their collaborative ministries:

- Working in a women's prison in their "read-to-me mommy" ministry program where they take a video of a prisoner reading a child's book and then send the video and book to the prisoner's child.
- Giving support to recently released women prisoners in a program called Letitia's Lydia's place.
- Offering services at Villa St. Joseph care facility.

Under title, Associates Fran Jankosky and Rose Capone at a recent event.

The Congregation of St. Joseph in Pittsburgh, Penn., has 140 publically committed associates, with 65-70 of them actively involved. They live in five eastern states.

When the less active were recently interviewed, their common message was, although not active with congregation-sponsored activities, they remain conscious of living the charism and value their associate relationship.

Sister Paula is one of four co-directors in associate leadership. She works with Sister Sue Clay, who was appointed, and Associates Sue Boyce and Carla Gregory, who were elected by their peers and confirmed by the congregational leadership team. They have an active associate board consisting of themselves and the leaders of their committees.

They also celebrate the charism as their Memorial Day program. A November event, sisters and associates gather for theological reflection to honor those who have died and were actively involved with the associate relationship.

I asked Paula what she wants to do when she retires. She laughed and said, "talking to others about God." "Isn't that what you are doing now?" I asked. She laughed again. Sister Paula has a mission for life.

Welcoming

NEW ASSOCIATES IN CALIFORNIA

Associate Kathy Noether, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, BACAR co-director

The Sisters and Associates of Notre Dame de Namur welcomed six women at the celebration of commitment ceremony held at the Belmont, Calif., Province Center on March 11, 2018. Cari Alexander, Mary Chan, Laura Leon, Karen Rende, LaVerne Vitale and Partner in Mission Patti Andrews each were introduced by their companion on their journey, and then each gave a few words defining their reasons for choosing to be an integral part of Notre Dame. These women of courage spoke so generously from their hearts that it gave us all pause to remember the joy of being on this spiritual journey together with the Sisters of Notre Dame.

We were deeply grateful to Associates Shyrl McCormick and Joanne Rossi for leading our new associates towards their initial commitment. It was a growing experience for new and old, sisters and associates, who participated in the sessions planned for the women seeking to become part of the Notre Dame family. The leaders provided sessions that would be unique and enriching for the candidates and for sisters and associates who joined them to share in praying together, relationship building and getting to know the community. This bonding effort helped to create the experience of community through prayer, sharing and support.

Sisters and associates were sent a monthly invitation encouraging them to participate in some of the Saturday gatherings while the candidates would be discerning and preparing for their commitment. Those without a formal role in the gatherings helped to acquaint the candidates with the community to which they belong. Throughout the sessions it was apparent that a truly significant contribution to the process came from sisters who joined in the sessions and shared their stories, remembrances and reflections. All these things came up spontaneously out of the conversations while inspiring knowledge and understanding.

Shyrl and Joanne invited sisters and associates to plan monthly Saturday sessions with themes including: *Sisters of Notre Dame - Founded on Friendship; Spirituality and Prayer; Sisters and Associates Partnering in Mission; Discerning Association as a Way of Life; Peace and Justice* and, finally, *Commitment Retreat*. The candidates were welcomed to all events the sisters and associates have had throughout the year. Sister Kay McMullen prepared and led the prayer experiences for the sessions. These rich and spiritually alive presentations concluded with the associate commitment ceremony and celebration in March.

Together all sisters and associates present this March day recommitted themselves to the mission and charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur established by Saint Julie Billiart and her dear friend, Francoise Blin, in 1804. The call of Notre Dame Associates draws “women and men, living their baptismal call in the spirit of St. Julie Billiart. They have experienced a strong attraction to Saint Julie, who proclaimed God’s goodness throughout her entire life. Based on their desire to grow in Notre Dame spirituality and mission, these women and men have a special relationship to the Sisters of Notre Dame” (www.sndden.org).



Six women recently made commitments as associates of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

Autumn Blaze Tree TAKES ON INDOOR LIFE

Renae Bauer, communications director, and Sister Marilyn Herr, associate director, Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross

A living gift is now preserved in oil paint.

During the April 8 founders' day celebration, the associates presented their gift of an oil painting to the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross. The painting is an interpretation of the Autumn Blaze pear tree on the motherhouse grounds. The tree itself was a gift from the associates in 2009 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the sister-associate relationship.

"It's beautiful," says Associate Laurie Rettmann who, along with her husband Don, also an associate, saw the painting for the first time at the April 8 unveiling.

Making the painting all the more special is knowing it was created by Associate Carol Kwaterski. "The idea of doing the painting of the pear tree evolved after seeing several beautiful fall photos of the tree in full color," she says.

Each autumn the tree makes a showy display of crimson, orange and buttery yellow foliage. The colors are particularly dramatic since they burst on the scene late in the season when most other trees have dropped their leaves and the grasses have faded from green to wheat. "The sisters say the colors change as the fall season progresses," notes Carol. "I thought, 'Wow, what a painting that would make.'"

And what a painting it has made.

"It's very beautiful," says fellow artist Associate Jane Gerlach. "Carol had shared her progress as she was painting but the photos didn't do it justice."



Associate Carol Kwaterski, artist, left, along with Sister Ann Rehrauer, president, Rose Jochmann, second vice president; and First Vice President Nancy Langlois, first vice president. (standing behind Sister Rose), unveil the oil painting gift to those in attendance.

For Jane, who works primarily in watercolor, the painting's beauty lies not only in the color and composition but what it symbolizes. "It speaks to our relationship," she says. "The tree itself is planted and growing. We are rooted in cross, word and Eucharist ... the tree reaches out and offers its branches and leaves for creatures to rest and find comfort."

Carol agrees. "The painting represents our deep love for each other that changes and grows with the passing seasons. What impresses me most about the sister-associate relationship is the strength we find in one another, a mutual sharing. With them my heart finds joy."

Charism Check In

Associate Carol Braun, Congregation of Sisters of Saint Agnes

Charism can often defy clear definition. Do we know what our charism is? Can we articulate our charism to others? The gift of charism is given to us by the Spirit; how do we share our gift with the world? Charisms adapt to the changing needs of the world and we are called to respond in our own times to those needs. How do we associates do that?

Associates of the Sisters of St. Agnes are answering some of these questions with a “charism check in” at meetings, with the intention of keeping our charism

alive and making it visible. As part of prayer and reflection before a meeting, associates are asked to share how they have lived out our charism in their daily life, in their work or ministry, or to share where they have witnessed it lived out by others. We have been able to see more clearly how the Spirit is moving in our lives and we are enriched by the wisdom and experiences each of us brings to the table.



Sisters of St. Agnes Associates deepen their sense of call and purpose by sharing how they live the charism in their daily lives.



Preaching Truth WITH OUR EMAILS

Dominican Associate of Peace Conni Dubick

Please find a quiet place to sit and then read and ponder these words:

- “Go forth from your country and I will be with you.”
- “I don’t want to walk no more.”
- “I had to leave a piece of myself at the door.”
- “They thought that they buried us, but they didn’t know we were seeds.”
- “It eats me alive every day.”
- “It cannot be from God that some have all and others have nothing.”
- “We have forgotten how to weep.”
- “The fierce urgency of now.”

These quotations and phrases are taken from my list of 59 which touched my heart, mind and soul at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, D.C., in April 2018.

I am a member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace Immigration Reform Committee and we seek ways to minister directly to our sisters and brothers who are migrants, refugees and displaced persons in this country. One way is to raise our voices by communicating with our United States senators and representatives who hold the power to confront injustice in our United States actions and laws. The border response has been to tell the migrants that their claims cannot be processed since it has exhausted its capacity to handle people traveling without documents. Thus, the families wait in fear and uncertainty unless congressional representatives find the ways to use their power and influence to offer refuge and hospitality to “welcome the stranger.”

Ecumenical Advocacy Days were two days of meetings and presentations which culminated in a march to Capitol Hill to meet our representatives with our Ecumenical Advocacy Days Ask. Please read [this statement](#) and consider sending it in an email to your congressional representatives.

We call on Congress to act with compassion and exercise fiscal responsibility by redirecting funding used for deportations, detention and border militarization, and invest instead in our communities and support for refugees while increasing poverty-focused and peacebuilding international assistance to address the root causes of forced migration.

EAD 2018 Congressional Ask



Participants at the recent Ecumenical Advocacy Days marched to Capitol Hill to meet representatives and ask for more compassionate immigration policies.

Strawberry Day CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

Associate Carrie McClish, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary

For generations of students who attended schools in the state of California opened and operated by the Holy Names Sisters, May 10 is known and celebrated as Strawberry Day.

That's because on that date in 1868 six young sisters, five of whom were in their 20s and the remaining one was 31, who had left their convent near Montreal, Canada, about a month earlier, arrived in San Francisco aboard the steamer ship *Golden Age*. The historic moment was recorded by one of the sisters: "Our steamer has stolen in silently, shrouded in midnight gloom. What a glorious vision awaits our waking hour. A large city lies before us and though it is very early, there is a great bustle and confusion ... everything is beautiful to our sea-wearied eyes."

Another sight that was almost as enticing to the young travelers came following a warm welcome by a group of Mercy Sisters who were stationed in San Francisco. The newly arrived Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary were treated to a feast that included California-grown strawberries, which proved to be an unexpected delicacy for the young Canadians.

Several days later the sisters were taken across the bay to the city of Oakland where they would soon establish an educational center on the shores of Lake Merritt. From this site a boarding school, high school and college were started to educate generations of teachers who went on to open schools in Oakland, throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and, in the years that followed, in southern California.

This year the Strawberry Day celebration took on added significance as the Holy Names Sisters are observing 150 years of presence and ministry in California. The opening event of the celebration took place on May 10, 2018, at the St. Theresa Parish Event Center in Oakland. Following welcoming remarks by Sister Maureen Delaney, provincial of the U.S.-Ontario Province,

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf read and presented a proclamation designating May 10 as "Sisters of the Holy Names Day."

The event, which drew over 300 people, included testimonials by alums of Holy Names schools and a concluding blessing by Bishop Emeritus John S. Cummins of the Diocese of Oakland, who also attended a Holy Names school.



Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf proclaims May 10 as Sisters of the Holy Names Day during the Strawberry Day celebration.

A second 150 year celebration took place May 19 in southern California at St. Anthony Church in San Gabriel. Other events scheduled to take place during this anniversary year for the include a retreat August 3–5 at the congregation's Villa Maria del Mar Retreat Center in Santa Cruz; a social and fundraising event in Los Gatos on September 8; and a liturgy at the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland on October 6.

For more information about the recent celebrations and to view future events visit the [Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary website](#).

Coming Events

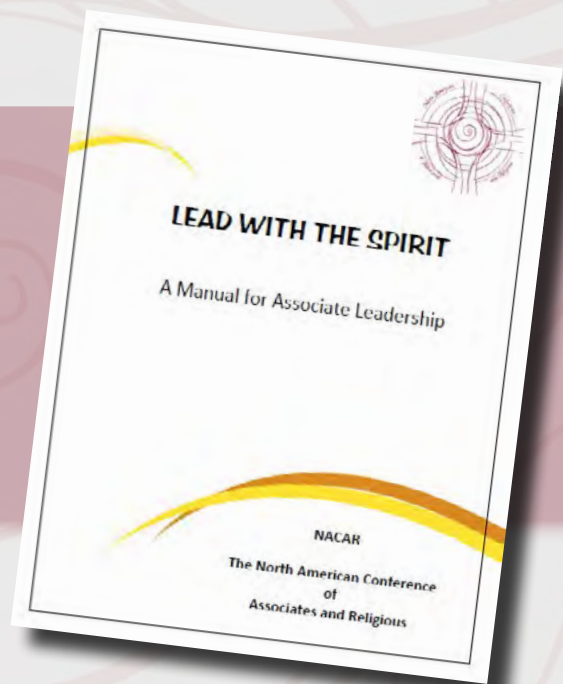
LCWR

LCWR ASSEMBLY

Encourage your leadership team to visit with NACAR board members during the annual LCWR assembly this August in St. Louis, Missouri. NACAR will once again be hosting a booth in the vendor area of the assembly. Send your leaders to booth 103 to say hello to Associates Jeanne Connolly, NACAR board president, and Terri Butel, NACAR board member, who will be there to greet them and answer any questions.

NEW LEADERSHIP MANUAL CHAPTER

A new chapter of the NACAR leadership manual will be coming soon. Sister of St. Joseph Rita Woehlcke and Associate Nancy Davis wrote this chapter entitled "Building and Sustaining Vibrant Groups." It addresses the concept of groups and offers practical wisdom on group dynamics to facilitate leaders in ensuring that the groups which they oversee are vibrant and life-giving. Watch for your notice to order yours coming soon!



NACAR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Renewal notices have been emailed to all community primary contacts and individual members. If you did not yet receive yours or have questions, please contact info@nacar.org.



Membership

NACAR Individual Membership Application

Individual membership is designed for any individual who has a desire to keep informed of trends, information and resources regarding the associate movement in North America and who desires to support the efforts of NACAR and the associate-religious movement. Individual members must have an email address in order to receive communications. See [NACAR Individual Membership](#) for a full listing of benefits.

Contact Information: ☐ Associate ☐ Religious ☐ Other

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Prefix _____ (e.g. Sr. Br. Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms. Rev. Deacon) Suffix _____

Name of Religious Community (if applicable): _____

Position Title (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Prov: _____

Zip/Postal Code _____ Country: _____

Ph (W): _____ (H): (____) _____ (C): (____) _____

Email: _____

***Must have email address to receive any communications from the NACAR Office.

My community is a NACAR member. Dues \$25 _____

My community is NOT a NACAR members. Dues \$75 _____

Donation to support NACAR _____

Total amount enclosed _____

Email or mail your forms to the NACAR address below. Postal mail your dues (US currency only please) or go to <http://nacar.org/individual-membership-dues-for-2017-2018.html> to pay by credit card or PayPal.

You may also complete this form and pay online at:
<http://nacar.org/members/membershipinfo/individual-membership-application.html>

NACAR
5900 Delhi Road
Mt. St. Joseph, OH 45051-1500

Email: info@nacar.org
Website: www.nacar.org
Phone: 253-256-2227

For office use only: Membership # _____

Date Rec. _____ Ck # _____ Entered/Ackn'd _____

Frequently Asked Questions About Individual Membership

NACAR NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF ASSOCIATES AND RELIGIOUS

WHAT IS NACAR?

The North American Conference of Associates and Religious is a membership organization that acts as a catalyst to serve, empower and promote the associate-religious relationship. NACAR remains the only professional organization to support and serve associates and vowed members as associates proclaim their call to live the charism of their religious communities.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF NACAR?

The purpose of NACAR is to encourage networking and mutual support for; to identify and explore issues relevant to the associate/religious relationship; to serve as a clearing-house for the sharing of resources and talents especially for associate spiritual growth; to provide a vision for the future of associate/religious relationship as the people of God; and to assist in policy and guideline development to support the Associate way of life.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP IN NACAR?

Individual membership is designed for someone who has a desire to keep informed of trends, information, and resources regarding the associate movement in North America and also desires to support the efforts of NACAR and the associate-religious movement. Individual members must have an email address in order to receive communications.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP IN NACAR?

Most importantly, it provides you with the opportunity to be part of the larger Associate- Religious movement across North America and to witness to the work of the Holy Spirit in our world today. Membership also provides

1. Opportunity to directly receive information on trends and resources regarding the Associate movement.
2. Discounted fee to workshops, conferences and webinars.
3. Access to Leadership Manual; Rookies Rock; and CARA study at discounted rate.
4. Access to Member section of NACAR website including the consultant directory.
5. Reception of monthly e-newsletter from the Board of Directors.
6. Reception of The Associate e-magazine three times a year.
7. Forum to address issues that impact Associate-Religious life.
8. Opportunities for continuing education, leadership development and professional growth.
9. Available resources regarding issues, concerns and trends in Associate-Religious relationship.
10. Access to postings of Prayer Requests on the NACAR website.
11. Listing in online Membership Directory.
12. Listing in Consultant Directory if desired.
13. Assistance in connecting with regional associate groups throughout North America.
14. Connection to other associates.

What are the yearly fees for an Individual Membership?

Individual membership is \$75 annually (July 1-June 30) if you do not belong to a community that is NACAR community member. It is \$25 annually if you belong to a community that is a NACAR community member.

HOW DO I ACCESS THE MEMBER ONLY SECTION OF THE WEBSITE?

To register on the website: Go to www.nacar.org, click on *register* and follow the prompts. If you need assistance, contact webadmin@nacar.org.

Please note: To register for the NACAR website you must be either an individual member or one of the listed members for your community. Registration for the website is a separate process from becoming a member.