

National Association of Vocation/ Formation Directors (NAVFD)



January Newsletter 2017

Companions on the Journey

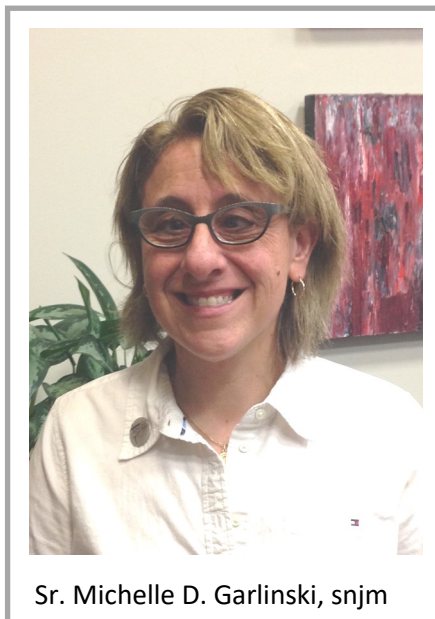
Who are the newer members of religious communities? Where are the sisters, brothers, priests who have entered religious life in Canada in the last several years? How did this novice end up at the NAVFD National Conference?

These are questions I had last April when I attended the NAVFD National Conference held in Winnipeg, MB. As a Novice who is comfortably familiar with the structure and diversity of Religious Life (particularly among women's communities), the

conference confirmed many of my assumptions. What did surprise me was the minimal attendance of younger Religious. Subsequently, I wondered about who are the younger Religious or newly vowed in Canada? Who else is taking this journey that I am on? How can I get to know and interact with them?

Religious Life is going to look different in the future as is obvious given the studies, research and present day realities. Our natural

networks within our own communities provide us with fewer peers in both age and life experiences prior to entering. The need to rely on one another across communities is much greater for us



Sr. Michelle D. Garlinski, snjm

than for earlier generations of Religious. I believe the witness we offer in and through our vocation is needed and continues to be called forth. As a younger Religious, I seek to share my experiences;

the joys and the struggles, with other Religious. Although I cannot guarantee this, I suspect that others desire this as well.

This hope and longing propelled me to have conversations with some of the younger Religious present at the conference and ask how we might be able to gather and build community and networks of support among Religious in Canada. The reality is that creating more conferences or gatherings of the like, will be difficult as our

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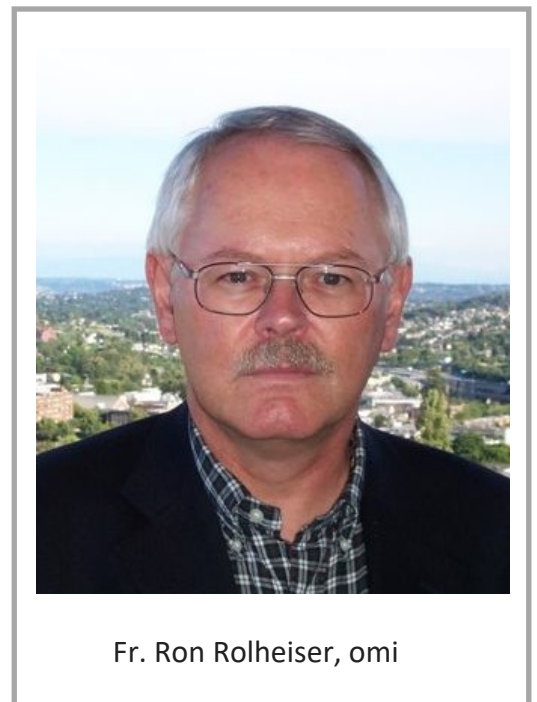
resources (temporal and otherwise) are limited. I wondered what other ways could we be creative about gathering? I suggested to them that we build on a common experience, such as a retreat. Since most, if not all, Religious participate in an annual retreat, perhaps we could offer this shared experience for younger Religious and newly vowed who are ministering in Canada. And so the possibility is becoming a reality. (see details below)

I returned to the Novitiate House following the conference and started making calls and asking the questions. With every step I took, I prayed for the grace of freedom to know that if it was meant to be, it would unfold. I admit there is a personal need embedded in this desire to gather and I am confident that there are others who share this with me as we live into Religious Life today, serving the People of God in Canada. I am sure this outcome was not planned for by the team from the conference, yet the resulting opportunity appears to be the work of the Spirit!

I am very grateful for the “yes” I received from Fr. Ron Rolheiser, whose books have been an inspiration for me and so many others. I am sharing with you, and hoping you will spread the word to newer members of your religious congregations, about a retreat opportunity this July which can bring newer members of men’s and women’s congregations together for prayer, conversation, and dreaming. ☮

***Amid the Uncertainties - Called to Hope:
Writing our Great Story into the Future A Retreat
for Newer Vowed/Religious***

- Presenter:** Fr. Ron Rolheiser, omi
- Participants:** Newer Vowed Men and Women Religious in Canada, under 55 years old.
- What:** A time to come away to the quiet to meet and pray with other Religious who are serving the People of God in Canada.
- When:** July 13 (1:00 pm)-July 18 (11:00 am)
- Where:** Queens House, Saskatoon, SK
- Cost:** \$500 (includes accommodations and meals)



For information or to register email bookings@queenshouse.org




Héctor Acero Ferrer



Sister Christine Carbotte, CSJ

Hilton Grant Article



As announced in our December 2016 newsletter, NAVFD is delighted to be the recipient of a generous grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for research into religious vocations in Canada. This month we were able to secure the services of Héctor Acero Ferrer as the Project Manager for the grant effective February 1, 2017. Héctor is the Educational Development Liaison Officer at Scarboro Missions in Toronto. Earlier in the month we retained Christine Carbotte, CSJ to do the data inputting of contact information of all religious congregations across Canada. Christine is a member of the staff of the Villa St. Joseph Ecology and Spirituality Centre in Cobourg Ontario. We thank Hector and Christine for their skills towards realizing the desired outcomes of this grant. 

NO NAVFD MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2017



As mentioned in our December newsletter, membership in NAVFD for 2017 is free. This initiative is totally unrelated to both the Conrad Hilton Foundation grant and the proceeds from Conference 2016. Generous benefactors have made this possible for this year only and we are delighted that new members are signing up. Please encourage others to complete the attached form and email it back. Consider it one way to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary by celebrating vocation and formation ministry in Canada. One of the many benefits of membership is the presence on our popular and informative website vocations.ca. The membership form is attached for your use which can be saved, completed electronically and emailed to navfdco@gmail.com. 