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We will receive 3 new SNJM Associates on January 21, 2012 at 2PM at the Convent of the Holy Names in Los Gatos.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Any questions on events or items in newsletter: Contact

### Kathy Noether

**Thursday, January 29, 2012** -- Next BACAR Core group meeting. Contact Kathy Noether (above).

**Saturday, February 4, 2012** - Next discussion group - Prophetic Witness continued with Kathy Noether and Elizabeth Fitting leading, at Holy Family in Fremont. Contact Kathy Noether (above).

**January 20--June 3, 2012** - Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America Exhibit, California Museum of History, Women and the Arts, Sacramento. (Picture to right.) You can get a special group rate from Greyhound Charter Services. Call Joann Alvarado, National Charter Sales Coordinator, toll free at 1-800-454-2487, ext. 203, or e-mail her at [joann.alvarado@greyhound.com](mailto:joann.alvarado@greyhound.com). Refer to group number 667457. Bus sizes are 47-55 passengers.

**June 1-3, 2011** - North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR), Chicago. Joyce Rupp is keynote speaker.



**October 6, 2012** - BACAR Conference with Kate Kuentler, Cannon Lawyer on Association.

### VIDEO CONFERENCE ON ASSOCIATION

Several BACAR members joined a video conference in November offered by canon lawyer Sr. Amy Herford, C.S.J., on *Associates of Religious Institutes: Seeking a Way Forward*. Her slide presentation is about the trends in Association and the implications from a perspective of canon law.

Amy looks at the relationship between a religious community and the associate community, the current structure of association and how both of these aspects might evolve, and be affected by canon law. She offers several existing models for associate structure that could be adopted.

She also explores current expectations, rights and responsibilities, and how these could change depending on the nature of the structures and relationships. If there is interest, this slide show could be shared with BACAR members at a future Discussion Group.

### BACAR DISCUSSION GROUPS

One outcome of the rich and provocative 2010 BACAR Conference has been the introduction of quarterly follow-up Discussion Groups to continue the conversation. If you recall, the October 2, 2010 BACAR Conference was facilitated by Elizabeth Fitting, who led an excellent debriefing from an expert panel including Joe Connell, Anne Hannigan, Elaine Sanchez, and Mary Ann Zollman. Many of us were enthused and

energized by the flow of the day and the intensity of the discussion that was generated from the topic ***Mutuality and Sustainability: What the Future Holds for Association.***

There was interest at the conference in being able to continue the conversation in another more intimate format. The BACAR Core Committee made plans for the Discussion groups to meet quarterly to keep us fresh and engaged. Each meeting has been at a locality that would be somewhere in the Bay Area for ease of proximity of guests. No fee would be charged and each meeting would be on a Saturday morning.

To date we have had four BACAR Discussion Group sessions or workshops, attended by anywhere from fifteen to thirty-five associates and religious. The first BACAR Discussion Group was held at the Notre Dame Province Center in Belmont with Elizabeth Fitting continuing the thoughts of the 2010 Conference. The second Discussion Group was held at the Holy Family Mother House in Fremont while the third was housed at the Mercy Retreat Center in Burlingame. The fourth was at the Notre Dame Province Center with Kathy Noether facilitating a discussion on ***Prophetic Witness.*** Information will be coming out soon regarding the next meeting to be held at the Holy Family Mother House on February 4, 2012. Mark your calendars NOW!!

These meetings were the original hope and dream of two people in particular that are still part of the original BACAR Core Committee (previously known as WSCAR). Both Kathy Herrington and Dolores Nice have guided this committee over twelve years to what it has become today. Their hope was to generate a common bond with the associates

and religious in California, and in particular in the Bay Area.

We are evolving, we are growing, we are continually being inspired. We hope that you will share this enthusiasm and come to our Discussion Groups with your ideas and hopes for the future of Association.

--Kathy Noether, BACAR co-chair 2012

### **BACAR SOUTH BAY REFLECTION GROUP**

Gaining much interest from our quarterly BACAR Discussion Group meetings, the South Bay has joined together to meet for further dialog and sharing of our common values as associates. We are calling these meetings BACAR Reflection Groups as they are a reflection of what may have been discussed and shared at the BACAR Discussion Group meetings.

The Reflection Groups are intended to be small, informal, and an outgrowth of the Discussion Groups. Our South Bay Reflection Group has met several times at different homes for either lunch or dinner. Each time we have met has been an inspiration to each of us. We have grown to know one another, feel safe and comfortable with each other, and look forward to next meetings! We decide as a group when and where we will meet. The group also decides how often we will come together and, so far, time limits have not entered the picture. We just go until we're done!

We have shared ideas about association, carry over discussion from our BACAR topic of Prophetic Witness, and looked to further dialog including books and articles that we have found interesting. Each of us brings a richness from our individual backgrounds and experiences: Kathy Herrington is a

Holy Names Associate, Kathi Goodman is a Holy Family Associate, Deb Albert is a Franciscan Associate, Kathy Noether is a Notre Dame de Namur Associate, and Virginia Busch is a Franciscan Associate. Some of us have also experienced other religious communities through work, church, or other volunteer committees over the years.

We have found these meetings to be enriching and fulfilling and look forward to our next date. We cannot neglect to mention that it has also turned out to be a culinary delight! This richness of newfound friends has been an anticipated and eager time where we look forward to rich discussions and relaxing times together.

- Kathy Noether, SND

### **OTHER REGIONAL GROUPS**

The Peninsula group, 7 people, meets every week in Sunnyvale. (There is a second BVM group that meets twice a month.) There are no groups in San Francisco or the North Peninsula at present, but Judy Borland is organizing associates in that area and getting a group going.

### **ASSOCIATES OF NOTRE DAME**

The Sisters and Associates of Notre Dame de Namur welcomed seven new associates earlier this February. Joining the Notre Dame family were Mary Fox, Belmont; Joan Marsh, Carmel; Lois Jones, Belmont; Sandy Lee, Burlingame; Suzy Smith, Montara; Gina Dorst, San Mateo; and Mary Haeslop, Belmont.

Reflecting on Association, Notre Dame's new co-associate director Dede Waters-Masters had said, "I believe that the Association model is a wonderful direction in the Church today. I have longed for a spiritual sisterhood of support and feel so blessed to have found it. St.

Julie's vision, the empowerment of women and the keen focus on public service have attracted me to this community."

Celebrating their new role with Notre Dame, associates shared their thoughts on becoming associates. Mary Haeslop said, "Believing in the Goodness of God is the very core of my being. The work that St. Julie and Francoise started, educating those less fortunate and teaching them what they need to know for life, is now being carried out by the Sisters in the California Province and their Associates."

Lois Jones stated, "Sisters of Notre Dame and Associates are champions proclaiming the goodness of God in our time. As an Associate I have the opportunity to become a viable participant in a group of strong, spirited women who make life better for others."

We welcome with hearts as big as the world the new associates of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in California.

--Kathy Noether, SND Associate

### **ASSOCIATES OF THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF DUBUQUE**

Virginia Busch & Deborah Albert associates with the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa attended the communities' annual summer "Gathering." Keynote speaker for the weekend was John Dear, S.J., a renowned speaker on peace and justice issues. John Dear has been arrested over 75 times in acts of nonviolent civil disobedience for peace. He has organized hundreds of demonstrations and peace rallies over the years at military bases as well as working with Mother Teresa to stop the death penalty.

The most impressive part of the day for both Deb and Virginia was when Fr. Dear listed all the social

needs of this country that could be met if our leaders could ever get beyond war. He explained at great length why he views the United States as a war driven country.

--Deb Albert, Sisters of St. Francis Associate



### **EVOLUTIONARY CHRISTIANITY: Topic for BVM Sisters and Associates gathered in Chicago October 7-9, 2011**

"For a deeper understanding that every human life is totally connected to the life of all the rest of the planet, that a human being can remain alive only if life is shared, moment by moment, not only with all other humans but also with the plants, trees, animals, rivers, and lakes, and with the atmosphere . . . We pray at this moment of grace."

These words adapted from Teilhard de Chardin's The Divine Milieu Explained by Louis M. Savary were part of the opening litany of the Chicago area gathering attended by BVM sisters and 11 associates (*pictured above*) and sum up well the focus of the event.

Gail Worchelo, co-founder with Thomas Berry of the Green Mountain Monastery in 2002, gave us an overview of what can be understood today as the "Universe Story" and what it means in our understanding of ourselves, our relationship to God and to all living things. It was a graduate course condensed into several hours that provided

enough material for a year of reading, studying and meditation as a person grapples with the implications on on personal and social level.

The obvious implication to what we heard was how important it is at this time to "transcend and include" as we move into this new understanding. We can include the past as we move into the future, but we need to be flexible and free enough to allow ourselves and our structure to be reformed.

The ritual, singing and sharing that were part of the event, helped us absorb the message on another level as we continued the process of letting our spirituality evolve - so much a part of the BVM legacy.

--Elizabeth Fitting, BVM Associate

### **MERCY ASSOCIATES**

Trish Trout and Ann Dufour are the co-directors of the West Midwest Community Mercy Associates. They recently sent out this report via the Mercy e-newsletter:

The 40-member group known as the Mercy Association Leadership Network (MALN) met at Mercy Center in Farmington Hills, MI. The theme of this year's meeting was "The Roots and Wings of our Shared Reality." From an overview of the roots of Mercy Associates dating from the early 1970s to the present, members of MALN journeyed into the future to identify new priorities and clarify roles to achieve them. Using the faith-sharing process that we experienced at Chapter last June, members of MALN came together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in a mode of discernment and sharing.

Aided by facilitator Sister Betty Finn (South Central), the members of

MALN began visioning the future of Mercy association in our Institute. An important order of business was to affirm a statement of support by MALN for the Fifth Institute Chapter Declaration Statement that will be conveyed to the Institute Leadership Team. We also pledged to inform associates in each of our communities about the Chapter Declaration and to follow up with actions and activities to live it out in our own settings. Special programming in connection with WMW Consultation Network meetings this fall has been our first step in raising awareness about the Chapter Declaration among WMW Associates.

Another important outcome of the meeting was to come to consensus about beginning a strategic planning process for MALN. It's clear from the evolution of our organization that now is the time to fine-tune our vision for association across the Institute and to begin to set new priorities and goals. The past several years have been full of change and reconfiguration for all of us. We're now able to focus outward, as well as tend to associate matters within our own communities.

The first Mercy Associate covenant in the United States took place in 1972. During the past 40 years, we have grown to 3,500 associates throughout the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Coincidentally, an article in the National Catholic Reporter (Sept. 27, 2011) estimates that associates of all religious orders in the U.S. now number more than 50,000. That's a leap from 24,500 lay associates in North America reported in a survey conducted in 2000 by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). "Lay association is truly a phenomenon," says Joseph Connell, director of Holy Cross Associates and board member of the North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR).

Our prayer is two-fold: that we continue to attract and nurture the unique call to Mercy association among women and men within our West Midwest Community, and that God gives us the grace to humbly lead associates to deeper spirituality, stronger communities and life-giving ministries of Mercy.

--Dolores Nice, Mercy Associate



**SNJM Sisters and Associates** gather for our annual Associate Sponsored Retreat at the Villa Maria del Mar on the beach in Santa Cruz, California. Our theme was Called by Name. Our presenters were Lorna Cooney, SNJM and Pat Iwata, SNJMA. We heard about our beginnings with Blessed Marie Durocher, her vision and mission to serve and teach the poor, especially women. We ventured into our present and the ways that her vision is alive and working in the lives of our SNJM Sisters and Associates today. We had a wonderful time in this blessed space. -Kathy Herrington, SNJM Associate

### Did You Know?

Several of our female political leaders in the Bay Area were educated by religious congregations? Dianne Feinstein was educated by the RSCJ's, as was Anna Eshoo. Nancy Pelosi was educated by the School Sisters of Notre Dame and graduated from Trinity in Washington, and Jackie Speier is a Mercy graduate.

## RSCJ ASSOCIATES: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ASSOCIATE

*After a November 2011 retreat with Lyn Ozick, RSCJ, and at the beginning of a liturgy in which the Associates present would renew their commitment, Mary Romo gave this Introduction to the assembly. Mary is a Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ) Associate and an adjunct professor in the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of San Francisco. Her thoughts on "What does it mean to be an Associate?" are true for all of us, in whatever community we have chosen to associate ourselves.*

Thank you all for welcoming us Associates today,  
and especially Lyn Ozick for a most enriching, insightful and personally  
challenging day of prayer, reflection, silence and sharing.

Thank you for embracing us  
And our daily efforts to live out the RSCJ charism  
of witnessing to and spreading forth  
the love of God,  
the compassion of Jesus,  
the grace-filled gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The last time I was up here at the lectern in this so sacred chapel was years ago when I led a retreat for the Associates—and now I'm one of them!

What does it mean to be an Associate?

I can speak only for myself.

To be an RSCJ Associate means—besides consciously living out the charism—to share in the RSCJ vision of the power of love to transform lives

and the RSCJ mission of actively engaging in the world,  
endeavoring, as St. Francis put it, to preach the gospel always,  
using words if necessary.

It means, as St. Ignatius wrote, being a contemplative-in-action,  
to see all things in God,  
and God in all things.

It means, as the recently deceased Dean Brackley said of his life in poverty-stricken,  
war-ridden El Salvador after the massacre of his Jesuit brothers in 1990,  
"It means learning how to *be*—differently."

It means what the biographer Jim Forest noticed about those who encountered the works  
of Thomas Merton, "Most of the people who read Merton didn't become monks.  
but they did discover a kind of monastic place inside themselves where [they]  
could live a more coherent spiritual life."

Being an Associate means belonging to a very special, almost palpably graced  
community in which we share aspects of our lives we might not otherwise  
explore and feel free to articulate.

Share experiences of wonder,  
of sadness,  
of conflict,  
of doubt, of loss,  
of the unexpected,  
of reaching out, and letting go,  
of consolation and celebration,  
of gifts and graces and gratitude—  
of experiences of faith and love and hope.

It means belonging to a community grounded and sustained in trust,  
mutual respect and dedication.

It means a daily “yes” to our unique call to the RSCJ.

It means a daily dedication to quiet, reflection, prayer, and surrender  
to on-going conversion.

It means a commitment to acknowledging and living to the fullest  
the gifts I’ve been given.

Robert Frost once wrote that a poem is “a stay against confusion.”

My experience of Associates’ gatherings—whether our monthly meetings,  
our seasonal retreats, or national and international conferences—  
is that being among the RSCJ and Associates is transformative—  
truly a “momentary stay” against the “confusion” of the world outside.

Over these 10 years or so as an Associate, I’ve come to see how I have become  
more attentive,

more deliberately conscious,  
more intentional

in living out the gospel values of compassion, truth, mercy,  
forgiveness, acceptance, service  
and delight in simply living.

And I’ve come to recognize the face of God in all creation,

And [I] strive to share the heart of Christ with everyone I encounter.



**“Be of love (a little more) careful than of anything” e.e. cummings**

**WE NEED YOUR HELP:** Please pass this newsletter on to all the sisters and associates in your community.  
Thanks to all who submitted articles. Please give us feedback. Let us know what you would like to see. This is YOUR  
newsletter.

- Editors: Michelle Hogan, RSCJ Associate and Elizabeth Fitting, BVM, Associate