

NACAR



North American Conference
of Associates and Religious

The Associate

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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.



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Message from NACAR



*We welcome you to a new year and a new look and schedule for *The Associate!**

Welcome to our new *The Associate!* We have heard your comments and suggestions and are making changes to *The Associate* due to your feedback.

There will be lighter background on each page to make it easier for individuals with vision impairment to read. It will also be easier to print for those who need to print copies for individuals who do not have access to email. *The Associate* will have fewer pages, making it easier to read online and/or print if necessary. To help in providing news on a more consistent basis, we will publish four issues of *The Associate* annually.

What will the new *The Associate* include in each issue? We will maintain the core of *The Associate* by highlighting the associate movement through interesting interviews with people in the associate movement, calendar of NACAR events, prayers, book reviews, reflective pieces and reflective questions. *The Associate* will contain a table of contents for easy reference to these elements in an eight to 12-page format.



We continue to need your support, so please share what is happening in your congregation, province or regional network. We also welcome prayers, poetry, photographs and reflections offered by your associates. When we share our stories, we help to inspire and encourage others as together we continue to share our charisms for the world. Updated guidelines and timelines are available on the website.

We look forward to sharing our new *The Associate* with you and we hope the format makes it easier for you to share with others.

**Associate Carla Rush,
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati,
editor of *The Associate***

Dreaming the Future

Into Being

by Covenant Companion Jeanne Connolly, Wheaton Franciscans, NACAR board president

“Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.”

Langston Hughes

Where I live, there is a television advertisement that shows a little girl stringing beads to create bracelets to donate for a cause. Derek Jeter asks her how long she has wanted to support this cause and she responds “ten years.” He expresses how amazing that is since she is only 6-years old. I smile each time I hear this. Recently, I have been wondering what happens to our dreams? The dreams that inspired us perhaps before we were born. The dreams that call forth the best of us. The dreams that move us to create a world that is filled with compassionate mutuality and not bound by rigidity, structure and exclusion.

When I reflect on the associate-religious movement, I wonder about the dream that called it forth ... God’s dream, perhaps born out of the belief that we are better together. This dream is born out of God’s love for all creation and desire to provide infinite paths back to God, to right relationships on the journey, and to a cosmos that is filled with peace, justice and care of creation.

This dream took shape within the hearts and minds of the women and men who birthed associate life within their own communities. Associate life began a new way of belonging, born of a desire to be connected and to give witness to God’s infinite love. This new way of belonging began to take the shape of a movement as more and more laypersons responded to the mystery of call and response to the charisma of each community’s founder/foundress. The North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR) emanated from this movement. It emerged out of the desire



to share how the Spirit was moving within our respective communities and to begin to address mutual interests.

Dreaming the Future

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Here we are now, just a short 24 years later, living in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. What now? Father Ronald Rolheiser suggests that “the invitation to mature disciples today is the same as it was for that first generation of disciples who were fearful and confused as they faced Jesus’ departure: Return to the city, return to your faith dream!”



So, we return to God’s dream. The dream that we are better together. The NACAR board of directors believes that God is serious about the future of the associate way of life as a transformative presence in the church and the world. Perhaps if we collectively listen closely and let go of expectations and limitations, we will hear God calling us to a new way of living this dream today.

Sister Pat Murray encouraged leaders in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious to “engage in web-watching and web-weaving.” She

quotes Mennonite theologian and peace activist John Paul Lederach and his work on moral imagination. Lederach defines moral imagination as “the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world, yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist.”

Throughout 2020, the NACAR board of directors will engage in exploring “that which does not yet exist.” We desire to do this exploration in collaboration with others. Author Adrienne Maree Brown suggests that we need “collaborative ideation ... we have to collaborate on the process of dreaming and visioning and implementing a world that works for more people and more life. We have to recognize that a multitude of realities have, do, and will exist ... ideation is the process of birthing new ideas, and the practice of collaborative ideation is about sharing that process as early as possible.”

From the beginning, the purpose of NACAR has been to provide a forum for sharing the Spirit at work within our charisms and to support leadership within the associate-religious movement. As we transition into the “not yet known,” we continue to hold the purpose (the why) of NACAR firmly in our hearts and minds, even as we search for a new how. Our world requires greater adaptability, insight and humility. Our commitment to the Gospel life demands this of us.

Welcome 2020 ... may our collaborative ideation be light for the world.

“By ourselves, we suffer serious limitations. Together we can be something wonderful.”

Max DePree

Religious Formation Conference Biennial Congress

by Covenant Companion Jeanne Connolly, Wheaton Franciscans, NACAR board president

The 2019 biennial congress sponsored by the Religious Formation Conference (RFC) was held October 24-27 in Louisville, Kentucky. The theme of this year's congress was Being Signs of Courageous Hope. For the first time in history, NACAR worked in collaboration with RFC to invite and consciously include associates.

Marci Madary, an affiliate with the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, served as the NACAR representative on the congress planning committee. She also served on the prayer and ritual committee. Marci Madary has worked in the area of spirituality for over 20 years and is the previous director of affiliates for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. In addition to serving on the planning committee, Marci offered a congress seminar "Moving Toward Mutuality."

From the welcoming remarks by Sister of Charity Ellen Dauwer, RFC executive director, through the beautiful liturgies and rituals, associates were made to feel welcome and a part of the call to be signs of courageous hope.

Father Bryan Massingale offered the keynote address on "Courage for an Interim Time that Does Not Yet Know Its Name." His remarks were challenging and deeply authentic. They crossed generations, lifestyles and spiritual practices, calling us to consider how we choose to be hope in this interim time. He reminded us that "hope is the inner orientation of the human spirit that sustains one in the quest of a non-guaranteed future. Hope is belief in the resurrection."

On Saturday morning we heard from Sister Norma Pimentele, Missionaries of Jesus, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. Sister Norma shared her

experience working at the Mexican border. Her stories were both heartbreaking and hopeful. Sister Norma reminded us that there is a role for everyone, even if it is not possible or practical to assist at the border. Prayer and advocacy can be done from wherever we are and at every age and stage of life, she added.

NACAR had an exhibit at the congress, providing participants an opportunity to stop by and engage in conversation about the associate movement. The exhibit was staffed by Jeanne Connolly and Terri Butel. Many expressed delight that NACAR



Terri Butel engages a participant at the Religious Formation Conference congress, during which NACAR hosted a booth to offer more information on association.

was present and that associates had been invited to attend the congress. NACAR also hosted a "grab (your lunch) and go" event. Approximately 25 people attended this opportunity to share how, at this time, the Spirit is moving within the associate way of life and NACAR.

The next RFC Congress will take place November 4-7, 2021, in Chicago, Illinois. For more information on the Religious Formation Conference, please visit their [website](#).

Annual Associate Sponsored Retreat

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

The annual Sisters of the Holy Names Jesus and Mary associate sponsored retreat at the Villa Maria del Mar in Santa Cruz, California, was held November 1-3, 2019. The theme was Because God First Loved Us and the theme song was "Psalm 103, Loving and Forgiving."

The retreat included four presentations covering the topics of loving, forgiving, being slow to anger and being rich in kindness. We spent time in reflection between each talk and to take in how thoroughly we are loved by our God. The love, like a gentle mist, penetrated, disproved and dispelled any negative thought that tried to surface. It was amazing to look around the room and watch fatigue and worries clear from the faces and the postures of each person. Smiles grew and breathing slowed. The time was sacred and healing.

We always enjoy our time together. Social hour is pretty raucous as we do our best to fill each other in on all the events of the past year since many of us had seen each other. The volume seems to expand the walls, and our hearts are full.

This is such sacred time and we live in the holy, in one of the holiest places on earth. The song of the ocean soothes our souls. We revel in our time walking on the beach; looking out the windows at the vast Pacific Ocean; watching the dolphins, otters and whales playing; and observing dogs doing their best to control the waves as they chase one another. Our hearts smile and we are full of gratitude and grace.

Sisters and associates gathered in Santa Cruz, California, for their annual associate sponsored retreat.



Spiritual Resilience

Creating Sabbath Moments

NACAR presents the annual associate leadership retreat May 18-21, 2020, at the Marillac Center, Leavenworth, Kansas. Facilitators will be Associates Bridget Spurduto and Eileen O'Shea.

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, the ability to spring back into shape. As associate leaders, the sometimes chaotic, uncertain times in which we live and work can deplete our reserves when we most need them. This retreat will provide a blueprint for creating our own "spiritual resilience toolbox" so that we are able to care for ourselves and inspire others to do the same.

Retreat Center and Amenities

The retreat will begin Monday, May 18 at 5 p.m. and conclude Thursday, May 21 after noon lunch. Registration details can be found on the [NACAR website](#); the deadline for registration is April 20, 2020.

Member rate: \$480 (single), \$450 (double)
Non-member rate: \$600 (single), \$570 (double)

Our Facilitators

Bridget Spurduto is director of The Well Spirituality Center in La Grange Park, Illinois. Weaving storytelling, scripture, theological and scientific concepts, Bridget invites adults and children into the profound presence and mystery of God around and within. Bridget is an associate of the Congregation of St. Joseph, a spiritual director, an educator and a retreat facilitator.



Eileen O'Shea, a member of the associate coordinator team for the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, has facilitated many retreats and seminars over the years. After a 30-year career at AT&T, where she led workshops on the quality of work life, Eileen served as manager of the Career Transitions Center.



Creative Conversations

Wednesday, February 19, 2020 - Translating secular workplace skills to associate leadership

Facilitated by Anne Scott, associate, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, U.S. Ontario Province, and Lori Ritz, director of life and mission, Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

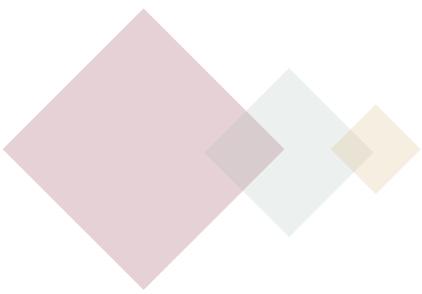
Wednesday, March 18, 2020 - Grief and loss in our communities

Facilitated by Amy Kulesa, director of associates, Sisters of Bon Secours and Terri Butel, director of associates for the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 - Starting conversations with associates about finances

Facilitated by Rita Woehlcke, Sister of St. Joseph, and Amy Kulesa, director of associates, Sisters of Bon Secours

Watch for the upcoming NACAR emails for registration information.



VLCFF at University of Dayton

Reduced Fee Online Courses

Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation is sponsored by The Institute for Pastoral Initiatives at the University of Dayton (vlcff.udayton.edu). All associates and vowed members are eligible for reduced fees for the online courses and seminars, available in both English and Spanish. Courses are three to six weeks in duration and cost \$50 (reduced from \$105); seminars are three weeks in duration and cost \$40 (reduced from \$80). Some courses require a textbook; others use online resources.

To register as a student; go to <https://vlcff.udayton.edu/> and click on the menu item “students” and “become a new student” (direct link: https://vlcff.udayton.edu/profile/become_student.php). In the registration field titled “diocese/partner,” click the drop-down menu and select “North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR) (OH)” so that you receive the discounted rate. Then you are ready to enroll.

You may also find more information on our website at: <https://nacar.org/resources/vlcff.html>

Courses Available Cycle 2: March 1 - April 4, 2020

(Registration: Opens January 15; Closes February 26)

- Basic Catechist Formation: Seminar 1.2 (Vocation of the Catechist)
- Bible Basics
- Bioethical Issues, Including Care for the Aging and Support for Families
- Catechetical Methodology: Archdiocese for the Military Services Only
- Catholic Beliefs
- Church History 2
- Conscience
- Designing and Implementing Adult Learning and Faith Formation (AFL 7)
- Disabilities in Parish Life: An Overview (SN 1)
- Discovering Integral Ecology in Laudato Si'
- Ecclesiology: Pilgrim Church
- Faith and Human Development
- Foundations and Vision for Adult Learning and Faith Formation (AFL 1)
- Galatians
- History of Catholic Social Action (SJ)
- Images of Jesus
- Introduction to Catechesis
- Introduction to Liturgy
- Introduction to Pastoral Care
- Introduction to Practical Morality
- Introduction to Prayer
- Introduction to Scripture
- Marianist Studies: Prayer
- Mary in Scripture and Tradition
- Ministering in Times of Scandals and Divisions
- New Testament
- Old Testament
- Our Hearts Were Burning
- Prayer and Worship with Adolescents (YM)
- Sacraments
- Survey of Catholic Doctrine
- The Parish Nurse: Facilitating Wholistic Health Through the Lifespan
- Understanding Culture in Ministry: Building Bridges

