
Vocations Future

Next steps proposed to attract new generations to religious life

Catholic News Service - Nancy Frazier O'Brien

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- At what one participant called a "critical juncture in consecrated life," dozens of religious and Catholic lay leaders gathered in Chicago recently to thrash out the next steps needed to attract young people to religious life today.

AN EXTRACT:

"Citing divisions in the church on issues ranging from hierarchal leadership to women's roles to sexuality and immigration, Brother Bednarczyk noted that the study conducted by CARA showed that younger Catholics entering religious life "are clearly disheartened by this polarization they see in the church, in religious life and in their religious institutes.

"Those divisions must be acknowledged as part of the reality to which we attempt to invite women and men to a radical following of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a life of consecrated chastity, poverty and obedience," he said.

Other speakers raised similar issues, citing a need to recognize the differing worldview of today's young Catholics in order to discover what might attract them to religious life.

For them, "Vatican II is someone else's history," said **Brother Sean D. Sammon**, a former superior general of the Marist Brothers and former president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men.

"Today a new generation, many of whose members lack a strong Catholic identity as



defined by the practices of the past, is looking at religious life and mission through eyes shaped by a world that is foreign to many of us over the age of 50," he said.

"Theirs does not include John F. Kennedy or the Cold War. Nor is it a world that has cause to remember Woodstock, the sexual revolution, Dag Hammarskjold, a war in Vietnam, Watergate, the early days of the women's movement," Brother Sammon added. "These

persons and events may have been a part of your world or mine, but for the emerging generation, they serve as content of the history books that they read."

He said the greatest differences between the younger and older generations are seen in the "desire to belong to a group whose commitment and fidelity to the church is unquestioned, the wearing of a religious habit, the form of community life and style of prayer."

Brother Sammon said a key ingredient in establishing "the necessary lines of communication between this population and our congregations" is the creation of a "culture of vocation promotion," including the appointment of at least one full-time vocation promoter in each of the congregation's provinces or districts.

"If General Motors or IBM faced the personnel crisis that we have had on our hands for the last few decades, they would have long ago had their best people in the work of recruiting men and women for a career with their corporations," he said. "At the same time, each

of us must learn to take some responsibility for this work."

He also suggested taking advantage of "opportunities available to educate as wide a population as possible," such as with a parish adult education course on religious life, yesterday and today.

"In so doing, we might consider targeting parents especially," Brother Sammon said. "They were once one of the strongest allies of those encouraging vocations; they need to be brought into that same position again."

Another crucial factor is visibility, he said, noting that "a number of us from older generations of religious have, to a large extent, become invisible in the places in which we serve and the communities in which we live."

"If we are truly interested in improving the witness value of our way of life," he said, "a number of us will need to find some new and more effective ways to be more visible."



Brs **Victor Preciado**, Econome General and General Councilor, **Alberto Uribe** (Ibérica), **Nicholas Banda** (South Africa), **Delcio Alfonso Balestrin** (Brasil Centro-Sul), **Mme. Blanca Arregui** ("Acrescere" – Madrid) and **MM. Juan Martín Cebrián** (Santa Marial de los Andes) and **Rex Cambrey** (Melbourne).

Marist Financial Team meets in Rome

Rex Cambrey (pictured third from the left in the back row) recently returned from some sabbatical leave and attending a meeting of the world-wide **Marist Brothers Financial Team**. Their task was to begin preliminary discussion on how best to finance the expenses of the General Administration and to ensure the financial viability of the Administrative Units around the Marist Brothers' world.

The Team was accompanied by Mme. Blanca Arregui from Madrid who ensured that the participants followed the methodology of the work.

Future meetings will be held in May and October, 2011.

On Being Framed

Br Mark O'Connor, fms

They tell the story that one day John Paul 11, after several years as Pope, was asked if he still wrote poetry. Remember that as student, pastor and even Bishop, Karol Woytla wrote some significant poems arising from his life situation.

John Paul looked around his Vatican surroundings and replied negatively with a sigh: 'No context'!

Perhaps the Papacy is rather more than a 'golden cage' for its occupant. But the story does suggest that making 'poetry' and not 'prosaic' verse of one's life, can sometimes be a challenge, even for one as prodigiously talented an artist as John Paul 11!

For 'context' and 'framing' are indeed, if not everything, quite a lot of the 'picture'. We say of people who claim they are falsely accused in B grade Hollywood movie jargon that they have been 'framed'. That is another way of saying that they been 'set up' to look something like something that they are not.

Like it or not, the context in our lives in society and church is indeed often 'framed' by the perception others have of us. Whether it is actually the 'truth' is another matter. As the Talmud say: 'We do not see thing as they are; we see things as we are"! Nonetheless, people do write 'framing' scripts for each of us and very often demand we play the 'part' assigned for us.



What to do about this? Well, first of all we must be at least occasionally aware that we live in a culture that, at the *macro* level, is terribly reductionist and often assesses people largely by slogans and labels.

Bella Figura is not just for the Italians!

'Looking good, not being good' is *the* mark of our media-driven culture. Week and after week we see public figures being 'mowed down' by a voracious media pack. Politics is fed by this concern for image and appearances. No wonder style over substance is the hallmark of our political debates. The intensely 'visual' nature of our culture also means that it is the attractive and beautiful who have 'first place' in our psyches – even despite our better selves protesting. As the old Marist Retreat Team prayer used to say 'The packaging is not the

gift.' (disclaimer: I regret to say I never 'qualified' for the Marist Retreat Team!)

At the *micro* interpersonal level, we see this 'framing' dynamic at work in the way some 'label' others. Being honest doesn't mean being brutal. In the name of telling the truth, we've all heard -- and said -- things we're sorry were ever uttered. Sometimes a single derogatory sentence from someone can remain stuck in the brain for life, serving as a toxic seed that grows. It's much harder to remove these seeds than not to plant them in the first place.

Let us affirm each other and avoid attempting to 'frame' or 'label' people. 'The Mower' by Philip Larkin puts it eloquently.

*The mower stalled, twice; kneeling, I found
A hedgehog jammed up against the blades,
Killed. It had been in the long grass.*

*I had seen it before, and even fed it, once.
Now I had mauled its unobtrusive world
Unmendably. Burial was no help:*

*Next morning I got up and it did not.
The first day after a death, the new absence
Is always the same; we should be careful*

*Of each other, we should be kind
While there is still time.*

Larkin's poem is salutary for all for us whose lives are inevitably 'framed' by the judgments of those around us - for good and for bad. While we await judgment from the only One who really counts (see Matthew 25) – as we struggle like John Paul 11 to make the Gospel the 'poetry' of our lives - we could do worse than to practice that advice:

*we should be careful
Of each other, we should be kind
While there is still time.*



LOMERI-

Weather extremes, pumps and Novitiate Life

At Lomeri, as November approaches each year, there is a sense of anticipation as the second-year novices complete their Profession Retreat and move into the final stages of preparation for making First Vows. This year, Profession Day is Saturday 13th November and there are six young men: one from Kiribati, two from Vanuatu and three from Papua New Guinea. While there is anticipation and an urgency of preparation, there is also time to look back.

One significant marker was in late December last year when Tropical Cyclone Mick roared in with winds and belting rains. 240mm of rain fell in less than 24 hours and 12 hours of cyclonic winds left a big clean-up job but no serious damage. For a day, the Novitiate on the hill of Lomeri was a cyclone shelter and evacuation centre for a hundred or so local people.

Once the wind dropped and the rain stopped the cleaning up started. Many fallen trees and other debris were removed, and the muddied and leaf-plastered windows and walls cleaned. Things that had blown away were found and retrieved, and novices helped local people clean up around the parish church as well as our own place.

The slope below our kitchen lost many large trees and, as it was cleared, we uncovered the pump that is occasionally used to bring water up from the mains supply pipe. For more than three years it had not been used at all as the rainwater tanks have been constantly refilled from our roofs with regular downpours. The pump looked fine and what appeared to be some sort of overflow pipe was ignored – until mid-August. Then after a month of very dry

weather the pump was needed. When started it just sent a stream of water down the slope. This was a puzzle. The last time it was used the water had smoothly pumped up the hill to our underground tank. What we had not yet recognised was that the feeder pipe had been snapped off by the fall of a large branch during the cyclone.

It took the clear descriptions of former resident, Peter Morellini, to help us find the part of the broken pipe that had become well buried in the cyclone. Thanks to Peter's good memory, and after careful rejoining and repairs by Br Bernard McGrath, the pipeline is now functional, the pump is purring and again we have access to water in drier times. Thanks to the Brothers in Perth who so quickly reconnected us to Peter and thanks to him for his recall.

Of course, we prefer the fresh rainwater that flows into the underground tanks from the roof each time it rains. It is so convenient and is always *wara swit moa** (the nicest water)!

These weather extremes remind us that the work of formation continues in all weather. In the dry times, as well as in deluges, the life of the Novitiate has continued and our living of community as brothers and novices in the style of Marcellin has gone on quietly with generous sharing of skills and concern for each other and with eyes on the needs of the people in the world around us.

We are in a place in which the inquiring minds and searching hearts of novices are nourished in their experience of prayer and silence in beautiful tropical surroundings. One marvellous aspect of life here is seeing

and knowing their willingness to enter into the inner journey during two intensive formative years. The reading and study side of that has been enhanced greatly through careful, loving attention to the Novitiate Library over the last three years. Br Bert Webster has laboured with diligence and purpose to make it a place enticing to the reader, in which the materials are well-organised, beautifully presented, accessible, attractive and appropriate.

Bert is at the end of his three years as community leader and is returning to Port Moresby. He leaves a legacy of inspiring and dedicated work to remind us of his

vision that it is possible to tailor a library that caters well to the needs of Pacific nations novices in the 21st century. Even as we thank him, our thoughts are turning to maintaining the materials, the organisation and attractiveness so that it continues to contribute well to the life and work of the novitiate.

Even more, we all carry with us a deeper sense of the meaning of dedication and thoroughness, all done with a truly joyful way of living. Bert has communicated to us all what life as a Brother is about by his presence and willingness to share life to the full with all who have been at Lomeri during the last three years.



Novitiate Community 2010

Front from left: **Joseph Wabi** (PNG), **Oscar Irebake** (PNG), **Renaud Tsione** (Vanuatu), **Andrew Litanga** (PNG), **Charles Tavor** (PNG)

Standing: **Br Bert Webster** (Community leader), **Borerei Katarake** (Kiribati), **Br Bernard McGrath**, **Valentin Samsam** (Vanuatu), **Ezrah Kapin** (PNG), **Br Christopher Maney**, **David Molsul** (Vanuatu), **Br Dennis Cooper**

ICFP -Bacau winds up the Academic Year

Greetings from ICFP Baucau. It is the end of the academic year here, and last Saturday the Third Year graduating students organised a wonderful farewell to share with all of us. Beginning with Mass in the Cathedral at 9.00, the students continued their farewell with a great program, including morning tea and lunch. Each of the Year groups presented an item and the Third Year students responded with a farewell song that had many of the students in tears – not to mention some of the staff! Despite the torrential rain, it was a beautiful day, and in my opinion, the best farewell we have had.



Year 6 practicum - teaching basketball skills



Third Year students prepare to sing their final song

It has been a busy semester with practicum sessions for all three years during the past 13 weeks, as well as normal lectures. I always feel so happy when I go out to visit students during their practicum as I can see future teachers for Timor Leste emerging during this time. Some of the students are outstanding, just about ready to start their career, while others, despite some difficulties, continue to strive to be the best teachers possible. The schools in Baucau have been very supportive,

since the concept of having spiral development of teaching skills is still a new one for them. But they too can see the development of the students each year and how they will be able to contribute to the rebuilding of their country.

The teaching staff continues to study for their Masters degree from ACU. The Professional Development team mentors them as they complete each unit. Two of them finished their Masters at the end of July and another three are busy completing their final assessment in their last unit. Another five should finish their degree by the end of 2011. It will be wonderful to see them graduate with the Third Year students during the graduation ceremony next year. If you were thinking of visiting us in February next year, the graduation ceremony will be held on Saturday, 26th. We have already started planning for it!

Best wishes from all of us at ICFP, and my personal regards to you

Margie x



Celebrations in Perth for Br Joe Hughes' Golden Jubilee

Over a very pleasant long Sunday lunch, Br Joe Hughes was again feted in celebration of his Golden Jubilee as a Marist Brother, this time closer to his home turf.

David and Christina Rushton offered their home patio area for the gathering of over forty people, comprising family members, former students of the Brothers' St Paul's School in Northam, and a smattering of Joe's former Newman Veterans hockey playing colleagues from the 1980's.

David Rushton has nurtured a group called the "Former Students and Staff of Northam Catholic Schools" over the last 14 years. He spoke fondly of the influence that Joe had in his capacity as Deputy Principal on the education of his children in their early secondary years at Newman Siena. He also made reference to Joe's enthusiasm and exploits as a nippy left winger in the Newman Vets Hockey team, mostly made up of former students from St Ildephonsus and Marist Colleges.



Br Joe Hughes receives a presentation from David Rushton

Joe was then presented with a gift and a special T shirt with the old St Paul's badge and motto "Ut Probetis Potiora" to remind him of his school days and the influence of the Brothers who led him to his vocation as a Marist Brother.



Br Joe responds to the congratulations

Former Vets Hockey players and spouses enjoy the celebration





Marcellin
Canterbury Roaders
Reunion

An Informal Get-Together
with Old Friends

Friday 26th November 2010

6.00 pm for 6.30pm.

(School tour 6:10-6:40, brief welcome 6:45pm).

Functions Room, Marcellin College,
160 Bulleen Rd, Bulleen.

Cost: \$60

Contact:

Michael Schauble

Brendan Millane

email: canterburyroaders@gmail.com

Postal Address: PO Box 2321, HAWTHORN, Victoria 3122

Enquiries: Michael Schauble: 0407 097427

Time for a couple of riddles

Answers on the back page

1. A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms:
The first is full of raging fires,
the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in 3 years.
Which room is safest for him?
2. Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Wednesday, Friday or Sunday?
3. What is black when you buy it, red when you use it, and gray when you dispose of it?
4. This is an unusual paragraph. I'm just curious as to just how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so plain and ordinary that you would think there is nothing wrong with it! It is highly unusual, though. Study it, think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But, if you work on it a bit, you might find out.



Recorded comments by Police Officers in the USA



"Relax, the handcuffs are tight because they're new. They'll stretch after you wear them a while."

"If you run, you'll only go to jail tired."

"The answer to this last question will determine whether you are drunk or not. Was Mickey Mouse a cat or a dog?"

"Just how big were those 'two beers' you say you had?"

"You know, stop lights don't come any redder than the one you just went through."

"Can you run faster than 1200 feet per second? Because that's the speed of the bullet that'll be chasing you."

"Yeah, we have a quota. Two more tickets and my wife gets a toaster oven."

"You don't know how fast you were going? I guess that means I can write anything I want to on the ticket, huh?"

"I'm glad to hear that the Chief (of Police) is a personal friend of yours. So you know someone who can post your bail."

"Yes, sir, you can talk to the shift supervisor, but I don't think it will help. Oh, did I mention that I'm the shift supervisor?"

"Warning! You want a warning? O.K, I'm warning you not to do that again or I'll give you another ticket."

"Fair? You want me to be fair? Listen, fair is a place where you go to ride on rides, eat cotton candy and corn dogs and step in monkey poop."

"No sir, we don't have quotas anymore. We used to, but now we're allowed to write as many tickets as we can."

"You didn't think we give pretty women tickets? You're right, we don't.. Sign here."

"If you take your hands off the car, I'll make your birth certificate a worthless document."



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Answers to the riddles

1. The third room. Lions that haven't eaten in three years should be dead.
2. Three consecutive days would be *yesterday, today and tomorrow*
3. Charcoal, as it is used in barbecuing
4. The letter *e*, which is the most common letter used in the English language, does not appear even once in the paragraph.

