

## Advent Day of Retreat



Father John J. Fisher, OSFS will be our Advent Day of Retreat presenter on December 1, 2018 at St. Anthony of Padua Church located on 285 Route 206, Hammonton, NJ 08037.

Father will speak on "Living the Vows in 2018" The schedule has been sent out with the registration forms to all religious in the diocese. All are welcome including religious from other dioceses.

## Fidelity to the Journey

Bishops, women religious, canon lawyers and others met recently outside Chicago to help diocesan leaders understand the precipitous decline in numbers of women in religious life and what that means for the church.

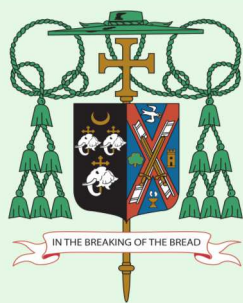
As many as 300 of the 420 religious institutes in the United States are in their last decades of existence because of aging members and declining vocations.

Despite the topic, participants said they came away inspired. Bishop Tobin said he was moved by the peace the sisters have found in planning for the fulfillment of their mission. He said that it reminded him of the prayer of Simeon, "Lord, let your servant go in peace, because my eyes have seen your salvation."

Mercy sister, Sharon Euart, executive director of RCRI, said, "As religious leaders shared the experiences and decisions involved in their own institutions' transitions, they spoke movingly of both peace as well as the grieving among members following decisions to leave ministries, sell motherhouses, find new ways to live their charism in the present and move forward in faith, joy and hope that continues to guide their mission and their lives."

### Prayer for Vocations

Lord of the Harvest, **BLESS** young people with the gift of courage. **Open** their hearts to great ideals, to great things. **INSPIRE** all of your disciples to mutual love and giving— for vocations blossom in the good soil of faithful people. **INSITLL** those in religious life, parish ministries and families with the confidence and grace to invite others to embrace the bold and noble path of a life consecrated to you. **UNITE** us to Jesus through prayer and sacrament, so that we may cooperate with you in building your reign of mercy and truth, of justice and Peace. Amen - *Francis*



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### National Vocation

**Awareness Week**  
November 4-10, 2018

**Advent Retreat**  
December 1, 2018

Rev. John Fisher, OSFS  
**Retirement Fund Collection**  
December 8-9

**World Day for Consecrated**  
**Life**  
February 2, 2019

**Knights of Columbus Dinner**  
February 23, 2019

**Lenten Retreat**  
March 9, 2019



# Women Religious Newsletter

## Diocese of Camden, NJ

Fall 2018

Volume 9 Issue 1

## A Response to the Crisis

Wounded and in need of healing, the Body of Christ, our beloved Church is living the passion of Christ. This suffering caused by others touches all of us. What is our response as Women Religious? How can we help heal these wounds?

We could join the cacophony of angry voices. Or raise our fists in protest, or scream out to unleash the fury, the disillusionment, the pain we too feel. But is that what we are called to do? "We too" are sinners. "We too" share in this very public shame that grips our Church. We have often been powerless in this male dominated institution. But who is to say that if we had power, we would be any better than our brother priests? "But for the grace of God, there go I."

Recently, in **Global Sisters Report**, Colleen Gibson, SSJ., suggested that we respond with humility, that basic virtue without which no one grows spiritually. Humility, we were taught is truth - the truth of who we are: women consecrated to Christ. We are all one Body. We bear our brothers' shame. We, like Christ, lift up the sinner—even those who have committed the unspeakable crime of child abuse. One powerful tool at our disposal is the ability to model loving and forgiving the sinner while seeking justice for the victims of abuse.

## Vicars for Religious Meet

The Eastern Region of the National Conference of Vicars for Religious met at Mt. Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappinger Falls, NY from October 23 to 25th. The topics covered varied from how to better serve our Bishops to extending loving concern to the religious in our diocese.

Sister Joseph Spring, SCC President of Assumption College for Sisters in Mendham, NJ and Rev. Anthony McLaughlin, JCD, vice-rector and professor of Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, CT. were the presenters on "Intercultural Preparation for Religious and Clergy." Often religious are sent to serve in the US without adequate preparation in language and culture resulting in frustration and discouragement both for them and for those they serve. This can be avoided by better preparation by the sending Bishops and Superiors.

## Formation Conference



The webinar offered by the RFC titled "A Conversation

on Vows" posed many interesting questions. For example: *How do people from various cultures fit in our local communities? Why do we take vows? What does it mean to live the vows today?* In the Bible, people took vows to express their vulnerability in relationship to God and to give witness to their faith. It was further noted that vows must incarnate the radical mission of Jesus. God still calls and people still say yes. They come ready to live the uniqueness of religious life, to live in a transformative way. In the future, communities will be smaller, more global. They will, of necessity join forces and work collaboratively. By pressing our ears to the heart of God, we will live in obedience to the Will of God.

## CELEBRATING 100 YEARS



On Saturday, October 6, the Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Kenya celebrated the founding of their Institute. During this century of service, the Sisters have lived out their charism of passion and compassion and especially caring for women and girls. They teach in schools, care for the sick, catechize and work in parishes. Since their founding in 1918, they have expanded to serve in Uganda, Tanzania, Italy and the US serving both in Camden and Brooklyn. Bishop Denis J. Sullivan celebrated the Mass and Msgr. Burton gave a very moving homily recalling how deeply the Sisters treasure the privilege of having Jesus present in their convent chapel. Their singing and liturgical dance glorifies the Lord.

### Sisters on the move ...

**The following have been transferred from the Diocese:** Sisters of St. Joseph Sr. Grace Pino, Sr. Alma Celeste Gallagher, Sr. Margaret Garvin, Sr. Stella Lotz, Sr. Miriam Denis McConomy and Sr. Mary Frances Kyle; Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception: Sr. Anna Pekala, Sr. Joanna Sopala, Sr. Magdalena Zawisza; Franciscan Sisters: Sr. Rosaline Walters, Sr. Paula Randow, Sr. Robert Marie Green. Dominican Sister Marie Di Camillo; Mercy Sister: Marie Edwardine Brown; Daughters of Mercy: Sr. Mary Paul Giordano and Mary Matthew Shaughnessy. Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters: Sr. Patrick Maureen Darcy; Joanne Wallace, Patricia Anne Hughes and Barbara O'Neill, IHM Scranton.

**Sisters new to the Diocese are:** Sisters Linda Taber, Sr. Joanna Ralph and Anne Lafferty, IHM's FMIHM Sr. Felicity Baideo. Sisters of St. Joseph: Carol Beevers and Kathleen Nace. Mercy Sister Guia Jimenez. FMIJ Sister Clorinda Rosa Narvaez. SMI Sisters Joyce Kamau and Immaculate Njiha. Sisters of Mercy (SOM) Norly Marie Gacang and Sicilykutty Joseph and Dominican Sister Rosemarie Wdzieczkowski.

### National Vocation Awareness Week November 4-11, 2018



National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW) is an annual week-long celebration of the Catholic Church in the United States dedicated to promote vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life through prayer and education, and to renew our prayers and support for those who are considering one of these particular vocations. NVAW began in 1976 when the U.S. bishops designated the 28th Sunday of the year for NVAW. In 1997, this celebration was moved to coincide with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which falls on January 13. Beginning in 2014, NVAW was moved to the first full week of November. Pope Francis, in his message for the 2018 World Youth Day of Vocations, emphasizes that it is at the loving initiative of God, and by his personal encounter with each of us that one is called. "God continually come to encounter us and guides us." [www.USCCB.org](http://www.USCCB.org)

## National Retirement Fund for Religious December 8-9



The National Religious Retirement Office coordinates the annual national appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious and distributes financial assistance for retirement needs to eligible religious institutes. The National Religious Retirement Office and the Retirement Fund for Religious are sponsored by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. NRRO strives to support, educate and assist religious institutes in the United States to care for their elderly and frail members now and in the future. NRRO aims

1. to raise funds for retired religious;
2. help religious institutes realistically assess their current retirement needs and implement planning
3. educate religious institutes to allocate assets realistically;
4. develop educational tools, programs, services and resource

materials that enable religious institutes to address retirement wisely. Members of religious institutes seeking information about financial assistance or other NRRO resources go to [Financial Assistance and Resources](#) on the National Religious Retirement Page on USCCB page. **Please contact your pastor in your parish or in a nearby parish to volunteer to speak on behalf of our retired religious during the weekend**



**GLOBAL SISTERS REPORT**

*A project of National Catholic Reporter*

by Joshua J. McElwee

"It's important for women to be at the table and for our leadership to be exercised at the table of decision-making in the church," said Sr. Sally Hodgdon, vice president of UISG. "One hundred percent, I agree with that, and UISG agrees with that. We don't have to be priests or cardinals or bishops to do that. We can just use our gifts to make the changes through our presence and continuing to push for the vote."

Hodgdon, the No. 2 official for the Rome-based International Union of Superiors General (USIFG) for the last five years and one of the seven women religious taking part in the Oct. 3-28 gathering said that under the Catholic Church's theology, brothers and sisters have analogous roles as non-ordained, professed members of religious orders.

"In theory— not even in theory, in reality we are equal... if the Pope allowed the two brothers to vote, it's logical that I would be able to vote."

"We, the USIG, will insist that sisters have the right to vote, if they are Superiors General. For the next synod, we will continue to ask that question."

The International Union of Superiors General represents the approximately 600,000 members of Catholic women religious orders around the world. There is a parallel group for men's orders called the Union of Superiors General. <https://www.globalsistersreport.org> Oct. 17, 2018 in Trends