

### **Vocation Sub-Committee**

*Précis as of 11 September 2017*

#### *Participants:*

- **Matthew Keough** – *Principal, CBA Syracuse (facilitator); Peggy Perkins* – *Director of Campus Ministry, CBA Syracuse; Theresa May White* – *Office of Faith Formation, Diocese of Syracuse; Michael Andrejko FSC* – *Director of Contacts, DENA; Francis Eells FSC* – *Vocations Director, DENA; Richard Galvin FSC* – *Auxiliary Visitor, DENA; Joseph Juliano FSC* – *Director of Administration, DENA*

#### *Process:*

An August 2<sup>nd</sup> and an August 23<sup>rd</sup> conference call was convened; both were about 80 minutes in length. The first meeting was an opportunity for the members to share their experiences of vocation promotion and formation in their respective ministries as well as the vocation efforts on the part of DENA. Three questions were proposed for dialogue:

1. Given the vast experiences of the group, what approach have been successful in promoting vocations to the religious life?
2. What does vocation promotion look like at the District level? How does the District support ministries in their efforts of vocation promotion?
3. What do you think is the greatest obstacle (strategic issues) in increasing the number of vocations to the religious life?

After synthesizing the answers from the first meeting, four more questions (**strategic issues**) were presented for further dialogue:

1. How do we create a culture of vocations in our ministries? What activities continually promote vocations and shift vocation promotion from a single event to a continued theme throughout a ministry?
2. How do we teach adults how to have the conversation with young people about potential vocations (FSC religious life and the teaching vocation)?
3. If we believe that God is still call men to the religious life, how do we help young people to hear, and be open to God's call?
4. What are some solutions to those obstacles (name 8 potential solutions – 3-4 will come easy)?

#### *Key Takeaways:*

The committee agreed that we need to promote a “culture of vocations” throughout the year and not limit it to a semi-annual event sponsored by the DENA Vocation Team.

- The committee further realizes that relationships (student/teacher and student/parent, peer/peer) are key to any type of vocation promotion – both on the local level and in DENA. Our constituents mentioned understand the need/desire for more Brothers vocations, but do not have the “know how” to do “the ask.”

- The need to further bolster service opportunities that engage students and faculty (not just religion teachers and campus ministers) that explicitly promote a “culture of vocations”
  - Ministry level: daily/weekly/monthly opportunities
  - District level: exploiting Lasallian Youth Assembly and other DENA-related activities. How do we involve the College Contacts?
- Engaging/creating formation activities to create a seamless “culture of vocations” with students, parents, faculty/staff (esp. counselors) that bridge home, school, church, and community:
  - Create a “check list” of qualities/traits that would “make a good Brother”
  - How do we engage our boys in a conversation about vocations, especially the Brothers’ vocation?
  - What are the skills needed for discernment?
  - How does one make “the ask”?
- More targeted PR/marketing materials
  - Ministry Level: parent newsletters? Blogs?
  - District Level: Fran’s newsletter (monthly?)

Through the survey and focus groups, the goal is to determine:

- One, how successful are we at creating a culture of vocations at our ministries?
- And two, how well are we teaching faculty and staff about how to invite young people to consider the religious life? In addition to these questions, we would like feedback as to practical solutions to the challenges that face vocation promotion.
  - Do faculty and staff members view vocation promotion as part of their role? If no, efforts should be made to communicate that responsibility better to the faculty and staff members of our ministries. If yes, further research needs to be conducted as to the reasons why faculty and staff may be resistant to promoting vocations in their ministry.
  - If no, then further research needs to be conducted as to what steps could help promote a comfort with discussions regarding religious vocations.
  - Are faculty/staff members apprehensive to discuss vocation promotion because of a lack of comfort or because of a perceived lack of a skill set?
  - How do we, as a District, respond to those needs? In general, how successful are our ministries in promoting a culture of vocations throughout the District.
- Questions for the survey instrument
  - Rating of 1 to 5 (1 being “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”)
    - Vocation promotion is the responsibility of all faculty and staff members of a Lasallian ministry.
    - I am comfortable having a conversation with a young person regarding a potential vocation to the religious life.
    - I have the knowledge and skills necessary to engage a young person in a conversation regarding vocations to the religious life.
    - My ministry possesses a culture of vocations that integrates various programs that promote vocations to the religious life.
  - Open response
    - What are some of the obstacles to vocation promotion at your ministry?
    - What are some best practices regarding vocation promotion?
- Focus group - TBD