

Provincial Assembly Daily Report

Thursday, July 19, 2018

“Needs of the Times: Listening, Never Ceasing,” is the theme of the School Sisters of St. Francis’ 2018 U.S. Provincial Assembly which convened Wednesday, July 18, at Alverno College.

Goals for the Assembly include:

- Receive the Congregational Direction Statement and explore ways the U.S. Province can animate it in our context
- Provide for the orientation of the Provincial Assembly Delegates and Associate Voice Participants
- Integrate principles of contemplation in interpersonal and group interaction
- Receive and engage in the process of the Province Reports
- Review the responsibilities and qualifications of nominees; discern and elect members to these committees:
 - PA Finance
 - PA Steering Committee and Chair
 - PA Government Committee
 - Interim Corporate Member/Consultative Body
- Approve the Nomination/Election process for the Provincial Team Election in February 2019

Wednesday’s Opening Session commenced with prayer and roll call, followed by a review of the responsibilities of voting and voice delegates. At the point that the gathering was asked to approve the assembly agenda, a motion was presented to remove from the agenda Friday’s scheduled discussion of a proposal regarding U.S. Province Bylaw 32



concerning Provincial Team term limits. After much discussion, delegates voted to remove that discussion from the agenda, and then passed the agenda as amended.



Information was provided regarding the process for nominations. The International Leadership Team was then introduced, with President Sister Mary Diez and Second Vice President Sister Barbara Kraemer present and First Vice President Sister Tresa Abraham Kizhakeparambil and Third Vice President Sister Lucy Kalapurackel sending video greetings to the delegates.



Provincial Assembly Daily Report

Friday, July 20, 2018

Following the opening prayer, Thursday's session of the 2018 U.S. Provincial Assembly began with the report from U.S. Provincial Team. Highlights of the report included the community's legacy at Campbellsport, the International House for refugee families in Milwaukee, the Sacred Heart solar energy project, the Sisters Program South collaboration, and Sisters Without Borders, which explores the challenges and opportunities for post-conciliar women religious today. The team also shared its non-verbal report slideshow, which was first shown at February's General Assembly in India.



Among the new initiatives the team announced was the relocation and revitalization of the Institute for Church Music and Liturgy, which will offer a master's degree program in collaboration with Alverno College and with support from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Formerly offered at St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana, the proposed program will offer summer sessions, workshops, and outreach events designed to appeal to parish liturgical musicians.

The team also announced the formation of a *Response in Faith* reflection process, a proposed three-year exploration of the ways that the community's understanding of *Response in Faith* has evolved. It is designed to re-embrace this foundational document with a renewed vision for mission in the 21st century. The process is scheduled to begin in Lent 2019.

Finally, the team explained that a listening and writing team was convened prior to the start of Assembly to begin developing a draft Province expression of the new Congregational Direction during this Assembly's first days. The writing team will present its first draft to the delegates for their reflection and response on Friday.

The Finance Committee led a reflection on the concept of the “common good” as it relates to the common fund and the use of Province finances. Delegates endorsed the committee’s continued practice of using Province financial resources to assist other provinces or regions as needs arise. The committee also presented a projected snapshot of the Province’s membership and financial needs in 2028, comparing that data to the Province’s current numbers.

In the afternoon session, delegates heard a report from the Justice and Peace Team, and viewed a slideshow of activities in which sisters and associates have



participated that relate to peace, justice, immigration reform, care of the Earth, and nonviolence. This was followed by reflection, table discussion, and large group sharing related to creating a culture of encounter as described in “*Encuentro: A Call for Our Time*,” an address by Sister Teresa Maya, CCVI, President of the

Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

Later in the afternoon, delegates received an oral report from General Assembly delegates on their experiences in India, and viewed a video slideshow of highlights from that Assembly. The afternoon concluded with a report from International Team members Sister Mary Diez (President) and Sister Barbara Kraemer (Second Vice President). They offered insights into the new Congregational Direction statement and mandates, and responded to delegates’ question.



Provincial Assembly Daily Report

Saturday, July 21, 2018

The opening prayer at Friday's session of the 2018 U.S. Provincial Assembly was followed by an expression of gratitude for Sister Naveena Kulathingal. Sister Naveena will be returning to the North India Province at the end of July, having spent the past four years as our congregation's archivist. The sisters and associates sang the Blessing of St. Francis and offered Sister Naveena their thanks for her ministry among us, and best wishes on all that lies ahead for her.



The morning's business session included discernment and balloting for the election of the PA Steering Committee and the Interim Corporate Member/Consultative Body. Elected to the PA Steering Committee were: Sisters Barbara Goertz (Chair), Mary Boyd (Alternate Chair), Joneen Kueler, and Beth Schmitz. Elected to the Interim Corporate Member/Consultative Body were (in alphabetical order): Sisters Kathy Braun, Frances Cunningham, Bernardin Deutsch, Liz Heese, Elaine Hirschenberger, Kathleen Kluthe, Patricia McCarthy, Marlene Neises, Barbara Niemeyer, Judeen Schulte, Nancy Sell, and Therese Thoenen.

The listening and writing team that was convened prior to the start of Assembly was introduced and presented its first draft of the Province Expression of the new Congregational Direction. Delegates were invited to reflect on the draft and then discuss it at their tables. The team will be reviewing delegates' written suggestions and considering incorporating concepts into a revised draft that will be presented to the Assembly on Saturday.



Following lunch, the Government Committee presented its report, including a review of the GA Governance proposals and approval of the U.S. Province Bylaws. The committee also facilitated table discussion about possible future Bylaws revisions.

The afternoon session concluded with a report by the Associate Relationship Team. Coordinators Sister Rosemary Reier and Associate Rosaura Solano, joined by Sister



Therese Thoenen and Sister Deborah Fumagalli, discussed the work of the Associate Relationship Think Tank. They also provided an overview of recommendations offered by an Alverno College undergraduate business class on how to reach Millennials and Latinas as a way of increasing the number of associates.

The slates for the PA Government Committee and the PA Finance Committee were closed with no further nominations; elections will be held Saturday morning.

Provincial Assembly Daily Report

Sunday, July 22, 2018

In the opening prayer at Saturday's session of the 2018 U.S. Provincial Assembly, delegates and observers were invited by Sister Rose Ann Trzil to be courageous as they "understand the heart of the culture of encounter." This theme played an important part of the discernment and dialogue throughout the day. Participants were asked to be intentional as they "breathe in God's presence, breathe out your desire to be one with God."

Delegates began their business session with discernment and balloting for the election of the PA Government Committee and the PA Finance Committee. Five delegates were elected to each committee to serve with a member of the Province Leadership Team. Elected to the PA Government Committee were (in alphabetical order): Sisters Kathy Chuston, Elaine Hirschenberger, Jo Ann Miller, Jane Elyse Russell, and Judeen Schulte. Elected to the PA Finance Committee were Sisters Lissa Francis Anjalikkal, Charlita Foxhoven, Margaret Kwiatkowski, Marlene Neises, and Janet Neureuther.

The team of sisters drafting the Province Expression of the new Congregational Direction discussed the feedback they had received Friday from 19 tables, which



informed the revised draft that they distributed to the delegates and observers. In the large group discussion that followed, delegates affirmed and expressed their thanks for the challenging and creative work of the writing team. Several delegates expressed reservations about trying to move forward with an expression about which they had had little time

to think deeply, and therefore did not feel they could own. Other delegates suggested that the whole Province should be engaged in developing a common expression. As lunchtime approached, the decision was reached for the Agenda Committee to consult with the writing team.

When the Assembly reconvened, facilitator Debbie Asberry provided a recap of the lunchtime consultation, noting that the writing team felt affirmed in its work and that delegates may feel they are responding to different needs than the Province had

four years ago. The Congregational Direction and action steps were distributed in preparation for further discussion.

The Nomination and Election Committee presented its report, asking the question, "Is it your time to act and respond to the needs of the times?" Committee members



outlined the discernment process and the proposed timeline for receiving nominations to serve on the next Provincial Leadership Team, and their work was affirmed by the delegates.

Because the Assembly was running ahead of schedule, it was decided to complete the work on Saturday afternoon. Delegates returned to the

discussion of the Province Expression of the Congregational Direction. A motion was made that because creating and living into the Province Expression would be the ongoing work of the Province, a first step in that process would be for delegates to engage with their area communities. They will ask their area communities this summer and fall, "What would it look like for us in our area community and local context to live into the Congregational Direction concretely?" These responses will then be gathered and shared, and will inform further discussion at the next Provincial Assembly in February 2019. The motion to move forward with this approach passed unanimously.

The Provincial Assembly concluded with the Liturgy, celebrated by Milwaukee Auxiliary Bishop James Schuerman. During the Mass, Sisters Arpitha, Elizabeth and



Merlin performed a liturgical dance while the Our Father was sung in Malayalam. Following the Liturgy, delegates, observers and staff concluded our time together with a picnic-style dinner.