



# **BACAR, Inc.**

**Bay Area Conference of Associates and Religious, Inc.**

## **Discussion Group Saturday May 20, 2017**

**Theme:**

**“Associate Call: Alive Today”**

**Theme and discussion: Spirituality, Mutuality, and Charism**

**Facilitators:**

**Kathy Noether, SND Associate   Marilee Hearn, RSCJ Associate  
Yvonne Bondi, SND**

**9:00 am – noon**

### **Prayer for BACAR Discussion Group**

*-adapted from the BACAR Board Prayer by Elizabeth Avalos, BVM*

**All: Gracious God, may your goodness and love be present among us today and always. We ask for your blessing on our gathering today. We ask for your guidance, wisdom, and support as we begin this Discussion Group. We ask for your vision as we move forward with our discussion for BACAR. Help us to move in wisdom as we share ideas and look at different points of view. Help us to engage in meaningful discussion. Continue to remind us that all that we do here today, all that we accomplish, brings us together to share in prayer, mutuality, inspiration, and friendship. We ask this in Your name. Amen.**



*Each of us has a spirit, this power of life in us, and like the breath, it is not just something that is in us, but has something that also issues from us. Everyone has the capacity, more at some times than at others, to project this power of life, vitality, to others. It is the power literally to in-spire, breathe into, and although it is invisible and intangible and cannot be put into a test tube or under a microscope, it is the greatest and most dangerous power we have.*

*Team spirit, group spirit, esprit de corps in French – all these point to the power that can be generated by a group of people, and can be generated with such force that to be in the group or even just near it is to risk being caught up by it and, for a time at least, transformed by it.*

*In some measure everyone has the power to transform for good or ill the whole life of the community, invisible, intangible, and nonetheless really. And one of the strangest aspects of spirit is that it does not appear to be bound by either time or space. The spirit of a community is the product not only of all who are part of it now, but of all who were part of it years ago and whose names may no longer be remembered. By the power of your spirit, your life can reach out and become a part of my life, you can empower me to do things that I could never manage on my power, and this can remain true whether we are feet apart or six thousand miles, six years or sixty. The spirit of those who died centuries ago can intoxicate us, transform us, as really as when they were alive.*

*The Mystery and Miracle of Grace, by Frederick Buechner*

# **BACAR**

*Bay Area Conference of Associates and Religious, Inc.*

**Discussion Group Saturday**

**May 20, 2017**

**“Associate Call: Alive Today”**

**Charism and Spirituality**

Excerpts taken from the *CARA Special Report of the Associate-Religious Relationship in the United States and Canada* Study Guide

## **1. Interpreting and Carrying the Charism**

Three in four directors/coordinators affirmed that associates have a role in interpreting their congregation’s charism, and eight in ten associates and vowed religious affirmed the same.

One vowed member shared in the study, *“They (associates) can all carry on the charism of the community with their participation at meetings and reflecting the issues of the world to us, as well as assisting in areas of their expertise.”*

Another vowed religious expressed this vision with a slightly different nuance: *““The love of the associates for the charism and mission is contagious. Their living of the charism questions us and calls us to be more fully alive in the spirit of our own Institute. Their relationship to the Founder and how they relate so deeply to his life puts us to shame. Their love for the poor (a dimension of our charism) is lived with real passion. The associates often bring us a new conversation and many of our men appreciate their presence at local community meetings, ongoing formation and retreats. We offer them formation and mission possibilities, but it seems we receive much more than we give”* (SR, p. 5).

Do we relate more (congregation or associate leaders and/or associate groups) to the statement of the first or second vowed religious in terms of the role of associates in carrying the charism and participating in the mission?

Do the associates of our congregation feel that they share in carrying the charism as a gift they have received, or that it is the charism of the vowed religious whom they are assisting?

How can our associates be more mindfully and intentionally formed in the charism?

**What is our call to action in becoming associates who “carry the charism?”**

**Our Timeline for addressing this action item...**

**Sharing:**

**\*What do we want to share with our congregational or associate leadership as a result of this conversation?**

**\*What do we want to share with the broader associate community/religious congregation?**

**\*What are we going to share with NACAR leadership?**

**Questions for Reflection and Group Process**

## **2. Initial Formation/Ongoing Spiritual Formation of Associates**

The study found that what attracts Associates to their institutes are a combination of a desire of a deeper spiritual life, the particular spirituality and mission of their institute and a desire to be of service (SR, p. 4). The spiritual tradition of the institute, and relationship with vowed religious and other associates, also continue to be influential in forming Associates in an ongoing way.

*“Casting a wide net toward more diversity and a willingness to take the time to be actively engaged in good formation will help attract and keep new associates,”* commented one vowed member (SR, p. 4).

### **Questions for Reflection and Group Process**

Are we investing in solid, innovative and continually-renewing formation materials? When was the last time we updated our materials and process?

How rooted in the founding charism is both our initial and ongoing formation? Is this still a motivator for a majority of our Associates?

How can the vowed religious of our congregation participate with associate leadership in developing charism and mission-centered initial and ongoing formation resources and process?

Does our initial formation process lead to a strong individual internalization of the charism and mission, able to be articulated at the time of First Commitment?

**What is our call to action in being attentive to our initial and ongoing formation processes?**

**Our Timeline for addressing this action item...**

## **Sharing:**

**\*What do we want to share with our congregational or associate leadership as a result of this conversation?**

**\*What do we want to share with the broader associate community/religious congregation?**

**\*What are we going to share with NACAR leadership?**

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It is the hope of NACAR leadership that this study guide has assisted your associate members, leadership, and congregational leadership, in opening up and exploring the findings of this extensive study. As religious life and the associate relationship evolve, the shared experience and wisdom of those involved in this new expression of traditional charisms help us all facilitate its growth and sustainability. We close with these words from the study of both an associate and vowed religious:

*“I am inspired and encouraged to enrich my personal, spiritual life and to strive to inspire others to deepen their baptismal commitment. I see the Associate movement as God’s way of calling more of us to carry out the Gospel message in a special way.”* —Associate

*“As the number of religious has decreased, the associates bring new life, energy, ideas, and enthusiasm to us, and are a sign of hope to me that our spirit and charism will continue through them in new ways. Their thirst for our spirituality make me appreciate more the richness that we have and deepen my love for it”* —Vowed Religious (SR, p.3).

**Some charisms as printed  
in the *BACAR Quarterly Newsletter Vol. 2, No. 2, July 2012, bacar2.org***

1. "In fidelity to the spirit of our foundress, Blessed Marie Rose Durocher, we are a community of women religious consecrated to God in the Names of Jesus and Mary, who desire to proclaim by our primacy of the love of God. Moved by an act of love, we collaborate in the Church's mission of education with emphasis on education in the faith and with a special concern for poor and disadvantaged people."  
**Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary**

2. "To seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families, for the Kingdom of God."  
**Sisters of the Holy Family**

3. "One heart and one mind in the heart of Jesus." **Religious of the Sacred Heart**

4. "Responding to the needs of the poor and suffering particularly women and children, is the special call of the Sisters of Mercy. Following the example of Jesus, the sisters move in the midst of the world teaching, healing, and comforting those in need." **Sisters of Mercy**

5. "The cross is our only hope." **Congregation of the Holy Cross**

6. "Following in the steps of Francis and Clare, we are called to integrate the gospel values in our daily lives through contemplation, peacemaking, care of the poor, and care of the earth."  
**Order of Saint Francis**

7. "As Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we are called to participate in the mission of Jesus. Our choice of ministry is in keeping with our BVM mission: being freed and helping others enjoy freedom in God's steadfast love."  
**Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

8. "Saint Julie Billiart envisioned a community of women living simple, prayerful lives, engaged in a ministry of education and service to the poor. Notre Dame de Namur carries her banner of simplicity open to God in obedience and animated by charity." Sisters of Notre Dame, women with hearts as wide as the world, make known God's goodness and love with and among people living in poverty, through a Gospel way of life, community and prayer. Each commits her one and only life to work with others to create justice and peace for all.  
**Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur**

**Prayer honoring the Charisms of Religious Institutes**

O God, you gave each of the founders of a religious institute a special grace to manifest your presence in the world. We honor and reflect on those charisms today, in the hope that we may also be graced to live in the charism to which we are called.

# Applying the CARA Study

Associate Kathy Noether, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, BACAR co-director  
Reprinted from **The Associate** - Spring 2017 - Volume 22 Number 1, [nacar.org](http://nacar.org)

What is our common call? What can we glean from one another? Where are we going? These were just a few of the questions that come up at quarterly San Francisco Bay Area Conference of Associates and Religious (BACAR) discussion groups. January wasn't any different! A bright spark was generated by several communities represented at the first discussion group of 2017 held at the Holy Family Sisters motherhouse in Fremont, California, with over 25 sisters and associates. Having been introduced to the results of the CARA study at the BACAR conference in October 2016 we delved into areas that held particular interest from the group.

Using documents and articles, we reflected on steps that led to this study:

- CARA Study of Associates and Religious: 2000,
- NACAR Survey to Associates and Religious: 2014,
- CARA Special Report: 2016,
- CARA Key Take-Aways: NACAR Webinar,
- NACAR CARA Study Guide: 2016.

The NACAR study guide prepared as a 'springboard for reflection and action' was used as an outline for discussion. From the eight major results of the CARA study, we chose two areas to begin our discussion: leadership development and financial sustainability. Following the format set in the study guide for small group discussion of gather, read, reflect and discuss, an enriching dialogue followed. There was a consensus of thought stating that each associate is a leader and enlightened with the charism of his/her community to spread the gospel and charism. Also, embedded in this is continued eagerness for compatibility with sisters and associates in mission and spirituality.

From this discussion a smaller group was asked to define their leadership structure and present its format on the BACAR website as a study and informational preparation for our upcoming BACAR discussion group in Campbell, California. From this point we seek to share what the communities of our area have in place, what works well and what ideas and visions are sought for the future of association. Through our website we have already begun to coordinate gatherings, talks, ministries, mini retreats and social justice activities, trafficking resources and other actions within the San Francisco Bay Area. We invite you to go to our site and catch up on our news and happenings: [www.bacar2.org](http://www.bacar2.org).

**Bay Area Conference of Associates and Religious Discussion Group**  
Sisters of Notre Dame Province Center, Belmont, CA



**Evaluation**

	1= Unsatisfactory	2= OK	3= Excellent
1. Program Content	1	2	3
2. Time allotted for Discussion	1	2	3
3. Pace of the Morning	1	2	3
4. Prayer	1	2	3
5. Gathering Location	1	2	3
6. Use of technology	1	2	3
7. Overall Morning	1	2	3
8. What topics would you like addressed at future dates?			
9. Other suggestions/comments.			

**Thank you for your participation!**

**Would you be willing to be a part of the *BACAR Committee or volunteer the day of the next conference?***  
**We need you and your ideas and suggestions!!!!**

**Committee ( ) Volunteer ( )**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Community:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**No, but I can suggest someone ( )**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Community:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Leave the completed form today or mail/e-mail to:**  
**Kathy Noether, 4246 Meg Drive, San Jose, CA 95136, or E-Mail a message to: [knoether@aol.com](mailto:knoether@aol.com)**

