

# The Mountaineer

From the Desk of the President

March 2017

Volume 10, Issue 1

Dear Friends,

During this season of Lent we join the universal Church on a pilgrimage homeward to the Father. Following in the footsteps of Jesus we set our eyes on the Father and make him our one goal during this time set aside for deepening our spiritual life. Our Lord points the way by his own example and takes us by the hand to journey with him. His one goal was to fulfill the loving will and wish of his Father and he knows that this is the only way for us to be united totally with the Father one day.

Lent is a time to practice for our final journey home. It is not primarily a time for penance and self-denial but a time for love. The strictness follows as our way to detach our hearts from those things that keep us from loving to the full. This is the season to renew our striving to be the best version of ourselves, that person whom God envisions us to become as the image of His Son through our life of consecration.

I recently spoke with Father Marcel Caron, the president of the Canadian Conference of Secular Institutes and member of the executive board of the World Conference of Secular Institutes (CMIS). He shared that the CMIS board will be meeting with the Prefect of the Congregation for Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in Rome around March 25. At that time they will present a document on the identity of secular institutes which the Congregation asked them to prepare.

In view of this encounter we chose our theme for the coming annual meeting (September 15-17): The Charism of Secular Institutes as Seen through the Eyes of Our Founders. Please set your calendars to join us. We need you to make your contribution to enrich all of us in our life of secular consecration.

With blessings for a fruitful Lent and a Blessed Easter,

Marcia Vinje



**SAVE THE DATE**

**Sept 15-17, 2017**

**USCSI Annual Meeting**

**Marriottsville, MD**

#### Inside this issue:

<i>From the Desk of the President</i>	1
<i>Cardinal Joseph Tobin Archdiocese of Newark</i>	2-3
<i>SEEK 17 Conference</i>	4
<i>Praying for Life in NYC</i>	5
<i>LA Religious Education Congress Feb 25-26th</i>	6
<i>Blessed Trinity Missionary Institute Reflections</i>	7-8
<i>Kathy Tierney, Directress De Sales Institute</i>	9

## Cardinal Joseph Tobin is familiar with Secular Institutes

***In response to the congratulatory message from President Marcia Vinje, this message below was received from Cardinal Joseph Tobin. He was one of the 17 prelates elevated to the College of Cardinals on November 19, 2016, in Rome.***

***A few lines from Pope Francis homily (posted by Zenit Staff) include:***



The Gospel passage we have just heard (cf. *Lk* 6:27-36) is often referred to as the “Sermon on the Plain.” After choosing the Twelve, Jesus came down with his disciples to a great multitude of people who were waiting to hear him and to be healed. ...

This call is accompanied by four commands or exhortations, which the Lord gives as a way of

molding the Apostles’ vocation through real, everyday situations. They are four actions that will shape, embody, and make tangible the path of discipleship. We could say that they represent four stages of a mystagogy of mercy: *love, do good, bless, and pray*. I think we can all agree on these, and see them as something reasonable. They are four things we can easily do for our friends and for those more or less close to us, people we like, people whose tastes and habits are similar to our own.

The problem comes when Jesus tells us *for whom* we have to do these things. Here he is very clear. He minces no words, he uses no euphemisms. He tells us: *love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you* (cf. vv. 27-28). ...

My dear brothers, newly created Cardinals, the journey towards heaven begins in the plains, in a daily life broken and shared, spent and given. In the quiet daily gift of all that we are. Our mountaintop is this *quality* of love; our goal and aspiration is to strive, on life’s plain, together with the People of God, to become persons capable of forgiveness and reconciliation. ... *-Pope Francis*

(continued...)

## Cardinal Tobin continued...

If you can, take the time to read more about Cardinal Tobin at:

[www.nytimes.com/2016/12/22/nyregion/cardinal-joseph-w-tobin-archdiocese-newark.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/22/nyregion/cardinal-joseph-w-tobin-archdiocese-newark.html)

### Cardinal Joseph Tobin shared the following:

Dec. 5, 2016

I am deeply grateful for your kind remembrance after the announcement of my elevation to the College of Cardinals. The decision of Pope Francis has surprised and humbled me. Your encouraging words and prayerful support are precious gifts and vivid signs of the love we share in Christ.

Please pray that I may grow in love for Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and serve his People with greater and more generous love. I will be especially grateful if you would include the people of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Archdiocese of Newark in your moments before the Lord. I hope that I may be useful to the Holy Father in his mission of caring for the Body of Christ.

As I thank you for your kindness, I renew my friendship and promise the support of my prayer.

In Christ the Redeemer,

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.



Check out  
our **NEW**  
Website.  
Send a  
message for  
blog posting  
to [jessica@  
schsrsmary.org](mailto:jessica@schsrsmary.org)

**It's YOUR Mountaineer -  
Please contribute from your secular  
institute.  
These are the next due dates we are  
aiming for this year:  
June 1, 2017  
October 1, 2017  
December 1, 2017**

### Executive Committee of the US Conference of Secular Institutes

**President:** Marcia Vinje Staten Island, NY  
**Vice President:** Fr George Hazler Troy, MI  
**Secretary:** Jessica Swedzinski Sleepy Eye, MN  
**Treasurer:** Evelyn Loyola Merced, CA  
**Councillor:** Claudette Cyr Watertown, CT

[www.secularinstitutes.org](http://www.secularinstitutes.org) [www.cmis-int.org/en/](http://www.cmis-int.org/en/)



## USCSI plants seeds with college students at SEEK17

With successful appearances at the last two National Catholic Youth Conferences, the USCSI felt it was time to step into the college arena. Sponsored by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), the SEEK 17 Conference drew 12,500 college students from around the country to San Antonio, Texas, from January 3-7, 2017. USCSI representatives from four institutes, Jessica Swedzinski, Terrie Alby, Heidi Infante, Karen Bruskewicz and Kathy Tierney, braved inconsiderate weather, late night conference schedules and the overflowing enthusiasm of the students to scatter many seeds in fertile soil.

To attract students to our booth we offered chocolate candy and a chance to win a \$100 Pizza Hut gift certificate. Both tactics worked well with this crowd! We distributed our brochures along with a magnet stating "You are at the heart of the world with the heart of God," spoken by Pope Francis to secular institute members last year. We also took advantage of the competitive spirit of the students by playing a trivia game about secular institutes. If they answered all the questions correctly then we wrote the name of their college on a "Perfect Scorers" display. Of course, we gave them little hints along the way to make sure their college got on the board!

**By far the most fruitful aspect of this conference was the number of students who really took time to listen, learn and ask questions about our vocation. Many of the students who spoke to us were seriously considering a vocation as a consecrated person. Nearly all of them had not heard of our vocation and were eager to learn more. A few even said they felt this may be the vocation that God is calling them to live.**

Aside from promoting secular institutes, we were able to join the students for incredible worship at daily Mass, adoration, confession, and a multitude of inspiring presentations by top Catholic speakers. We were inspired by the zeal of these young people who are on fire for their faith. We all left quite exhausted but full of hope for the church and for secular institutes. *Kathy Tierney, Principal Officer, DeSales Institute*



## Praying For Life

On January 21, 2017, the day after the inauguration of President Trump, there was a day of Prayer for Life held by the Sisters of Life in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan, NY. We wanted to attend this event to be united in prayer and trust in its strength. We joined Saturday commuters on the Staten Island ferry and as we did, we passed our symbol of freedom, the Statue of Liberty, and drew close to Manhattan's shore. The Statue of Liberty was a special symbol for us in the event we planned to participate at. She gives witness to the importance of life, freedom, and liberty, thus, inspiring us to make sacrifices for the most vulnerable of human life, the infant in the womb. Then, from ferry, to subway and onto city streets three secular institute members ventured close to their destination at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Just when we should have had a relaxing sigh of "Rejoice, we're here!" our eyes pondered a sea of people, posed like an obstacle before our destination, totally filling the street that we needed to cross. What was the crowd all about? It was the Women's March which from beginning to end encompassed 100,000 people. The crowd, though expressive, was also tame. There were other pro-lifers around us and they were quick to offer to go with us through the crowd to get to the other side of the street which then led to the doors of the cathedral. One woman said that she was a New Yorker – used to pushing her way through crowds – so she led the way for us to walk.

In the Cathedral there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, confessions, and music played by the Sisters of Life. There was a wonderful prayerful atmosphere and all united in the intention for life as we prayed. There were various prayers and a vocation witness talk offered before the Holy Mass with Cardinal Timothy Dolan. He began his sermon with a gripping story about a tiny new born, umbilical cord still attached, carefully wrapped in a big, clean bath towel, left in the crib of the manger scene in Holy Child Jesus Parish in Queens:

*"We are summoned to be such agents of conversion. Yes, we do it by reasoned and compelling argument; yes, we do it by advocacy; you bet, we do it in law and political action; don't forget, so obvious tonight, we do it by prayer and fasting . . . but we most successfully accomplish this conversion, this conversion from the culture of death to the culture of life, from the "throw away culture" to the culture of tenderness and mercy, by imitating those priests and parishioners at Holy Child Jesus Parish in New York City, by acknowledging that little Jose, that abandoned newborn baby, was nowhere more at home than in the empty manger of their parish nativity scene, because he, too, is a child of God."*

We prayed the Chaplet of Mercy and vespers along with time for personal prayer. The time of prayer was most enriching. Then we had to prepare to make our return trip home – about a two hour commute.

With joyful hearts that were now enriched and refreshed we could venture out ready to make a return through the crowded "parade." Grateful for the opportunity given to us this day, as members of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, we could see how important our mission is in the world. Among so many people of various, different views and values it was so important to be able to go into that world with a firm and God-given purpose. We went with openness in our hearts for all that is good, true, and beautiful. We could bring God's love and life in our hearts to a world so much in need. And even though others may not be aware of it, our prayerful lives are for them. As secular institutes may we be for others signs of God's life and love. Joyful to be united together as secular institutes, *Ellen Marie Baranek, Staten Island, NYC*

## USCSI Present at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress Exhibits

For the first time in history, the USCSI received confirmation for a booth request at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress (RECongress). This gathering of all interested in religious education is the largest of its kind in the world; this year drawing over 37,000 persons from 48 states and 20 countries. Marcia Vinje, Fr George Hazler and Jessica Swedzinski arrived on February 22 and held their executive committee meeting the next day, after setting up the booth for USCSI in the huge Anaheim Convention Center. They were also able to meet Fr Ric Sera, principle officer of the Institute of the Heart of Jesus. He is engaged in parish work a few miles from the Anaheim Convention Center. Ada Locatelli and Ann O'Donnell, Fr Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata arrived with the tabletop display, boxes of brochures and 2,800 magnets. Both live and work out of West Covina and they heroically staffed the booth from 10:00 to 2:00 for the Friday through Sunday Congress.

Our magnets display the Pope Francis quote: You are at the heart of the world with the heart of God. We were blessed with interested people looking and asking about secular institutes. Many took magnets and brochures with them for their class or staff. We were also asked for information in Spanish at numerous occasions. The hours from 8:00 am through 5:00 pm were blessed indeed. Fr Jim Halley, Voluntas Dei, was able to put in a good word for our booth to be accepted among the 525 highly sought after spaces. At 5:15 pm participates and exhibitors were invited to seven or so cultural Masses. Concerts or films were offered in the evenings.

From the opening at 8:30 am on Friday February 24<sup>th</sup>, which Fr George coined as a *little opening of the Olympics*, through the final blessing of Archbishop Gomez, who waved and blessed as he left, beloved by his flock and spending the entire weekend with us, it was a fast-paced congress. Two hundred speakers offered over 300 workshops in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Topics ranged from teachers' apps to alzheimer's, Scriptures to movies, social issues to prayer centering, with authors, composers, dancers and every possible form of Catholic art available for seamless purchases. There were fewer religious orders at booths, more men (30%) and more families in attendance, with an overall younger appearance than at the 2015 event.

Next year's theme is *Rise Up!* from March 16-18, 2018. If you could be available to help further our vocation to religious educators, please contact Jessica at [jessica@schrsmmary.org](mailto:jessica@schrsmmary.org).





Questions and Answers Re: Mutuae Relationes

- 1) **In the light of the principle of the above *co-essentiality*, which are the contributions that the hierarchical and charismatic gifts make towards the ecclesiology of communion?**
  - a) They bring a variety of means and methods depending on the different vocations their nature and their charism:
    - + multi-lingual- to reach all over the world
    - + various charisms and means – unity in the diversity for apostolates
    - + inclusion of the different and new forms of consecrated life
    - + open dialogue and growing consciousness of the gift of working together for the good of the whole
- 2) **In your context, is Consecrated Life appreciated for its witnessing identity in a particular form of *sequela Christi* or mainly for its functionality?**
  - a) I think that it is appreciated for both: witnessing identity and functionality. Consecrated life is a reflection and a sign of God's love to others, transmitted through us. We are to bring God's love and message through our deeds and actions always under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That is the challenge that we as consecrated persons face in our world today.
- 3) **Based on your experience, point out the positive and negative tensions between the consecrated person and the pastors and the good points and the limitations of the present text of *Mutuae Relationes*.**
  - a) From my point of view as a consecrated lay person, I could say that one of the things that brings tension is the lack of knowledge, understanding, and recognition of our vocation in the world. Most priests and religious do not know about the vocation of a consecrated lay person, a vocation lived in and from within the world. Whether it is the lack of information of this vocation during their formation programs or just because they don't recognize our vocation or because they see it as a threat.

There are many priests and religious that do not recognize Secular Institutes as a new form of Consecrated Life in the Church, and we are most of the time left out in celebrations, dialogue and planning. A very simple and common example of this is when praying for vocations at services or even at Mass. They pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, but they hardly ever pray for vocations to Secular Institutes or new forms of consecrated life. We are even left out or hardly ever mentioned in some Church writings.

As the document *Mutuae Relationes* states in the Introduction, p. 3, secular institutes are not dealt with except where of particular interest. And while the early paragraphs use the term consecrated life in its fullest meaning, most of the piece uses the term as synonymous with religious. In any contact that I have had with the bishops and most priests, they have used this same equivalence, even in addressing celebrations of consecrated life each February 2<sup>nd</sup>, when members of secular institutes, consecrated virgins and consecrated members of new movements in the Church are present.

The document emphasizes the eschatological witness of religious life, which does not apply to the members of secular institutes in exactly the same manner. Called to sanctify secular realities including family life, education, politics, health care, etc. the witness of members of secular institutes points to the universality of the call to holiness especially among the laity, among whom these members are co-creators with the Lord, as are the rest of the laity. And their availability for service, because of their consecration, was not foreseen to be most often in ecclesial structures.

**4) Which are the useful elements that are needed to elaborate a future document to regulate the *Mutuae Relationes* which would include all forms of consecrated life?**

- a) Acceptance of new forms of consecrated life that are emerging. Otherwise it might be like blocking the movement of the Holy Spirit.
- b) Inclusion of consecrated lay persons in dialogue, activities in parishes, formation programs, etc.
- c) Inclusion of our vocation in more vocational activities.
- d) As the new dicastery in the Vatican that deals with the laity, family life, healthcare, etc. begins operation, it seems that secular institutes and perhaps some of the new forms of consecrated life arising from the ecclesial movements, could well be placed under its jurisdiction so as to acknowledge the status of members as *Christi fidelilais*.

Rather than being dealt with in a promised document dealing with all forms of consecrated life, perhaps a separate document dealing with the lay and secular nature of the secular institutes could be prepared so that more Catholics and more people in general are aware of this distinctive vocation. Of course, the particular charismata of some of these institutes that would have members generally not bear public witness needs to be respected. But given the nature of the present society, especially the wider role of women in public life, the professions, etc., a document that makes this vocation more widely known would be timely.

Maria del R. Sanchez, BTMI  
General Custodian

Theresa A. Panzera, BTMI  
September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**USCSI Mission Statement:**

The USCSI shares in the mission of Jesus Christ in serving its member institutes by providing education, resources, and support for member institutes.

The USCSI is an organization of member institutes committed to making known, understood, and appreciated the call to consecrated secularity in the Catholic Church.

USCSI collaborates with other groups to present consecrated secularity as a viable option in today's Church.



## My Experience in Taking Over the Reigns as Directress

It has been almost one year since I took over as Directress for the De Sales Secular Institute's United States Region. Dana Elzi, our previous Directress, was only 58 years old and in seemingly good health when she was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer. With all of our other members battling the struggles of advanced age, I was elected to take over the reins of our community. While the group councilors were very helpful in guiding me in spiritual and constitutional matters, nobody was prepared for the obstacles I met in trying to gain access and control over financial and internet accounts.

During the first two months after her diagnosis, Dana was well enough to contact financial institutions and begin the transfer of access to me. However, it took weeks to get things done! There were mistakes in getting addresses changed. Sometimes we could not even get replies to our emails and phone messages. Many requests took six to eight weeks to be processed. By the time we were getting forms returned to be signed, or requesting more information, Dana was already in the final stages of her cancer and completely unable to be of any more help. I learned that these are the most important documents to provide when trying to establish legal access to financial accounts: death certificate, corporate resolution of legal agent, Articles of Incorporation (if incorporated), and Certificate of Good Standing from the state incorporated.

We had investments in two separate financial institutions and a checking account in another. It has taken a full year for me to gain access, close, and transfer all three. Our treasurer only had access to the checking account, which made that account easier to close. God blessed me with a close friend who is a veteran financial advisor. I don't know what I would have done without her since neither I nor the councilors knew how to proceed.

The internet has been the other challenge. It's all about passwords! We have a website. To keep it up and running we need to pay Franklin Company, who gives us our web address. We also have a free account with Weebly, which is the design platform. And we have an account with Host Monster. That is the website administrator. With all the proper documentation I have been able to get access to Franklin and Weebly, but not Host Monster.

Before she became too ill to help, Dana had given me all the information I needed for our Google email address and our telephone conference line. She also procured a credit card for me to use on institute business. That was a life saver.

Dana really did as much as she could to make the transition smooth. But we just didn't foresee how long it would take, and how quickly she would succumb. Even as I am working to resolve the last of the transition issues, I am thinking how I am going to prevent this from happening to my successor, should she find herself in the same situation.

Let my experience be a lesson to all that important legal and financial documents, internet information and passwords should be kept with more than one person in any institute. Make copies and carefully list contact persons with addresses, emails, and phone numbers. It will make a planned transition smoother. It will keep an unplanned transition from becoming a heavy cross. Thanks be to God for helping me carry this one.