



# The Mountaineer

Volume 14, Issue 3  
Fall 2021



Dear Fellow Conference Members,  
I wish to introduce myself: I am a professed Missionary for 20 years in the Secular Institute of Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ and grateful to God for giving me this opportunity to serve you and work with you to make our vocation of lay consecration better known and loved as your incoming President.

I wish to thank Marcia Vinje for her prayerful, steady and creative leadership of the Conference for the past six years and to the other Executive Board members with whom I am working and are making my transition comfortable - Father George Hazler, Jessica Swedzinski, Deacon Paul Lang and Claudette Cyr.

An important focus over the next several years will be participating in the Church's preparation for the Synod of Bishops to be held in October of 2023. This is a chance for us to make our voices heard and bring to the bishops our needs and hopes.

As we soon begin a new liturgical year, I pray that we can together shine the light on and promote our beautiful vocation. With thanks to God and asking for blessings for you all.

**Sue Larkin**



### Inside this issue:

Message from the President <i>Sue Larkin</i>	1
USCSI Annual Meeting 2021 <i>By Marcia Vinje</i>	2-3
Reimagining Key Points  <i>By Fr George Hazler</i>	4-5
Remembering Loved Ones	6
Update on CCLV Consultation Organization from Baltimore	7
Scattered But One Heart <i>by De Sales Institute</i>	8-9
I wish you enough ...	10
<i>Mountaineer</i> Info Data	11

## USCSI Annual Meeting 2021

The United States Conference of Secular Institutes held its annual meeting September 24-26, 2021. Sixteen participants were in person at Marytown, Libertyville, Illinois, while another 15 joined online via Zoom. It was the first time using the hybrid format and admittedly, we had a few technical glitches. However, it was wonderful to connect with the largest number of participants we have had in many years.



On Friday evening the meeting was opened by President Marcia Vinje, welcoming everyone and giving a short introduction to the year's theme: *Re-imagining: Little Things Make a Big Difference*. She reminded us that after the pandemic things won't be the same, but God has a plan. He can and does use crises to get his message across to us by challenging us to emphasize exactly the points that are most affected. As we re-imagine, we need to ask first of all, what is God's image of the human person?

Kathy Tierney, the chair of the Vocations Committee, principal officer of the DeSales Secular Institute, then gave a quick rundown on activities to promote vocations to secular institutes. The pandemic challenged us to find new ways to get our message out, e.g. Facebook and Instagram. There were online vocation panels and virtual meetings. She commented that it seems that an important way to introduce people to the concept of secular institutes is by putting them into the context of other forms of consecrated life.

Father Gerardo Carcar of the Schoenstatt Fathers celebrated Friday evening Mass for us. As is customary it was offered for our deceased members. He centered his homily on the exhortation from the first reading, "Take courage... for I am with you; ...do not fear!" Afterwards those of us meeting in person took

advantage of the invitation to gather for refreshments and fellowship.

Saturday morning began with Morning Prayer and then Fr. George Hazler, member of *Voluntas Dei* and our vice-president, led a morning of reflection. His theme was that re-imagining has to do with unlearning and re-thinking in our rapidly changing world. (See p. 4-5 for separate article.)

In the afternoon Deacon Paul Lang, treasurer of USCSI, conducted two workshops. The first concerned legal documents for secular institutes, including EIN numbers, financial matters and insurance. He stressed the importance that more than one person have access to bank accounts, passwords and essential documents.

The second workshop was about technology, specifically mastering social media.

USCSI is moving toward more activity on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, and any institute can use the materials we produce.

In our break we had our photo taken outside by a member of the kitchen staff, who then unfortunately, got locked out.

After supper we gathered again to watch the film, "The Staircase" about the spiral stairs that St. Joseph built in a chapel in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Since this is the year of St. Joseph we wanted to give him some honor. We enjoyed it and afterwards there was still time for some good conversations.

On Sunday morning we joined the Franciscan Friars for their solemn Morning Prayer complete with organ and choir. Holy Mass followed and brunch. At 11 am



## ...continued: USCSI Annual Meeting

we met for the USCSI Business Meeting. After the reports of the officers and standing committees had been given, we elected Susan Larkin, Missionary of the Kingship of Christ as the new president of USCSI. Deacon Paul Lang facilitated a discussion about the format of our future annual meetings. It was unanimous to continue with the hybrid format, acknowledging the importance of meeting in person, but also including those who are unable to travel. Going forward we will make every effort to send pertinent information out in advance to our online participants.

The Sacred Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life has requested USCSI to facilitate a conversation among our institutes concerning the synodal process being held throughout the Church in preparation for the Bishops' Synod in 2023. Marcia Vinje gave an overview of the preparatory document for the synod.

Secular institutes have a unique perspective that should not be missing from this process. As Cardinal Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation, wrote, "In addition to the personal participation that the individual consecrated man or woman may offer in virtue of his or her presence in certain organisms of communion, or the contribution of the individual local community, we consider it extremely helpful that specific contributions be prepared by the national and international Conferences."

After the annual meeting closed, the executive committee met to discuss briefly what practical steps could be taken to facilitate this input before the deadline of March 2022. We hope to see you September 9-11, 2022, here at Marytown for our next annual meeting.

*Marcia Vinje*



**Executive Committee: Dcn Paul, Jessica, Marcia, Sue and Fr George**



**Principal Officers An and Ana chat with Mary Grace, Apostle of the Interior Life**



**Fr Scott from Cor Unum Priests, and Emily, a new Principal Officer, share insights at meeting breaks.**

# Reimagining is Rethinking

USCSI Annual Meeting, Marytown, September 2021

*We thank Father George Hazler for sharing some points from his morning reflection:*

When we reflect on what it takes **to be mentally fit**, the first idea that comes to mind is usually **intelligence**. The smarter you are, the more complex the problems you can solve—and the faster you can solve them. **Intelligence is traditionally viewed as the ability to think and learn.**

**Yet in a turbulent world, there's another set of cognitive skills that might matter more: the ability to rethink and unlearn – the ability to reimagine.**

First of all, as individuals and secondly as an organization, as an individual Institute, what are we doing to reimagine – to rethink our vocation – while adhering to the charism and mission. Are we simply doing what we have always done – but has the HOW we are doing whatever it is we are doing – changed? Or has it not changed?

But here we are as God's people – not a corporation but a community of believers with Jesus Christ as our leader and model. When Jesus came on the scene, beginning at the Jordan River, things began to change. He was not buying in to the way things were. This new way of life that he was living and offering to us – was not accepted by many – so much so that it caused him his death. But he even conquered death itself.

**Bishop Sheen: We love to discuss more than we like to decide. Let's sit down and talk about it, let's form a committee to study the possibilities. Discussion always replaces decision.**

The problem is that we live in a rapidly changing world, where we need to spend as much time rethinking as we do thinking.

**Re-thinking favors humility over pride, doubt over certainty, curiosity over closure. We may have to admit we have not been doing it as best we can.**

**What about daily routines? Have you ever stopped to think why you are doing something the same way? Have you ever thought of another way? *Cutting the ends off the Easter Ham... Mother-Grandmother-Great grandmother.***

**Our convictions can lock us in prisons of our own making.**

Arrogance is ignorance plus conviction.

Now if we do not take the opportunities to rethink situations, practices, to unlearn the errors we seem to make over and over again – new circumstances will come along and force us to RE-THINK – namely a pandemic.

The pandemic we have all experienced demonstrated these two facts – based on the rapid spread of the virus.

**Interdependence – the increasingly global nature of human society**



## Interdependent – Interconnected

During that retreat, I realized like never before the radical **dependence** you and I have with Jesus and then the **interdependence** we have with one another. Who I am today is a result of all the people who inspired my life along this journey.

Have you ever stopped to consider the **people who influenced you** on your journey through life? The people who **formed you and shaped you** into the person you are today. In addition to **parents and family members**, there are all those people who **inspired us** in **grade school, high school, and college**. Maybe it was your **first boss** or **person who hired you** or your **colleagues** in the workplace who offered words of encouragement. I think back to **the sisters and priests** who encouraged me to consider religious life or priesthood.

No one of us is a self-made person. We were once physically attached, totally **dependent on Mom for our blood supply, protection, and food**. Even though that cord is cut we are still dependent.

Thomas Merton said: *"No one enters heaven all by herself/himself. We reach God through a community, through one another."*

The theologian, Karl Rahner, put it strikingly: *"Unique individuals as we are, we are loved by God only because we belong to all others and because they belong to us."*

And Jesus said: *"I am the TRUE VINE you are the branches. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me."*

**Depending on our relationship with Jesus, the vine, will determine how we relate with other branches.** Is Jesus the source of my life? **How am I helping others on the vine? We need one another.**

If a deadly virus can spread throughout this world in a matter of days and weeks, **just think of how contagious love can be in our world if we stay connected to Jesus the true vine.**

### Focus on the Present Moment Meditation by Founder-Father Louis Marie Parent, OMI

*Each of us has a natural tendency to tear the past into little pieces in order to prepare the future. Without realizing it, few are interested in the present moment, in exploiting its strength and its energies.*

*We utilize the present more for crying over our trials, our errors, the hard knocks not digested or reawakening bad memories for preparing our daily portion of unhappiness.*

*Too often we exploit the present for tarnishing and spoiling the future.*

*To live the present moment, intensely demands serious motivation and constant attention to what is happening inside of us, to what we want to accomplish today, to what we are living in the hidden depths of our being.*

*The person who wants to succeed, whoever they may be, must free themselves from all depressing and troubling thoughts from the past. They must forget their bad experiences and their failures whether real or exaggerated.*

*A life liberating from the past and future is truly a heaven where each one is peaceful and enveloped in happiness.*

## Remembering Deceased Loved Ones

Whenever I go to the chapel, I put myself in the presence of our good Lord, and I say to him,

“Lord, I am here. Tell me what you would have me to do.”

...And then, when I tell God everything that is in my heart, I tell him about my pains and my joys, and I listen. If you listen, God always speaks to you when you approach him plainly and simply.

– *St Catherine Labouré*

### **THREE LIVES FULLY LIVED AS MISSIONARIES OF THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST**

#### **Fran Weems (March 3, 1937 - June 12, 2020)**

Fran was born on March 3, 1937, in Baltimore County, Maryland. Before joining SIM, Fran served in the U.S. Army as a photographer for three years. One day in the 1970s, Fran was home sick and reading a Catholic newspaper. It was there that she saw an advertisement for SIM. She contacted one of the SIM groups in Detroit and was referred to Barbara Ottinger. For the next couple of years, Fran stayed in contact with Barbara and finally entered the Institute in 1981. She made her profession on July 6, 1985. One of her core responsibilities in SIM was playing the guitar for Mass during the retreats.

#### **JoAnn Rowe (May 13, 1940 - March 13, 2021)**

JoAnn was born on May 13, 1940, in Washington, D.C., where she grew up with her two brothers. While trained as a teacher, she ultimately decided to join the State Department. In the mid-90s, JoAnn took a leave from work and traveled to New York to continue her search for a vocation. It was there that she met Mary Hatfield in 1987 and was introduced to SIM. She made her profession on July 7, 1990. JoAnn was a member of the Tri-State Group for many years later becoming a member of the NY/NJ group.

#### **Anne Zvitkovitz (April 11, 1926 - July 29, 2021)**

Anne was born on April 11, 1926, in the family home in Allentown, PA, although her parents were originally from Austria. Anne was a secretary for a Catholic Social Agency in Allentown and then was hired by Attorney Stanford to do wills. After she received her teaching certification, she taught for over 25 years. Father Bernard Ristuchia, a Vincentian, introduced her to a Missionary (Helen Miksits), who was instrumental in her learning about the Institute. Anne was professed on August 24, 1974.

### **LIFE GIVEN TO JESUS THROUGH MARY AS SCHOENSTATT SISTER OF MARY**

#### **Lucina Juarez (June 30, 1955 – May 16, 2021)**

Lucina was born on June 30, 1955, in Chimalcoyotl, Mexico, as the oldest of 8 children. She studied nursing and worked in a pediatric hospital. In 1975 she came in contact with the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary through a nearby social service center and joined the institute in Texas in 1976. She worked in both Mexico and Texas, caring for sick and elderly members, and then took care of the Schoenstatt training center in Lamar, Texas.

**MAY THEIR SOULS AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED  
THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE. AMEN.**

## Update from Consecrated Life Group in the CCLV Consultation Organization for the USCCB

*Via zoom there were two meetings recently; the first being on September 23, 2021, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. EST and the second held traditionally on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in November during the Fall Plenary Assembly of the USCCB, November 13, 2021, from 10 a.m. to 11:20 am EST.*

The following were present for the meeting (via Zoom):

CCLV – Bishop Ronald Hicks, Diocese of Joliet

CMSM – Fr. Frank Donio, S.A.C., Executive Director and Small Group Reporter

CMSWR – Sr. Mary Bendyna, OP, Executive Director (absent Nov. 13)

LCWR – Sr. Carol Zinn, CSJ, Executive Director

NCVR – Sr. Maryann Lopiccolo, SC, President

USACV – Dr. Judith Stegman, President

USCSI – Jessica Swedzinski, Representative (Marcia Vinje, President, also present Sept. 23)

### **What are the effects of the pandemic on your organization?**

#### *Organization*

Technological advance that moved meetings and other gatherings into an online space

Redesign of methods used to engage members

Most engaged in a fuller way as the reach due to technology became far greater

#### *Members of Organization*

Re-evaluation of priorities in communal life and ministry

Isolation from those beyond local situation, including lack of ability to gather to grieve and celebrate life and anniversary events

Deeper awareness of mental health issues of some members

Greater communal life with intentionality and more time for prayer and meditation

### **What are the challenges and opportunities for evangelization going forward?**

*Challenges* - Danger of a return to the status quo prior to the pandemic

Disconnected from one another - Difficult to build and maintain relationships

*Opportunities* - Good use of technology to maintain connection

Pruning away that which is not fruitful

More CCLV sharing of challenges included: less economic support is given to national groups, i.e. diocesan cuts of full time to part time to eliminating some vocation directors; 2D to 3D relational dangers cannot go forever as people need people to thrive; seminarians particularly hit hard as with no communal Holy Week/Easter 2020; tensions abound between the masked & unmasked; parishioners leave for non-vaccinated areas; issues are not clearly defined (as in how to receive Holy Communion); there are many opinions from various doctors, and so on. For the LCWR, leadership is greatly hampered as Int'l General Chapters have been postponed for over two years.

Opportunities were shared that cloister groups could fully participate 1<sup>st</sup> time ever via zoom; many groups responded how prayer life was increased and deepened! Technology is fully there 1<sup>st</sup> with a greater sharing between youth and “any members over 50 yrs of age who were flattened by this new technology and how to fully employ it” and secondly by so many shut-ins and home-bound individuals receiving a parish Mass on a daily or weekly basis (and/or participation in diocesan/national events).

Themes for 2022 are to stress there is no going back to normal, as templates are broken and we need to make meaning of this “in the present moment.” **Eucharistic Adoration and the 2023 Synod** will be addressed and the June 2022 reports to the Congregation of Consecrated Life which share the richness of the Church will be discussed. –*Jessica Swedzinski*

## Scattered But One in Heart

My heart was bursting with joy! For the past two years we had shared the ups and downs of our life and faith with the eldest member of our community through a Zoom room, and now I was watching her small, 89 lb. frame amble out the door with a cane to meet us IN PERSON! We were convinced that night that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation” *nor distance or a pandemic*, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

I’ve asked the Lord many times, “Is it your will that this flock be so scattered across the continent?” Our community in the United States put down roots in Wilmington, Delaware, and most of its early members lived close enough to gather on a weekly basis. Today we are scattered across the eastern half of the country and southern Canada with only a few Associate members living within close proximity of each other. Technology has been helpful, but could women who see each other in person a mere once a year really develop the strong bond of sisterhood? Could our community really practice the bond of charity as our constitution states when we are so far apart? The Lord answered these questions loud and clear that night during our annual retreat.

Katherine Marsh and Heather Triggs began their online formation program two years ago. Very early in the program I invited Dot Kelly, our eldest professed member, to join us for the evening as a way of letting our candidates get to know the community. We enjoyed her company and sage wisdom so much that we gave her a standing invitation to join us every week.

When the pandemic began, the joy of conversing through Zoom turned into a “need” to be together. Dot resided in a home for the aged and the lockdown was very strict. She was confined to her apartment and had no access to the sacraments for a much longer period of time than the rest of us. Our weekly Zoom

meetings were her “life line” she would tell us. As the date of the first consecration mass approached and restrictions were being relaxed, Dot was determined to attend despite her many physical ailments and growing weakness. And we were just as excited to see her in person!

But just a few days before the retreat her waning strength began to fail her. She realized with great sorrow that it would be too risky for her to leave her apartment and attend the retreat. We realized it was a wise decision, but we were heartbroken. It had been two years since I had seen her, four years since Heather had met her, and Katherine had never met her in person. Distance, evidently, was not a barrier to love. And love can lead people to do crazy things!

Our retreat center was at least a two hour drive from Dot’s apartment... But this was New York City traffic on a Saturday night, which is anything but smooth sailing... Retreats are supposed to be a time of quiet and prayer, but we just couldn’t ignore our burning desire to see Dot... So after supper we got into our car and began our four hour drive to see our beloved sister.

We were NYC traffic weary as we arrived at 9 pm. Dot welcomed us with very COVID-prohibited but absolutely wonderful hugs as tears of joy filled her eyes. We visited for about an hour in her apartment and shared the happy moments of the first consecration Mass. She was able to see it live via our FaceBook link and told us how happy she was to be able to watch. We enjoyed looking at all the religious art and books in her room and the photos of priests that she tended to during her days as a nurse. She shared gifts with Katherine and Heather and we took (again, COVID-prohibited) selfies without masks. We just couldn’t hide our big smiles.

The time during our blessed visit passed in the blink of an eye. It was already past 10 pm and we had a long drive back home. We wanted so much to stay longer

## DeSales Journey of Love continued ...

but Dot knew we needed to start home. So with another round of very COVID-prohibited maskless hugs, we ended a very blessed and fulfilling evening. I knew that it could very well be the last time we got to see Dot in person. But the thought was quickly replaced with the peace of Jesus, knowing that eventually we will all be together again.

We arrived back at the retreat center at 1:15 am. Exhausted, we got out of the car and looked up at the night sky. Never before have I ever seen so many stars, so many constellations, so much brilliance. As tired as we all were, we were giddy with delight at this celestial gift that God was giving to us. It was as if He was saying, "Thank you for sharing my love with my daughter tonight."

Many secular institutes find themselves in the same situation, trying to create a sense of community when members are scattered far and wide. To you I say, love is greater than distance. The Lord Himself is our shepherd, and no matter how far and wide we are scattered He will gather His flock, and we will be one with Him.

*Kathleen Tierney, DeSales Secular Institute,  
November 14, 2021*



(Left to right) Heather Triggs, Kathleen Tierney, Katherine Marsh, and Dot Kelly

*Articles from Heather and Katherine will be published in Winter 2021 Mountaineer*



**Kathy, chair of the USCSI Vocation Committee, points to her city of Indianapolis. She zooms in across country!**





## I WISH YOU ENOUGH

Recently I overheard a father and daughter in their last moments together at the airport. They had announced the departure.

Standing near the security gate, they hugged and the father said, "I love you, and I wish you enough."

The daughter replied, "Dad, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough, too, Dad."

They kissed and the daughter left. The father walked over to the window where I was seated. Standing there I could see he wanted and needed to cry. I tried not to intrude on his privacy, but he welcomed me in by asking, "Did you ever say good-bye to someone knowing it would be forever?"

"Yes, I have," I replied. "Forgive me for asking, but why is this a forever good-bye?"

"I am old, and she lives so far away. I have challenges ahead and the reality is - the next trip back will be for my funeral," he said.

"When you were saying good-bye, I heard you say, 'I wish you enough.' May I ask what that means?"

He began to smile. "That's a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone..." He paused a moment and looked up as if trying to remember it in detail, and he smiled even more. "When we said, 'I wish you enough,' we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with enough good things from the Dear Lord to sustain them." Then turning toward me, he shared the following as if he were reciting it from memory:

**I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright no matter how gray the day may appear.**

**I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more.**

**I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.**

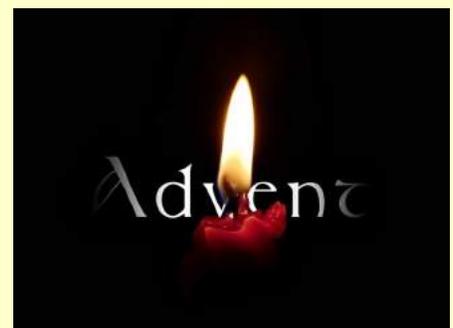
**I wish you enough pain so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger.**

**I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.**

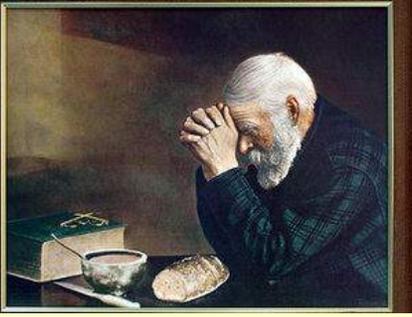
**I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.**

**I wish you enough grace to fulfill your personal ideal.**

**I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye.**



## Mountaineer Information



### ✻ Making donations to USCSI:

We are most grateful for any amount. Please send your donation (checks made to “USCSI”) to:  
Deacon Paul Lang, 26 Settler Court, Tinton Falls, NJ 07753

### ✻ 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.

### ✻ Executive Committee of the United States Conference of Secular Institutes:

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✻ Please share joys & blessings from your institute as the YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH closes and we celebrate Jesus’ Birth. Contributions for our *Winter Mountaineer* can be emailed to [jessica@schrsmary.org](mailto:jessica@schrsmary.org) by **December 10, 2021**.

✻ O St. Joseph, at Fatima you appeared as head of the Holy Family and with the Child Jesus, blessed the world and all its inhabitants. As the greatest consoler of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we beseech you to assist us in our devotion to your beloved spouse, especially in our First Saturday reparations, which console our heavenly Mother. As the faithful father and protector of Mary and Jesus, we implore your powerful intercession in helping us to restore marriage and family to right order with God. With your spiritual carpenter skills, rebuild our Church and guide those who have strayed back to our Eucharistic Lord. Help us to do our part in bringing about the triumph she promised. Amen.

