



The Mountaineer

Dear Friends,

Volume 15, Issue 3 Fall 2022

These past several months have been rich in opportunities for reflection, participation, listening, and sharing as a participant at two congresses.

Our annual USCSI Conference took place at the Marytown Franciscan Retreat and Conference Center in Libertyville, Illinois, September 9-11, 2022. There were a total of 19 institutes present and a total of 23 present in person and 12 on Zoom. The keynote speaker was Father Scott Jones from the Institute of the Heart of Jesus who gave a two-part presentation entitled **“Reading the Signs of the Times: Consecrated Life Through the Ages.”** His historical sweep of the history of consecrated life from the days of the Apostles, through the fall of Rome, the Middle Ages, and finally to current times was stupendous and gave a broad but detailed understanding of our origins in the Church.

That afternoon there was a panel discussion with panelists Fr John O’Neill of the Voluntas Dei, Ana Maria Roman of the Crusaders of Mary, Marcia Vinje of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, and Pearlina Archer of the Madonna Della Strada. Each speaker gave a perspective on how they or their institute interpreted or lived synodality. A question and answer session followed with the audience (both on Zoom and in person) and this elicited further perspectives on the topic.

On Sunday the business meeting took place. Father John O’Neill was elected Vice President and Father George Hazler was elected Councillor. All seemed happy to have participated. Next year’s conference will be held at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat house in West Hartford, CT, September 15-17, 2023.

Prior to that on August 24-28, I was privileged to represent the USCSI at the **CMIS elective assembly in Rome**, taking place after six years (instead of four) for the election of the officers. It was a great joy to be with approximately 94 representatives of secular institutes from around the world and the national conference leaders as well. Several highlights of that meeting included a presentation by Dr. Daniela Leggio entitled “From Synodality to the Authority of Service.” Here in the concept of synodality as a collaborative work of the Spirit in actively listening to others at all levels, is embedded in the mandate to serve one another which is at the heart of all consecrated life – not just for us who have taken sacred bonds but for all (beginning when we were consecrated in the Church through Baptism. More in a separate article.)

One of the highlights was a private audience with Pope Francis who was addressed by our President Jolanta Szpilarewicz and to which the Pope responded with remarks including reference to Armida Barelli (beatified last April). We each then were invited to greet the Pope individually, an unexpected, gracious and generous act on his part.

We thank God for the many graces we have received and pray for each of us to enthusiastically work to make Christ known and loved on a daily basis.

Yours in the love of our faith and our vocation, *Sue Larkin*

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Report on the International Assembly of CMIS

This past August I had the honor of representing the United States Conference of Secular Institutes at the elective assembly in Rome on August 24-28, 2022, of the CMIS (World Conference of Secular Institutes). It was a great joy to be with consecrated people representing secular institutes (88) along with country conference representatives.

Arrivals were Wednesday evening at the Passionist Monastery attached to the Basilica of Saints John and Paul in the Ceilo section of Rome. The meetings began on Thursday and the delegates from the secular institutes and the representatives from the national conferences met in session.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Daniela Leggio, explored a history of synodality beginning with the Apostolic College with Peter at its head but with an emphasis on the radical nature of power and authority, reflecting on Christ's dialogue with the mother of James and John repeating that power of authority comes only through service. She quoted Pope Francis:

Jesus founded the Church by setting at her head the Apostolic College, in which the Apostle Peter is the "rock" (cf. Mt 16:18), the one who must confirm his brethren in the faith (cf. Lk 22:32). But in this Church, as in an inverted pyramid, the top is located beneath the base...It is in serving the people of God that each bishop becomes...the vicar of that Jesus who at the Last Supper bent down to wash the feet of the Apostles (cf. Jn 13:1-15).... Let us never forget this! For the disciples of Jesus, yesterday, today and always, the only authority is the authority of service, the only power is the power of the cross...¹

Dr. Leggio reflected on the authority vested in persons and institutes or groups in institutes who can only be powerful inasmuch as they are willing to serve, beginning with each individual, following Christ who emptied himself of ego and is our model. She pointed out that 'authority' comes from the Latin verb 'augere' meaning to increase and to grow in the sense that we as leaders or members will grow only so much as the ego diminishes and serving others increases.

Besides the meetings to review assembly procedures and conduct the voting, there were small group meetings divided by language on the topics of formation and organization. I met with 8 English-speaking representatives from India, Croatia, Germany and France, where we discussed common problems in formation and organizational challenges in our various countries and groups. There were approximately 8 or 9 groups who met, including 3 groups of Italian speakers, 3 groups of Spanish speakers, and 1 of English speakers.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner were taken in a large hall with self-seating. Language did not seem to be a barrier to the good will and kindnesses of representatives towards each other as we got to recognize names and faces over the four days. We were honored to have Cardinal Braz de Aviz celebrate Mass one evening in the Basilica of Saints John and Paul. Bishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo celebrated another mass, both highlighting the great contributions and importance of secular institutes in the Church and encouraging us to work hard for our mission of spreading the Kingdom.

International Assembly of CMIS, August 2022 ... continued

On Saturday, we had the opportunity to have an audience with Pope Francis. Buses brought us to the Vatican where we were taken to one of the gardens and we proceeded on foot from there. As one can imagine, it was a very carefully coordinated event and we were made very comfortable in the grand hall in which we waited for the Pope. Coming in, we all stood to cheer as he entered. The President, Jolanta Szpilarewicz, greeted him with great thanks for the audience as well as for his strong support for secular institutes particularly in his letter of February 2, 2021, to the President of CMIS. The Pope responded by encouraging us to be faithful to proclaiming the Gospel by our lives. As if the audience were not enough, we were invited individually to meet the Pope, an unexpected but great blessing and great joy for each of us there.

The proposals which were approved by the assembly for implementation during the next administration were:

- 1) continue the theological research on the vocation of consecrated secularity;
- 2) seek the approval to have Pope Paul VI named as the patron of secular institutes;
- 3) continue work online as was done in the online forums this past spring; and
- 4) increase the use of modern tools, such as social media, when appropriate.

It was a rich and profound experience for me as USCSI representative and I am very thankful to have been given this wonderful opportunity to be with women and men from all continents and all committed to spreading the Gospel in the world. *-Sue Larkin*



The room in which we met Pope Francis



Sue Larkin meets Pope Francis

¹Francis, *Address on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html



Marytown hosts USCSI Annual Meeting

Theme on Secular Institutes and Synodality

On Friday, September 9, 2022, the annual meeting of the United States Conference of Secular Institutes convened under the theme: **Secular Institutes and Synodality – What we offer!** We began our practice of synodality by gathering for supper at Marytown Retreat House in Libertyville, Illinois. Old friends greeted one another and new comers were drawn in too.

After the delicious meal we officially opened the weekend with a welcome by President Sue Larkin of the Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ. She introduced the members present as well as those who joined us online. Then Father Mark Niehaus of the Schoenstatt Fathers celebrated holy Mass for us in the Chapel of St. Clare, which was offered for our deceased members.

Following Mass we gathered in our meeting room for snacks and conversation, getting caught up with news, and delving into deeper conversations about institutes' charisms, new vocations, and learning to know members who came for the first time. This is one of our most fruitful times of the whole weekend, we have found.



After breakfast on Saturday morning we prayed Morning Prayer together and then our president introduced Father Scott Jones of the Institute of the Priests of the Heart of Jesus, who gave the morning presentation on “Reading the Signs of the Times: Consecrated Life through the Ages.” We found that he is not only a good lecturer on Church history, but has the material deep in his heart, as he could ad lib very spontaneously. Fr. Scott led us on a journey with the Holy Spirit through the history of the Church pointing out the needs of the Church, and consequently new forms of consecrated life to meet those needs. The process continues even to this day.



We had time yet for private reflection and prayer.

At noon we joined other pilgrims to Marytown for holy Mass in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament where there is perpetual adoration. After lunch there was time for individual prayer and conversations, talks and walks.

Starting at 2:00 pm a panel of participants shared on the topic of Secular Institutes and Synodality. Marcia Vinje, Schoenstatt Sisters of

...continued from page 4

Mary, started off with a presentation on how her particular institute has the principles of synodality built into their lifestyle. Fr. John

O'Neill, *Voluntas Dei*, took a different approach and spoke on how a parish priest can incorporate the listening process of the synod in practical life. Ana Maria Roman, *Crusaders of Mary*, took points from the exhortation by Pope Francis to flesh out the wider meaning of praying, listening and discerning that the synodal process entail. Pearline Archer, *Madonna della Strada*, gave a deep meditation on letting others experience the love of God through us. Following the formal presentations, a lively discussion took place from the floor.

It was a lovely day so we took our customary photo outdoors in front of the retreat house. After more time for personal conversations over dinner, we came together to pray Night Prayer and then watched a movie, "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (which turned out to be a bit more of an

action movie than about the Ark of the Covenant).

Sunday, September 11, we began our day with sung Lauds and Mass with the Franciscan priests and brothers, and the parish in the main church. After brunch, we commenced the business meeting at 11 am. The usual reports were shared and President Sue Larken reported on the International Assembly of CMIS (World Conference of Secular Institutes) in Rome in August which she attended. She shared that there are 144 secular institutes who are members of CMIS.

We thanked the outgoing officers, Fr. George Hazler, the current Vice President, and Claudette Cyr, our Councillor. The next order of business was the election of our new officers: Fr. John O'Neill as Vice President and Fr. George Hazler as Councillor, both of whom belong to the *Voluntas Dei* Institute.

Next year the annual meeting will be held September 15-17, 2023, at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center in West Hartford, Connecticut. -*Marcia Vinje*



Pearline Archer: Thoughts on Synodality



Pearline Acker is one of our stable ingredients of the Annual Meeting. For decades she has been flying in from Kingston, Jamaica (and this usually involved an extra stay-over on Sunday evening in order to be accommodated by their local singular daily flight patterns to and fro USA airports). Since she couldn't be present in person this year, Pearline was one of our two digital panelists. I thanked her afterwards: You anchored us in the wisdom of the ages. We needed your mature view of what synodality looks like in person! Here I want to share her email to me on the Monday after:

Throughout the years of my membership in USCSI I have always felt joy and camaraderie in attending and looked forward to doing so. I even felt missed the two years around 9/11 when I didn't attend, by the warm welcome I received when I did return. In addition, the meetings have brought me information on our way of life and the different ways in which communities are living a Secular Institute way of life. It has brought me education and fulfilled needs – ex. vocation spread, spirituality in general and in particular, of SIs.

For this meeting USCSI has brought us, in my estimation, “The passage of Synodality through the ages in terms of the development of Consecrated Life.” Looking carefully at this development one might see that each Consecrated Life came into being when God saw the need among his people for what that Consecrated Life could and should offer in respect to change and growth. May I suggest here that change is usually a result of resurrection, a result of death – the old order must fade and give place to a new order to bring God's people to the realization and purpose of his Kingdom. For me SI is the baby of that synodal development. Our charge is personal through God's love – loving as he loves and witnessing to that love.

Yes, I too miss our personal chats and fellowship; but as long as Zoom continues and my brain functions, I'll be there until God says, “Stop.” Special regards to all, especially to those who know or remember me well. *Love / blessings, Pearline*

Another powerful answer to our prayers came at the end of this year's national meeting. With joy we welcomed a brand new secular institute as Anna Le attended from the Jesus Christi Fraternity. She lives in Tustin, CA, and braving to come alone; she needed a Sunday stay-over to fly out Monday morning. Here's what happened:



Regarding my trip: I didn't need to spend night at O'Hare Airport. My friend, Thanh An (on right) and I had a sightseeing in a heavy rain. The first time I could see the magnificent, grandiose buildings of Chicago Center.

After that, she dropped me at my terminal. I talked to the United Officer and I could change my flight ticket. I got a direct flight from Chicago to Orange County, California, last night. That flight departed at 8:00 pm. I came home at 11:00 pm. Thanks be to God so I would like to share with you my blessing.

I am very grateful to all of you for your arrangement and fraternal concern. May God bless you, everything you are doing to serve, and keep you in good health and peace. *Anna Le, JCF*

SI Members in Formation 9-2-22

As Labor Day rolls around the first Monday of September each year, and school bells ring, it is a good time to do a roll call of how many members are in formation throughout our US Conference of Secular Institutes.

Caritas Christi, Therese Druart: We have four people in renewals (temporary commitments), two in formation, and two in preparation.

Institute of the Priests of the Heart of Jesus, Fr Scott Jones: We have six priests in initial formation (novitiate)

Institute for the Heart of Jesus Women, Beth Schwartze: We can announce four women.

Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ, Sue Larkin: We have six women in formation stages.

Father Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata, Ada Locatelli: We have two members in formation, one in the Period of Formation and another in the Period of Proof, all in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (except for Ann who is still in Rome as a member of our General Council).

Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, Emily Kenkel: There are two in final stage of formation and another three women committed to starting their formation period.

The Volunteers with Don Bosco, Fr. John Puntino: the men's group aspiring to become a secular institute has just one perpetually professed member in the United States, but the hope is that within a few years we could be recognized as a secular institute of diocesan rite from the Archdiocese of Caracas.

Blessed Trinity Missionary Institute, Rosa Tirado: We are grateful for one in formation for first vows and two in formation for perpetual vows.

For more than 30 persons daring to give their lives to Christ and serve directly in building the Kingdom, we give heartfelt thanks and praise!

Prachi Shah shared these lines from Pope Francis' homily to the Consecrated during his recent trip to Kazakhstan:

A synodal Church, journeying towards the future of the Spirit, is a Church that embraces participation and shared responsibility. A Church that, formed in communion, can go forth to encounter the world. ... This is what consecrated seculars do... formed in communion, they live synodality to go encounter the world. ... in the Church, shaped by the Gospel, we learn to pass from selfishness to unconditional love. This means going out of ourselves. Each of us constantly needs to do that. All of us need to nurture the gift we received at our Baptism. That gift inspires us, wherever we are – in our ecclesial meetings, in families, at work, in society – to become men and women of communion and of peace, sowing seeds of goodness wherever we go.



Secular Institute Member in the Spotlight

As one of the most enjoyable and beneficial aspects of the annual national meeting of delegates to the US Conference of Secular Institute Conference is getting to know other secular institute members, we want to focus on Alice Ann Cortez. Spoiler: If you need a cheery phone call, put her number on your list.

My name is Alice Ann Cortez and I belong to the Franciscan Missionaries of Jesus Crucified. I made my final vows in this secular institute in 2006. I was born in Texas on a farm. I heard my call to religious life when I was picking cotton and hauling corn as a youngster.

Now being 86 years old, I still can hear the call. Presently, I have been newly re-appointed General Minister of our Institute, helping Jesus carry his cross. Yes, I was in the convent for 18 years, entering when I was just 16 years old with the Carmelite Sisters of the “Divine Heart of Jesus.”

Today I live in Mescal Lakes, Arizona, near Benson in the desert. It’s a very nice and silent place. I have my own home and Cheri Jones lives with me. (She is pictured on left.) It is like a small oasis in the desert. We say our prayers together and each Thursday we say our prayers with the entire secular institute community via a conference call over the phone. This being our Liturgy of the Hours, community prayers and prayers against the virus, and the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

We have members all over the USA. And of course we couldn’t be prouder to announce that we have five candidates who are very good, studious, and committed! They are from places like Omaha, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and a Deacon from New Jersey who is over 70 years of age.

Along with finding our peace and security in the Sacred Heart of our Savior, I can tell you that I have eight chickens, one dog Max, and Koble our cat. I work in my yard and keep busy with our institute affairs, plus we belong to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Benson. I might add we don’t have anything fancy or accessible here like internet or Wi-Fi or the like. I use the postal system which most of you reading this would call the snail mail and we are happy to have found a phone possibility of Global Meet Conference Calling to keep in touch with each other.

Whenever you need a time in the beauty and depth of the Arizona desert, drop me a line. We hope to see you come. Our love and prayers are with all of you. 536 N Crooked Lane, Benson AZ 85602

Peace in Jesus and Mary, Alice Ann Cortez, F.M.J.C. / Gen. Minister





News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

Katherine Marsh, DeSales Secular Institute member living in Canada wrote: Just read the Summer Mountaineer (thank-you) and I noticed a contribution from a nurse? That has false information... Here is a debunking article: <https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-inventor-ages-died-idUSL1N2LY149> Readers, Please do take time for this interesting article, Editor

R Thoughts from the vocation committee: Can we each step up to take on a few more events in our local parishes this coming Fall. Many possibilities exist such as asking your pastor, parish vocation team, or religious education coordinator to offer a short time slot when you could give a witness story of your secular institute vocation. Let's all offer one extra event toward vocation work as part of our Advent Striving this year!?!

R If you can't come to join us at the information booths, please support in prayer our next conference vocation endeavors: National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) at Long Beach, CA, from November 10-12, 2022, and the Seek 23/Fraternity of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) at St Louis from January 2-6, 2023. And what about World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal this coming August ...

R How is our website doing? We thank Greg Kremer, Voluntas Dei, who takes up this task of being our web email administer. He reports: About 1/2 of the emails received are actual inquiries (which I forward) and about 1/2 are some form of spam (solicitations or random messages).

R Natasha Sager, Caritas Christi, is working toward a fresh, clean look in updating our USCSI Website. Please help along by sending some photos of your members, or interesting photos taken by your members, or little human interest stories: jessica@schsrsmary.org

R 3/9/22: grace and peace! Just wanted to share with you an example of support from our new pastor at St Michael's Church in Flushing, NY, as in the past this was not recognized. See picture of the Mass he celebrated recognizing consecrated life in our parish. I am present, two sisters and an order priest. Next is the letter of invitation regarding this Mass and event. Fr. Do has asked me for next year to give a short talk regarding the vocation of Secular Institutes!

God Bless you, Rosa Tirado, Blessed Trinity Missionary Institute



R At the elective Assembly of the Secular Institute of Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ in mid-June, Mary Lou Carr from Rye, NH, was elected as the next President of the U.S. Zone.

R For those of us who know Benita Huerta from Texas, she had a knee replacement in June, in San Antonio. She is now 90 years old, an active member of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate.

R Monsignor Edward Girres is the new Principal Officer of Opus Spiritus Sancti Secular Institute of priests, taking the baton from Fr Dan Guenther. This was in Iowa in July.

More News Briefs



☞ On July 22, 2022, the Cistercian Order (OCSO) blessed Prachi Shah's Consecration, as the Abbot of the Monastery of Latroun, Israel, welcomed her into the Cistercian Family as the first "lay consecrated person" ... potentially paving the way for others. She met with the secretary to the Abbot General, who read her rule of life, and who expressed great interest in the possibility of the creation of a Secular Institute affiliated with the Cistercian (OCSO) family. <https://youtu.be/ExXKID7u-jc>

☞ During the last two weeks of July into the first week of August, Deacon Paul Lang was in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, at the Voluntas Dei General Assembly.

☞ Francine Lartigue and Marcia Vinje, L to R, celebrated their golden jubilee on August 15, 2022. Marilee Hauser is not shown. All three are Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary with Francine hailing from Long Island, NY, and Marcia and Marilee growing up in the Madison, Wisconsin neighborhood.



☞ On September 12, 2022, Joanna Buckley, was elected as general superior of the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary and another local member of our institute, Lorena Segura, was elected to our General Council by their General Chapter being conducted in Schoenstatt, Germany. The institute has over 1,600 sisters from 42 nations working in 29 countries. Both will serve a 12 year term, residing in Germany. When asked of her reaction to the election Joanna replied, "I am grateful for the chance to serve our community worldwide and in that way contribute to the mission of the Church."



PLEASE, MARK YOUR 2023 CALENDARS NOW:

In connection with the National Executive Committee Meeting at San Alfonso Retreat Center at Long Branch, NJ, there will be a Zoom Meeting for **Principal Officers** or Proxies during Tuesday afternoon, **February 7, 2023.**



Our next USCSI National Meeting will be starting on Friday, **September 15-17 in 2023.** This will be at the **Holy Family Passionist Center in West Hartford, CT.**

For Future Planning, we are looking at the Franciscan Retreat House in **Danville, California for September 2024.**

And the Eucharistic Congress, sponsored by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, is in **Indianapolis from July 17-24, 2024.**

Stop and Pray! How to Get Things Done ASAP



A colleague of mine went to have some blood tests at a typical lab nearby. Being a good observer, he noted that the building was a modern structure with little architectural adornment. His eyes looked instead upon the office decoration, which allows people to reveal something of their individuality. In a workaday world, such observations can provide some spice to an otherwise bland experience.

As the nurse took down his personal details on the computer, he saw a decorative wood block that read ASAP—supposedly referring to the need to get things done “as soon as possible.” Such a reference is not surprising since the medical business models are often based on efforts to maximize efficiency. Time is money and is not to be wasted. Getting it done quickly is the norm.

However, my colleague was surprised when he read the meaning assigned to the acronym. It was not “as soon as possible,” but written out beneath the big letters were the words: **Always Stop and Pray.** He breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing the nurse’s priorities.

Then he congratulated the nurse on the sign and its much-needed message. She was pleasantly surprised by his remark and thanked him. When asked if the idea for the wood block was her own or someone else’s, she replied that she had found the block for sale at a shop and bought it.

The exchange led to an interesting conversation about the need for stopping to reflect and then the action of prayer to get things done calmly and carefully. Impressed by the experience, he told the nurse he would pass on the episode to others who might benefit from it.

-John Horvat II



USCSI Mission Statement with More Data

☞ 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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Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwrsN2t7T8xHfrdyGCHY59g>

Websites: www.secularinstitutes.org & www.cmis-int.org/en/

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/secular_institutes_usa/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/secularinstitutes>

- ☞ Please share joys & blessings from your institute. Contributions and photos for our **Winter Mountaineer** can be emailed to jessica@schsrsmmary.org by **November 14, 2022**.

☞ Making donations to USCSI:

We are most grateful for any amount. Please send donations (checks made to: USCSI) to:

Deacon Paul Lang,
100 Pin Oak Court,
Kingsland GA 31548-3389

*Please note his new address.

