

North American Salesian Network

Minutes Annual Meeting, April 21, 2020

Members Present (via Zoom)

Fr. Joe Boenzi, SDB, Salesians of Don Bosco, Western Province
Sr. Anne Elizabeth Eder, OSFS, Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales
Sr. Susan Louise Eder, OSFS, Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales
Mr. Mark Eifert, Don Bosco Secular Institute
Fr. Lewis S. Fiorelli, OSFS, Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Wilmington-Philadelphia Province
Fr. John Graden, OSFS, Embraced by God
Ms. Mitzi Jimison, Daughters of St. Francis de Sales
Fr. Tomy Joseph, MSFS, Fransalians
Sr. Susan Marie Kasprzak, VHM, Order of the Visitation of Blessed Mary, 2nd Federation,
Sr. Patricia King, FMA, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Western Province
Fr. John Loughran, OSFS, Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Toledo-Detroit Province
Fr. Ken McKenna, OSFS, DeSales Center
Sr. Mary Grace McCormack, VHM, Order of the Visitation of Blessed Mary, 2nd Federation,
Mr. Michael Moran, Sons of St. Francis de Sales
Fr. Michael Murray, OSFS, Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Wilmington-Philadelphia Province
Fr. Kevin Nadolski, OSFS, VP of Mission & Identity, De Sales University
Fr. John Puntino, SDB, Salesians of Don Bosco, Eastern Provincial
Sr. Alphonsine Roy, FMA, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Province of St. Joseph
Ms. Kathleen Tierney, DeSales Secular Institute
Ms. Anne Williams, Visitation Salesian Network
Fr. William McCandless, OSFS, Coordinator for NASN
Fr. Donald Heet, OSFS, NASN Facilitator

- The Minutes of the 2019 meeting were approved
- The agenda for this meeting was approved
- Last year's action items
 - Contact Bishop Barron regarding Salesian programming on "Word on Fire"
 - Bill McCandless: I attempted but was not able to make direct contact. He checked "Word on Fire" website and found a blog focused specifically on St. Francis de Sales. He said he would try again to make contact with "Word on Fire"
- Investigate Catholic Radio stations re: audio droplets. – no report
- Investigate play on Francis de Sales produced by Diocese of Wilmington
 - Bill McCandless: it was produced in December, 2018. The author's name is Johanna Schlaut. The diocese owns the rights to the play. Bill can find out the possibilities of obtaining the script and/or producing it.

- Don Heet said he was interested in seeing the script
 - Mike Moran: I saw it produced and said it was phenomenal. It would be a great YouTube presentation; it runs less than an hour
 - Joe Boenzi: It would be good to publish it as a script on line or in print. Makes it much more available
 - Those who are interested in a script, send email to Bill
- Press packet regarding Quadri-centenary of Francis' death
 - Bill will do that. Currently there are no details yet to promote
- What is currently available in terms of Salesian material
 - Bill has been collecting information.
 - DeSales University produced a video biograph narrated by Fr. Sandy Pocetto.
 - He has 14 clips on Francis as Sage and Saint. It is good content but has poor technical quality.
 - The cost of producing new videos (20-30 minutes) would run 4-6k, but we might be able to work with the Television/Film program at DeSales University.
 - Bill will include a list of resources on the website.
 - John Graden will send a packet of materials to Bill, including Sr. Mary Grace Flynn's indexed 800 passages from SDF and Mike Donovan's list of images in SFS.
 - Kathy Tierney will follow up with Bill on this issue
- Core Salesian Values
 - Kathy Tierney: they were wonderful, but they needed to be edited for style. She expressed a concern with "trigger words"; it is important to make sure everything is consistent with catechism
 - Bill McCandless: they needed professional editing for clarity and standardization. The Oblates in Wilmington use a professor at SJU for editing but we would have to pay. We also have to decide how we want to disseminate this work
 - John Graden: the editor would edit, condense, standardize, make them of similar length, distill them.
 - Kathy Tierney: we could post them on website
 - John Puntino: Who is intended audience? Those with Salesian background? Others may not understand what we are referring to. These seem more in-house than directed towards the general public
 - Joe Boenzi: it is good to have a wide variety in the reflections to appeal to disparate audiences
 - Don Heet: he had included name of individual authors. Since NASN is a Network, it should be clear that these reflect individual insights. Perhaps they could be put on line as collection of reflections rather than in print
 - Kathy Tierney: it needs a preface or introduction.
 - John Graden: St. Francis de Sales is often perceived as addressing private devotion. These reflections focus on dynamic quality of Salesian Spirituality to

challenge culture, not just personal piety. Audience may be people who have discovered St. Francis de Sales, but need to be prompted to conversion. These were intended to present Salesian Spirituality as prophetic and able to influence culture. He will send out a draft of an introduction.

- Sr. Mary Grace: it currently does not have a context; an introduction is completely necessary.
 - Some reflections seemed to say what our culture have is bad, and we have the good; some of the assessments of present culture seemed very negative.
- Mike Moran: Salesian core values are prayer, virtues, be who you are and be that well. It needs an introduction that can pull it all together.
- Ann Williams: There was difficulty in not knowing who audience was. They can be read in spirit of conversations, letters. Perhaps they could be packaged like getting a letter of reflection. They could also benefit from graphic support to highlight what we are trying to say.
- Mike Moran: Graphics could be provided by Mickey McGrath– but we have to pay him
- Kevin Nadolski: Perhaps we could publish them in a pamphlet like the OSFS Salesian Spirituality committee’s “God and the Human Family”. If we present them as a collection, the fact that some are somewhat longer than others would not be a problem. It would give elasticity in way we share our spirituality
- Mike Moran: his experience with such a book was that it needed to be edited so each contribution fit together with the others.
- John Graden agreed to draft an introduction and send it the members for feedback.
- Investigate other statements of core values.
 - Don Heet: In sense this was covered by Bill’s collecting what is currently being done
 - Kevn Nadolaski: DeSales University has compiled a list of core values. (*See Attachment at end of these minutes.*)
 - Mike Moran: years ago published Salesian Threads. He will send it to the members
 - Tomy Joseph: The Fransalians have a list of core values. He will send it to the members
- Blog – fallen into disuse until new website so nothing to report.
- Survey of what Salesian multi-media and audio visual material is available – part of what Bill is doing for website
- 400th anniversary of Francis Death
 - Joe Boenzi: He met with rector major, Fr. Angel Fernandez, and it was discussed in General Council. It was going to be brought to General Chapter, but the chapter was cut short because of the pandemic. The Rector Major said, “We’ve done this before; it can be done again.” If general council is working with him, we can hope something will happen. Currently their plates are full with covid-19. But it was greatly enthusiastically received. Eunan McDonald, is now the

provincial in Ireland. He promotes Francis de Sales and he is pushing this forward.

- Bill McCandless: Since both the SDB Rector Major and the OSFS Superior General are in favor it seems both congregations willing to sign off. Can we draft a document, that they can sign off on/
- Joe Boenzi: The Rector Major said “We can do it,“ but that did not exclude our writing it.
- Bill McCandless: the OSFS Superior General (Barry Strong) and Rector Major have been in communication. They seemed interested in getting together. If other leaders are in Rome, Barry is willing to host a meeting. Perhaps we can get everyone together by fall. But it would be helpful to provide a draft for them.
- Tomy Joseph: that’s a good idea. We need someone to coordinate
- Don Heet: Perhaps Joe Boenzi can write to the Rector Major and ask whether we should find someone to write a draft, or will a Salesian of Don Bosco do it? What is the best way to proceed?
- Joe Boenzi: I can work together with John Puntino
- John Graden: Lou Fiorelli should have also some input as a former general.
- Lou Fiorelli: I will be happy to help
- Mitzi Jimison : Maybe we should be looking to promoting this anniversary with “Word on Fire”.
- Sr. Mary Grace: We should also include Fr. Corrigan, the Religious Assistant to the Visitation. He has connections with Rome as well as Visitation.
- NASN moving forward: Do we want to become an incorporated non-profit organization or not
 - Bill McCandless: We are considering becoming a non-profit organization, not applying for 501-c3 status. The application is not too complicated.
 - Need recognition by a bishop. If we get a bishop’s approval, we would be listed in the National Catholic Directory.
 - We already have
 - a name,
 - a mission,
 - a location,
 - members,
 - We would need
 - a board of directors or officers,
 - to list meetings,
 - to show how our finances are managed.
 - Once approved, we could open a bank account in our own name, have more recognition.
 - First step is to decide whether we want to become a non-profit,
 - Then, if so, elect officers. At present no-one is authorized to speak on behalf of NASN

- John Graden: For 25 years DeSales Resources existed as a ministry of Oblates, not organization. Several years ago, we were incorporated, got a board, by-laws, officers, 501-c3 status, Then complications arose; we were informed that as a corporation we needed insurance. It raises the question, should we have done it. There can be unforeseen consequences, as, for example in New York State. We should take all this into consideration
 - Bill McCandless: New York is one of the worst states to incorporate. Delaware, for example, is much easier.
 - Ken McKenna: Getting in the National Catholic Directory is good. Another way of setting up a checking account is through a DBA (“Doing Business As”) of any of our organizations, as long as similar mission. At this point some sort of organizing is good to do
 - Tomy Joseph: Getting ecclesiastical recognition is a good idea. We need to see what direction we are going to take. We need to consider issues.
 - Bill McCandless: We could open a sub-account, but there is something to be said for being stand-alone. We don’t want to be a sub-ministry of some other order or ministry. It is important that the leadership of our members be present at meetings, or at least appoint delegate. With our new website, we need approval, credibility. Status as a non-profit organization moves us to next level. It gives us credibility for example, working with Word on Fire. We need officers and especially treasurer to give credibility
 - Kathy Tierney: All of us have full plates. Having a board, treasurer – do we have people who will do it. Another option is to find a fiscal sponsor. You run organization and they take care of rest, but they do take a percentage.
 - Tomy Joseph: Would this be secular or ecclesial status?
 - Don Heet: Primarily secular, but also ecclesial. Main point is much more so we can function legally
 - Tomy Joseph: we should go for both
 - Bill McCandless: It gives us both. It helps with other church organizations outside of Salesian world.
 - John Graden: Can Bill put forward a proposal listing pros and cons.
 - The suggestion was moved, seconded and approved
 - Bill McCandless: I am willing to do it, but I have no cons.
 - Don Heet: Can you just send out proposal and let people react to it
 - Bill McCandless: I can do that. I have bylaws already
 - Don Heet: Send it out and give people one month to consider it. Then ask for vote by email, yes or no and go by majority.
 - Lou Fiorelli: who votes
 - Don Heet: Everyone on list, except Bill and me, should vote
- Dues/finances
 - Don Heet: Because of the generosity of the Visitation, we currently have some funds, but still have to pay Bill’s salary moving forward. Another consideration is

that a small organization like Don Bosco Secular Institute cannot contribute same as a larger organization.

- Lou Fiorelli: It is very true that if there is no money, there is no mission. How much each can contribute will vary
- John Graden: if we want to accomplish something, we have to contribute. We should also look into applying for grants
- Tomy Joseph: do we have an idea of how much
- Don Heet: I have been asking a 1000 a year. I could send a letter to each organization asking if they are willing to pay that much in dues. Mark what are your thoughts
- Mark Eifert - It's possible, reasonable, combine mine with the Salesians of Don Bosco
- Joe Boenzi. I don't know if our province made a contribution
- Bill McCandles: Here is a list of contributions.
 - September 2019: Visitation Sisters, \$1000
 - October 2019: OSFS T/D Province, \$1000
 - November 2019: Oblate Sisters, \$1000
 - November 2019: Daughters, \$1000
 - December 2, 2019: Visitation Sisters \$5000
 - December 27, 2019, DeSales Secular Institute, \$1000
 - January 21, 2020, Salesian Sisters, \$1000
 - January 22, 2020, Embraced by God, \$1000
 - March 2020, Salesian Sister, Eastern Province, \$1000
 - Stipend – 1000. 6000 in savings.
- John Puntino: I was told we were sending; if not let me know
 - Don Heet: I will follow up.
 - *Note (In fact, the Eastern Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco has committed to sending \$1000 within the month)*
- Bill McCandles: – my province has let me divert stipend to developing website, stationary, as well as other expenses. That is our province's contribution.
- Michael Moran: I might have been invited to attend before, but I didn't notice it. I noticed that the Daughters contributed \$1000. We can contribute something.
- Anything else
 - Michael Moran: We should invite Salesian Missionaries of Mary Immaculate to be members
 - Tomy Joseph: They have attended in the past. Sr. Elsi Joyce, SMMI, came.
 - Bill McCandles: I reached out to her regarding this meeting, but she did not respond
 - Michael Moran: There is also a large group of men at Salesianum interested in learning about Salesian Spirituality

- Bill McCandless: The organization of about 8 men is under the leadership of Tom Vresics; it is called SLAM. I sent two messages, but did not get a response.
 - Tomy Joseph: there is a priest of St. Francis de Sales. Do we promote them?
 - Don Heet: talk to him and see if they are interested in becoming member of NASN.
 - Tomy Joseph: I also want to salute Fr. Joe Boenzi for the retreat he gave to the Fransalians last year. It was very good.
 - John Graden: Can we get mailing addresses as well as email addresses.
 - Don Heet: I will ask for them in the email regarding dues.
- Date and Location of Next meeting
 - Lou Fiorelli: Kevin Nadolski sent an email suggesting that we meet via Zoom rather than travel for an overnight
 - Sister Susan Louise: this works only because we have already had face to face; that's important. Getting together is a plus, we can discuss and let spirit work.
 - The sense of the group was that it is important to get together
 - Ken McKenna: camp is available
 - NASN will meet April 12-14 2021 at DeSales Center, Brooklyn, Michigan.

ATTACHMENT

DeSales University

Core Values

Gentleness: As a bishop in the 17th century, Francis de Sales faced tremendous violence where Christians were killing Christians over theology. This church leader was both incredulous and disheartened over such evil and turned to the Word of God. Matthew 11:29 deeply touched Francis' aching heart, as he heard Jesus say, "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart." For the young bishop, gentleness was more than just a simple virtue. In the context of vast violence, gentleness became an orientation and disposition by which a disciple could identify with Jesus and engage the world with counter-cultural life behaviors. Today, Salesian gentleness challenges us daily, from how we text and email to the way we drive, vote, and relate to our friends, family, foes, and colleagues.

All-powerful God,

you express your power with gentleness, giving life to us through love and grace.

Empower us, through your Spirit, to be women and men of strong gentleness and gentle strength

to counter the violence of our world and advance the rich peace

the life of your Son, Jesus, brought to the world.

May our gentleness deepen the human dignity of all people and

inspire a lasting respect for the beauty of creation.

Amen.

Humility: While gentleness was the antidote to the ills of Francis' day, humility brought him to a renewed understanding of the tireless way that God loved him. The word comes from the Latin word meaning "from the earth." For Francis, humility calls the disciple to give thanks for the grace of God that creates, sustains, and moves us forward to love, grow, and flourish. All gifts come from God, and we are called to cooperate with grace to use our gifts to advance the Kingdom that Jesus inaugurated with his life. With Salesian humility, we are grateful for the gifts given to us, crediting God for them and blessing the world with our expression of those gifts placed at the service of others.

Giver of all gifts, you never stop stirring your grace within and among us.

*We remain humbled by your presence and action in our lives,
and we return to you our gratitude.*

*We also ask for a spirit of generosity and creativity to discern wisely
how to place our gifts at the service of our neighbors, especially those most in need of our help.
May your Spirit continue to keep us humble,
always aware of your goodness and the call to share our blessings.*

Amen

Gratitude: In response to the amazing grace of God that creates us and provides us with the countless gifts of family, faith, community, talents, work, and love, we return thanks. Our ability to give thanks to God emerges from humility and prompts us to pray and, in turn, share the bounty of our blessings with others. Salesian gentleness grounds us in a radical equality that illustrates that we are all graced and uniquely blessed. Our shared human dignity calls us to a rich respect for all people, as we are one human family with one Divine Parent.

*God of abundance, we thank you for all that you have given us,
especially today for (name a blessing).*

*May our gratitude continue to bring us to share from our bounty
to ease the burdens of those who struggle.*

Humbled in gratitude, O God, we ask for one more gift: a grateful heart.

Amen.

Wisdom: As a Salesian community of learning, we champion the knowledge we receive through inspired instruction, transformative relationships, and graced activities of art, sport, service, and prayer to develop our minds, stretch our hearts, and strengthen our hands to serve the common good through the Catholic intellectual tradition. Francis de Sales wrote: “Knowledge is the eighth sacrament.” Francis also developed the centrality of the heart as the locus of love for the human person. Thus, knowledge must not remain in the mind but touch the heart to be transformed into a wisdom that informs life’s choices and impels the disciple to love and serve.

Come, Holy Spirit, inspire our minds with your truth, stretch our hearts with your love,

*and strengthen our hands to serve those in need of our help.
May the knowledge we attain transform us into wise people
who can read the signs of times and join our neighbors
to celebrate in joy and hope and to provide care in their grief and anguish,
especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way.
Amen.*

Hospitality: When Francis de Sales and his chief collaborator Jane de Chantal founded their religious community known as the Visitation of Holy Mary, women committed to deep charity and faithful prayer as the means to holiness, they welcomed those who were physically disabled and were deemed unacceptable to the religious communities of their day. The willingness and openness of these two eventual saints to welcome the unwelcomed highlights the essential dimension of hospitality for disciples. During a time in our world when countless peoples are exiled from their homelands, rejected and forced to live on streets, or precluded from quality education, Salesian hospitality seeks to accept others by honoring their human dignity and empowering them to be who they are and be that well.

*Father in heaven, your son Jesus tells us,
“Come to me, all who are burdened and find life burdensome.”
May we follow his example to welcome those who struggle.
May our acceptance of our neighbors
reinforce their dignity and strengthen their hearts.
Enlighten us to marvel at your unconditional acceptance of us
so that we may mirror your grace to others.
Amen.*