

VOCATIONS

Answering an invitation

New director brings 'inclusion' to ministry in Manhattan, Diocese

As Sister Beverly Carlin moves into her new role as vocation director for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, she also hopes to move the definition of "vocation" beyond its usual link to the word "religious."

"I see 'vocation' as an invitation from God, calling everyone to some kind of vocation," Sister Beverly explains. "It's being who God wants us to be — whether we're married, single, in religious life, in church or not."

That is the inclusive message Sister Beverly takes with her as she moves to a new home — and her new ministry — in Manhattan, Kan., where the congregation has historically had a strong presence.

Sister Beverly succeeds Sister Anna Marie Broxterman, who had served as vocation director for 18 years. Sister Anna Marie was elected to the sisters' Leadership Council last year, and asked the congregation to appoint a successor.

In appointing Sister Beverly to the duties, the Council also created a three-person "vocation team" to support her, and offer assistance and feedback whenever she needs it.

Sister Anna Marie is a member of that team, along with Sisters Janet Lander and Jean Rosemarynoski, all of whom live in Concordia.

Sister Beverly has moved the vocation office from Topeka to Manhattan, to be a part of the Salina Diocese and to be able to coordinate her work with that of Father Jarrett Konrade, the diocesan vocation director. She also notes the vibrant program that operates at St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center in Manhattan, and hopes she will be



Longtime vocation director Sister Anna Marie Broxterman remains a part of the Sisters of St. Joseph vocation team.



Sister Beverly Carlin, speaking during the community assembly in June, is the new vocation director for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, and has moved the vocation office to Manhattan, Kan. There she is a part of the Salina Diocese.

able to volunteer there.

"She has a deep love for the Salina Diocese," noted Sister Jean, "and now Bev can maintain her ties throughout the diocese in her new ministry."

Sister Beverly entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 2000, and has served for the past three years as religious education director and RCIA coordinator for St. Matthew Parish in Topeka.

A native of Osborne, Kan., she is a graduate of Marymount College with bachelor's degrees in business administration and general psychology.

As vocation director, she is responsible for a variety of events throughout the year, including Discover Camp, "Come & See" programs and other outreach projects in areas where Sisters of St. Joseph serve.

Sisters respond to landmark study of newer members

A landmark nationwide survey that garnered responses from 4,000 women and men who have entered religious communities since 1993 has drawn considerable media attention since it was released in August.

The conclusions drawn from the first-of-its-kind survey are as varied as the media outlets that have given it print space and air time.

The "Study of Recent Vocations to Religious Life" was undertaken by

the Center for the Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), a Georgetown University-based research center, on behalf of the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC), a professional association of religious vocation directors, based in Chicago. The study sought to determine best practices for religious institutes in attracting and retaining new members.

Mercy Sister Mary Bendyna, executive director of CARA and principal author of the study, called the men and women religious who participated "a sign of hope for religious life and the Church."

"They face many challenges and are making a choice that family and friends don't understand," she said, "but they are embracing their call with faith and enthusiasm."

The Leadership Council of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia asked our members to reflect on the study in preparation for our November Assembly, where its finding will be on the agenda.

Sisters were asked five specific questions about what is now called "the CARA study." At right are a few representative responses to two of those questions.

» To read more about the CARA study, go to www.nrv.org

Where did you feel an invitation as you read the new CARA vocation study?

The invitation is to believe religious life gives breath and life to the Church and the world. I desire to collaborate as far as possible with the Sisters on the Vocation Team. I will continue to initiate and encourage women to consider religious life. It is a life choice to share our spirit and spirituality that seems to resonate with them through our particular charism. It is the dynamic energy that is lived out through our personal gifts and talents. I want to spread the "good news" of the value of religious life in our



SISTER CHRISTINE DOMAN

SISTER PAT LEWTER



I felt an invitation to keep on keeping on! I am a CSJ more and longer than I have ever been anyone else.

— Sister Pat Lewter
Grand Junction, Colo.

I continue to feel hopeful about Religious Life. It is God who inspires, calls and connects women to us and to the community. I want to be present and reflect the joy I feel in being a woman religious, a Sister of St. Joseph. I want to be available to serve as a witness.

— Sister Jeanette Wasinger
Orange, Calif.

The study only served to renew and revive my zeal for the mission. I know I am a CSJ

What do you see as the implications for our future regarding new members?



SISTER BETTE MOSLANDER

Some recent articles on religious life suggest that there is an upturn in priestly vocations and intimations of a similar trend in both forms of women's religious communities. But we cannot predict whether that will prove true. We must continue to move out to young women of all ages.

— Sister Bette Moslander
Concordia, Kan.

Having entered the congregation literally at the peak of our membership followed by a very quick, abrupt and consistent decrease of members, I have been consistently challenged through the years to re-frame what really matters: quality vs. quantity (numbers). New members?

Women and men may be willing to delve into the market place of gospel-based ministry these days while spreading those blessings as active

parents, gainfully employed, or actively retired human beings. We are in a different time/historical framework in 2009.

I am far more concerned about the quality of living in the day-to-day for human beings as a whole vs. the quantity of canonically vowed women religious. LOTS of folks have our spirit and live it without being canonically, vowed women religious: CSJs.

That is my intent/driving force — to pass that on!

— Sister Loretta Jasper
Concordia, Kan.



SISTER LORETTA JASPER



SISTER JODI CRETEN

God calls. God invites, and we are the instruments and nourishers, as women are attracted to our way of being in the world. The charism will draw, because we draw. Are all women who are seeking God looking for that Elusive Being in the same way? I doubt it! We have something only we can offer, and the same for other communities.

I believe that religious life will continue and I want to help in the molding of its future by my being.

— Sister Jodi Creten
Atlanta, Ga.

world today that is witness through our total self giving as it is exuded in our members. Always a challenge!

— Sister Christine Doman
El Paso, Texas

in the fiber of my being, and everyday, I see the implications of that for our world: how I live the charism, how I pray, how I live community, are all for the mission.

— Sister Jodi Creten
Atlanta, Ga.



SISTER MARY FRAN SIMONS

I felt an invitation to be true to myself and our community to be true to who we are. We are called to a prophetic life, which often is not popular.

— Sister Mary Fran Simons
Chandler, Ariz.

I feel invited to be more active in relating to the young women who come to the Motherhouse for vocation programs — such as Discover Camp and others. It is incumbent on all of us to be role models for interested women.

— Sister Norma Schlick
Concordia, Kan.



SISTER NORMA SCHLICK

I think there is room in this world for diversity regarding consecrated life.

— Sister Jeanette Wasinger
Orange, Calif.

I believe there will always be women who relate to our charism, spirit and spirituality as CSJ of Concordia. They will come and they will stay. They will energize that same spirit and spirituality in the future to the world. It is God who calls women to a religious life style who seek to deepen their prayer life and give their lives in ministry.

— Sister Christine Doman
El Paso, Texas



SISTER JEANETTE WASINGER

Our founder told us to go out into the neighborhoods, find out what people needed, and respond to that need as best we could. Initially that was caring for and educating new immigrants and their children. That group has now moved into the mainstream of American life. We are still going out into the neighborhoods, and we are finding very different needs, and we are doing what we can to address them.



SISTER AGNES IRENE HUSER

— Sister Agnes Irene Huser
Independence, Mo.