

MONTHLY MEMO March 2024

EFCL recently held the first Board meeting of 2024 and, as always, began their meeting with a session dedicated to formation. Linda Ferrington rsc, Mission Integration Manager of EFCL, prepared the papers for the Board to discuss and facilitated the discussion. It struck me that it would be good to share a little about Board formation, so Linda has written the following, beginning by quoting Sharon Holland ihm:

The essential thing is to be attentive to the Spirit. FIDELITY to who we are and what we're about and to help the remaining members to keep that sense of being a community of faith in Christ that drew trust in the first place and carry on in whatever way we do mission until it comes to completion.

The Board Directors continue to prioritise formation at each meeting and in joint sessions with the Member Representatives. Each director wholeheartedly prepares for and engages in the conversation, and the shared understandings inform the current and emerging context of EFCL.

For Directors of EFCL, the invitation is to live Jesus's transforming mission and hope and work for God's Reign in both the now and the not-yet dimensions of religious life. In his own life, Jesus preached the Reign of God as a life of justice and compassion. Jesus drew on the people's deepest aspirations and hopes. "He found that hope already in people's hearts, and he was able to recreate it in a surprising new perspective from his own experience of God."¹

Through fidelity to the mission of God and the commitment to service of EFCL, Board Directors have their foundation in serving the poor and vulnerable in the pattern of discipleship of Jesus. "The laity are called to participate actively in the whole life of the Church; not only are they to animate the world with the spirit of Christianity, but they are to be witnesses to Christ in all circumstances and at the very heart of the community of mankind."² The preparation for ecclesial leaders called to ministerial leadership has its foundation in supporting, skilling, and recognising each person's gifts to this process. "Formation creates deeper meaning, facilitates recognition of grace and nurtures belief in why we do what we do, how we do it, beyond data and business norms"³.

¹ Cf. Accessed March 23, 2024, <http://toservefirst.com/definition-of-servant-leadership.html>. "Greenleaf describes servant-leaders as people who initiate action, are goal-oriented, are dreamers of great dreams, are good communicators, can withdraw and re-orient themselves, and are dependable, trusted, creative, intuitive, and situational."

² Hagstrom, *The Emerging Laity: Vocation, Mission and Spirituality*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2010), 12.

³ Patrick Gaughan, "Formation Revitalizes Health Care Ministry," *Health Progress* 86, no.9 (November – December, 2017): 90, accessed July 1, 2019, <https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/health-progress/formation-revitalizes-health-care-ministry.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.

The year to date has been really busy. We have spent the last eight months working on the April-May days being held in 2024: developing appropriate and relevant agenda items, engaging presenters and working with our service partner religious and lay colleagues to identify and engage personnel for breakout sessions. These days in Melbourne and Sydney have been advertised to all religious and their lay colleagues and we are coming to the end of our registration period. If you, or any colleagues or friends would like to attend one of these events, please register via one of the following links

Register for the Melbourne Event: <https://events.humanitix.com/2024efclnetworkevent-melbourne>

Register for the Sydney Event: <https://events.humanitix.com/2024efclnetworkevent-sydney>

If you experience any difficulty in registering please email nitasha.prasad@efcl.org.au

EFCL has also planned a day on May 15 to meet with our current service partner leaders and leadership teams to discuss learnings from the journey and to allow them time to interact with each other about issues they have encountered. One learning is that our service partners are in an in-between space when shared services are accessed. So while EFCL recruits and manages staff for the religious institute, there is usually still a leader and leadership team in place. This provides a challenge for the leader and leadership team, for the staff and for EFCL.

The first Safeguarding Training session for all staff was held on March 13, presented by EFCL's Safeguarding Officer, Sheree Limbrick. It was the first of three annual sessions and was recorded for viewing by staff who were unable to be present.

One issue that came up at the Safeguarding session was the need expressed by some staff for professional supervision. EFCL understands that our landscape is a different one for professionals formerly used to a workplace and work colleagues. We decided that we would offer opt-in small group supervision by accredited supervisors for an hour every two months and the cost would be billed back to the congregations, whose approval for staff to attend group supervision would be initially sought. We have one supervision cycle in place already and the opportunity to create more if and when the need arises.

Our work with the Canonical Delegate Network is continuing this year with our first meeting held on March 4. EFCL is working with a group of religious to create a network of those interested in the roles of Canonical Delegate and Consultor, seeking to address and explore all the issues about these roles. The roles are high-level and hands off in the EFCL model, but like all roles, we are discovering particular aspects as the roles are taken up and go live.

Emerging Futures continues to connect with our international network of religious individuals and organizations that, like us, are coming to new understandings of what it means for a religious institute to come to completion. Linda and I spent time last week consulting with Mary Pellegrino csj who will be offering a day for EFCL on September 10 at North Sydney, talking about the challenges that face religious in this time of coming to completion.

All of us at EFCL wish you all the blessings of the Easter season as we celebrate the gifts of the Risen Christ in our midst.

Sharon Price rsm
Transition Manager
26 March 2024