



MONTHLY MEMO
September 2022

Our September *Monthly Memo* is a little longer than usual as we have a few significant pieces of news we want to share!

EFCL sent team member Linda Ferrington rsc to the **2022 LCWR Assembly**, entitled *Mystical Wisdom: Following Spirit's Beckoning*. Linda wrote:

“The key speakers, theologians Sister Constance FitzGerald, OCD, and Dr. M. Shawn Copeland, articulated the global context around mass migration of people, the increase in violence, globalization, the pandemic, and the cosmic reality that surrounds us. They recognized the connection between the loss of home, country, and the place of the cultural identity of many across the world and the transformative experience of religious experiencing loss in several ways e.g. diminishing numbers, leaving ministries, community changes, and the relationship of religious have with the global experience of many people.

One session presented **Learnings from the collaborative leadership hubs**, the three-month consultation process that LCWR has been undertaking this year, asking “What are we discovering as we discern the emerging future together?” Three major shifts have been identified:

1. A Shift in Identity and Understanding of Charism

The meaning of our lives is not determined by numbers or by institutional accomplishments, it flows from the ever-transforming personal and collective call to intimate union with God and communion with all of God’s creation. The discernment is helping us to see that relationship is central to a way of being that reflects an inner life that spills over into a presence of genuine caring, love, peace, and joy. This truly is a transformative moment for religious life.

2. A Shift Toward Re-Imagining Leadership

This is a time of great possibility for leaders to engage communities in making sense of the changes and transitions occurring in the context of the evolution of religious life. There is readiness for change, awareness of the presence of the Spirit in the letting go and letting come, stretching us toward new and more agile ways of a transformative life form in the broader evolutionary movement toward communion in the Cosmic Christ.

3. A Shift Toward Embracing the Potential for All to Live the Life Fully

A reawakened sense of the call to deepen one’s inner life is an invitational grace for elders. At every age, religious life allows one to fall in love again. The quality of presence that flows from a life of lived love is a precious gift of elderhood. In these changing times in religious life, elders have a special role in sharing the love, acceptance, wisdom, and capacity to be a blessing acquired over a lifetime.

These shifts speak to the ministry of EFCL. These shifts acknowledge that religious during their generative years identified the essence of our call with the service that we poured our lives into as an expression of the Gospel and our charism. EFCL often meets religious as they age wondering what their purpose is now. This reawakened sense of the call to deepen one's inner life is an invitational grace for older religious. At every age, religious life allows one to fall in love again. The quality of presence that flows from a life of lived love is a precious gift. In these changing times in religious life, elders have a unique role—to share the love, acceptance, wisdom, and capacity to be a blessing acquired over a lifetime. The shift toward embracing the potential for all to live life fully invites us to examine how the culture of religious life or the cultures of our institutes are facilitating or inhibiting the transformative potential of interculturality and intergenerationality.

NETWORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Networking with colleagues across the globe has been significant in developing Emerging Futures. The mutuality of relationships to inform, discuss, share, and developed shared strategies and resources are immense. **Sharon Price rsm has established a global network of relationships that facilitated the following meetings.**

Canon Lawyers

Sr. Amy Hereford's contribution to EFCL is through her ministry as a Canon Lawyer and her writings in [Canonical Leadership and Collaborative Governance](#). Amy's advice to Religious Institutes has moved to petitioning Rome for one Commissary: enabling greater freedom and flexibility in exploring this in practice could provide for a religious institute to engage lay people as their consultants without asking for their formal appointment from Rome or a Bishop. **Lynn McKenzie OSB** provided insights to the Transition Team and our contemplative institutes around the Vatican document *Cor Orans*, specific to Contemplative Orders. Lynn's mantra is to ask Rome for the minimum, a Commissary, and allow the freedom, Spirit, and flexibility of the Congregation and the Commissary to work out the best way in which this will work. This approach allows for the possibility of Lay Colleagues to function as the Council/Consultors. **Sharon Euart rsm**, canon lawyer and Executive Director of the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) spoke of the distinct roles of Commissaries, and that the relationships between most Commissaries and their Institute in the US have a greater level of engagement than the EFCL model. The strong Canonical advice in the US to focus on sending one name for approval by Rome provides an agile response from Religious Institutes to seek advice from trusted lay colleagues.

Groups

The **Wisconsin Religious Collaborative** of ten Religious Institutes exists to provide a sustainable membership organization that promotes good stewardship by sharing resources to sustain the mission and meet the needs of individual religious institutes. There was great interest in the accountabilities of EFCL in terms of the Commissary and the Religious Institute and the services delivered by EFCL and since returning to Australia, Sharon Price and I met on Zoom with the board of WRC to provide further information on how EFCL operates. I also met with four **Cincinnati Ursulines** who told the story of their community discernment journey leading to the appointment of one vowed religious as their Commissary. They generously provided significant documentation.

Influential Partners

Sr Carol Zinn ssj is the Executive Director of LCWR and has extensive knowledge of the opportunities and challenges facing religious congregations throughout the US. Carol is extremely interested in the development of EFCL and the way we are making our path by walking. Carol spoke of the meeting of English-speaking Conferences of Religious Institutes meeting in Rome in December 2022. The key in the letter which relates to the ministry of EFCL is that "existing juridical instruments are often inadequate. It is, therefore, necessary to identify new ones, along with new paths that require all-around ecclesial accompaniment."

Carol emphasized the importance of each group working collaboratively together to meet in Rome in December with a unified approach to critical issues of Charismatic formation, Governance, and economic management.

Fr Alain Ambeault *csj*: is **Executive Director for the Canadian Religious Conference** whose mission is to encourage its members to live fully their vocation in following Christ and to support them in their prophetic witness to justice and peace in a Canadian context. Alain is passionate about the mission of consecrated life in the world and the Church, he believes that the experience, insights, and model of EFCL is an essential contribution to the meeting in Rome, as we are ministering to the reality experienced by Religious Institutes.

Pat Murray *ibvm*, **Executive Secretary for The International Union of Superiors General (UISG)**, identified a receptivity within the Dicastery, a movement towards engagement and listening leading to the meetings in language delegations in Rome. There is a vital need for a united position to be arrived at on the emerging governance issues to reflect a professional, yet calm manner. There are global challenges facing provinces with a diminishing leadership pool or people tired from long terms and re-elections. There is also a movement within Women's Religious Institutes to not send their younger members to look after older provinces, contributing to the wind of change.

Other Valuable Meetings

Mary Pellegrino *csj*: as **Vice President of Plant Moran** her role is mission, charism, and formation. The Paschal Mystery is the centre of our journey as we discover how to be prophetic today, pointing to and witnessing the Reign of God.

I also met with the US Provincial and Team Member of the **Cluny Sisters** as they are one of our Service Partners, on how our EFCL is relevant to their international context.

Conclusion

It was a great privilege to engage in these conversations to make connections, gain new insights, and deepen my appreciation for the evolving story of Emerging Futures by walking the path of collaboration rooted in a deep sense of communion. As Jane Herb *ihm* said, *We need to look to the future with both our heads and our hearts. As we do so, the future of religious life needs to respond to the transformation within us as the changes are happening around us. We need to be nimble and to risk as we look to the future. We are called to trust in the mystery as God calls us from the future. There is a call for more diversity as we embrace interculturality. To engage in the divine dance into the future will take courage and a spirit of hope.*"

In other news.....

EFCL farewelled our Finance Manager, Greg Costello, who has been with EFCL since the beginning and prior to that with CLRI(NSW). We are extremely appreciative of the almost twenty years of service Greg has given to the support of entities working for religious institutes. He has been invaluable in the creation of EFCL, the set-up of the company last year and the development and implementation of the finance system. Greg generously saw EFCL through our first audit and inducted the new Finance Manager, George Mackenzie. We welcome George and look forward to his contribution to the future development of EFCL.

This month we also welcomed Rosemary Young AM to the role of Shared Services Manager. As Rosemary wrote to the staff EFCL employs for our service partner congregations:

I have spent almost a decade as Director of Operations for the Sisters of Charity. In that capacity I worked both with the Congregational Leaders and with an amazing team of up to 26 staff working in a variety of roles, from finance and archives to nursing and housekeeping, to support the Congregation. I also had the

opportunity to work with the Society of Our Lady's Nurses for the Poor as they came to a time of transition before the Emerging Futures Collaborative initiative was in place.

Previously I had spent over 18 years heading up the Uniting Church's rural and remote ministry agency, Frontier Services, providing over 100 community services across outback Australia and a pastoral ministry to 80% of the continent. I am used to working remotely and to supporting those working in challenging situations, respecting the differences of each environment but maximising the potential to add capacity in each situation.

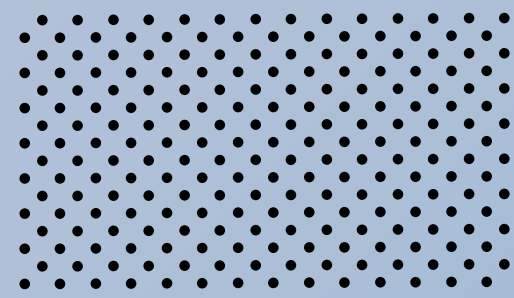
This is for me an exciting opportunity to bring some of my previous experience to a collaborative and developing organisation but to be tested and challenged as new possibilities arise. It is such a timely and visionary initiative and I am delighted, and proud, to be able to be part of it.

We welcome Rosemary to her new role and look forward to the contribution she will make to the Team at EFCL, to the staff employed for our service partners and to the continuing development of Emerging Futures.

At the end of this month EFCL had its first AGM along with a meeting of the Member Representatives and the Board, but we might hold reports from those meetings till October -given the already lengthy September *Memo!*

A reminder that in November we have a Zoom planned for anyone interested: see the invitation on the following page!

Sharon Price rsm
Transition Manager
September 30, 2022



EFCL ZOOM EVENT

JOIN US FOR AN EFCL UPDATE
WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 9



This Zoom meeting will provide an opportunity to get an in-person update about EFCL's growth and development in 2022. Elizabeth Dowling rsm, theologian, has been working with us since 2017 to assist us to articulate our mission and theological underpinnings. Liz will be part of the Zoom event to reflect on our deepening awareness of our mission and ministry. We will also be explaining our emerging key concepts that have surfaced as we work with our service partner congregations and the changing landscape at DICLSAL in Rome, which has implications for the appointment of canonical delegates and consultors.

EVERYONE WELCOME

11.00AM-12.30PM TAS/VIC/NSW

10.00AM-11.30AM QLD

10.30AM-12.00PM SA

8.00AM-9.30AM WA

To register for the Zoom event,

Email sharon.price@efcl.org.au

with November 9 in the subject line

