

The Congregation of the Passion, Holy Cross Province
Communications Vision Fulfillment Team Minutes
March 25, 2020

Attendees: Keith Zekind, Chair; Sandra Arnould; Christopher Gunn

Absent: Alan Phillip, CP; Cedric Pisegna, CP

Guest: Tim O'Brien, Vision Fulfillment Facilitator

The meeting began at 11:00 am, CDT. Keith opened the meeting with the Province's pandemic Prayer for Hope.

Keith welcomed everyone to the Communications Vision Fulfillment Team.

The Team checked in with each other as to how they were doing physically, emotionally and spiritually during this time of pandemic. Sandra shared with the Team what St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat and Conference Center was doing to reach out to its retreatants. The Retreat Center was to host a mini 2 hour virtual retreat to a group of women on the weekend and sending a hopeful themed email every week to its database.

Keith then invited those in attendance to share their thoughts on communication. Sandra, Christopher and Keith shared those verbally. Father Cedric presented his thought via a written document which Keith shared. Keith asked that those present on the call to forward their thoughts in writing so that can be put summarized into one document. Included in these minutes is what has been submitted to date. Christopher and Father Alan still need to submit their thoughts.

The Team then reflected on what content is already available to be communicated. Christopher focused the Team on three areas related to this content:

- How do we cull this content?
- How do we present this content?
- How do we promote this content?

The Team also discussed how we can reach out and work with the Vision Fulfillment Teams and how we can blend our thoughts with theirs.

At the next meeting, it was agreed we would look at the thought lists of all Team members, identify what projects we want to begin, and begin to identify what resources we have available to execute our communication projects. We will also discuss how we can begin interacting with the other Vision Fulfillment Teams to hear more about their communication needs.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, April 15, 2020, at 11:00 am, CDT.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm, CDT.

Sandra Arnould's Thoughts

Vision Fulfillment - Communication:

Touchpoints Currently in Place:

- Weekly emails to retreatants with messages of hope for this time
- Weekly YouTube videos for Lent and Easter
- Also, for how to do the Triduum from home – YouTube series

Will be doing:

- Mini “live” virtual retreats for 2 hours blocks of time – can be follow up to retreat season in future

Important to consider:

Communities & Charism

- extend spiritual and social opportunities to build relationships – primarily with retreat centers first so we can begin to expand that to a greater community
- Take baby steps, more included in Masses and times of prayer
- Social opportunities to join in all team celebrations and milestone events for the community
- Brown bag type lunch and learn for charism

Leadership

- need to continue building trusting relationships (Keith and Elizabeth (examples)) how do we expand that scope so we forge ongoing leadership support
- expand the leadership day to a zoom interaction perhaps semi-annual so there is more opportunity for building those key relationships

Collaboration

- all the retreat centers meeting weekly with how we are handling the current crisis, do this periodically when not in crisis?
- This communication and sharing of best practices very practical and helpful & Important for onboarding new key employees
- Spiritual direction ministry either in place or via zoom (young adults mentioned as a target but must be seeking). Make available on websites where in person and virtual companions are available

Laudato si

- need to get message out it's not just about helping the environment, it is integral ecology with environment being one aspect – website resources? Distance learning? Mini-retreat themes at centers?

Fr. Cedric Pisegna, CP's Thoughts

Communications Team:

Now more than ever, communication by media is needed. The virus has forced everyone to stay at home and all are looking for something to watch. Also, most churches are now broadcasting online. While we need to reach out, understand there is now much competition out there. Our team is needed now more than ever.

- 1) We have to motivate them to want to communicate (the virus is doing this, and we should continue with motivating them long after it is over):
- 2) Share TV program: about Laudato Si (with their committee)
- 3) FB+Twitter Live streaming and post videos.
- 4) Merge mailing lists
- 5) Mailings/Email blasts with videos.
- 6) Offer daily meditations via video
- 7) You Tube channel.
- 8) Use development office mailing list.
- 9) Write books and Write articles. Newspaper and magazines.

Our role, as I see it is to provide help, motivation and leadership in reaching out to Church goers and beyond that, to those who do not go to any church. Most videos are geared to those attending. We have to think beyond that and make an appealing message to those who are seekers, who have no affiliation. NONES.

Keith Zekind's Thoughts

- We need to remember that not all the Passionist Family is technologically savvy. We need to reach out to those in an 'old school' way using phone calls and the USPS.
- As a Province, we need to collectively share our various lists of names (either electronic or USPS) to get our message out to the Passionist Family. This would include Province Offices, Retreat Centers, Communities and others. We are not looking for financial gain, rather we are using these lists to get our Passionist message out to people.
- We need to have a Leadership Retreat (attendees to be decided by the Provincial and his Council) to have more interaction among the leaders at our various ministry sites. Leaders can communicate among themselves more about their ministry, their successes, their challenges and their commonalities among each other. This would be something different than the Leadership Day that occurs prior to the ALS/PRCB meeting held in the fall.
- We need more communication/interaction/information regarding the Configuration of Jesus Crucified. If this is the future of collaboration, more people need to get involved beyond the current Provincial Councils.
- We need to set up a mentoring program for Holy Cross Province. While we have the opportunity, we need to tap into the wisdom of current vowed and laity and transfer that wealth of knowledge to those who are new members of the Passionist Family in leadership roles or those of the current Passionist Family that have shifted from a passive role in the Province to a more active one.
- We do not always have to create new material to communicate to our Passionist Family. The Province Offices contains a wealth of resources that are either in the Archives or on bookshelves that can be brought to life with various communication platforms. We can communicate the history of the Province through those that are currently walking with us or have walked with us in the past.
- We need to engage our vowed Passionists more in our communications. That could be through phone calls, letters, personal visits or via technology. People are always looking for that personal connection with a Passionist.
- Obviously, we need to continue to use technology as a platform to reach out to people. The current environment is challenging us to react and vision a need for spirituality that is not contained within a building, and we are trying to answer that challenge. We need to remember to include the NONE's and SBNR's in our response. We need to reach out to where people are today, rather than the other way around.
- We need to continue to be intentional in our language that it makes sense to everyone and that we know what each other is trying to say. Not everyone has a church vocabulary.
- Not all our communications have to be spiritual or religious in nature. How can we help the Passionist Family cope with what they are facing today? We need to include communication for all generations.

Christopher Gunn's Thoughts

1. Video is crucial and has been even before COVID-19. My first thought is to focus a considerable amount of resources on YouTube and video-related mediums. YouTube is also beneficial because it is owned by Google. Google places more favorable search rankings on its own products which means we can reach more people by doing this. A strong strategy is to combine video with other mediums. Embed a video in a blog post if it is relevant to the post.
2. Interaction – try using polls or do challenges like a photo challenge. For example, you could do a 40-day photo challenge during Lent. One day could be “go and photograph something purple.” These can be posted for all participants to see, accompanied with relevant posts such as Lenten reflections.
3. Isolation and Loneliness – address with interaction. Use Google Hangouts or Zoom for a special gathering – prayer, topic like theology talk with a moderator, etc.
4. Retreats are a spiritual journey and you end up somewhere else than where you started. Try different journeys or bodies of work and break it into small chunks. For example, some people have revealed novelettes and books slowly over social media platforms such as twitter. Younger crowds tend to digest in smaller bits, so in-depth content can be broken up and distributed in this way. You can create a series in this method as well.
5. Geocaching for Passionists – have caches at retreat houses and each has a special prayer or meditation with it. Use this method to unite beauty and nature with spirituality. For example, you can have a geocache at a high place on a mountain and when someone gets to it, they get a reflection that they read in that spot. Maybe it's related to the transfiguration, or Moses on the mount. This enables the participant to experience that mountain in a whole different way – with a guided reflection specific to that location.
6. Many museums now offer virtual tours. How about a virtual experience to better understand the saints or for the retreat houses? Example:
<https://www.abbeyroad.com/news/google-presents-inside-abbey-road-1003?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>
7. Many younger people and working people like things that give you a sense of accomplishment and progression. For example, checklists, project management software where you tick off what you finished. This also happens in apps that are games – gaining levels, getting a daily reward, etc. Why not have something like this geared towards prayer or learning? Ex: Novenas.
8. Communicating with other orders – Father Alex Steinmiller calls this a symphony of charisms. I'm not sure how much the Passionists are connected to other orders, but it would be a good way to share and ask questions about challenges they have that are similar to the Passionists.
9. More Live Streaming – Live Streaming Mass and other things like theology workshops or other topics.
10. Cross Pollenate between retreats. Show very specific things from Mater Dolorosa (like the Mary Sorrows Garden) to Chicago or Detroit retreatants. Perhaps their interests will be piqued and might make a pilgrimage to other locations they would not normally go.

Fr. Alan Phillip, CP's Thoughts

I am not at a point of making any suggestions yet. I just have a lot of questions about our committee's work.

What is it that we are supposed to communicate? The Gospel? The Passion? Our Charism? Passionist history? Laudato Si? The work of the other committees? All of the above? Isn't that what everyone has been and is doing? Don't we need a focus?

With whom are we supposed to be communicating? Our Board members? Retreat Center attendees? The members of our parishes, and the folks who attend our parish missions? Youth? Shut-ins? NONES? The unchurched? The other committees? All of the above? Again, isn't this what we have been and are doing? Should we concentrate on just one or two groups?

How are we supposed to be communicating? My preferred method is Morse Code. However, I am fascinated with all the creativity going on with electronic communication. The corona virus has certainly opened up new doors for those who know what they are doing. All I can do is cheer them on.

I have a couple of questions. Most of us are still working full time. If we take on new projects, what are we supposed to stop doing that is presently occupying our time in order to do something new? This is an extremely practical issue.

I am a writer (three books, one booklet, articles, etc.). Writing is one skill. Marketing is another. And I have very little skill in marketing. Among our large list of contacts, friends and benefactors, isn't there someone out there who has skills in marketing? I could certainly use their help.

I have ten years of homilies (plus articles, jokes, etc.) on my website. How do I drive traffic to it?

Such are my thoughts at this moment.