

New Partnerships  
March 24, 2020

Meeting began at 2pm.

Attending were Fr. Pat Brennan, Fr. Alex Steinmiller, Tim O'Brien, and Elizabeth Velarde

Not attending were Fr. Jon Chalmers and Sharon Brewer

We began with the Vision Fulfillment Prayer.

We reviewed the notes Elizabeth had taken during the New Partnerships session during the Leadership Day last November. The areas we talked about then were as follows:

1. What is the definition of "partner" – a person or other entity which shares or is associated with another in some action or endeavor. Legal – a person associated with another or others as a principal or a contributor of capital in a business or a joint venture, usually sharing its risks and profits.
2. We wanted to talk "partnerships", not just relationships, implying that a partnership would be where both side "do something."
3. We need new partnerships to ensure our survival as a Province.
4. We would look to new partnerships in both lay and vowed populations.
5. HCP has well developed partnerships to date which has increased its success and helps maintain its viability.
6. Where did these partnerships originate? Most likely they were generated out of necessity. Then after being put together out of necessity, these relationships grew into partnerships. Both sides saw a need to continue working together, each recognized the others' need, each grew to see the other as a partner in mission, formed around the Charism.
7. Where would we look for new partnerships among vowed people:
  - a) Jesus Crucified Configuration
  - b) Passionist Nuns and Sisters
  - c) Other Provinces (India, St Paul of the Cross)
  - d) Other Vowed Communities

Examples of Lay Partnerships ongoing in the Province:

1. Lay Staff who become more than employees and incorporate the Charism in their lives
2. Boards of Directors in all ministry locations
3. Retreat Captains

We would look to the OME and CTU to provide formation in the Charism to future "partners".

During that session we ended by concluding that a new partnership would "bring something different in order to create something new." Tim suggested that the statement be clarified that the "something new" would not necessarily mean a new entity.

Fr. Alex thinks we should be focused on initiating ideas which would expand our Charism. Over his years of ministry he has promoted many ideas for innovation and expansion. His ideas have been affirmed but in many cases the ideas have not taken hold and grown. Partnering with Cristo Rey education program in Birmingham is an idea of new partnership which did succeed and continues today. Life Directions is another.

We recognize that any innovation in ministry with new partners will take a lot of dialogue and work in order to make any movement forward. It takes a lot of time. For example, National Association of Mental Illness wants to explore and it is likely that many other institutions would also be interested. But we need to assess what we are looking at investing into any new partnership we consider. How much is possible given our resources – how much is viable for us to consider?

Acknowledging that his years of leadership in retreat center ministry has necessitated that he be more practical and less idealistic, Fr. Pat thinks our efforts should be focused on reaching out for new partnerships that are attracted to our Charism and bring people or organizations into our ministries to bolster or expand what we are doing. He is not against something totally new, or joining other important organization in efforts that would strengthen both, but he recognizes that we most importantly need new partnerships to help us do what we currently do.

Are these two points of view mutually exclusive? Is it possible that we could come up with ideas that would address both? Fr. Pat had previously mentioned trying to bring young adults into the retreat center, or into the Detroit community residence to create a small young adult community and perhaps have them participate in some way in the retreat ministry.

Fr. Alex acknowledges his willingness at this point in his life to surrender his drive toward inspirational projects and realize perhaps the spirit is drawing his energy to be in consensus with the way others are thinking. One of his activities in Detroit is to build rapport with five young adult groups in the Detroit area. (They are in Milford and Wall Lake, St Peter and Paul, Maryknoll Missionaries, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and St Fabian) The groups have been self-formed around environmental issues.

What if we were to reach out to these young adults to form a partnership which could attract youth to the retreat center? With Frs. Pat and Alex in the same location they could work on it together. They have committed to reaching out to these groups to set up a conversation in order to assess the following:

- Could this be a pilot group for other locations in the Province.
- What would a partnership like this look like?
- What resources would be needed to do something?
- Is there an opportunity for partnership here?

Where would we find other groups; how would we invite them to a conversation; what would we be inviting them to?

There are many examples of partnerships, and programs, that have been tried in the past which have not developed fully and thrived. Examples include programs for caregivers, young adult retreats that were service oriented, parish leadership programs, et al. While it's clear that compatibility of mission and relevance to the Charism were there in these endeavors but that doesn't mean the idea will "have legs." We have to forward with ideas that offer the best use of time and resources.

Meeting adjourned at 3pm