

Presentation of the Work Method

by Patrick J. McDevitt, C.M.

The Preparatory Commission for the Visitors' gathering in Mexico has a two-fold objective: (1) To study and reflect on the questions of ongoing formation for Vincentians and (2) to assist the Visitors in acquiring the tools to assess the ongoing formation needs in their provinces and to articulate some direction for possible programs, policies, or information for the Visitors to provide the needed leadership.

To achieve the objectives and address the questions of ongoing formation, the Preparatory Commission has scheduled two days of content presentations and two days of group process. The balance of content and process is helpful for groups to achieve their desired outcome (Kraus & Hulse-Killacky, 1996; Hulse-Killacky, Killacky, & Donigian, 2001; Gladding, 2003). The content component of the gathering provides information and raises questions such as: *What do we have to do? And, what do we need to do to accomplish our goals?* (Gladding, 2003). The process component of the gathering has three parts: (1) it will help Visitors share the collective international wisdom for ongoing formation (2) it will provide a general assessment of ongoing formation (3) it will allow the Visitors to establish some general principles for ongoing formation in the Congregation.

The process component will focus on four areas of interest: (1) *The Diagnostics*: will identify and give language to the ongoing formation needs of confreres; (2) *The Resources*: will target the available resources to address the needs and consider strategies to obtain the resources that are not readily available; (3) *The Interventions*: will look at policies, procedures, curricula, and programs to effectively address the educational and formational needs of confreres; (4) *The Sustainability*: will examine structures and supports that are needed to provide quality, long-term, and sustained formation support for members of the Congregation.

The process component will engage the Visitors in approximately four methodologies: (1) case studies, (2) creating prototypes of ongoing formation programs, (3) work within *Think Tank* groups to brainstorm alternative principles, programs, and structures for ongoing formation, and (4) role-playing to practice the skills of

assessment and address the formation needs and concerns of conferees.

In conclusion, the process component of the gathering will truly be the work of the Visitors and not the work of any presenters, experts, or professionals. The research on groups by Irvin Yalom shows the most effective action-oriented groups are those who set their own course of action. In fact, Yalom's (2005) research shows 5% of group members consider a group leader, teacher, or expert as the most influential for group action. In order for the international Community to set a strong and clear direction for ongoing formation in the Congregation, it is imperative that direction come from the collective experience and learning of the Visitors.

References

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