**Live † Jesus**

**St. Louis Visitation Association of the Christian Faithful**

**Visitation Academy (St. Louis County, Missouri)**

**Twelfth Annual Report: October 31, 2015**

**Members**

Mrs. Ginny Starke, Moderator; Mrs. Mary Anne Spruell; Msgr. John Unger, Chaplain; Miss Mary Beth Concannon; Mr. Jeff Cupps; Mrs. Marilyn Fitzgerald; Mrs. Cathleen Fogarty; Mrs. Jennifer Germanese; Mrs. Julie Ivers; Mrs. Julie Ledbetter; Mrs. Chris Nassif; Mrs. Michelle Reagan; Mrs. Mary Ann Schwartz; Mrs. Kathryn Snodgrass; Mr. John Sturm; Sr. Veronica Haronik, Superior; Sr. Margaret Mary Gibson; Sr. Mary Grace McCormack and Sr. Marie Therese Ruthmann. Mrs. Julie Ledbetter stepped into the Moderator position March 2015 so that Mrs. Starke could attend to a family health crisis.

**Formation Summary**

The Visitation Association of Christian Faithful delved into formation this year by analysis and discussion of the book*, Living Love* by Bernard Bangley. This work reviews the content of *The Treatise on the Love of God* by St. Francis de Sales and provides insight into the roots of Salesian spirituality. The Sisters provided discussion questions to facilitate the conversations. In addition, our Chaplain, Monsignor Unger provided a morning retreat for both ACF members and the Visitation Associates, which focused on Evangelizing Faith in our Catholic Schools. The four formation sessions were very well attended by the ACF members and provided for insightful discussion. Last fall, ACF members renewed their commitment to the Association alongside the Sisters as they renewed their religious vows in a special prayer service.

Visitation Academy Board of Directors and the ACF shared an evening retreat on Salesian Leadership and Governance in September 2014 at which Fr. Kevin Nadolski OSFS presented: Foundations for Catholic and Salesian Education, a Leadership Perspective. The retreat included presentations on Catholic identity and our Salesian mission. Generative small group discussions to consider opportunities, challenges and priority initiatives at Visitation were productive and enlightening.

Catholic Faith Formation planned for 2015-16: A full day ACF retreat will be held November 7th, 2015 on the topic of Catholic Sponsorship presented by Sr. Amy Hereford. Our ACF formation meetings for the year will continue to enrich our understanding of Salesian spirituality. .

**Association of the Christian Faithful Business Meetings**

The Visitation Association of the Christian Faithful held 5 business meetings during this past year. Meetings had excellent attendance and all members actively participated in discussions. Committee meetings were held outside of the business meetings. Additionally, several meetings were held to continue planning for our future center of spirituality, identified in the campus master plan for Visitation Academy. The name for this center will be The Visitation Heart and Mind Center or *The VHM Center* to honor the Visitation Sisters of Holy Mary.

All ACF members signed an agreement of commitment and confidentiality at the beginning of the year. Complete meeting minutes are available for review upon request.

**Overview of Activities**

The Visitation Association of Christian Faithful continues to expand our understanding of how to serve the Visitation community. We diligently strive to meet our spiritual and fiduciary responsibilities and remain very committed to Visitation and the Church. Our primary goal is to maintain Catholic Salesian spirituality in the Visitation community. We strive to accomplish this goal with three main objectives of service:

* Catholic Sponsorship by participating in a governance structure that preserves and promotes our Catholic Salesian spirituality at Visitation;
* Spiritual Enrichment by providing a center of Salesian knowledge and practice to engage the community and give opportunity to study and live the Salesian charism more fully;
* Collaboration by supporting the school as it provides excellent education within a Catholic-Salesian environment (mission of the school).

Several practical issues also required our attention this year: serving as support and advisory for the Sisters in the development of the Visitation Real Property Foundation (Trust) to ensure security of the property into the future along with their legal representative Sr. Amy Hereford CSJ, JD, JCD; the application process for the Visitation ACF to be listed in the Official Catholic Directory, and revision of our ACF statutes to appropriately reflect the progress made over the past 12 years. We met with Monsignor Shamleffer and Fr. Aaron Nord in February 2015 for consultation in this process.

At the Board level for Visitation Academy, designated ACF Members served on the Academy’s Board of Directors and on all Board of Director committees in either member or ex-officio capacity. ACF members also served with Board of Director representatives in collaborative efforts to complete revisions of the academy’s bylaws as well as identify initial construction needs for the VHM Center. The ACF committees of Communication, Formation and Membership successfully met on a regular basis. The ACF Council (akin to an executive council) met regularly and frequently with Sr. Veronica and the Monastic Council to assist in leadership and Monastery service, as needed. An ACF member served as the Alumnae Association co-moderator with one of the Sisters during the 2014-2015 school year. Two ACF members serve alongside Sr. Mary Grace McCormack to provide leadership for the Visitation Associates.

**Accomplishments for 2014-15**

* Enrolled Visitation Academy administration, faculty and staff into the Archconfraternity of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
* Participated in a commitment renewal service with the Visitation Associates
* Participated in the faculty’s formation and discussion meetings, *Listen with Your Heart;*
* Attended alumnae and academy sponsored events such as all school Mass, Adoration, Safari Annual fundraiser, May Day and graduation;
* Traveled with the Sisters to Mendota Heights Visitation to view their Coeur de Visitation Center and visit our Minneapolis Visitation Sisters;
* Developed spiral bound informational booklet on the VHM Center’s vision, purpose, mission and objectives;
* ACF Council: Assisted the Sisters in an advisory capacity regarding the VRPF (Trust) terms and lease renewal as well as a draft outline of sponsorship expectations for the Academy in preparation for the upcoming Visitation Salesian Network evaluation in 2016, developed an electronic version of ACF informational binder for all ACF members; participated in ISACS meetings for the academy’s accreditation process providing a spiral bound collection of ACF history, purpose, vision, mission and objectives; gave ACF informational presentations to Board of Directors and Fathers’ Club; and worked with the Monastery bookkeeper to develop budget projections for the administration of the future VHM Center.
* Formation committee: Assisted in the planning and presentation of Salesian Spirituality as part of the orientation process for new faculty, staff and board members; organized an update for the video presentations for future Salesian orientation sessions; provided reflections for each ACF meeting, organized a retreat morning with Msgr. Unger; and provided spiritual gifts for the Visitation students attending Vistory and Salesian Leadership Camp last summer.
* Communication Committee: Worked on expanding a communication database, maintained the ACF website and Facebook page listed below, and facilitated the process for selecting the name Visitation Heart and Mind Center.
* Membership Committee: A slate of 15 candidates was presented for the Sisters’ approval. New members will first participate in formation and/or on ACF committees (ex-officio status) prior to participating in ACF business meetings.

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