

**Voluntas Dei USA 2014 Assembly Preparation**  
Overview of September and October 2013 Team Meetings

These notes are offered to all members as an aid to understand the reasoning and the process that teams are asked to follow for the September and/or October meetings. The Assembly will take place in August 2014. It is important that all members of the Institute have the opportunity to provide input to the assembly discussion. The way we will prepare for those discussions is through conversations at the team meetings in September/October. All teams are asked to allow a rather substantial amount of time for prayer and discussion at one or both of these meetings concerning the upcoming Assembly. These Spirit-led discussions will be the principal way of collecting suggestions, proposals and recommendations that will guide the leadership initiatives of the Council elected at the 2014 Assembly.

"Guided by the Mission and Vision of the Second Vatican Council," is the theme of the Assembly and the council's vision for holiness, the role of the laity, the world, the centrality of baptism, and inter-religious dialogue provides a context for our team discussions in preparation for the Assembly.

As announced at the 2013 Congress, there are four principal areas of concern that will be discussed at the Assembly [names of committee members included in brackets]:

- Spirituality – All the ways we develop, live, and share our spirituality, especially at the team, sector and district levels. [Jamie Bono, Chair; James Musumeci; John Szamreta]
- Vision and Mission – New ways our District may be called to grow and serve [Carol and Joel Livingston, Chairs; Bill Konicki; Paul Tolve]
- Structures – All the ‘behind the scenes’ things needed to support the future vision and mission of both the District and the Institute, including administrative structures, technology, finances, etc. [Anthony Bruno, Chair; Paul Lang; James Burns; Marty Theys, Timothy Corbley]
- Formation – All process and content related aspects of the development of each member, team, sector, and district to increase our ability and readiness to do the will of God in all things. [Timothy Sullivan, Chair; Rory Murphy; John Anderson; Eileen Theys, Alexis Ibarra]

For each of these areas, each team is asked to pray and reflect individually, then come to the team meeting ready to pray some more and discuss and agree on no more than 3 top proposals in each area of concern to submit to Assembly chair Andrew Sioletti. Andrew will sort the proposals according to the area of concern and submit all the material to a committee assigned to each area, e.g. all Structure proposals will be submitted to the Structures Committee, etc.

The committees are responsible to faithfully take the material and combine similar proposals and ideas while remaining faithful to the essence of each proposal. This task will reduce the total number of proposals to a more workable number and reflect the essence of the submitted proposals.

The committees will then forward their work to Bro. Loughlan who will review them for consistency and clarity and send his feedback and suggestions on the proposals to the committee chairs for their consideration. If there are suggestions that need to be accepted or rejected, the committee chairs will work with their committees to finalize proposals.

These final committee proposals will then be presented, discussed, and potentially further refined by the Assembly participants, and ultimately will be voted on by the delegates

In order for the committee and the assembly to vote on proposals that reflect the membership, it is essential that the discussion during the September/October team meetings focus on soliciting members’ concerns, suggestions, and proposals as this will set the direction of the Institute in the four areas of concern described above.

## PROCESS NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER TEAM MEETINGS

For the September and October Meetings:

Choose to discuss anyTWO of the four areas of concern (Formation, Mission and Vision, Spirituality, and Structures) at the September meeting and the remaining two areas at the October meeting. ALTERNATIVELY, the team may discuss all four areas at the September or October meeting. However the team proceeds, please conclude discussion by Oct 31.

The following is a summary of the process all members are asked to engage during the team meeting.

1. Pray. Please begin your prayer before the meeting, and begin the meeting with a prayer to the Spirit, a prayer for the intercession of Fr. Parent, a recitation of Psalm 23, and time for silent reflection on the areas of concern that you are considering at this meeting.
2. The team should review the 'brainstorming' ideas from the break-out groups held during the August 2013 summer congress (see below). Try to get a sense of what other people thought – just to get things going. You are not beholden to them. In fact, once you read them, put them aside and do not refer to them again. The work at your meeting is to produce your own ideas and proposals. These reports are given to you just to help start the thinking process. That's it. Once you get the idea, cast them aside and start your own discussion.
3. Generate ideas about the area of concern. This is a brainstorming exercise. During this first phase resist the temptation to discuss, there will be an opportunity to that later. At first, get the ideas out. If circumstances permit, it might be helpful to write those ideas on newsprint so all can see. If not, be sure to have a good secretary. The main goal at this stage of the meeting is to generate as many ideas as you can. Don't worry about having too many. Think outside the box. Ask yourself a question such as, "What can I propose so that \_\_\_\_\_ (fill-in the blank, e.g. structures) can be more effective or more understandable or more helpful to members of the Institute?" Continue until you sense that the ideas have dried up. Then it's time to move on.
4. Review all the comments to date. Any additions?
5. The next stage of the process is to consolidate or synthesize the ideas. Review the comments and start to find relationships between the ideas, i.e. which ideas share a similar essence of thought. The basic task is to reduce the number of proposals or ideas by combining similar thoughts which result in a more manageable number of proposals for discussion. As you proceed ask "What are these ideas really about?" By identifying a common theme among the many ideas, it will be easier to group similar ideas together. As a result, for example, if your team had generated 15 ideas, the process of consolidation might reduce the list to 4 ideas, each expressed with a common theme.
6. Each team is asked to submit no more than 3 proposals per area of concern. In order to work with only those ideas deemed most important, please cull the list for each area of concern to two or three themed proposals.
7. Third step. Review each proposal and add recommendations as how the district council might best implement the proposal. These recommendations are not voted on as part of the proposal, but are included as guidance for the council for all approved proposals.
8. Lastly, please send the completed work by email to Andrew Sioletti ([agreece@aol.com](mailto:agreece@aol.com)) ASAP after each of your team meetings in September/October. Please send all material by Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Brainstorming Ideas from 2013 Congress breakout sessions

### SPIRITUALITY

- 1) Incorporate Fr. Parent's spirituality in the team meetings
  - a) A team meeting format at the Regional meetings with people we don't know
  - b) Team lessons should incorporate Fr. Parents spirituality
  - c) Vatican II documents and Fr. Parents spirituality should be discussed.
- 2) **Prayer forms:** Rosary/Adoration: prayer styles
  - a) Meditation/reflections: different forms
- 3) **Regional meetings:** Emphasis on the spirituality at the regional meetings, regional meetings are too busy. More prayerful reflection is needed. Retreats should emphasize the spiritual (companionship, rest, refreshment). We need to be aware of the possible tension between our spiritual needs and perhaps the tendency toward structure and business-like format at our regional meetings.

### MISSION AND VISION

- 1) Full participation is an issue: i.e financial hardship, minority outreach, geographical accessibility and cultural barriers.
- 2) Presentation of ourselves IV Dei to the Church and to the World (PR person) make ourselves spirituality better known in the USA.
- 3) In the increasingly violent USA culture how does the USA district promote peacemaking?
- 4) How do we balance inclusivity, hospitality, openness to new members and formation issues vis-a-vis teams, days of recollection, assemblies and congresses?

### STRUCTURES

- 1) Relationship between business and spiritual formation/community-who what we are, what do we want to be, why do we gather (purpose and content), location of gathering, technological initiatives.
- 2) What is the relationship between transparency/responsibility, budgets, bills, how do we support new initiatives and projects, growth?
- 3) Review contribution structures and requirements at all stages among all groups.

### FORMATION

- 1) How can members be challenged to deepen their spirituality of IV Dei in their lives?
- 2) How does formation prepare us to understand and live out our vows and commitments?
- 3) Creative ways of dealing with formation for future priests? And others?
- 4) How do we make formation transformative for all **members** and teams?
- 5) To be visionary with regards to ministerial approaches
- 6) Team lessons for 2013-14: Ask Tony and/or John to come up with 8 or 9 themes from Vatican II documents that speak to the spirituality of Voluntas Dei

**PLEASE USE THIS 3-SECTION FORMAT FOR ALL PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Submit as a WORD document, if possible. One proposal per page, please! Thanks

To: agreece@aol.com  
From: atlanticOcean@gmail.com  
Subject: Proposals from the Atlantic Ocean Team

I. PROPOSAL

That the USA District form sectors to meet the needs of a growing VDei presence in distinct geographical sections of the US and is imperative to promote growth of the Institute.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

IN IMPLEMENTING THIS PROPOSAL WE RECOMMEND THAT ...

1. while there is a lot of enthusiasm for sectors, a careful study should be conducted which will include the downsides as well as the upsides.
2. if we do divide into sectors, there continue to be a national congress each year attended by all.
3. each sector have a minimum of one meeting each year in addition to the national congress.
4. representation from the leadership team be present at each sector meeting, such as the Director, or a council member.
5. we should consider the possibility of having a Sector Facilitator.

III. THIS PROPOSAL IS SUBMITTED BY:

TYPE THE NAMES OF ALL MEMBERS WHO AGREE TO THIS PROPOSAL.

(Please note that individuals who do not belong to teams can also submit proposals)

## Time Table

September and October	Teams will prayerfully discuss areas of concern and submit no more than 3 proposals for each area
On or before October 31 <sup>st</sup>	Teams will submit proposals to Andrew (agreece@aol.com)
November 1-15 <sup>th</sup>	Andrew will combine similar proposals and forward the refined proposals to the committee chairs for each area of concern.
November 15 <sup>th</sup> – February 15 <sup>th</sup>	Committees will use 'GoToMeeting' and other means to further combine, refine, and streamline the proposals. They will strive to keep essence of ideas.
March 1	Committee chairs send completed work to Bro. Loughlan (loughlanst@hotmail.com) by this date for his review and suggestions.
April 1	Bro. Loughlan returns his feedback and suggestions on the proposals to the committee chairs for their consideration. If there are suggestions that need to be accepted or rejected, the committee chairs will work with their committees to finalize proposals.
June 1	Final proposals from committees are returned to Andrew and made available to all Voluntas Dei USA members.
August 4	Assembly delegates & covenanted observers arrive after dinner.
August 5, 9 AM –Aug 7, Noon	USA District Assembly Committee proposals are used as the starting point for discussion, refinement and voting by delegates.
August 7, afternoon	All members of USA District arrive after lunch
August 7, dinner- Aug 9, Noon	USA District Congress For all members of the USA District