

ARCC RWG - LEGAL ISSUES IN RELIGIOUS ARCHIVES PRACTICE - JUNE 2, 2021

Presenter - Sr. Ginger Downey, OLVM – Summary

ginger.downey917@gmail.com

<https://www.olvm.org/>

Leadership's role and responsibility

Care of the members and care of the mission this includes the care of our deceased members and to tell their stories as well as the care of our living members.

Do you have the mission stated and the charism written in a way that others, not your congregation, but non-members can understand it?

Planning

No matter the number of sisters the percentages of older to younger sisters are basically the same and planning for many different areas are important, one being Archives which is often not on leadership's radar until it is need to check a date or retrieve a previous Chapter decision. However, the archive is so much more. It is the place where your history is stored until you decide to tell your story or have it told. If we do not preserve our history, care for the mission and members who have gone before us, then part of the larger history will be lost.

Some questions in planning

Do you know what is in our archives?

Do you have guidelines on what to keep? What tells your story?

You cannot keep everything, even a small community needs to have guidelines for not only the archivist and leadership, put for sisters as they downsize to move whether to the motherhouse or to healthcare?

Who is responsible to go through the room of a sister/brother when they die?

Do you have someone from the community who knows what to keep, what to share with the family and what can be destroyed? You can destroy some things that are not important, but you have to know the difference

How has it and is it being taken care of?

Do you have a competent archivist, knowledgeable about preservation, storage requirements and finding aids or tools?

Where is it housed and is it the best place?

What type of room do you have? Is it climate controlled?

Do you have the right tools for preservation?

How long can you sustain the current archive, with competent and knowledgeable personnel?

How long do you have for leadership?

What happens if we can no longer own or manage the archive? (Too small or not financially able to afford an archivist, no longer have leadership from your community)

If a province, do you have a congregational archive that will take it?

Congregation or cluster of provinces, a "motherhouse"

Collaboration and consultation with others is important, we do not always know what we do not know or how much we do not know.

Do you want to have someone protect your archive, repository?

Do you want to have your archive researchable? If so what parts of the collection?

Do you want your heritage and your story shared?

ASK QUESTIONS and talk to other leaders who have gone through this or are going through it.

Places and people to start a conversation

Your archivist: they know your collection

ACWR: Archivist for Congregations of Women Religious

ARCC: Archive Resource for Catholic Collections

Resource Center Religious Institutes

Leadership Conferences: Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Leadership Conference of Women Religious or Conference of Major Superior of Women Religious