***GUIDELINES FOR BENEDICTINE SPIRITUALITY***

***WORKSHOP*** *A****N****D* ***RETREAT* (BSWR)**

**North American Benedictine Vocation Formation Conference**

**2022 Edition**

**DESCRIPTION**

The Benedictine Spirituality Workshop and Retreat (BSWR), sponsored by the Federation of St. Scholastica, began in 1982. With the inauguration of the American Benedictine Formation Conference (ABFC) in 1991, BSWR came under its direction. Participation, staff and host sites are open to all federations/congregations of American Benedictines.

BSWR is a 17-day program, held in June and July, consisting of a workshop component and a four-day silent, directed retreat. It is designed for monastics in temporary commitment/first profession who are discerning the possibility of making perpetual profession. In 2014, it was determined that a minimum number of six participants are needed to have this program. In 2015, the ABFC Core Team presented a proposal to the prioresses to decrease the length of the program from 21 to 17 days. This was approved when the prioresses met in January 2016.

**GOALS of BSWR**

The experience of BSWR is planned and structured to

* Assist scholastics/sisters in first profession as they discern possible perpetual commitment to monastic life
* Review essential elements of monastic life
* Provide a forum in which participants can reflect on their own lived experience of monastic life
* Provide peer support and interaction across federation/congregation lines among women discerning perpetual monastic profession
* Experience a staff/team that models the monastic values they present

**PROGRAM of BSWR**

BSWR includes the major elements of the workshop and retreat as outlined below. The monastic rhythm of this program blends presentations, personal reflection, sharing one’s lived experience, some manual labor, and leisure. Various rituals and integration experiences enhance the program. A break day, prior to the retreat, offers options for participants to experience the local area.

The workshop component includes the following monastic topics/values:

* Benedictine charism
* Monastic profession including obedience, stability and fidelity to the monastic way of life
* Monastic prayer including contemplation and solitude
* Discernment
* Cenobitic community, relationships
* Celibacy, sexuality, and personal wholeness
* Gospel ministry: reverence, stewardship and hospitality
* Peace and justice
* Humility

The four-day directed retreat provides the atmosphere for prayerful reflection on the call and commitment to monastic life with the assistance of one-on-one direction. The silence of these days allows for a deeper awareness of God’s activity within the life of the participant.

**PROCESS of the PROGRAM**

Essential to this program is a rhythm of contemplative and reflective space interspersed with presentations, activities and interactions. The program consists of three major elements:

* Presentations and reflection on monastic values followed by integration processes (See the director's notebook)
* Presentation and reflection on the three-fold monastic commitment followed by an integration experience (See the director's notebook)
* Four-day directed retreat followed by an integration experience and an evaluation process (See the director's notebook)

The program begins with the sharing of vocation stories in the context of prayer. The staff models this sharing.

Opportunities are provided for bonding by members of the group. Outings, breaks, picnics and, if feasible, visits to other monasteries are also included. Staff members need to be sensitive and adapt the schedule to the unfolding needs of the particular group.

**LITURGY**

Liturgical prayer and rituals highlight this program. A collection of resources for rituals is handed on from director to director.

* Participants usually join the host community for Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist. During the course of the workshop, each participant provides materials and leadership for the BSWR group to pray Liturgy of the Hours in her own community's style. The staff arranges for this to happen.
* Participants may serve in liturgical roles as is feasible in each setting.

**STAFF**

The NABVFC Core Team names the director and assistant director, and identifies the site for each year’s BSWR. The director, who plans the BSWR program, may host it at her own monastery or she may direct a BSWR taking place at another monastery. The assistant director is usually the following year’s director.

In the case of BSWR being held at a monastery other than the director’s, the hosting monastery designates a site coordinator who, in regular consultation with the BSWR director and assistant director manages the details of hospitality (e.g. housing, food service, transportation, standard technology needs of presenters, etc.) and the interface between the participants and the host community.

[Annually, at the fall meeting, the NABVFC Core Team names BSWR staff for upcoming years: a director and a co-director for each year. The director is usually from the host community; the co-director usually serves as director for the following year and is from that year’s host community.]

* Each staff member has experience in formation and training in spiritual direction/directed retreats.
* Staff members work together to decide the presentations each will make and enlist, as needed, the help of presenters from the host community or from other Benedictine communities. Directors are asked to consult with the co-chair of the NABVFC Core Team before engaging presenters who need to travel a distance.
* Staff members serve as retreat directors; for larger groups, an additional director may be engaged after consultation with the co-chair of the Core Team.
* Staff members gather prior to BSWR to prepare and stay an additional day to complete evaluations and reports.

At its fall meeting, the NABVFC Core Team determines the following year’s stipends for the director, assistant director, site coordinator (if used), and any other non-staff presenters.

**FINANCES**

Annually at the fall meeting, the NABVFC Core Team sets fees for the coming year’s BSWR participants, stipends for director and co-director and other presenters. The fees are $1800 for each participant. In 2016, stipends for BSWR were increased as follows: the director, $1800; the co-director, $1200 plus travel; non-staff presenters, $100 per hour stipend, travel if applicable, and a small personal gift; $100 per participant directed for an additional retreat director. When there is a site coordinator, the determined fee is $500.

* Participant fees are intended to cover room and board, staff stipends and travel, presenters' stipends plus travel, if applicable, and other program fees.
* Costs of transportation to and from planes or buses should be added by the director to the participant fees.
* NABVFC, through the treasurer, may provide the director with funds, as needed, to cover initial programming costs
* Partial scholarships may be provided by NABVFC for participants. Requests for financial assistance should be directed to the NABVFC treasurer. The director will receive payment for the scholarship directly from the treasurer. Forms for scholarships are found on the website.
* NABVFC reimburses host communities when BSWR income does not meet expenses.

**PROCEDURES**

The electronic fact sheet forBSWR, which includes the NABVFC logo, is prepared by the director and sent to NABVFC Chair for review by December. Following the review, the director forwards it to the website coordinator for posting on the NABVFC website by January 15. The fact sheet

* Describes the BSWR program, its goals and theme and lists location, dates, deadlines and fees
* Includes a registration form and requests travel information (plane, bus, car) and participant special needs
* Lists arrangements for transportation to and from plane and bus as well as the cost of this service

The director confirms via email or in writing each participant’s registration providing helpful information

* Items to bring: clothing, liturgy material, Bible, Rule, journal, a very small memento from her community
* Map for participants who drive
* Announcement of required ten-minutes presentation of her vocation story
* Instructions for the hour of the liturgy she will provide and lead during BSWR
* Request to collect soil from a sacred place on her monastery grounds for the opening ritual along with the suggestions that, for one month prior to the opening of BSWR, this soil be placed in her prayer space and that she hold the other participants in prayer

The staff prepares a folder for each participant including

* Name tag and detailed schedule of activities
* Participant list with name, address, birthday, phone and email address
* Information about the host community and its locale
* The evaluation form to be used in the final integration experience and retained by staff for the report to NABVFC

At the beginning of BSWR, the director invites each participant to complete a photo release form, which can be found on the last page of these Guidelines or on the NABVFC website. [nabvfc.org]. At the conclusion of BSWR the director sends the signed release forms to the website coordinator. She also electronically submits a few photos along with names of persons appearing in each to the website coordinator for posting on the NABVFC website.

At the conclusion of BSWR, each participant is encouraged, when she returns home, to share with her community what the experience has meant to her. She does this in the format best suited to her situation.

After BSWR, staff members write a personal letter to each participant’s prioress summarizing the program and its participants, their appreciation for the opportunity to work with the sister and comments about her participation. If concerns arise about an individual participant during the program (not privilege information shared during retreat), the director will contact the respective prioress to discuss these concerns.

Staff members prepare and send, within a month after the close of BSWR, a written report to the chair of the NABVFC Core Team. The report includes

* Data on participants
* List of presenters and topics
* The calendar and schedule of activities
* Summary of participant evaluations
* Staff evaluations and recommendations
* Financial report (format attached)

The chair of the Core Team includes a copy in the final report with the other materials she provides for the NABVFC's liaison to the Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses before prioresses' winter meeting.

The items listed above along with the fact sheet advertising BSWR, a sample of the director's response to registrants, guides for integration experiences, and any other relevant materials are also filed in the director’s notebook, which is passed from one director to the next. With the assistance of the co-chair of the NABVFC Core Team, materials beyond the last five years are transferred to the NABVFC archives at Mount St. Scholastica Monastery in Atchison, KS where they are held permanently.

If the expenses of BSWR exceed the income, the director is encouraged to request reimbursement from NABVFC for the difference at the time she submits the final report. The NABVFC Core Team will act on the request promptly so that BSWR bills can be paid in a timely manner.

*Prepared by NABVFC Core Team*

*Revised: August 2022*



North American Benedictine Vocation Formation Conference

## NABVFC PHOTO RELEASE FORM

*Permission of release to use photograph with or without identification*

**EVENT: DATE:**

**LOCATION:**

**PURPOSE:**

I grant the ***North American Benedictine Vocation Formation Conference,******its* *member monasteries and affiliated communities*** the right to take photographs of me in connection with the event listed above. I hereby authorize the American Benedictine Formation Conference, its assigns and transferees to copyright, use in print or electronically such photographs, images and identifying information, with or without my name, for any lawful purpose including, but not limited to, publication, illustration, advertising and web content on behalf of the American Benedictine Formation Conference*,* its member monasteries and affiliated communities.

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have read and clearly understand the above. By this signed consent, I will not hold the American Benedictine Formation Conference, its member monasteries and affiliated communities liable for transgressions of used material beyond their control.

**Name: (Please print clearly.)**

**Signature:**

**Name of Monastery**

**Mailing Address**:

Revised/approved 8/25/2022

**BSWR Financial Report**

**BSWR 20\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_ Monastery**

**INCOME:**

Registration fees

NABVFC Scholarship

Airport Shuttle fees

**Total Income**

**EXPENDITURES**

Room per day

Board per day

Conference Rooms rental

Stipends:

Director (Name)

Co-Director (Name)

Mileage for co-director

Site Coordinator (Name)

Presenters/Spiritual Directors (Name each with hrs. contributed and stipend presented)

Snacks

Supplies

Excursions (entrance fees, food etc)

Photocopies, Printer cartridges

DVD’s, album photos

Mailings

Co-Director and Presenters Gifts

**MILEAGE**

Airport travel and Excursions

**Total Expenses**

**Expenses Exceeding Income**