



## Who We Are

The RELIGIOUS FORMATION CONFERENCE (RFC), which originated in the 1950's as the Sister Formation Conference, is the oldest national Roman Catholic conference serving religious congregations of women and men, primarily in the United States and in other countries. The programs and services of the RFC are directed especially toward:

- Religious women and men who are involved in the ministry of incorporation/formation of new members in their congregations.
- Individuals who are engaged in the process of incorporation/formation and preparing for vowed membership in their religious congregations.
- All members of religious congregations of women and men who are involved in ongoing formation and education.



Sisters Mary Emil, IHM, Richardine, BVM, and Annette CSJ, (right) plan with Monsignor Justin A. Driscoll.

**“We do what we do not for ourselves, but for those who come after us.”**

**- Sister Annette Walters, CSJ**

*Words to a friend on the eve of her death 1978*

## Religious Formation Conference

The RFC is organized into 15 regions throughout the United States and is governed by a 17 member national board. The Conference collaborates with the following national organizations: The National Religious Vocation Conference, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, North American Conference of Associates and Religious; and accredited graduate schools of Catholic Theology and Ministry: Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois; the Washington Theological Union, Washington, D.C. and the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Texas.



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## Religious Formation Conference

*A national Catholic organization providing education for religious women and men engaged in the ministry of initial and life-long formation for the sake of mission in the Church and the world*



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**- Sister Annette Walters, CSJ**

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## Services We Offer

The RFC offers programs and services to Roman Catholic religious congregations preparing women and men for the ministry of incorporation/formation, and to members engaged in life-long transformational learning. The Conference has approximately 500 institutional members (religious congregations of men and women), and more than 1,000 auxiliary congregational members. RFC's major programs are:

**For Mission** – The program is for women and men who currently accompany new members of their religious congregations at any stage of initial formation for consecrated life. The program has four intensive residential sessions over a two year period and is hosted by Catholic Theological institutions in Chicago, San Antonio, and a retreat center in Baltimore.



Presenters are Catholic theologians who lecture nationally and internationally and have published in their field.

**Life Commitment** – The program for religious women and men preparing for final vows commitment marked its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2009. The Conference includes daily prayer, Eucharistic liturgy, presentations, time for reflection and discussion, and leisure. Presenters are drawn from Catholic theological institutions and organizations and speak to particular aspects of the program theme from their areas of expertise.

**Summer Forum: We Are the Change** – The RFC has inaugurated the second three-year cycle of the popular program on contemporary theological understanding of the vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience in the context of religious life in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The program is open to all vowed women and men religious who desire to participate in a cross-generational learning environment and reflects RFC's commitment to providing life-long transformational learning to religious women and men for the sake of life-in-mission.

**Orientation to Formation** – Presentations during this two-day conference focus on topics relevant to directors of pre-novitiate, novitiate, and temporary professed religious, as well as individuals who are new in these roles. The program provides an excellent opportunity for congregational leaders who have



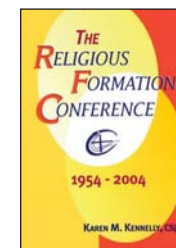
responsibility in the area of initial and life-long formation to accompany formators and support personnel in this critically important congregational ministry. The context provides a rich opportunity to share ideas and to gain encouragement from others who are involved in this key ministry. Presenters are particularly attentive to the practical formation concerns of the program participants.

**“The primary context of those seeking to live a vowed, communal life within the Catholic tradition called religious life is God. God at the center of one’s being; God beyond the horizon of one’s vision.”**

**Biennial Congress** – Every other year, RFC hosts a Congress that draws approximately 500 representatives from religious congregations of women and men in the United States and abroad. Congress sessions are organized around theological and ministerial themes that are of particular concern to those in attendance. Keynote speakers and workshop/seminar presenters are drawn from accredited theological schools, educational institutions and religious congregations. Proceedings of each congress will be available in DVD format.



**Publications** – The RFC publishes a newsletter and a bulletin electronically for RFC membership four times a year. These publications offer pertinent articles related to initial and ongoing formation and other topics of interest to congregational members. The RFC also publishes a series of resource manuals that cover a wide range of subjects relevant to initial formation. A history of the conference is now published.



**Word Becoming Flesh**

Religious Formation Conference Document

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