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Hello,

I again find myself apologizing in the delay in getting back to you. I closed my practice 9/20/19 to write full-time and work on building up CPA in the Northwest (NWCPA). However, closing out the practice after 40 years of doing psychotherapy, organizing all the stuff I brought home, and so on took me much longer than I had expected.

I'm still very interested in building up NWCPA. Our region, Region XII, is the same as the NCCB's, namely, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. It seems a vast area to cover and rather daunting. However, some good news is that I got to spend August 23-30<sup>th</sup> with Valerie Conzett, the acting executive director of CPA in Vancouver, Washington, at the National Association of Vocation Directors.

**If you would like one (or more) of the packets we gave out to diocesan vocation directors at the conference just send me your mailing address.**

While staffing our CPA booth Valerie was very helpful in sorting through where to begin with our fledgling region. She suggested, for example, that our first year we focus on:

1. Getting a few people to the CPA national conference in Phoenix, April 30-May 2, 2020. A card on the conference is also in the packet.
2. Find a way to contact members quarterly. CPA nationally uses Zoom and, of course, US mail, email, or even a personal visit.
3. Next we might consider a quarterly distance workshop. Valerie suggested something such as grief. Though later in the process we might consider addiction, marital issues, parenting, divorce, LGBTQ issues, or living as a Catholic Christian in a secular world.

When we think about new members consider it part of the new evangelization for Catholics working in the human services. That can include mental health professionals, clergy, and students. Over 40 years of doing psychotherapy and many, many hours of supervision, even Catholics who wanted to bring Catholic anthropology into their work didn't know where to begin. At the vocation directors conference 3 of the 300 priests were PhD psychologists but most had no idea where to begin using psychotherapy. So, be open to helping priests, institutional chaplains, others in pastoral ministry, and clients seeking a Catholic who is faith-filled have told me the same thing. Plus, many counseling and therapy training programs presume that faith has no bearing on their work—or also wonder where and how to begin. Consider inviting someone. We're so few we have nowhere to go but up. The harvest is still great and the laborers few (Mt. 9:37).

On a final note, I've finished the manuscript for a book, *Listening for God: Catholic Psychotherapy and Faith: Reflections on Seven Parables of Jesus*. I'm still finishing up an index and straightening out glitches readers have pointed out to me. If you'd like to be a reader, share your address with me and I can send you a copy of the manuscript. My immediate goal is to

have it in print for the April conference. My long-term goal, if the Lord gives me a couple more years, is to write about the connections between Catholic anthropology and psychotherapy throughout what the early church called the ascent to God. On that note I've started a second book on Catholic psychotherapy and religious experience. The new logo at the top is a start on further connecting the Catholic faith experience and psychotherapy.

Salespeople clients had told me over and over that to sell a person needed a good product. I'm convinced we have a hidden treasure in the church's vision of the human person. Let's learn how to share it.

I hope you have a blessed New Year,

Deacon Ray Biersbach, PhD

Copy to:

NWCPA Membership

Valerie Konzett, D.Min, L.P.C., Executive Director

Michael Gross, Minneapolis