

Sister Anne Tranelli

When I was a “younger member of our community” I never imagined that at this moment in our history we would be experiencing a decline- that is a lack of new membership. We have “moved into the marketplace”- we have become social workers, spiritual directors, administrators, parish/church ministers, artists, volunteers. The “dear neighbor” is out there and we are responding. You would think that others might just want to join and work with us, but it is not happening.

One of the things that drew me to our community was a group of women who staffed our parish school. They exuded happiness and well-being and from all appearances were supportive and cared for one another. I thought I would like to be a part of that life style. Becoming a teacher was the farthest thing from my mind for I had come from eight years of successfully working in the business world and loving it.

What has sustained me throughout some fifty plus years of “ups and downs” in active and now retired ministry was the wisdom of our older members, the dreams and questions of our younger members and my friends who love and challenge me to be all that a woman is capable of being. Personally, I will always treasure our older members with gratitude, our younger members as gift and challenge and my friends as “pure gift.”

I look at our future and at our present scarcity of new membership. What comes to mind is “the dear neighbor.” It is easy to think that the dear neighbor is the student in school or the immigrant in need of assistance, etc. but aren't we or shouldn't we also be treating one another as “dear neighbors” with love, respect, support, etc. Would this perhaps help solve the membership problem? Would it change our image and make us attractive to potential new members? Would others like to become part of us because of what they see?

I do believe (and hope) that it will be the sharing of our collective wisdom, the living our charism but much more so our loving and supportive commitment to one another-that is our “dear neighbor” that will speak an important message and encourage others to become a part of “our little design.” Lo creo y lo afirmo...