

Participants' Cover Letter

Dear Sister,

My name is Sister Maria Clara Kreis, a Sister of Divine Providence, and I am the LSSAWR Grant Project Coordinator & Lead Researcher at Duquesne University (Pittsburgh, PA). It is with great excitement and in deep gratitude that I can share with you that Duquesne University and I have received a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to promote the development and future use of the "Life Satisfaction Scale for Apostolic Women Religious (LSSAWR)."

The development of the LSSAWR was originally the focus of my dissertation and I am very grateful for the guidance and support of my dissertation committee which included Sr. Janet Mock (St. Joseph Sister from Baden, PA). In fact, the topic of my dissertation was the development of a life satisfaction instrument specifically designed for apostolic women religious. Please note that the term 'apostolic women religious', for the purposes of this study, includes all religious who minister in an apostolate (e.g. teaching, pastoral work) regardless of their designation as apostolic religious, evangelical (e.g. Franciscans) or monastic (e.g. Benedictines).

In collaboration, Dr. Cecil Reynolds and I, and with the support of our research team, are currently working on the development of a "Manual" that will guide apostolic women religious in the near future the use of the LSSAWR. Our goal is for the LSSAWR to be used to assist women religious individually and communally as they discern their commitment to religious life, and its call to be of service to the world. To this end, the grant from the Conrad N Hilton Foundation will also support the translation of the LSSAWR and its manual into the Spanish language and the extension of the LSSAWR to the youngest generations in religious life.

We are grateful and excited about your interest and participation in this online study. Please note that your online participation would be completely voluntary and confidential.

With regard to maintaining the confidentiality of each Sister who volunteers her participation, please note that only I (Primary Investigator) and my immediate research team will have access to the correspondence from the participating Sisters. This survey includes eight sections such as responding to yes/no and rating questions as well as providing short answers to open-ended questions. Prior research (as a part of the dissertation study) has indicated that it can be completed in about 40 to 50 minutes.

In addition, we are looking for some participants to complete a portion of the survey a second time. Only Sisters, who have volunteered their email address, because they want to complete the LSSAWR and the Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) twice, will be contacted so that they can retake these two instruments approximately a week to two weeks later. Those who are willing to complete this abbreviated survey (about 15 minutes) will communicate this directly to Sister Maria Clara Kreis by providing their email information at the end of the initial survey. Additionally, if an individual Sister would like information about her responses on the LSSAWR, this will be available in the survey.

For risk and benefits of a Sister's participation in this study please see the consent form included in the online study. The indirect benefits of this study for the participants are the development of a life satisfaction instrument specifically designed for apostolic women religious. Once this instrument is established, it could be used to assess the life satisfaction levels across generations of apostolic women religious.

It is hoped that the above information helps you to understand the content and context about the purpose and procedures of this study. If you interested in volunteering to participate, **please indicate your consent** and **complete** the questionnaire online at the following link:

https://survey.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9N32YJ4JARDTjjn

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions about this study (see contact information at the end of this letter). I would like to thank you in advance for your attention and support of this study. It is my hope that the results of this study can contribute to the future of religious life.

Sincerely,

Sister Maria Clara Kreis

Month , 2018

Contact Information:

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Sisters of Divine Providence

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