



Questions for International Board Nominees

GREGORY & KATHLEEN FAST

1. Names: **Gregory & Kathleen Fast**
Candidate for International Board Position Title: **DCOR/ICOR; ED-USCAN Deputy Coordinators/Coordinators; Expansion & Development – US/Canada**
How long have you been married/ordained? **28 years**
Fr. Mike Morin, Lincoln, Nebraska, has graciously agreed to serve with us on the International Board (IB). He has the heart of a true servant leader.
2. When and where did you make your original Retrouvaille weekend? **Anchorage, Alaska, 2012**
3. How do you serve Retrouvaille? (Positions held past and present)
Current positions: CALM Mediation committee Chair, Mediation team (3 year term complete 12 '21); Community Coordinators, Weekend Coordinators, Publicity, Workshopping trainees.
Past: CALM committee Secretary, Prayer Couple, CORE Coordinators, Post Coordinators, Supply, Translation support to IB (Gregory).
Present: Stage 1 & Stage 3; All Posts 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12 & The Retrouvaille Challenge.
Enrichment: We have attended Retrouvaille Discipleship, Formation, Digging Deeper, Writing Weekends, Regional gatherings, and the past 6 ICM's.
4. Members are required to have been involved in presenting the program.
When did you last present a Post or Weekend? **August 29, 2021 (via Zoom for Portland)**
Scheduled to present: Sep 10-12 '21 (Stage 1); Posts in Sep/Oct/Nov '21
5. What is your Personality Style? (Helper, Organizer, Thinker, Catalyst)
Gregory: Catalyst
Kathleen: Organizer

How do you see it contributing to your ability to serve in this position?

Gregory: I love to brainstorm and think "outside the box." I judge that I have original and innovative thoughts. I believe my catalyst style will be advantageous in tackling some of the major and minor changes Retrouvaille is considering. I look forward to contributing ideas and inspiration to the IB.

Kathleen: The IB has much that requires **insight & attention** including: restructuring, clarifying Regional responsibilities & funding, declining numbers, community partnerships, workshopping shortages, translation management, coordination of online Weekends & Posts, finances, website optimization, standing committee oversight, and more. Retrouvaille is facing significant change opportunities. The IB is called to guide the council in making beneficial organizational improvements within existing resource constraints. **My organizational skill**

set supports faith-based servant leadership, status-quo scrutiny, prioritization, strategic management, developing functional processes, and working collaboratively to de-conflict change implementation.

6. Are either or both of you bilingual? If so, what languages?

Gregory: Yes. English, French (advanced), Spanish (advanced)

Kathleen: Yes. English, Spanish (intermediate)

7. What are your technical skills? Retrouvaille website comfort level?

Gregory: I took some computer classes as a foundation, but am largely self-taught in **Microsoft Office, Facebook, Google tools, video conferencing, and MailChimp - an integrated marketing platform.** I am familiar with many computer programs that have little application outside the utility world. I also worked **extensively** with Excel, Word, and PowerPoint in my utility work and in teaching electrical classes. I am comfortable **embedding audio and video** into presentations. I **set up the accounts and files for CALM.** Kathleen and I collaborate on Retrouvaille documents; usually I draft and she edits. This is a very **complimentary process** for us. I am **knowledgeable about the Retrouvaille website** and help our board members use it.

Kathleen: I am proficient with Microsoft platforms including Microsoft 365 on which CALM developed a shared business account for email and case management. I **competently navigate** the Retrouvaille website. I am a capable and detailed technical writer, having drafted the CALM Mediation Committee Guidelines, the Mediation Agreement & Disclaimer Form, the CALM Case Report template, Case Log, and several case reports with recommendations for IB consideration. My **writing skills are a strength** in every volunteer and professional position I have served.

I hold a Master's degree in Public Administration. I retired in 2014 as Reserve Chief of Staff for the Coast Guard in Alaska after years of **strategic planning and organizational change management** on local, west coast, and nation-wide initiatives.

8. Being a member on the International Board will require a good deal of time. Some roles will require organizational skills, some will require computer time, and some will require personal connections in an effort to strengthen, support and expand the ministry. Will you be able to adjust your life/schedule when you need to find the time?

Gregory: I judge I have enough time in my life to take on new responsibilities. I enjoy making and deepening personal connections. I spend a lot of time on the computer. Kathleen and I have discussed how we will adjust our life and our schedule when we need to find the time and we judge it is manageable.

Kathleen: Since Gregory and I are fortunate enough to be retired with our youngest child in college, I judge that **I am available** to support this ministry. My ongoing commitments include weekly outreach at a women's prison; women's bible study leader, and community involvement with Retrouvaille of Alaska.

9. Please name some of your personal strengths which you believe qualifies you to serve in the role you've been nominated for. (Couple and Priest)

Gregory: *I am a dedicated worker, servant of God, a loving husband and father. I enjoy public speaking, teaching, leading, and problem-solving. I am systematic and persistent in troubleshooting. This trait helps me identify and work through system shortcomings.*

Kathleen: *Faith and reliance on God. Kindness. Empathy. Flexibility. Strong leadership, administrative, and managerial background (see #7 above; #11 and #12 below).*

10. Do you suggest the dialogue process when talking with the couples, and if so, when?

Gregory: Absolutely! *We teach dialogue in the Post sessions and in Stage I & III. We use dialogue regularly. Our first question when a couple has a problem is, "Are you dialoguing daily?"*

Kathleen: Yes! *We assign a dialogue question in each CALM mediation. This establishes an understanding of feelings on the issue(s) and initiates the Conflict Management process. Dialogue is integral to Alaska's CORE, and to Posts, of course. When available, our community distributes Retrouvaille dialogue calendars to all couples. We provide links to multiple sources for dialogue questions. During our Regional gathering in Alaska, we posted a "dialogue of the day". When Retrouvaille friends struggle, we ask how dialogue is going, just as our mentor couple does for us. Dialogue enriches marriage.*

11. What is your leadership style when it comes to disagreements at meetings?

Gregory: *I have a **collaborative, team-oriented leadership style**. This style encourages input from all personality types. I value congeniality and openness in meetings governed by civility and respect. When different personalities approach an issue they feel strongly about, conflict often arises. Though conflict is inevitable, combat is optional. As a mediator, I have seen how disagreements destroy community and relationships when positions are unyielding. The tools of Conflict Management ideally guide conflict towards a spirit of conciliation and compromise. This is the approach I will bring to the IB.*

Kathleen: *My leadership styles have evolved. I don't typically employ the same leadership style in all conflict or disagreement situations. I apply **coach-style leadership** in Posts and during writing workshops. On a board of directors, I prefer a **democratic leadership style** based on **collaboration and consensus**, while sometimes using **accommodation** for minor issues in order to focus on higher priorities. If consensus collapses, it can take **transformational** or strategic leadership to inspire compromises in decision making. I avoid bureaucratic leadership because it suppresses innovation and relationship building. Transactional leadership worked with my teens, but is not for ministry. The most **destructive leadership style**, particularly in a volunteer ministry, is **Authoritative leadership**. Other than emergency situations, its' use is divisive.*

12. As you serve on the International Board, you will inevitably encounter different cultural and religious views. How will you deal with people who are different to you?

Gregory: *I am fascinated by cultures different from my own. I have traveled extensively, lived in France and Mexico, and did missionary work in Bolivia. I enjoy languages. I strive to become conversant in new languages before we travel, because culture and language are closely linked. Fluency in French and Spanish has fostered close and lasting friendships abroad and at home, enriching our lives. Cultural differences enhance organizations when understanding and communication is sincere. I was active in an ecumenical community for over 30 years, embracing Christianity as a unifier, not a divider between Protestant and Catholic. Under our leadership, Alaska just held its first CMD weekend, and we pray there are many more to come. Not only are we looking for an Alaskan priest for Retrouvaille, but we are working to attract a pastor couple as well. If growth through discipleship is a goal of Retrouvaille, then our net must be cast widely. All married couples should expect to be welcomed in Retrouvaille. Collectively, we are the welcoming party.*

Kathleen: *Diversity is an organizational strength. I spent three (3) years as senior member of the Coast Guard's Diversity Advisory Council. Inclusion, equity, and respect are essential for resiliency and innovation. **Retrouvaille cannot attract hurting couples from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds if a perception of intolerance exists.** Loving neighbor as self remains the second greatest commandment after Loving God, necessitating my respect towards all.*

13. Why are you willing to serve in this position?

Gregory: *I judge God is calling us to serve in some capacity on the IB.*

Kathleen: *Three couples whom I esteem, each separately invited us to discern for IB positions this year. I believe this is the Holy Spirit prompting us. **I am open to serving God through Retrouvaille**, even though I feel apprehensive. We will never know how the Lord might use us if we don't try.*