**Interview with Todd Seifert**

**Our Lady of the Prairie**

3-29-22

**Question #1**: Tell us about the Prairie. What are your general impressions?

* Excited about it. Neat transition. Kind of in infancy.
* Shifting from a tiny retreat center for Catholics only.
* Not a secret any more – starting to market it.
* Seeing new impacts from our program coordinator.

**Question #2**: What are the strengths of the Prairie?

* Great group of people – like a dream team right now.
* Grounds.
* The positive energy. A special place.
* We did not pick the Prairie – it picked us.
* Everyone who comes here feels it.
* Support from the Humility Sisters
	+ Financial – Sisters are very generous
	+ Marketing and communications
	+ Volunteers
	+ If we have a real need, they take care of it.
* Great intimacy and seclusion.
* We know who we are and we don’t try to be something we are not.
	+ We do what we can with what we have.
* Support from the Advisory Committee.
	+ Development and marketing committee.

**Question #3:** What are the weaknesses of the Prairie?

* We operate in the red.
* We are out in rural Clinton County – secluded (both a blessing and a curse)
* Gravel roads with deep ditches.
* Limited as a Ten-bed facility.
* Not able to attract real big-time speakers
* Decision-making can be kind of slow at times (that’s not a complaint).

**Question #4:** How would you improve upon these weaknesses?

* Our weaknesses make us unique.
* We don’t spend money we don’t need to spend.
* More “friend-raising” (number of donors).
* Making our circle bigger.

**Question #5**: Anything they should stop doing?

* N/A

**Question #6:** What do you see as the opportunities to grow the Prairie?

* Location.
* Marketing opportunities – getting the word out about our events.
* Connecting to the people where the event would resonate.
* Lot of people who have walked away from organized religion but see themselves as spiritual but not religious. They are looking for places like this.
* Divisiveness of the world.
* Need for more stability coming out of the pandemic.
* Technology.

**Question #7:** What do you see as the greatest obstacles to growing the Prairie?

* Our circle of friends and supporters is getting smaller and older.
* Technology creates opportunity to listen to great speakers like Thich Nhat Hanh on YouTube, which has become competition for us. But they do not get the community and the sharing that you get when you are out here.

**Question #8:** What do you suggest as strategies moving forward?

* We need to get the younger people out here.
* Offering a diverse calendar of events.
* Get them out here once and they will come back.
* Advertise the unique benefits of retreats such as ours.

**Question #9:** What else would you like to share about the Prairie. Anything else?

* Everything seems to be moving well. I have great faith in the Humility Sisters to keep this going, and great confidence in the people associated with the Prairie.
* Sr. Margaret will leave some big shoes to fill.