



Report to Sisters and ACOF from the Congregational Leadership Group

Los Angeles, California
March 2-6, 2017

All 30 members of the Congregational Leadership Group gathered in the warmth of the California sun and the gracious hospitality of the sisters of the Los Angeles Province from March 2-6. Our time together was somewhat bittersweet, as we acknowledged that this would be the last time that all the members of this particular CLG group would be together: current leadership teams of Peru and St. Paul are completing their terms, and the Hawaii team looks to the completion of the amalgamation of the Hawaii Vice Province with the Los Angeles Province on July 1, 2017. Our facilitators were Mary Dacey and Connie Gilder (SSJs from Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania).

The upcoming Extraordinary Congregational Chapter served as the horizon for our discussions and decisions. Our agenda included updates on the implementation of decisions we have made for consolidation and collaboration, review of the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and consideration of material for the upcoming Chapter. As has been our practice, we began with prayer, time for personal reflection and a sharing of the heart. We also reflected and shared, from each province/vice province's perspective, on the "streams of thought" emanating from the ongoing discernment across the congregation in preparation for Chapter. Our sharing throughout our time together was deep and rich and, at times, intense.

In reviewing the progress of implementing decisions made by this CLG group:

- Danielle Bonetti shared the progress of the consolidation of the Archives. The Congregational Archives have already been moved to Carondelet where the

consolidated archives will be located. Planning for the necessary renovation of the space, the timeline and shared financing continues.

- Responding to a September 2015 request from CLG that the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) working group move toward consolidation, Diane Smith, JPIC Coordinator for the LA province, presented a proposal for the JPIC working group to become a consolidated JPIC Ministry Team. CLG affirmed their proposal.
- Jeanne Marie Gocha and Angela Faustina offered an update on behalf of those working on a Congregational Formation Process. Anticipating that our candidates will become novices in the next 6 to 18 months, they named the need to begin a search for Co-Directors for our congregational novitiate program. Even though we anticipate participating in the Federation novitiate, we will need at-home directors.
- Miriam Ukeritis updated us on the work of the Vocation Working Group as they respond to the call from CLG to consolidate their ministries across the congregation.

The leadership team from Hawaii – Brenda Lau, Patty Chang and Sara Sanders – along with Theresa Kvale of the Los Angeles team, reviewed the process by which Hawaii has moved toward amalgamation with the Los Angeles Province, to be effective July 1, 2017. Each noted the gift of ways in which the sisters have been engaged throughout this entire discernment process.

As we received these updates, we noted the diversity in how groups across the congregation are responding to the Calls to Action of the 2013 Chapter, and expressed our gratitude for their ongoing work.

Finances are ordinarily part of the March meeting, and Miriam Ukeritis led us in a review of the budgets for the Congregational Office, Mission Fund and Peru Fund, including updates on the assessments and collaborative donations.

Looking ahead to material for the Extraordinary Chapter, Mary Fran Johnson, St. Louis Province Treasurer; Brian Blaes of the St. Louis Province Finance Office; and Linda Birochik, CFO of the Albany Province worked together to share a comprehensive overview of the finances across the congregation. The information they shared will be presented at the Chapter. We affirmed our conviction that while finances can inform our decision making, they do not drive our decisions. We came to see that our financial situation does not present a major obstacle as we consider our future.

Also in preparation for the Chapter's consideration of a direction for governance across the congregation, members of CLG were invited to submit questions related to canonical concerns. Canonists Lynn Jarrell, OSU, joined us in person and Dan Ward, OSB, connected via Zoom to offer insights and responses to these questions. A video of their presentation will be available to vice/province delegations to the Extraordinary Congregational Chapter, as well as to the entire congregation.

Barbara Dreher updated the CLG on some practical details related to the Extraordinary Congregational Chapter. An initial email communication from CLG and registration information went to participants soon after their selection.

As is our custom, CLG had an opportunity to meet with the sisters and associates of the Los Angeles Province. Each province/vice province Team and the CLT offered a brief presentation on the gifts their unit brings to the congregation, as well as reflections on how the congregation continues to be a gift in our world today. The sisters were very appreciative of the opportunity to engage in conversation with us and expressed their affirmation.

On Saturday evening, we traveled to the Doheny Campus of Mount St. Mary's University where Greg Boyle, SJ, shared Eucharist with us and offered some new perspectives on how we might approach the Lenten season. After this, we feasted royally at the Doheny Mansion with our hosts and partners in ministry, Ann McElaney-Johnson, President of MSMU, and Shannon Greene, Director of the CSJ Institute at MSMU. The influence of our sisters, and the lived reality of the CSJ charism at Mount St. Mary's were proudly evident in their energizing and inspiring presentations.

We ended our meeting by reflecting on how we have worked together and identifying what we have learned in our work together over these last two years. We closed with a prayer of blessing for the Hawaii, Peru and St. Paul teams as they complete their service with the Congregational Leadership Group. Laughter, tears and much gratitude accompanied our blessing prayer for them. The sign of peace we shared as we departed was profound, and we left with trust in the Spirit present among us as we look forward to gathering at the Extraordinary Congregational Chapter in April.