

Congregational Leadership Group Summary

The Congregational Leadership Group met for its semi-annual meeting in St. Louis from February 5-9, 2015. Guided by the principle of *keeping the vision of the whole as the horizon for our reflections and the well-being of the whole as the desired outcome of our decisions*, we gathered for an extended period of reflection on the afternoon of February 5, and integrated prayer into each day's deliberations. Throughout our days, we beheld the image of bread dough among us, and reflected on bread as a symbol of who we are and how we are called to move forward. Many grains of wheat are gathered to create one bread, but only through the processes of kneading, pushing, and pulling until the dough is ready. We felt ourselves being kneaded, pushed, and pulled as we strove to be and act in new ways as one congregation, conscious of the gift of our diversity but longing to be one in mind and heart. We were assisted in our discussions by a wonderful facilitator, Sr. Mary Jordan, FMSA.

We began by reviewing each unit's *Order of the House* presentation, noting how our concerns and responsibilities so often overlap, and we experienced ourselves like bread...many grains of wheat coming together to form one loaf.

Among the areas of discussion, deliberation and decision were the following:

- We received an update on the request by the sisters of the Vice Province of Hawaii to amalgamate with the Los Angeles Province.
- We received a report from an ad hoc committee planning for an extended retreat for the Congregational Leadership Group, to be held prior to the next meeting in September. Taking time for an extended retreat prior to a meeting is a "first" for CLG.
- We heard from Sr. Jane Behlmann, St. Louis Province Archivist, and Sr. Carol Marie Wildt, SSND, Congregational Archivist, who represented the congregational archivist group in presenting a proposal to consolidate the archives. We reviewed and approved the proposal, noting that a "first step" would be to hire a consultant to make recommendations.
- We continued to reflect upon the Calls to Action of the 2013 Congregational Chapter. We reviewed reports and gave direction to three working groups from Chapter: *Oneness and Structures*, *Partnering with New Eyes*, and *Seeding Our Future*.
- We identified emerging working groups, and focused on three groups which could collaborate: Information Technology Departments, Government Committees, and the St. Joseph Worker Programs.
- We reviewed our congregational demographics and projections in order to inform future planning. As we considered our demographics, we were aware of both our reality and the opportunity such information provides us for moving into the future with trust. We also discussed what further financial information would be helpful as we continue to evaluate our ability as a Congregation to support our life and mission now and into the future.
- We also reflected upon ways to generate and distribute income as we continue to implement the Calls to Action and to further the mission.
- Sr. Helene Wilson joined us on Saturday, February 7 to present the Congregational Office Budget for fiscal 2015-16. In that presentation, she included some options for the

Chapter Implementation assessment. After discussing these options, we came to agreement on one of these recommendations and affirmed the assessment.

- We received and reviewed reports from the Ad Hoc Selections Review Committee, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Communion Within the Earth Community.

Though we worked very hard, we also took time to be together socially. Each unit team had the opportunity to gather with their CLT Liaison for dinner one evening. We gathered with the sisters and associates of the St. Louis Province for an informal and fun evening on Saturday. In addition, the Congregational Leadership Team and Staff hosted a social at the new congregational offices and the St. Louis Province Leadership Team hosted us for dinner at a local restaurant on Sunday evening.

Through all of our time together, we experienced a deepening trust among us as we prayed, as we “played”, as we realized the impact of our demographics, and as we deliberated and came to decisions for the good of the whole and for the furtherance of our mission as Sisters of St. Joseph. All is grace!