

The well is deep...the water living

**Acts of the 1997 Congregational Chapter**



September, 1997

*Dear Sisters and Associates,*

*We take great joy in sharing with you the results of our Congregational shared visioning and co-laboring -The Acts of Chapter from our Twenty-Fifth Congregational Chapter: Over this past year and during our chapter gathering, our minds and hearts were opened and God's Spirit filled us. How blessed we are!*

*The Acts of Chapter from shared visioning are different from one another because they resulted from different starting points and two distinct processes: focus groups and dialogue groups.*

*In FOCUS GROUPS, chapter participants worked on either **global issues which touch our lives and ministry or our multicultural realities and our need for inculturation**. We worked together to understand more fully these issues in order to move us to action. By design, the focus groups ended with recommended actions to all of us. The next step is to mobilize our energies and to act individually, by unit and as a congregation in each of these areas.*

*Because of the complexity of the issues involved in membership and spirituality as well as our diverse starting points, the dialogues that took place at the Chapter were the beginnings of our congregational conversations on these issues. The DIALOGUE PROCESS called each of us to respectful listening and a deep level of sharing. The process took complex topics as far as possible in a short period of time. The outcomes of the dialogues offer new questions which we must now address. Our Chapter experience challenges all of us to enter into the dialogue process, to engage the questions in a new way together:*

*As the Chapter concluded, it was clear to the participants that our commitment to one another had been deepened and that we were filled with hope and more focused on our commitment to Jesus and our mission. May we be faithful to our charism and transformed by our responses to God's call to us in our Acts of Chapter throughout*

*the next four years.*

*With every blessing for each of you and gratitude from each of us,*

*Marie Damien Adams, CSJ      Lynn M. Levo, CSJ*  
*Rose McLamey, CSJ    Judy Molosky, CSJ    Toni M. Nash, CSJ*

### **The Well is Deep... the Water Living**

**The participants at the 1997 Congregational Chapter explored this theme through prayer, reflection and dialogue. We found ourselves refreshed and challenged at the well of our God and one another. We believe that fidelity to our charism of unity and reconciliation calls us to conversion by a new commitment to each other and the Gospel. For the next four years we challenge ourselves to be transformed by our response to our Acts of Chapter.**

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*Acts from Shared Visioning:*

***Access to the Well: Global Issues and Systemic Change\****

**Passionate for the mission of Jesus, we reaffirm our choice to be in right relationship with people who are economically exploited and impoverished, especially women and children. We reaffirm our need to be in right relationship with Earth.**

**We commit ourselves to:**

- **Deepen our understanding of global systems of domination that continue cycles of hunger, violence, poverty, militarism, racism, deterioration of values, maldistribution and overuse of resources, and other threats to life.**
- **transform these systems by taking action in collaboration with other persons and groups.**
- **promote the fullness of life, including sustainable food production, a healthy environment, and access to education, health care, housing and employment.**

Acknowledging that we are often complicit in these systems, we challenge:

- ourselves as individuals: to reflect on Gospel values, to share from our hearts personal experiences of unjust actions and to act in ways that create and support right relationships.
- each unit or region: to select or continue to focus on an issue(s) of injustice.
- the Congregation: to establish a task group to:
  - to promote broader Congregational understanding of the systemic connection between issues identified in our local areas.

*\* The Chapter gave the freedom to each unit to use the translation which best expresses the concepts passed by the Chapter.*

- develop ways of educating and moving the Congregation toward transformative action.
- promote networking with other groups focused on these issues

***Drinking from the Well of the Other: \* Multicultural Realities***

**Challenged to recognize the Incarnation of Jesus Christ as the most powerful \* \* model of inculturation (Phil 2:6-7) and called to drink from the well of the other, we commit ourselves to deepen our embrace of our multicultural realities. Such an embrace is at the core of who we are as CSJ's, called to serve the dear neighbor without distinction.**

**We commit ourselves to:**

- **share the stories of the richness of our multicultural experiences and of our experiences of prejudice and racism,**
- **reflect together on what we have learned from our stories and share the learnings about what calls us to conversion,**
- **take action as a result of our reflections.**

Some actions might be:

- participation in immersion experiences that enable us to experience unfamiliar situations - beginning with another culture close to home and possibly moving to immersion experiences in cultures in another country
- prayer experiences
- theological reflection
- learning from those with whom we minister
- developing and sharing resources

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\* Castro, Luis Augusto. Beber En El Pozo Ajeno  
 \*\* for the Spanish translation the word is perfect

- structured and informal opportunities to reflect on questions, such as:
  - What kind of conversion do we need in order to face conscious and/or unconscious prejudice/racism in our communities/ministries/societies?
  - As I/we reflect on multicultural realities, where have I/we felt pain? Affirmation?
  - How do we become learners in new situations/milieus?
  - How does the United States export cultural, racial, and social norms?\*\*\*

These activities introduce us to unique revelations of the fullness of God, challenge our values, and require a posture of openness, welcome, and continual conversion. This encounter with another culture can be articulated best in images. It requires us to cross over to the other side, leave our preferences behind, and enter into the culture of the other. It is a mutual adoption, each giving to the other in her own time. It must be intentional and inviting. In the study of another language and/or culture, key components include the understanding and use of symbols and rituals, and sensitivity to learning modes and to the ways of dealing with conflict.

In Images of Congregation 2007, we recognized and celebrated our successes in this area as indicated by our agreement that the multicultural dimension is and will be present in both membership in our Congregation and in our ministry. At the same time we acknowledge that we have far to go experiencing, appreciating, connecting with other cultures. (p.9)

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\*\*\*for vice provinces and regions outside the United States, the understanding here is how to raise consciousness about the exportation by the United States of its cultural, racial and social norms.

## *Come to the Well.. Membership*

**We enter the Congregation to become united for mission in community. Community emerges from our relationships around charism, the manner in which we live out the mission of Jesus. Vows express the gift of our whole selves to God and shape how we live together in community. We ask: what gives life to or what dilutes, the mission of the Congregation? At this time in history we need to consider how our experience at living out our commitment impacts our lives as members.**

**We commission a Congregational dialogue around the questions:**

- **Is the expression of our commitment through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience life-giving for mission, or is it in need of re-wording or re-imaging?**
- **What are the implications of our commitment for the people of God?**

**We ask that the dialogue include both the sharing of our own experience of living the vows and reflections on scriptural, historical and pastoral perspectives and on insights from various contemporary theological approaches.**

## *The Well is Deep...The Water Living: Spirituality*

Spirituality is the lived experience of our beliefs and values. Is there a common CSJ spirituality? What is it that we hold in common amid our diversity? A common understanding and acceptance of each other come when we share our hearts with one another in simplicity and candor.

**We call ourselves to a deeper level of sharing where each one shares and listens to the other's stories and experiences of God in her life, of who Jesus is for her, and accepts with respect and love what the other holds sacred.**

**Mindful that our spirituality cannot be separated from our CSJ identity and the Gospel call to be one with the dear neighbor, we commit ourselves as individuals or as a local community to select ways to live out our preferential option for the poor. In so doing, we move closer to that unity with God, with ourselves, with the dear neighbor and with all creation.**

### **Background: Process Information**

The Chapter chose to become a “learning community” which provided an approach to discover the Chapter’s truth by emphasizing careful listening to each other in respect and reverence for the variety of ways in which each participant brought her truth to the Chapter. By means of inquiry as part of skillful discussion, and by means of dialogue and the sharing of the stories of our hearts, the Chapter members reached new insights on key issues affecting our life together in community and our service to the dear neighbor.

The Congregational Study Group proposed that the Chapter consider a number of topics which had surfaced as important through the Study. The entire Congregation also engaged in shared reflection on two questions: What more is being asked of us now to deepen our commitment to justice and Who are we becoming? The Agenda Committee considered all of the issues and data and identified the following three categories for the Chapter to consider:

#### 1. Issues for Reaffirmation:

These attitudes, awarenesses and activities seem to be alive and well-rooted in the Congregation:

- a deepening sense of the importance of and commitment to right relating as apart of our CSJ charism
- a deepening concern for justice and the value of diverse action on behalf of margined people
- the intention and desire to deepen and radicalize our option for the poor along with the need for continued education, systemic /strategic actions, and direct service

- a prevailing desire to risk more and to become more prophetic
- a great concern for the plight of women in the Church and around the world

While these attitudes, awarenesses and activities are vital to our life and mission, the Chapter determined that they did not need the visioning focus of the Chapter at this time. Many of these are reflected in the four Acts of Chapter.

## 2. Issues Needing Further Focus:

These issues needed further focus, education and/or action in order for them to take root in our Congregation:

- recognizing the reality of our interdependence, increasing and improving our efforts at networking, collaboration and the use of technology across unit boundaries and beyond the congregation.
- continuing our conversations, regarding leadership, including the role of leadership in the Congregation and members as leaders.
- deepening our understanding of our multicultural reality and the need for inculturation.
- Continuing to understand and respond to global issues which touch our lives and ministry such as poverty, economic systems, globalization, immigration, violence, and care of the earth.

Two of these issues, global issues and our multicultural realities, became the Acts of the Chapter: **Access to the Well and Drinking from the Well of the Other**. They were handled by means of two focus groups in the Chapter. Leadership was the topic of an open forum at the Chapter.

## 3. Issues Needing Deeper Sharing and Dialogue:

Three issues needed exploration and dialogue because of their significance

and because of the diversity we experience among us: membership, spirituality and our relationship with the institutional Church. Membership and Spirituality were explored in dialogue groups and the Acts of Chapter: **Come to the Well and The Well is Deep... The Water Living**. Our relationship with the institutional Church was the topic of a second open forum.

*Acts Related to Governance*

## **Congregational Leadership 1998-2002**

The Congregational Leadership Team selected to serve from 1998-2002 will consist of five members, serving a four year term.

The Chapter approved the following understandings:

1. That those who serve in the ministry of congregational leadership (Congregational Leadership Team) commit themselves to this as their primary ministry for the next four years. It is the members of the Congregational Leadership Team who will determine whether or not additional ministerial responsibilities/activities can be assumed by team members. The question which the 1997 Chapter recommends as a criterion for such decisions is: "How will this affect our availability for our first priority, which is leadership for mission?"
2. That the Congregational Leadership Team elected to serve from 1998-2002 function as a team sharing authority and leadership of the Congregation among the members of the team. Aware that there are many models of team which enable them to function in the ministry of leadership, the Chapter recommended that the Team consider:
  - That the team model is a structure to facilitate mission; it is not an end in itself,
  - That any model chosen free the gifts of the individual team members, empowering their service,
  - That the energies of the Congregational Leadership

Team 1998-2002 be directed outward to the larger Church and world as well as towards internal ministry within the Congregation.

3. The 1997 Chapter chooses to make no changes in the Constitution and Complementary Document relative to the team model. Use of the working understanding and language changes developed by the 1993 Chapter (see 1993 Acts of Chapter), as amended by understandings 1 and 2 above will continue until the Chapter of 2001.

The Chapter directed the Congregational Leadership Team selected in 1997 to undertake the following:

1. examine congregational leadership functions, with the aim of eliminating those that duplicate efforts at the provincial/vice-provincial level
2. prepare for the decrease in number of full-time team members by identifying those functions that can be performed by others, including part-time councilors
3. report findings related to 1 and 2 to the members of the Congregation by January 2000
4. continue to engage membership in conversations regarding notions of leadership and membership
5. work to sustain the members' enthusiasm for mission and encourage their networking efforts
6. continue to strengthen collaboration within the Congregational Leadership Group.

### **Congregational Leadership 2002 - 2008**

The Congregational Leadership Team selected at the 2001 Congregational Chapter will consist of three full-time members. In addition, at least two part-time councilors will serve in Congregational Leadership.

*Eligibility of Re-election:*

The three Congregational Leadership Team members may not be re-elected for a second consecutive term, either as councilor or team member. Councilors may be elected as team members but not as councilors for the next term. (Note: members selected for a first term in 1997 will be eligible for selection in 2001.)

*Term of Office:*

Beginning with the Leadership Team and Councilors selected at the 2001 Congregational Chapter, the term of office will be six years.

**Congregational Chapter:**

**Composition of the 2001 Congregational Chapter:**

The Congregational Chapter of 2001 will consist of the following:

1. Ex Officio:

Congregational leadership Team

1 from each province/vice province leadership selected from among those who hold positions of province/vice province superior/director/assistant(s) or team (CD, O.)

2. Elected delegates

6 from each province

2 from each vice province

1 from the mission of Chile

3. Alternates

3 from each province

1 from each vice province

1 from the mission of Chile

4. Others who hold positions of province/vice-province leadership

Those who hold positions of province/vice-province superior/director, assistant(s) or team member who have not been selected to serve as an ex officio delegate, and who attend the entire chapter will have voice throughout the chapter (CD, O.). For the Chapter of 2001, this number will not exceed 2 from each unit.

5. Additional participants with voice:

The Chapter of 1997 affirms the value of having voiced participants at the Chapter. The Chapter directs the Congregational Leadership Team to retain this form of participation for the Chapter of 2001. The number of voiced participants in 2001 will not be fewer than in 1997. Other specifics about voiced participation will be determined by the Congregational Leadership Team in consultation with the Congregational Leadership Group.

**Intervals between Chapters:**

Following the 2001 Congregational Chapter, Congregational Chapters will take place every six years.

**Congregational Committees:**

The 1997 Congregational Chapter approved the establishment of two Congregational Committees:

Review Committee for Government and Initial Personal Development  
Plans

Congregational Selections Review Committee

**Review Committee for Government and Initial Personal Development  
Plans:**

To be appointed by the Congregational Leadership Team after consultation with the Congregational Leadership Group.

This review committee will:

- A. review major changes in unit government plans and initial personal development programs/plans between congregational chapters.
  
- B. in a chapter year, share their recommendations with the congregational chapter who approves the changes. In the interim between chapters, the committee will share their recommendations with the congregational director and council who will approve the changes. The following congregational chapter will be informed by the committee of any major change approved in the interim between chapters.

Composition of Review Committee for Government and Initial Personal Development Plans:

The committee will be composed of four or five members from the various units and one from the Congregational Leadership Team.

Term:

Members of the Review Committee for Government and Initial Personal Development Plans will serve the length of time between congregational chapters.

### **Congregational Selections Review Committee:**

To be appointed in March 1998 by the Congregational Leadership Team after consultation with the Congregational Leadership Group. The Chapter delegates encourage some representation from the 1997 Chapter body.

This Review Committee will:

- a. study the evaluation of the current selection process as compiled by the 1997 committee
- b. poll the Congregation as feasible
- c. study other possible variations
- d. propose to the Congregational Leadership Group by March 1999 a process to be used for the 2001 Congregational Leader-

- ship selection.
- e. serve as the Congregational Selections Committee in preparation for the 2001 Congregational Chapter.

### **Chile Mission:**

The Chapter affirms the commitment of the sisters in Chile and the Congregational Leadership Team to continue their dialogue on the Chile mission, clarifying, articulating and communicating what it means to be a congregational mission. (Chile Action Plan, 2/97). Period written communication on the status of this dialogue and key issues under discussion will be disseminated to the entire Congregation. We anticipate that this dialogue will result in a recommendation to the Chapter of 2001 regarding our mission in Chile.

Issues to be addressed will include:

1. the governmental status of the Chile mission (eg. continuing as a mission or becoming a vice province),
2. how sisters in Chile participate in Congregation-wide processes,
3. the question of active and passive voice of the sisters in Chile in their home units,
4. appropriate representation of sisters in Chile on bodies such as Congregational Leadership Group and Congregational Chapter

Between now and 2001, plans to ensure the full participation of the sisters from Chile in Congregation-wide and other processes will be developed and implemented. In addition, ways for the sisters to exercise their active and passive voice in Chile will be studied. It is the intention of this process to explore possibilities that can be experimented with during the next four years, so that reflection on and evaluation these efforts can be brought as Information to the Chapter of 2001.

## **Additional Chapter Actions:**

The 1997 Congregational Chapter also approved:

### 1. Re-editing of the Constitution and Complementary Document

The Congregational Leadership Team will initiate the re-editing of our Constitution and Complementary Document. This process will attend to language changes as well as incorporating changes to the documents which have been made since the publication. A hoped for outcome of this activity is a re-printing of these documents.

### 2. A Public Statement in Opposition to the Death Penalty

The participants of the Chapter publicly stated their opposition to the death penalty throughout the world.

They expressed:

- a deep concern and compassion for the families and friends of those who have received the death sentence and
- a desire to work toward ending the cycle of violence which is perpetuated by the death penalty.

## **Implementation and Accountability**

**Each unit, with all of its members, is responsible to focus**

**Implementation of these Acts of Chapter**

**according to its own needs, situations, and visions.**

**Congregational Leadership is responsible**

**to facilitate intracongregational**

**communication and sharing**

**and to call for periodic communication on these Acts.**

**Congregational Leadership and units**

**are accountable for implementation of these Acts**

**to the 2001 Congregational Chapter.**



**Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet  
Acts of General Chapter 1993**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

During 1992-1993  
the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet  
participated in a process called  
the Wisdom Circle.

Through our reflections, we endeavored  
to discern God's call to us at this time in our history.

Bringing the fruit of that work  
and prayer to the 1993 General Chapter  
through theological reflection,  
we arrived at the following  
Act of Chapter.

## From Theological Reflection

***What more is being asked of us now in our commitment to justice ?***" The  
Wisdom Circle

Challenged by this question, passionate for the mission of Jesus, emboldened by the Spirit, tested by the tensions among us, guided by theological reflection, and trusting in one another, we renew our commitment to *Fidelity to Right Relationships*.

**"The gospel calls us to embrace a fidelity to right relationships with God, persons, and the earth. This embrace is not a specialized ministry but is an emphasis which permeates our life and work."** Act 1 of 1989 General Chapter

In light of this commitment, the needs of our world and our present CSJ reality challenge us:

- **to a way of being that calls us to humility, reverence, non-violence, and solidarity with our sisters and brothers who suffer economic oppression**
- to search out what being a multicultural, international congregation asks of us and to change so as to integrate that reality into our processes at every level
  - valuing interdependence in our diversity
  - respecting the cultures in the congregation and learning from each other
  - valuing and promoting what is proper to each unit
  - enduring in the struggle to be a prophetic sign of unity
- to deepen our understanding of cosmologies which teach us the interrelatedness of all creation, and to let those understandings influence our way of being community and carrying out the mission

- to acknowledge tensions in the congregation around the issues of interdependence, decision making, power, membership and to engage in ongoing reflection and dialogue

In a spirit of hope we say yes to this challenge. As a chapter, we call each individual, local group and congregational unit to choose those justice issues that are most crucial in their particular experiences. We call ourselves to engage in concrete processes of **theological reflection, social analysis, actions toward systemic change and the building of a value system that creates a more just world.**

Our congregational leadership will facilitate regular communication among the units on these issues.

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*Phrases from the Acts of the 1989 General Chapter are highlighted in bold.*

## **Acts related to Governance**

### **SELECTIONS PROCESS**

**The 1993 General Chapter approved a common process for selection of the congregational officers.**

The following process will supersede the processes currently in effect in the governmental plan of each of the units, provinces, and vice-provinces.

#### **Steps in the Process**

The steps described below provide a common, prayerful, reflective process with participation by all members.

#### ***Step 1: Local Groupings Surface Names: March through April***

Local groupings meet in small numbers to engage in a prayerful, reflective process during which they brainstorm ideas on the needs of the world, the Church, and the congregation and, in the light of that, surface names for the congregational leadership team. The needs of the world, Church and congregation and the list of names are sent to the Congregational Selections Committee. This committee prepares a list of names with unit affiliations and sends it to the units along with a list of the needs of the world, Church and congregation, generated by the members, for consideration in the endorsement process.

#### ***Step 2: Local Groupings Reflect and Individually Endorse: May through June***

The local groupings meet again in a prayerful, reflective process in order to endorse members for the congregational leadership team. After group reflection each sister writes an individual endorsement for each person she wishes to endorse. Endorsement may also allow two or more individuals to endorse a person as long as each person in the group signs the endorsement individually. The purpose of this endorsement is to give the endorsee additional

knowledge of herself from others in order to assist her in making her decision; self-endorsement is not appropriate. A sister may endorse any number of persons. These individual endorsements are sent to the Congregational Selections Committee who forwards to each endorsee the endorsements she has received.

The unit makes endorsement forms available for sisters who are unable to attend a local grouping.

***Step 3: Prayerful, Reflective Process to Identify Endorsees: September through November***

Each unit arranges a time of reflection at which the endorsees who live in that unit come together to discuss, in a common reflective process with facilitation, whether they should continue in the process. Those who decide to remain in the process agree to be interviewed on videotape and to provide a resume which will be sent to the unit chapters for their use in identifying nominees.

The videotapes and resumes are prepared and sent to the units by the beginning of January for use by the unit chapter delegates and others. Cassette recordings with the verbal data may also be made for those without access to VCRs.

***Step 4: Unit Chapter Nomination Process: January through May***

Prior to chapter selection of nominees, delegates will have viewed the videos and read the resumes of endorsees. In order that the process be common among the provinces and vice provinces, the guidelines for the prayerful, reflective process and a method of balloting will be provided for each chapter body by the Congregational Selections Committee and the congregational chapter selections facilitators. The unit chapters may nominate as many as nine of the endorsees for the congregational leadership team. In order to qualify as a nominee, a majority vote of the unit chapter is required. The unit notifies the sisters they nominated and forwards their names to the Congregational Selections Committee by May 1st.

### *Step 5: Selection of Congregational Leadership Team: July*

The nominees will gather two days prior to the congregational chapter for retreat and faith-sharing. The purpose is to get to know one another, share faith together, and get a sense of who may be able to work together.

During the general chapter, the chapter delegates will enter into prayerful reflection and discussion with the nominees in order to determine the composition of the congregational leadership team in accord with a process approved by the congregational chapter which includes a provision for nominations from the floor. After the congregational leadership team has been identified, the congregational director as well as the first councilor will be selected from this team according to the **Constitution** and **Complementary Document**.

### **Recommendations**

Based on our own experience as Congregational Government Task Group/ Congregational Leadership Selections Committee and the responses from unit chapters, we offer the following recommendations to the next Congregational Leadership Selections Committee:

- To encourage greater participation, there should be a minimum of two dates in each of the four provinces for the endorsee reflection day.
- Very strong encouragement should be given to endorsees to remain in the process through the prayerful, reflective process at the unit level.
- Although the units found the videos useful, there is need to assure uniform tape quality when they are produced and reproduced in the units.
  - Consideration should be given to the inclusion of some group interaction among the unit endorsees.

- Each endorsee's name should be included either as an introduction to her tape segment, or while she speaks.
- A copy of the biographical data for the endorsees should accompany each video.

## CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM MODEL

The 1993 General Chapter approved the congregational leadership team model.

The functions of congregational leadership remain the same as stated in the **Constitution** and **Complementary Document**. The shift is in how they will be implemented.

### Congregational Leadership Team

Each member of the five person team

- is elected for a 4 year term renewable once
- will serve no more than 8 consecutive years, not counting the years in which she completed an un-expired term
- is a full-time member of the team

The congregational leadership team model assumes that the authority and the leadership of the congregation are shared by the members of the team. The model also assumes that the members of the team possess a diversity of gifts and that the members will complement each other in their gifts and leadership tasks. The leadership team will function with a consensus based, shared leadership style in its activities and decisions.

The five-member team will engage in facilitated initial and ongoing team development.

In this team model, the responsibilities of the general superior listed in **Complementary Document #53** become responsibilities of the team. The leadership team will carry out all other general responsibilities described in the **Constitution** and **Complementary Document**. One member of the leadership team will serve as the congregational director in compliance with the **Constitution** and **Complementary Document**. Another member of the lead-

ership team will be designated as the first councilor. In those matters required by church law, the other four members of the leadership team will function as the council to give advice (*consultative vote*) or consent (*deliberative vote*) to the congregational director.

The order of election: after the chapter has elected the members of the team, the chapter elects one of the team members as the congregational director; the chapter then elects one of the team as first councilor. the role described in **Complementary Document #54**.

### **Values Related to Team Governance:**

- relational elements inherent in our **Constitution** and **Complementary Document**
- mutuality, collaboration, interdependence of religious governance
- shared authority, responsibility, accountability
- global vision for the common good of Church/community needs/mission
- heightened degree of ownership for decisions made
- facilitation of the emergence of new leadership subsidiarity

### **Qualities Needed within the Congregational Leadership Team:**

- commitment to a team approach to leadership
- commitment to initial and ongoing team development
- ability to trust the judgment of others
- ability to focus on mission and ministry
- ability to deal with conflict
- relational administrative skill
- ability to function with a global perspective flexibility
- communication skills

## Functions of the Leadership Team

### **Religious Governance**

Government in a religious congregation includes more than the organization and management of secular government. Those who serve the congregation in the ministry of authority:

- facilitate the religious community's listening to and obeying God's will as spoken through word and sacrament, through persons and events of life
- make decisions according to our Constitution regarding common life and ministry
- call members to respond in faith in the ways they live out their consecration in community and to turn beyond themselves to serve a world in need

### **Administration of the Ordinary Affairs of the Congregation**

All administrative functions as stated in the **Constitution** and **Complementary Document** and church law which include:

- assist the vice-provinces and CSJ mission, including finances and development
- employ and supervise support staff
- serve as liaison with:
  - the units
  - Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Federation and other groups
  - Church and civic community -communications and publications
- provide
  - team reports
  - congregational statistics and studies -preparation/ implementation of congregational budget

-financial reports, audit

-periodic communications --letters, periodicals, etc.

### **Coordination, Collaboration and Planning**

- preparation and follow-up on congregational chapter acts and recommendations
- direction-setting that flows out of our congregational mission and provides goals for the next planning cycle
- coordination of mission education and fundraising for the missions
- networking of the various unit offices, such as ministry, treasurers, social justice, formation, associate membership, archives

## LANGUAGE CHANGES

The 1993 General Chapter approved the following language changes in the Constitution and Complementary Document in all the appropriate places with the exception of statements of history.

Throughout the **Constitution** and **Complementary Document** where the adjective "general" is presently used, the adjective "congregational" will be used. The one exception will be in statements of history.

Other appropriate language changes in keeping with the congregational leadership team model:

- "congregational director" replaces the title "general superior".
- "first councilor" is the designation for the member on the congregational leadership team who would assume the responsibilities of the congregational director in the event of her death, resignation, deposition or incapacity (**Constitution #54**).
- "congregational leadership team" replaces "general council" including general superior, except in those matters requiring consultative or deliberative vote, or other specified responsibilities.

**The 1993 General Chapter affirmed for 1993-97 the following as the working understanding of articles *Constitution #5156* and *Complementary Document #53*. The General Chapter of 1997 will decide whether or not it wishes to vote on these changes formally.**

### ***Constitution #51-56***

- Congregational government unites the members of the congregation in keeping the life and ministry of the congregation contemporary as well as faithful to the spirit of the gospel and of our founder. Congregational government includes the congregational leadership team and the congrega-

tional chapter. Both assist the congregation to reflect on its experience and to respond to a broad vision of the church and its needs.

- 52. The congregational team is composed of five members, one of whom is the congregational director. Their sense of the congregation, church and society should assist them in advancing the life and ministry of the congregation. With faith, courage and leadership they govern the congregation and lead it in carrying out its mission. They exercise leadership in collaboration with national and international groups. Through their vision of the congregation and the church, they foster unity among the members in common life and ministry. Faithful to the inspiration of the Spirit, they encourage the congregation to move always toward greater love of God and love of others in God.
- 53. Together, the congregational leadership team is responsible for the practical interpretation of the **Constitution**; authentic interpretation rests with the Holy See. The team provides for the just stewardship of congregational resources through the congregational treasurer, administers the legal and corporate affairs of the congregation, and carries out the other duties listed in the Complementary Document.
- 54. Each member of the congregational team is elected at the congregational chapter. A team member must be a permanently professed member of the congregation for at least six years and be willing to perform this service. The term of office for any team member is four years, renewable once, so that the consecutive total time served in any capacity is no more than eight years.
- 55. The congregational director is the major religious superior of the congregation. One member of the team is elected as first councilor so that she can assume the office of congregational director in the event of the death, resignation, deposition or incapacity of the congregational director. She convenes a chapter of elections, unless a regular chapter of elections is to occur within twelve months.

- 56. When the congregational director requires the advice or consent of the council, the team members, with the exception of the director, form the congregational council. The director does not vote in those matters where the consent of the council is required. The director acts invalidly if she acts contrary to the vote of the council. The following actions require the consent of the council: *(as stated in the current **Constitution**)*.

### **Complementary Document #53**

- C. The congregational leadership team has the following responsibilities:
  - 1. to represent the congregation to appropriate civic and Church groups, for example, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the International Union of Superiors General, the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
  - 2. to communicate with the appropriate representatives of the Church regarding the life of the congregation, for example, proceedings of congregational chapters, cases of separation and transfer
  - 3. to implement in accord with the principle of subsidiarity
    - a. the Constitution
    - b. the acts of the congregational chapter
    - c. the recommendations of the congregational chapter
    - d. the directives of the Church
  - 4. to present to the congregational chapter the leadership team's recommendation for the establishment or amalgamation of provincial or vice-provincial units
  - 5. to provide for the just stewardship of temporal goods
  - 6. to administer the legal and corporate affairs of the congregation

and to perform other duties in compliance with Church and civil law and the needs of the congregation

- 7. to appoint, with the deliberative vote of the council, members to serve as the congregational secretary and the congregational treasurer
  - 8. to confirm the members selected for the offices of provincial and vice-provincial superiors, assistant provincial(s) and assistant vice-provincial(s)
  - 9. to effect unity in furthering the mission of the congregation through meeting periodically with
    - a. the provincial and vice-provincial superiors and their councils
    - b. those authorized to implement the personal development programs
    - c. secretariats or other groups as necessary
  - 10. to be present and available to the members of the congregation through communication and periodic visits
- 
- Items # 2,6,7,8 (under **Complementary Document #53**) are the responsibilities of the congregational director. Items #1,3,4,5,9,10 (under **Complementary Document #53**) are the responsibility of the congregational leadership team.
  - In fulfilling these responsibilities, the congregational leadership team meet regularly together and with other appropriate persons or groups. They may delegate responsibility for specific functions of congregational leadership to appropriate persons.

## CONGREGATIONAL STUDY :

The 1993 General Chapter approved a congregational study as described below:

- Based on input from the unit chapters, the 1993 general chapter gave its approval for discussion and study of the feasibility and desirability of congregational restructuring of the units (provinces, vice-provinces, missions, generalate). Part of the 1994-1998 leadership team's ministry will be to coordinate this study that will culminate in a recommendation/report to the 1997 Congregational Chapter.
- The study shall provide for broad-based participation from all units of the congregation, and the cost shall be underwritten by the units. The use of consulting services, as determined appropriate by the congregational leadership team and the congregational leadership group, is strongly encouraged.
- Where possible, the congregational leadership team, in collaboration with the unit leadership and appropriate persons/groups, will continue to facilitate the discussion and possible consolidation across the congregation of those services which can be effectively integrated, but without prejudice to the right of a future congregational chapter to make the decision regarding any restructuring of the units.

## COMPOSITION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHAPTER

The following change in the **Constitution** will be made, subject to the approval of the Congregation for Societies of Apostolic Life:

- These sentences replace the 3rd and 4th sentences of paragraph #59:

- "The ex officio members of the congregational chapter include the congregational director and congregational council. Additional ex officio members may be determined by the previous chapter; the number of elected delegates must exceed the number of ex officio members."

The 1993 General Chapter made the following addition to paragraph #60, R. 8. of the **Complementary Document**:

- "... and the number and category of additional ex officio members for the subsequent congregational chapter."

### **Composition of the 1997 Congregational Chapter**

The ex officio membership includes the congregational leadership team plus one designated leadership person from each unit.

The unit may choose their ex officio member from among those who hold positions of province/vice-province superior/director, assistant (s) or team member.

Others who hold these positions and attend the entire congregational chapter will have voice throughout the chapter.

Before the 1997 Congregational Chapter, the congregational leadership team will address the question of voice for others who are present for the entire chapter.

The number of elected delegates will be

- 6 from each province
- 2 from each vice-province
- 1 from Chile

The number of elected alternates will be

- 3 from each province

- 1 from each vice-province in accord with paragraphs #58-60, O. of the **Complementary Document**

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Congregational leadership is responsible to call for periodic communication and to facilitate intracongregational communication and sharing.

Congregational leadership and units are accountable for implementation of the acts and recommendations to the 1997 Congregational Chapter.