

Appendices

Acts of 2001 Chapter	3
Acts of 1997 Chapter	A3
Acts of 1993 Chapter	A23

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Acts of Congregational Chapter 2001



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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
ACTS OF CHAPTER	
Communion with the Sacred: Spirituality.....	6
Communion with Creation: Relationship with Earth	7
Communion with Each Other: Continuously Revitalizing Community.....	8
Communion with the Church: Right Relationship and Justice.....	9
Communion with the "Dear Neighbor?": Collective Power for Mission	10
ADDITIONAL CHAPTER DECISIONS	
Actions.....	11
Leadership	12
Changes in the Constitution and Complementary Document	13
Composition of the 2007 Congregational Chapter.....	14
Epilogue.....	15



INTRODUCTION

Congregational Chapter 2001 used the image of the spiral to express the call of the Congregation. This image shaped our process, content, and outcomes. In a spiral, there is a dynamic of motion and energy flowing into the center or heart of the spiral and flowing back out. In the spiraling in and out, energy is exchanged, released, modified. At the very heart of our spiral considerations, we discovered *communion*. *Communion* suggests that our deepest connections, our rootedness in God and with creation, impel us to share our very selves with the "dear neighbor." *Communion* is the origin of that energy which frees us to move outward with "our world in need" to continue in mission. *Communion* reflects that quality of relating which leads to the experience of being at one with God, ourselves, and the "dear neighbor" as expressed in the "Consensus Statement, our **Constitution and Complementary Document**, and the "Acts" of previous Chapters. The Congregational Chapter challenges us to live the reality of *communion*.

The spiral image continues to influence us. As the Chapter developed focus topics, we realized that there are many points of entry and energy in spiral movement. We saw that each focus topic is related to the others and that *communion* is the lens through which we view them.

COMMUNION WITH THE SACRED: SPIRITUALITY

Rooted in Gospel values, we desire to move always toward a deeper awareness of the Divine. We recognize that all of life and creation is interconnected and sacred. Our **Constitution** calls us to see relationship with God as living and changing. Prayer opens us to share in the mission of Jesus and to transformation which is the gift of the Spirit. We call ourselves to respect and love that which others hold sacred (Acts of Chapter 1997). We challenge ourselves to continuing conversion and attentiveness to the dynamic of spiritual development.

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 to:

- Deepen our understanding of and reflection on CSJ charism, core documents, and contemporary theologies and cosmologies
- Support and participate in opportunities for spiritual enrichment
- Create and engage in opportunities for sharing our insights and experiences, both within the congregation and beyond
- Recognize and reverence the diverse ways in which we experience the Divine
- Be open to the variety of ways in which we pray.



COMMUNION WITH CREATION: RELATIONSHIP WITH EARTH

Our belief that all of life and creation is sacred motivates our urgent concern for- Earth, our home. Its beauty and richness enliven our spirit. Survival of the life systems of Earth is threatened due to the destructive aspects of globalization and other human behaviors. We recognize that those who are economically poor are affected most immediately and intensely by this crisis. We acknowledge our own complicity. We will continue to join with others in working for systemic changes that will enable all to lie in right relationship with Earth.

We commit ourselves to:

- Study new theological and scientific understandings of the interconnectedness of all creation
- Deepen our understanding of globalization, especially its effects on people who are economically poor and on Earth itself
- Acknowledge and resist the negative impact which globalization, greed, and racism are having on the well-being and survival of diverse cultures and species
- Continue to raise our consciousness of and change our own patterns of consumption
- Identify specific issues on which to act individually and collectively and develop concrete plans to address them
- Call forth the power of creativity through our imagination and the arts to provide expressions and experiences of right relationship with all creation
- Reflect, evaluate, ritualize, and celebrate our efforts.

COMMUNION WITH EACH OTHER: CONTINUOUSLY REVITALMING COMMUNITY

*'A spirituality of communion expresses itself visibly in community. ' **

Our *communion* with each other and all creation compels us to revitalize our community Life for the sake of mission. The Gospel calls us to enter into union with Jesus in the life-death-resurrection mystery of being a human community in and for the world. When we commit to community in an intentional way, there is both joy and tension as we attempt to listen attentively to each other and to the "dear neighbor." We challenge ourselves to embrace a deepening *communion* among us.

We commit ourselves to:

- Acquire and practice the skills necessary to develop community
- Allow the multicultural and multigenerational realities of our congregation and our ministries to touch and change us
- Live community in a way that promotes our health and well-being and invites others to join us
- Witness by our lives together that community is possible.

Clara Yañez, CSJ (Argentina): *Reflexión on the 1997 Acts of Chapter.*

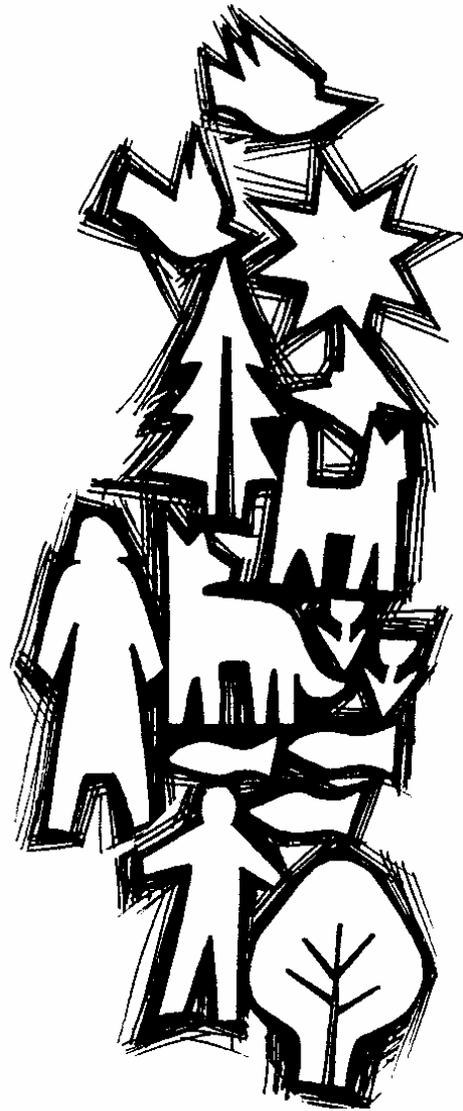


COMMUNION WITH THE CHURCH: RIGHT RELATIONSHIP AND JUSTICE

As Church, we are impelled by the urgent desire that we be true to our mission.

We commit ourselves to:

- Organize dialogue among ourselves about our understanding of and relationship with the institutional church
- Promote local, diocesan, national and international dialogue regarding right relationship and justice within the Church.



COMMUNION WITH THE NEAR NEIGHBOR": COLLECTIVE POWER FOR MISSION

*Action on behalf of justice is constitutive to living the Gospel **

As a Congregation, we claim our collective power in an age when the righting of relationships is urgent. We collaborate with other groups when possible.

We commit ourselves to:

- Act collectively when justice demands it, especially when our corporate power could significantly influence an issue
- Commission the Congregational Leadership Group to set up processes for intra-congregational and inter-congregational dialogue and responses to issues
- Direct the Congregational Leadership Group to develop procedures for Congregational Leadership to speak publicly on issues on behalf of the Congregation
- Learn and use models of systemic change.

*based on "Justice in the World." Synod of Bishops, 1971.



ADDITIONAL CHAPTER DECISIONS

ACTIONS

- 1 . The Congregation will continue to support a Task Force on Systemic Change to continue and further the work begun by the present Task Force.
2. The Congregational Leadership Group will develop guidelines for a structured conversation in each Province/Vice Province regarding the roles of vowed members and associates. These conversations will include cross-unit exchange. By January, 2005, the fruits of these conversations will be forwarded to the Congregational Leadership Group.
3. The Chapter gives the freedom to use translations in Japanese and Spanish which best express the concepts passed by the Chapter.
4. The Congregational Leadership Group will convene appropriate congregational meetings/assemblies in the years preceding the 2007 Congregational Chapter.
5. In dialogue with the C/SSJ Federation Governing Board, the Congregation will provide additional funding to the Federation for expanding its presence at the United Nations.

LEADERSHIP

- 1 . The Sisters elected to congregational leadership in 2001, whether full time or part time, serve as members of the Congregational Leadership Team with equally shared leadership and authority in order to assure collegiality, a diversity of gifts, and a variety of viewpoints in planning and decision making.
2. The three fulltime members of the Congregational Leadership Team may not be re-elected for a second consecutive term, neither as full-time nor part-time members. Part-time members may be elected as fulltime members but not as part-time members for the next term.
3. The 2001 Chapter chooses to make no changes in the **Constitution and Complementary Document** relative to the team model. Use of the working understanding and language developed by the 1993 Chapter will continue until the Congregational Chapter of 2007.

CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION AND COMPLEMENTARY DOCUMENT

- 1. The following is a change in the Constitution, #60 because Canon Law no longer requires the bishop of the local diocese to witness the election.**

The presiding officer of the Chapter declares the election of the Congregational Director and the First Councilor. The election is celebrated with a Eucharistic Liturgy. The newly elected officers assume office when the office becomes vacant by law.

- 2. The following is a change in the Complementary Document, #0 39-40; it reflects our current and lived reality.**

*The policy-making body is a representative body whose members are selected according to the method determined in each province's government plan. The chairperson is a member of province leadership. This body assists in the administration of the province by formulating policies consistent with the **Constitution and Complementary Document**. These policies give direction to the life and ministry of the province.*

COMPOSITION OF THE 2007 CONGREGATIONAL CHAPTER

The composition of the 2007 Congregational Chapter will consist of the following:

1. Ex officio members
 - the Congregational Leadership Team
 - one from each Province/Vice Province Leadership -selected from among those who hold positions of province/vice province leadership
2. Elected delegates
 - 6 from each province
 - 2 from each vice province
3. Alternates
 - 3 from each province
 - 1 from each vice province
4. Others who hold positions of Province/Vice Province Leadership
 - Those who hold positions of Province/Vice Province Leadership who have not been selected to serve as an *ex officio* delegate and who attend the entire Chapter will have *voice*. For the Chapter of 2007, the number of these participants will not exceed two from each Province/Vice Province.
5. Additional Participants with Voice
 - The Chapter of 2001 affirms the value of having voiced participants at the Chapter. Eligibility for the role of voiced participant will be determined by the Congregational Leadership Group after structured conversation in each Province/Vice Province. The number of voiced participants will be determined by each Province/Vice Province/Mission in collaboration with the Congregational Leadership Group.

EPILOGUE

To begin with a confession, sometimes this Chapter seemed to be going around in circles which made us sore. And sometimes we went around in spirals and then we soared. It began with an amazing adventure during the first session. Soon after we began in the gathering space in St. Joseph's Hall around twenty round tables, Claudia Wong (H) led the 150 of us out the door we'd just entered. In single file, we followed like sheep, albeit curious and some a bit skeptical, shy with each other yet. We started to curve around the yard, then spiraled into ever smaller circles into a crowded center where we turned and on the journey out we could see and smile at each other's faces. Shyness dissolved; diversity of personality appeared: dancing, singing, laughing. Many got frisky. As we circled out, we also began to feel stretched and pulled by both inner and outer tugs. Back inside, our facilitators said, "Look out the window"; there in the yard was the spiral our feet had imprinted in the grass. We gasped at what, alj unknown, we had created.

That initial experience began two weeks of spiraling in to where we simply "be" and then spiraling out to where we "do"! At first we likened it to the Mary-Martha action-contemplation tension. Some questioned if our expertise at doing ministry is eroding our sense of being, of community. Some wanted to put resolutions aside and consider how we are with each other. Others cried: "Earth is dying; problems abound!" We must emphasize the external community we strive to serve and make just. Though we alj wanted to revitalize and deepen our sense of community, to tell the truth, tension carne and disagreements. Despite the *communion* for which we yearned, we kept circling.

The spiral kept gently reminding us that the divine energy which creates our *communion* with each other and the Earth is not just at the center. In all creation, it moves both inward and outward. More, bringing our collective energy to the center unleashes new energy; we go back out transformed, more than we were. We learned that the spiral is one of nature's basic forms of design. We live in a spiral-shaped galaxy. In the swirling spiraling evolves a pattern of order and new He. *Communion* is a basic ingredient in all creation. It's our task to unleash it.

We named our basic desire as *communion* with God and each other and our neighbors and our earth. The spiral metaphor helped us see that spirituality and urgency to act were part of each other, not opposing tugs. The spiral shaped our Chapter proceedings and outcomes. An addendum names areas in which we couldn't stop going in circles. We entrust them to our leadership and members to turn in spirals by Chapter 2007.

