



Congregational Leadership Group September 2017 Meeting Summary

The Congregational Leadership Group met in Albany from September 14 through 18 and welcomed new leadership teams from Peru and St. Paul. Using key statements from our Congregational Chapters since 2001, we started our conversation reflecting on what we had learned from the Extraordinary Congregational Chapter in April. Key ideas emerging from our consideration included the importance of asking rather than assuming, listening deeply, and recognizing that what attracts people counts as much as the data.

We next heard preliminary reports from the [Innovation and Animation Committees](#), which were mandated by the Extraordinary Congregational Chapter. Both committees initially met electronically and are committed to the principles outlined in the context of the [Acts of the Extraordinary Congregational Chapter](#). The Innovation Committee has met once face-to-face, and the Animation Committee will meet face-to-face later this month. They will keep the congregation informed of their progress and will seek engagement with the sisters as they develop their work.

A Zoom video conference allowed the vocations personnel across the congregation to speak with us directly. They plan to meet bi-monthly and have set three major goals for the immediate future: (1) work with the congregational communication coordinator to flesh out the vocation pages on the congregational website; (2) gather resources for reflection evenings, articles, stories of sisters, photos, and other materials that those in vocation ministry can use in their work; and (3) initiate some conversations on justice topics that will interest younger women. As their work moves forward, they will also address the revision of vocational materials and how to include Peru in their collaboration. The members of the group clearly plan to continue to work together and already see positive things emerging from their combined efforts.

Those involved in formation ministry shared their progress on planning for the women who are now in various stages of formation. After a challenging discussion, we agreed to locate a congregational novitiate in Los Angeles, with several units participating in this experience. While we are moving forward with a process for the women who are in the early stages of formation, we will continue to review the formal congregational formation plan at our next CLG meeting.

We considered different aspects of the 2019 Congregational Chapter, exploring ideas about the meeting site, dates, budget, and ideas to expand the number of voting participants, while being aware of the implications this increase might have for processes at the chapter and the cost of such increases.

We had the opportunity to meet by Zoom with representatives from the [Kakehashi](#) group (formerly Seeding Our Future). Thirty-four Sisters from this cohort gathered in L.A. in July and focused on the richness of their cultural diversity and commitment to deepening relationships among the members. Their new name's meaning, "bridge," speaks to this spirit emerging in the group. They believe that it is important to continue to meet in order to share common experiences, intensify their CSJ ties, and grow in the mutual trust that will strengthen our mission in the world. Members of this group also meet regularly by Zoom for sharing of the heart which keeps the essence of the larger gatherings alive among them between meetings.

The CLG meeting also allowed time for us to hear reports on various aspects of our common life. So we discussed the seating of a Selections Committee for the congregational selection process that will take place in preparation for the 2019 Congregational Chapter. We heard from Los Angeles and Saint Louis about their progress in creating Ministerial Public Juridic Persons which will sponsor their ministries into the future. We learned about early conversations among those interested in learning more about the opportunities for agregées. We heard a report about the successful and enlivening first ACOF Congregational Convocation held this summer. And we discussed the next steps in preparing for the archives from three provinces to move to St. Louis in early 2018.

We had a lively panel discussion with sisters and associates from the Albany province revolving around questions like "Who do we need to BE to fulfill our desire to deepen relationships among us?" and dispelling myths about our provinces.

As we concluded our time together we warmly wished each other peace and said "farewell" to Mary Dacey, SSJ. This was Mary's last meeting with us. We expressed our deepest thanks to Mary who has played such an important role in our work as CLG over the last two years. Her skill, patience and humor have been a great blessing.