

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON CHAPTER DIRECTIVES OF SPRING 2020

INTRODUCTION

We so appreciate your willingness to participate Survey on Chapter Directions. You gave us such rich information which we are already incorporating into our responses to chapter. A total of 341 individuals completed the survey representing respondents from all the units, including some in Spanish and some in Japanese. The results, then, came from a good cross-section of the whole congregation.

QUESTION 1: AS YOU CONSIDER THE 2019 CHAPTER DIRECTIONS, WHICH TWO DO YOU FIND MOST URGENT?

As we expected the commitment to “respond to the crisis of Earth and global warming” was most frequently mentioned by the respondents. Those who chose this answer indicated that they see this as the most urgent social justice question of our time. They believe it underlies all other questions of justice. They noted that this issue also falls disproportionately on those who live in poverty. Respondents’ second most frequently mentioned concern was the call to “deepen awareness of our complicity and work toward dismantling interlocking systems of oppression.” Those who chose this commitment indicated that if we did this well, we would include all of our other chapter commitments.

Our other three directions, “articulate and authentically live our vows in ways that witness and speak to today’s realities,” “walk with women as we claim our voice and work toward an inclusive church and society,” and “use our collective voice to accompany others speaking their truth” were also chosen by a number of respondents. A few respondents felt that the five commitments were so inter-related that they could not choose one as more urgent than the other. They urged us to work on all of them. All of the directions were seen by the respondents as ways that we can collaborate across the congregation to use our power to make the world more just for all her inhabitants. Chart 1 shows the choices for question 1.

Respondents said, “CLT has the power and tools to gather up province efforts to work with other religious and civic political efforts to effect necessary and urgent change to save the planet,” “As the whole congregation, become an environmental activist,” and “We can collaborate with other environmental groups and participate in collective actions.”

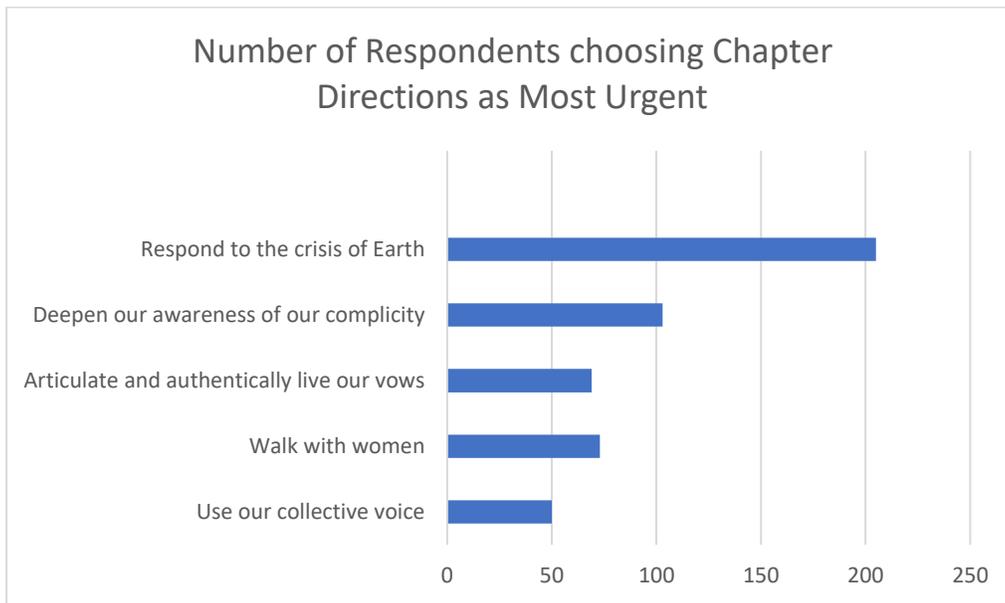


Chart 1. Most Urgent Chapter Directions

QUESTION 2: CHOOSE TWO OF THE DIRECTIONS. WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR WAYS TO IMPLEMENT EACH OF THESE ACROSS THE CONGREGATION?

We received an abundance of ideas for each of the directions. About responding to the crisis of Earth and global warming, a large number of you want to make sure that we advocate strongly at every level of government. Many of you also encouraged specific personal actions that could help to alleviate the crisis of Earth, particularly by responsible recycling and reduction of our carbon footprint. Many mentioned the importance of education about the issues, both for our own community members and the wider world. You see *Laudato Si* as a good resource for such education. Since many of those responding also said that they wish to be better informed about these issues, such education should find willing ears, hearts and minds. Several of you want us to partner with other groups in a variety of ways. You suggested that joining with others who are working on the same issues will amplify anything that we can do. A good number of you want us to share across units what we have already done and assess our efforts on behalf of Earth. Other topics mentioned by fewer respondents are sustainability, looking at our investments, praying for conversion and considering carefully what we purchase.

Reflecting on how to “deepen awareness of our complicity and work toward dismantling interlocking systems of oppression,” many of you urged us to educate ourselves and others on the issues involved in systemic oppression. Some of you offered resources that could assist us in this educational effort. (The rallies and protests in response to the murder of George Floyd certainly demonstrate that many in our culture are ready for such education.) A number of you suggested that we seek out partnerships both within and outside of the congregation and use our voice to advocate for more just systems. Other comments noted the need for assessment in

whatever we do, proposed individual actions we could take and reminded us of the power of our witness to make a difference.

When you talked about how to “articulate and authentically live our vows in ways that witness and speak to today’s realities,” you wanted us to think about various kinds of resources that could be made available to all the sisters and ACOF. Some of you urged us to make sure that we are communicating across units so that all can speak with a common voice. Respondents also reminded us of the powerful influence of witness in our world. Other topics on this issue included the need for continuing education, the desire to look at our common life and the importance of hearing diverse voices on the issues.

In response to the direction to “walk with women as we claim our voice and work toward an inclusive church and society,” you urged us to look for partners who have been working on these issues for many years. You recognized our need for continuing education on this topic and offered some resources that are available or could be made available. A group of you suggested that we act on this topic by supporting those who are “walking with women” in the media and in the church. Some of you see the value of working with the hierarchy of the Church to make a difference. Others want to make sure that we hear diverse voices, that we take action where we find opportunities, that we seek out best practices, lead by example and encourage alternate rituals.

On the final direction of using “our collective voice to accompany others in speaking their truth,” a number of you suggested actions that we could take to address this need. You again urged us to find partners who are already doing this well and to support those already working for equality. You noted that we need to listen before we can ask people to speak, that we already have some good resources and that we can highlight examples of how others have done this in the past.

Some respondents chose a more general approach to this second question. Rather than address each direction separately, they made broad recommendations that incorporated all of the directions. Not surprisingly, we found the same themes in these replies. Further education and seeking partnerships were most frequently mentioned. Action, dialogue, the need for resources and the value of witness also appeared in these responses.

We need honesty in determining where we can contribute as unique and powerful witnesses/workers/voices—and where we are committed and courageous followers.

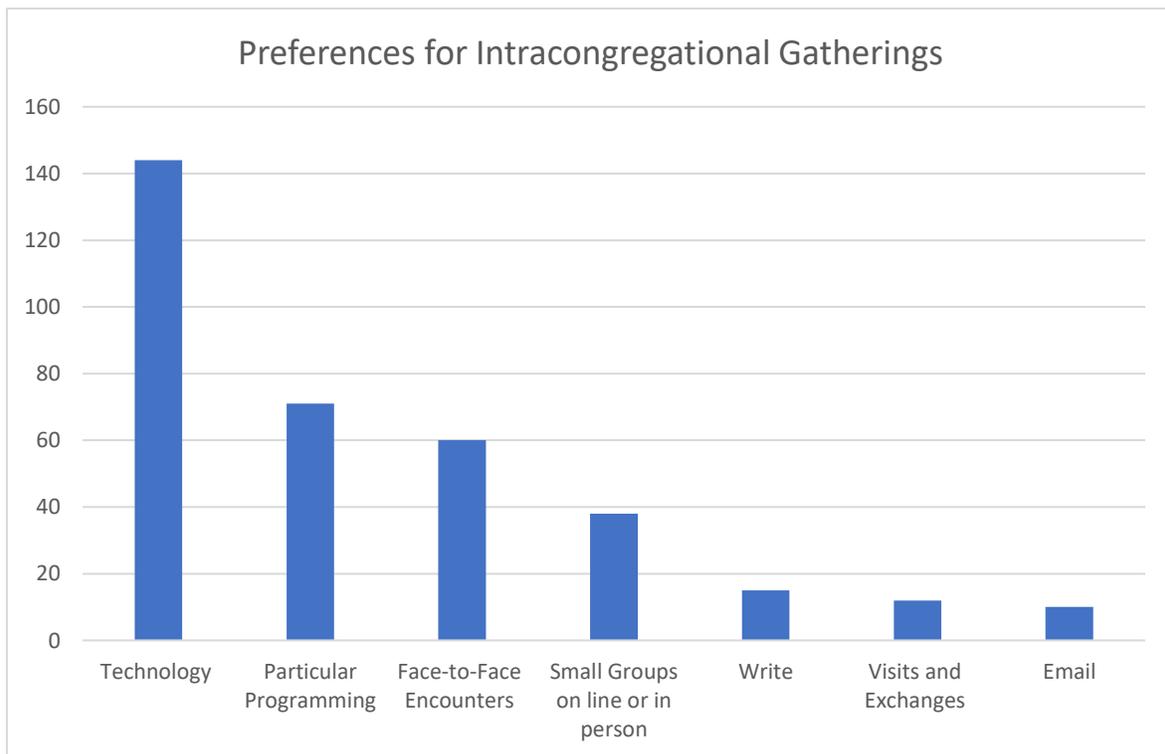
Question who is NOT included.

QUESTION 3: ONE OF THE CHAPTER DIRECTIVES STATES THAT “THE CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTRA-CONGREGATIONAL DIALOGUE AND SHARING.” DESCRIBE WHAT KINDS OF INTRA-CONGREGATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WOULD WORK BEST FOR YOU? DON’T BE LIMITED BY THE KINDS OF GATHERING WE HAVE ALREADY EXPERIENCED.

You had many ideas about this. The following summarizes your responses

- Most people named technology as most helpful
- Many suggested particular programming
- You generally find face-to-face encounters best when they are possible and feasible
- You see the value of small groups whether they occur on line or in person
- Some of you prefer to hear from others in writing. It gives time to absorb what is being shared.
- Others want to experience visits and exchanges with other parts of the congregation.
- Some of you like to receive e-mails.
- A variety of other ideas were suggested by a few people each.

A committee is already working on creating intra-congregational experiences. They have all of your comments for their use in their planning.



QUESTION 4: HOW DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM CAN BEST ASSIST ALL OF US TO REALIZE OUR DREAMS FOR THE CONGREGATION?

You had offered a number of suggestions about what CLT can do to assist the congregation. Table 1 shows your responses.

Item	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Collaborate	52 ¹	16.5%
Communicate	35	11%
Challenge	31	10%
Listen	30	9.5%
Encourage	25	8%
Visit and build relationships	22	7%
Broaden our vision	15	5%
Attend to structures	14	4.5%
Participate in prayer and contemplation	12	4%
Provide resources	11	Less than 4%
Be our voice	7	Less than 4%
Insure diversity	6	Less than 4%
Identify our common dreams	5	Less than 4%
Focus on provinces	5	Less than 4%
Total Responses	316	100%

Table 1: How the CLT can help realize our dreams for the congregation.

¹ Please note that this is the number of responses, not number of respondents. Some respondents account for several responses. Not everyone answered this question.

CONCLUSION

As you can see, these rich data give us ample ideas and ways to implement our chapter directives. We will continue using this information as we respond to our chapter call to go deeper, to journey farther, and to respond boldly and creatively to the needs of our dear neighbor.

If you would like to see all of the responses to the survey, you can find them, collated for your convenience on the Members Only section of the csjcarondelet.org website.