



## Responses to Questions Asked in Relation to Governance

March 2021

### SPONSORED WORKS

Some people asked for ideas about sponsored ministries. A number of different strategies can address the needs of sponsored institutions. These ideas could help simplify v/province activities no matter how a v/province decides to structure itself. Provinces have a variety of types of sponsorship agreements with their sponsored institutions that could be modified or transferred to another body if the sponsor and the sponsored institution agree. For example, St. Louis has formed a Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP) approved by the Vatican to take responsibility for their five educational ministries. As they begin the process of transitioning sponsorship responsibilities to the MPJP, sisters will be directly involved. Over the coming years, as more people complete the formation process, more lay leaders may share the leadership of the MPJP.

St. Paul has a covenant relationship with St. Catherine University. Covenants, while not legally binding, build on sponsorship agreements with sponsored institutions. For example, the St. Paul Province entrusted the responsibility and authority it holds in the name of the Church to a Sponsorship Council, consisting of seven members of the Board of Trustees (four sister trustees and three lay trustees). The Province Leadership Team liaison to the University, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and the University President serve as *ex officio* members. The Sponsorship Council holds responsibility for university board decisions related to any matter that substantially affects or alters the mission or Catholic identity of the corporation, including the selection of trustees, the selection or termination of the president, the sale or mortgaging of property, major construction contracts or debts, closing or merging the university and approving amendments to the university articles or bylaws.

If the sponsored work is totally controlled by the province, the province can seat “mirror” boards for the sponsored works. This means that the same group of people can oversee the workings of several corporations/organizations. For example, the Board of Trustees of the Albany Province also serves as the board of trustees for two corporations that formerly offered services to orphans. The same group oversees a state-chartered educational corporation that has, at various times, provided programs in speech therapy, preschool for special needs children, tutoring, summer enrichment services and music education.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Some have asked about possible “structures” for v/provinces going forward. Possible ways include:

1. Remain as a Province
2. Transition Canonical Governance to the Congregational Leadership Team
  - a. By an Individual Path
  - b. By a Shared Path

Let us expand on each of these.

### 1. Remain as a Province

A province could choose to remain as it is and relate to the congregational leadership as it presently does. It can continue to review its governance structures to find ways to simplify.

### 2. Transition Canonical Governance to the Congregational Leadership Team

In the Implementation of the Recommendation for Structures in the 2019 Chapter, we find this paragraph, “Any province/vice province whose intention is to enter into a new relationship with the Congregational Leadership Team will create a *path for this transition* in dialogue with the Congregational Leadership Team and the Congregational Leadership Group.” Here are two examples of possible paths.

#### a. Individual Path

A province could choose a path that essentially keeps the structures of the province intact, while moving the canonical governance to the congregational team. That means that the sisters in that geographic area would continue to function much as they do now but without a local provincial canonical governance structure. The province would work together with the Congregational Leadership Team to consider what kind of local leadership would be needed to oversee the activities of the province.

A coordinator (which could be one person or several people), who has specified authority and works in collaboration with the Congregational Leadership Team, would facilitate life and mission for the Sisters’ pastoral care and support, both personally and communally. Depending on the path for transition established by the province in dialogue with the CLT, the coordinator(s) could be elected/discerned by the sisters or appointed by the CLT. Initially, this may be a sister who could be assisted by lay persons as needed/desired, but, if the sisters want it, the transition path might start with only lay persons. This (These) person(s) would also assure that the sisters are involved in appropriate decision making related to their unit and the congregation. Local customs and meetings could continue. For example, Assembly meetings and Jubilee celebrations could stay

the same. Committees and boards could continue to function. The civil corporation could continue. The board for that civil corporation would be seated by a process that honored appropriate subsidiarity. The finances and investments of the unit could remain in place. Development and advancement activities would be decided between the CLT and the local sisters. As needed, future planning for sponsored ministries would be made in dialog with the local sisters and the leaders of those sponsored works. Typical management and administrative responsibilities could be delegated to an individual or a board to address such things as food service, nursing care, local community needs, finances, maintenance, cars, and other tasks. All decisions would be made with subsidiarity in mind and could be implemented on an experimental basis and later changed as experience indicated.

**b. Shared Path**

Several provinces could choose a common path. All of the canonical and other agreed upon functions of the provinces are transferred to the Congregational Leadership Team. Those who were in these former provinces could be a region, a district, a section or some other structure. Ways would be developed to foster relationships among the sisters in the combining provinces. As the pattern of those relationships emerged, structures could be created to support those relationships. The combining former provinces would work together to determine which activities would be shared and which would be maintained in the geographic area. For example, some committees might be combined while others might focus in a local area. People (sisters or lay people) would be elected or appointed to coordinate responses to the needs of the local sisters, for example, transportation, housing, food, healthcare and the like. The combining provinces would create the necessary governance structures, both small and large group, to assure the active voice and input to decisions of all the sisters in that unit. The financial and other assets of the historical provinces would be combined with the congregational finances in a way that demonstrated good stewardship and might take several years. The sisters in a given geographical area would not be expected to move to a different geographical area unless they chose to move. The first decisions would be made to meet the Sisters' needs and support their life and mission. Only later, when decisions and pastoral structures are enacted, would the civil reality, the statutes/corporation, need to be adjusted accordingly.