

I am making *Something New!*  
Do you not see it?  
Is 43:19



¿Estoy haciendo *Algo Nuevo!*  
¿No lo ven?

私は新しいことを行おうとしている。  
あなたたちはそれを悟らないのか。○イザヤ43:19

*Congregational Chapter  
2013*

*Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet*



*Congregational Chapter*  
*July 2013*

# Preamble

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.  
We are quite naturally impatient in everything  
to reach the end without delay.  
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.  
We are impatient of being on the way to something  
unknown, something new.

~ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

**F**rom the primordial flaring forth, everything has been, is, and will be forever in relationship. This is communion.

Over millennia, galaxies coalesced into being. Solar systems of stars, planets, and moons formed communities capable of bearing and sustaining life. On our Earth, life emerged, including humans who possess the conscious ability to know, reflect on, and respond to God with gratitude and love.

In union with God, Jesus showed us how to heal with our touch, to love with deep passion, to break the bread of our lives with all those gathered around the table, and to realize in the depth of our spirit that we are one.

Our *Acts of Chapter* for the past twelve years have called us to see that communion is at the heart of mission and our charism of unifying love. From our very beginnings in 17th century France, our first sisters and partners in mission embraced a spirituality of communion. In the "*Eucharistic Letter*," Jean-Pierre Médaille, SJ, once articulated it this way:

*"Our little design and the persons who compose it will be nothing for themselves, but wholly absorbed and emptied of self in God and for God, and with that, they will be all for the dear neighbor, all for God and the dear neighbor, nothing for themselves."*

**1993**

When we gathered on this same sacred mountain in Los Angeles, we were reawakened to our longing for communion by recommitting ourselves to "fidelity and to right relationships with God, persons, and the earth" (1989 General Chapter). We were aware of our interconnectedness. Despite our differences, we were willing to struggle to "be prophetic signs of unity in our world."

1997

Our expanding consciousness of relationship embraced our global dimension more deeply, reminding us of our multicultural and international identity. We discovered that personal storytelling and sharing our hearts enhanced our relationships. To effect systemic change, we desired to widen our networks with others.

2001

We named communion as our call and reality. The image of the spiral helped us turn toward one another as we journeyed into the Sacred Center and outward to impact the world. We named five communions to focus our energy for mission.

2007

Our consciousness grew to reverence the Sacred in all that exists in the web of life. Because of this, we now saw only one communion, with our energy for mission focused on four facets: Creation, Church, the Dear Neighbor, and Each Other. We recognized how Associates, Consociates, 'Ohana, and Familia de San José (ACOF) and our partners in mission/ministry extend the mission. To live communion, we realized that we need to acknowledge and confront the racism and other barriers among us. We recognized both the mystical and active dimensions of communion and honored the Sacred Mystery that unifies and transforms us.

The Recommendations of the 2007 Acts of Chapter created a pathway to deepening communion. Sisters, ACOF, and partners in mission/ministry across the congregation engaged in daily contemplation and frequent conversations. Some participated in congregational gatherings of study, relationship-building, and celebrations. We strengthened our experiences of communion and deepened our understanding.

2013

The words of Isaiah called out to us: "I am making something new. Do you not see it?" (Is 43:19) We were invited into a new way of being.



ongregational Chapter 2013 unfolded like the ups and downs of our daily lives. Considering what we most deeply cared about, we met, talked, listened, laughed and cried, while exploring that for which we long with all our hearts:

Communion Within the Earth Community  
Church as the People of God  
Living the CSJ Charism  
Claiming our Oneness  
Partnering with New Eyes


We realized communion holds  
harmony and dissonance,  
inspiration and frustration,  
enthusiasm and exhaustion,  
readiness and hesitation.

Although we barely know how, we love.  
We are in communion.

Sacred Mystery  
embraces us in unifying love and  
we are in communion.

Breathing in and breathing out  
unifying love—  
our charism, our mission—  
we participate in the Mystery of Transformation.

# Introduction

 The mystery of transformation moves us from the center where we are comfortable to the margins where we will likely feel frustrated and displaced. From this vulnerability, however, we can experience truly mutual relationships, see with new eyes, and recognize that all aspects of justice and survival within all Creation—nature, humanity, and organizations—intertwine.

Acclaimed theologian Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, in her book *Quest for the Living God*, helps us see this:

A moral universe limited to human persons is no longer adequate. If the Earth is indeed a sacrament of divine presence, a locus of divine compassion, and a bearer of divine promise, then its ongoing destruction through ecocide, biocide, geocide is a deeply sinful desecration. In the tradition of biblical prophecy and the spirit of Jesus, the response of people of faith needs to become prophetic and challenging, promoting care, protection, and healing of the natural world even if these go counter to powerful economic and political interests—and they do. We need to use all the techniques of active nonviolent resistance to halt aggression against the vulnerable, be it ever so humble a species or ever so vast a system as the ozone layer (p.197).

In Pope John Paul II's 1990 World Day of Peace address, he challenges us to see that "Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends to the rest of creation." Johnson further explains, "Pragmatically, humans shall survive with other creatures on this planet or not at all. The issue is more than practical, however, for respect for life cannot be divided. Not only human life but the whole living Earth is God's beloved creation, deserving of care" (p. 197).

Within our mission of unifying love, communion calls us to act in healthy and just ways within the Earth Community and Church, with Each Other and the Dear Neighbor. Deepening our awareness of this, we commit to the following Calls to Action.

# Calls to Action

## Communion Within the Earth Community

**WE BELIEVE** that Creation is a sacred trust given to the whole Earth community.

**THEREFORE, WE COMMIT** ourselves individually and collectively to ask in every deliberation, "How does this decision/action impact the Earth community?" We do this to raise our awareness and change our behaviors.

**WE BELIEVE** in the interdependence of humanity and nature in the whole Earth community, and recognize our harmful impact.

**THEREFORE, WE COMMIT** ourselves to simplify our lifestyles through specific, measurable actions regarding water, climate change, food, consumption, and waste, taking into consideration local realities and concerns.

**WE BELIEVE** our charism calls us to informed action for justice for the whole Earth community.

**THEREFORE, WE COMMIT** to the development of a congregational-level ad hoc group to:

- \* Recommend processes and experiences that engage the mind, heart, and will for conversion;
- \* Identify potential partners who share our goals;
- \* Name collective actions to advance these ecological goals;
- \* Design the ways we will be accountable to one another.

**THEREFORE, WE COMMIT** ourselves as a congregation to participate in these processes.

**WE BELIEVE** that our lack of consciousness and our activities have placed Mother Earth in crisis, and we recognize our culpability in her destruction.

**THEREFORE, WE COMMIT** ourselves to act with urgency to protect her stability and integrity and to celebrate her beauty wherever we are.

## Church: The People of God

### **WE BELIEVE—**

We are co-responsible participants in Jesus' mission by living out our baptismal call to unify, reconcile, and act prophetically.

In the authority of the Gospel and in the Gospel understanding of power as service.

In the teachings of Vatican II

\* in the primacy of conscience;

\* in obedience to the Holy Spirit within and among us which is the fruit of prayer, contemplation, and theological reflection.

The time is now to speak on issues about which we can no longer be silent.

Church teachings are complete when the faithful receive them (*sensus fidelium*).

### **THEREFORE, WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:**

Live, teach, and frame our mission around Vatican II teachings.

Enter more deeply into the mystery of the God of life as expressed in diverse and emerging theologies and spiritualities, and reground our theologies in evolutionary cosmology.

Explore and act upon what it means to be a collegial Church.

Take ownership for, join in, and keep generating rituals that reflect the experiences of women and people of diverse cultures.

Work collaboratively for the equality of women in the Church.

Speak out when legitimate authority uses power in dehumanizing ways.

Stand in solidarity with and support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons in our quest for inclusion and justice, knowing that Jesus welcomed everyone to the table respecting the dignity of every human person.

Dialogue and pray with people of other faith traditions whose mission and hopes are compatible with our mission.



# Living the CSJ Charism

## **WE BELIEVE—**

The Holy Spirit calls all people to holiness and lavishes the People of God with myriad charisms.

As Sisters of St Joseph and Associates, Consociates, 'Ohana, and Familia de San José (ACOF), we seek to embody the charism of unifying love, while recognizing the many ways of living and expressing this charism. We also recognize and rejoice that we already live in communion with many who share our charism and mission.

Many people today hunger for spirituality, a sense of belonging, and a commitment to justice.

Differences exist in and among generations and cultures regarding commitment and community life.

## **THEREFORE, WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:**

Deepen our living and understanding of the radical nature of consecrated life as Sisters of St Joseph and celebrate our lives as a gift for the Church and the world, creatively inviting others to live consecrated life as Sisters of St Joseph.

Foster existing and emerging relationships for living the charism.

- \* Celebrate the continuing evolution of the ACOF as a gift to our mission and the world, creatively inviting others to become ACOF;
- \* Encourage sisters and ACOF to have conversations among themselves and with each other to explore notions of identity and commitment;
- \* Intentionally welcome, foster, and develop emerging ways of living the charism, such as temporary commitment, agregées, and partners in ministry;
- \* Intensify our efforts to share our spirituality and mission with young adults;
- \* Build mutually beneficial intergenerational and intercultural relationships for mission.

Create an umbrella/framework that networks and supports existing and emerging ways of living the charism.

Create ways to facilitate interrelationships and animate emerging ways of living the charism.

## Claiming Our Oneness: Relationships and Structures for Mission

### **WE BELIEVE—**

Structures support mission and foster deepening communion. Mutuality, collegiality, subsidiarity, and flexibility are core principles for governance. We deepen communion by being and acting in new ways as one congregation.

### **THEREFORE, WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:**

Build relationships and utilize current and evolving structures in order to live fully our mission with the dear neighbor, with one another, with the Church, and within the Earth community.

Continue intra-congregational conversations and discernment about oneness and structures begun at chapter.

Make communication a primary means of promoting and deepening collective identity for mission.

Intensify collaboration, experimentation, and consolidations where appropriate in order to maximize our resources and generate new possibilities for the sake of mission.

\* We charge already existing working groups\* and emerging groups to demonstrate concretely new ways of being one, to engage the membership, and to report to and dialogue annually with the Congregational Leadership Group (CLG);

\* We charge the CLG to develop and implement methods to engage members across the units around these efforts at collaboration, experimentation, and consolidations.

\* ACOF Directors, Archivists, Communicators, Development Directors, IT Directors, Justice and Peace Coordinators, Retirement-Sisters Care Directors, Treasurers, and Vocation-Formation Directors

## Partnering with New Eyes

**WE BELIEVE** that the mission of Jesus calls us to:

- \* Conversion that comes through authentic mutuality;
- \* Openness to the unknown and the unpredictable;
- \* Prophetic witness that comes from partnering with new eyes;
- \* Collaboration with others for justice.

**WE BELIEVE** mutuality can only happen when we:

- \* Recognize and respect the dignity and authority of every person;
- \* Acknowledge and deepen our understanding of our privilege, our racism, and our participation in interlocking systems of oppression and exclusion;
- \* Walk with our sisters and brothers who live in poverty;
- \* Share our stories and listen empathically.

**WE BELIEVE** partnering with new eyes happens when we:

- \* Join with others in working for systemic change that will enable all to live in right relationships;
- \* Join with others in addressing issues that demean or deny people their human dignity and that force those who are marginalized to bear the burden of unjust systems.

## **THEREFORE, WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:**

Deepen awareness of our mutuality with all people in order to transform our world views and educate ourselves in ways that challenge these world views.

Walk with those who are marginalized, especially those who live in poverty, as an essential lens in sharing resources and evaluating and forming partnerships.

- \* Identify existing partnerships (formal and informal) to facilitate congregation-wide sharing;
- \* Discern the viability of current commitments across the congregation to strengthen, change, or relinquish them;
- \* Explore new ways of partnering;
- \* Strengthen mutuality through intra-congregational gatherings with our partners to better understand, promote, and celebrate our mission;
- \* Use imagination and creativity to practice and pilot new ways of being in mission with partners and collaborators;
- \* Collaborate with representatives from CSJ sponsored ministries and institutions to explore ways to build capacity for mission integration into the future.

Encourage the Congregational Leadership Team to make public statements on justice issues in the name of the congregation.

# Additional Chapter Decisions



he Congregational Leadership Team (CLT), with the Congregational Leadership Group (CLG), will convene appropriate congregational working groups, gatherings/events in the years preceding the 2019 Congregational Chapter.

The Congregational Leadership Team (CLT), with the Congregational Leadership Group (CLG), will provide opportunities and resources for the “Seeding Our Future” age cohort to deepen relationships and continue conversations as they envision mission in the future.

Written congregational materials and documents will be translated and published in three languages: English, Japanese and Spanish. Provision will be made for oral translation as needed.

A Congregational Leadership Selections Review Committee will be appointed in March 2014 by the Congregational Leadership Team (CLT) after consultation with the Congregational Leadership Group (CLG). The review committee will:

- \* Include some representation from the 2013 chapter body;
- \* Study the evaluation of the 2013 selections process;
- \* Review the process in relation to the selections process which has been used with minimal modification from 1993 – 2007;
- \* Engage the congregation in the evaluation process as appropriate;
- \* Propose by March 2017 to the CLG a process to be used for the 2019 congregational leadership selection;
- \* Share the approved process with the congregation prior to the 2019 Congregational Chapter;
- \* Serve as the Congregational Leadership Selections Committee in preparation for the 2019 Congregational Chapter.

The Congregational Leadership Team elected in 2013 will be a team of five, all of whom are full-time; their term will be six years, 2014-2020, non-renewable.

The sisters elected to congregational leadership in 2013 serve as members of the 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.

The 2013 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 Congregational Chapter and modified by subsequent chapters will continue until the Congregational Chapter of 2019.

The Congregational Leadership Team will call for a congregational review and evaluation of the current Congregational Leadership Team model in light of our emerging congregational reality.



The Congregational Chapter 2013 affirms:

That Japan is now a region of the Los Angeles Province.

The understanding that the Congregational Leadership Group works together on behalf of the whole congregation.

Congregational participation in the Global Health Partnership Initiative.

# Composition of the 2019 Congregational Chapter\*

The composition of the 2019 Congregational Chapter will consist of the following:

## **Delegates with Voice and Vote**

### Ex-officio Delegates

- \* The Congregational Leadership Team
- \* Three from leadership in each province,  
selected from those who hold positions of province leadership
- \* Up to two from leadership in each vice province,  
selected from those who hold positions of vice-province leadership

### Elected Delegates

- \* Nine from each province.
- \* Up to three from each vice province

The chapter gives the freedom to the vice provinces to implement these provisions in the light of their reality.

## **Participants with Voice and Provision for Alternates**

The chapter of 2013 affirms the value of having voiced participants and alternates at the chapter. Eligibility for the role of voiced participants will be determined by the Congregational Leadership Group (CLG). The number of voiced participants will be determined in collaboration with the CLG.

The first two vowed members who are s/elected as voiced participants will also serve as alternates for delegates from their province/vice province, if the need arises. When a delegate is, for serious reasons, unable to fulfill her responsibilities as a delegate, the first vowed member who was s/elected in her province/vice province as a voiced participant will serve in the delegate's place. The second s/elected voiced participant will serve as an alternate if the need arises. The alternate will be seated as a delegate, with the approval of the chapter, after consultation between the province/vice province leadership and the congregational leadership.

## **Observers**

The CLG has the responsibility to establish the guidelines for the role of observers at congregational chapter.

Observers are any members of the congregation who attend any part of the chapter and/or Associates, Consociates, 'Ohana or members of the Familia de San José (ACOF) who attend any part of the chapter. Observers do not have an "official" role at the chapter, have neither voice nor vote at the chapter, and make their own arrangements for accommodations and meals. On occasion observers may be given voice at the discretion of the Congregational Chapter Process Committee with the approval of the chapter body. (*CLG February 2013*)

\* Should the structure of the provinces/vice provinces be modified prior to the 2019 chapter, the Congregational Leadership Group is empowered to make appropriate adjustments to the above provisions.



## **Implementation and Accountability**

The Congregational Leadership Team with the Congregational Leadership Group is responsible to initiate and advance the implementation of the direction, decisions and calls to action of Congregational Chapter 2013. In doing so they will engage members, associates and partners in mission and ministry as appropriate and possible.

The Congregational Leadership Team will provide for accountability, reporting to the congregation between chapters and at the 2019 Congregational Chapter.



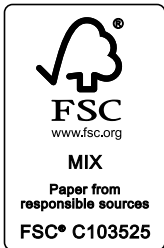
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Only God could say what this new spirit  
gradually forming within you will be.  
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing  
That [his] hand is leading you,  
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself  
in suspense and incomplete.

~ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ



Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet  
Hermanas de San José de Carondelet

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