

## Introduction: How we Got to the Idea of Community-Based Leadership

Throughout the data collection about proposed community-based leadership this Fall and at the Community Assembly in February, questions have been asked about the origins of this idea. So to begin today, I am offering some context.

For several years there's been a desire in the St. Paul Province community for there to be more collaborative, mutual, equitable ways for the Sisters, Consociates, Agrègée, Friends, St. Joseph Workers and Partners to gather, to connect and relate, to foster the growth of CSJ community and mission among us and our local area.

This is *not* to replace the religious governance for Sisters. It is more like a network that supports existing and emerging ways of living the charism, the mission.

The theme for the Congregational 2013 Chapter was a verse from the prophet Isaiah, 'Behold I am making something new, do you not see it?' (43: 19).

The St. Paul Chapter encouraged its delegates to take the idea of an umbrella framework that can network and support existing and emerging ways of living the charism, the mission to the meeting in Los Angeles, CA. As a result, within the Calls to Action of that the chapter two significant statements were made:

From congregational chapter, 2013,

- "As Sisters of St. Joseph and Consociates, 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."
- 'Create an umbrella/framework that networks and supports existing and emerging ways of living the charism'

Following that, within the St. Paul Province, audits and studies helped us identify the possibility of a Community Assembly. We organized a committee and board into a Relationship and Association and Ministry Commission to be on par with the Justice Commission. Since 2016, we could say, we've been living with this experiment.

Echoing the 2013 congregational chapter, the 2019 statement for direction said, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Consociates “stand in communion with all who share our passion, charism, and mission: St. Joseph Workers, partners in mission and ministry, friends, emerging and ongoing relationships such as Agrègées, and all those enlivened by our charism.”

Preceding the Province Leadership Selection Process in 2021, Sisters considered Viable Possibilities. These focused the Province Leadership Council and Sister Assembly on Sister governance.

The Viable Possibilities also offered the idea of CSJ Community-based leadership.

- This does *not* replace the religious governance for Sisters.
- Community-based leadership would assist further evolution, to provide a transition or bridge to what might be in the future.
- Community-based leadership can ensure the implementation of the what we have called the Acts of Chapter.

Underneath these decisions and movements, the Province is and has been the container that is holding all of the existing and emerging ways of living the CSJ mission and charism. The Province may or may not continue into the future as we now know it.

As Sisters of St. Joseph, Consociates, Friends, Agrègée, and partners, we seek to embody the charism of unifying love.

- How can we create a more collaborative, mutual, equitable way for us to gather, to connect and relate, to foster the growth of CSJ community and mission among us and our local area?
- What is the vision that will carry the charism and mission forward?
- How might community-based leadership help us become what we desire and need to become?

‘Behold I am making something new, do you not see it?’ (43:19).