Ginny & Rosemary’s ongoing conversation after **CARAVAN DISCUSSION** 4-05-24\*

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**JUSTICE IS OUR CORE:**

How do we lament and celebrate justice in prayer and through ritual? How will we communicate this to the world around us?

So often when the question is asked at our gatherings, “why do you come?”, the answer embeds the charism-“love of God and of neighbor without distinction.”

I carry that to my workplace, where I volunteer, etc, but how does the workplace or the volunteer community know that we are carrying this charism to the community around us? We don’t have a recognizable community identification (a pin or a shirt, etc). In turn, how does the Community learn of the work we are doing?

Where is the place we come together to share the charism, to strengthen the charism, to explore new ways of living the charism? (some questions to explore include…how we remain connected to NDO ministries…what other ministries will be needed in the future)?

The CSJ Charism and Mission often moves us to places we would not

otherwise be, and it’s difficult for current structures to be nimble enough- to

allow us to tell each other about current opportunities, invite each other in,

and/or pray for justice work that is being done. However we organize

ourselves, we want to be able to come together quickly for shorter terms

involvement as well.

An example which may serve as a model involved the initiative

spearheaded by Isaiah—Drivers Licenses for All —at the Minnesota

Legislature. This was an opportunity for those living the CSJ Charism to act

together for its passage (by prayer and by other forms of involvement as

each was able) as well as to partner with other groups and organizations,

including Churches, to work for its passage. Getting the word out about

what initiatives are in the works allows us to broaden our own participation

in short term as well as longer term opportunities to work for justice. (Do Something Just and Rapid Relay are two vehicles for disseminating

information quickly but we likely need more.)

“We also must keep our eye on the *systemic impact* of the charism.” (Kay Egan)

**RELATIONAL WEB**

What difference does it make that I am here? We often hear that question. What difference does our presence make? Who is invited? Who is missing? Are we all invited to the table? Do we all feel welcome?

These are crucial questions for all of us. We hope coming together as community will invite us to do things where each person makes a difference—where we are affirmed, confirmed, and challenged to see the intersectionality of our individual pursuits and to be opened to new possibilities. Connecting with each other in ever widening circles is central to the success of this effort.

Are Sharing of the Heart groups the place where we share how the charism

touches our hearts and moves in our lives as we go out into our world and

our work? Or do Sharing of the Heart groups have a different focus, are they

intended to be more about the spiritual growth of an individual, rather than

focusing on work people are doing in the world? Or are they more than one

thing? We know at least they should imbue us in ritual, invite us to prayer

and open us to each other. They are an important part of the relational web

we are embedded in individually and collectively and we hope they will be

strengthened as we move through this process.

Stirring the Fire,with its strong emphasis on ritual and continuity, is another

way to maintain and strengthen the relational web. We feel, that for the relational web to be a dynamic reality, there needs to be structures which keep the lines of communication open and flowing between and among the individual parts, (Sisters, Agreges, Consociates, Friends, Partners in Ministry & Mission).

**EMBRACING CHANGE WITHOUT DESTROYING STRUCTURE**

At the March 21 ET gathering, Jill Underdahl raised a couple of concerns about subsidiarity: “It would be important I think, for each of the groups that are mentioned here, DEI and Membership & Association and Justice Commission, to be able, as their assembled groups, to think about how they would fit into this[rather than us] thinking about how they could fit into this, without them and their groups thinking about it themselves. And too with the Sisters Assembly…… Subsidiarity in the groups themselves thinking about this is important.” [Jill Underdahl, March 21 gathering].

Since Vatican II the leadership of American Women religious set a high bar for embracing change without destroying structure. Congregations of women religious have worked to achieve consensus before moving forward. In fact, their use of listening circles in which they sought to let the spirit in may have been the model of the Pope’s call for a synodal Church. They have done this as individual religious communities then jointly through the LCWR.

Several years ago when American Religious Women were investigated by Rome for canonical irregularities, it was this ability to work individually and collectively that led to Rome closing its investigation. So, in thinking about how to move forward, it is vitally important to remember the legacy of the Sisters whose success has rested on 1) transparency 2) communication 3) deep listening to each other 4) prayer and 5) a willingness to defer action until everyone has felt free to speak and has been heard.

\*Submitted by Ginny McDermott, Friend of St. Joseph & Rosemary Curran, Consociate 4-10-24

\*See Forum for first notes from 4-05-24 CARAVAN