

**March 21, 2024 ET Gathering: Table & Zoom responses. as submitted.**

**Common Table**

Justice Commission predated The Community Assembly and other Commissions.

Is there a CBLG?

Is the Common Table the CBLG?

**Calendar & Format**

(5X a year plus STF)

Hard to picture who would schedule/coordinate these?

Personal stories and mission sounds good

There will likely be a lot of planning required.

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

It will be challenging to find scribes

Are there specific members of The Common Table or CBLG who are communicated with? Re: the notes?

Publicizing the groups and inviting all to groups?

Is there a way to reach out to those we don't see?

.....

**What brought us here?**

Charism

Mission together

Intrigued

Curiosity--need for clarification: "Is this [the Proposal] a 'done deal?' --*or can we construct and deconstruct, playing with a workable model?*

Are we [ET] jumping ahead? Is ET out of their lane? --*the threads of the Proposal go all the way back to Viable Possibilities documents. This [Proposal] is not about Leadership, it's about Community. It's about being together into the future. Our job [in response to this Proposal] is 'to question' [discernment].*

ET's charge is to 'Engage Broader Community in the establishment of the Community-Based Leadership Group.' *The Community's charge is to imagine this model and respond--give feedback, but it appears to be a proposal of what we have to do, by some.*

Can we revitalize the Community Assembly to do this work?

What is the goal of this experiment? How do we measure it?

The table Hosts (concept) of allows a mini-lead role.

Time/Talents/Treasure commitment is needed by Consociates.

THE PROBLEM (Consociate speaker): 170 Consociates but many are not engaged (+- 30% are).

Need to work on the relationships/format that invites those people who are missing.

Concern about the weakness of the relational "web" of the Consociates--  
The Sisters cannot do this work for the Consociates. It is the Consociates' work to strengthen this web.

Our mission work together is important; check-ins and relational being are equally important.

Silos--how do we make Community more open?

Extend invitation to more; extend expectations.

Reach out to those who are missing? How?

"If you fear change, leave it here!" (change jar at Mayday Cafe)

**What are we carrying as our CSJ mission (name mission interest circles)?**

.....Everywhere I go.

Ritual & prayer

Garden

Native American awareness/involvement

Mission gives opportunity for action

CSJ Leadership--lots of work involved; Carondelet Village--  
manage/pasotral care

St. Kate's involvement--Center for Spirituality & Social Justice--

Staff/faculty/as well as students

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**Common Table**

"Suspend"; what does this really look like?

All are welcome! This is hopeful.

What brings energy for people to come to the table?

I believe there is hope and energy to try something new and bring new life.

**Calendar & Format**

Who will organize these tables--where is the planning?

Is 'stories' and sharing 'ministry' updates the essence of table gatherings?

Will this body be empowered to make decisions?

### **Network of Engagement Small Groups**

Opportunity to re-engage people (sisters and consociates and partners and others)

Is the “format” really the driving reason people are not contributing and getting more involved?

Maybe the need to build community in a post-COVID world is real and important, but how do we not reinvent the wheel?

### **Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

Does “telling and sharing” stories “energize” for action?

What is the process for creating and building the actions?

### **Insights**

Thank you all for the creative energy to try something new--being bold to try something new.

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### **Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- Like Common Table
- If we suspend the commissions and Community Assembly Planning Committee, who does the underlying organization?
- Are Saturdays the best day for assemblies?
- Don't lose connections with NDO and other CSJ founded ministries. They are like adult children, they are independent but they want to maintain connection

### **Network Engagement Small Groups**

- How would we create interest groups? What are some ideas?

### **Common Table**

- Wider We of Community o St Joseph

### **Calendar and Format**

- Table: 5 months, include meal

### **Network of Engagement Small Groups**

- How Sharing the Heart is folded in

### **Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- Keep ritual central

- Idea to re-connect: can we Consociates send a letter to every Consociate alerting them to the Big Change and kindly requesting they update us on their 1. Data – how they are best contacted 2 current time commitments 3 interests that reflect the charism 4 what would they need to get involved in community events.
- .....

**Calendar & Format**

- Like idea of gathering every other month in a larger group and
- Smaller interest groups as they decide when and how often they meet

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

- Small interest groups is a good way of building community on a smaller scale
- .....

**Common Table**

- Who collects, allots agenda items to fit the time allowed
- Who plans the logistics needed to set up gathering?
- Good to involve more people

**Calendar & Format**

- Socializing around food is good

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

- Small groups may be what draws people to a wider assembly
- Commissions committees become small interest groups

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- These are all good aspects to shape the Common Table
- .....

**Common Table:**

- Do not suspend the Justice Commission
- We need to define who will do the planning
- Saturday meetings need to have some flexibility – so hot topics may be addressed
- Consociates need to be re-energized – this is work of the Consociates (Totally agree with Rosemary’s comments)
- It seems most important thing is to come together to share and socialize, etc

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

- I am already involved in 7 groups and not sure I will want to be in more small groups

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- Connections with the “wider we” (missing piece)
- What does “operationalize pastoral care in the community” mean?



Thank you for your substantial, ongoing work on our behalf!

**The “Common Table”**, in my view, already exists in the Community Assembly. How can we better operationalize it there:

- to build/deepen relationships and mission commitment across/throughout the community via experience-based story-telling
- Community Assembly Commissions (Relationship and Association, Justice, Ministry) share their mission/current action focus in 3-4 sentences – at each assembly (we have done this, helpfully, in the past); encourage Commissions to suggest how and where and how partnerships with neighbors are strong and can deepen...
- Actively, creatively promote participation, (including comp time for staff participating ( is Saturday the best day to meet? Would a survey help better-determine this?))
- Give significant Assembly time to a particular CSJ/consociate ministry/relationship group  
     i.e., Agreeges, staff members, with intent to inform, share their mission-connection, living and deepen relationships with others

With 4-5 community assemblies a year, community can come to know ministries, departments, and Individuals better and more personally, experientially...

Identify already existing small conversational groups, their purpose and, as possible

membership and meeting time/frequency.... Seek their permission to share this information and their willingness to share any other info from group meetings;

Recognize publicly and actively support with admin. resources necessary the great

work of the Community Assembly Planning Committee and call attention to its potential, broad-Based make-up and membership.

I support the Content section as is. This can be achieved within all Assemblies as well as small groups meeting for heart-sharing, justice learning and promotion and, soon, DEI and B experience-based learning

**Community, Relationships and Belonging** may be more internal, and at the same time, also have indirect, positive external effects. And **Collaboration, Mission and Solidarity** may likewise have powerful internal as well as external effect

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### Common Table

- Who will plan and prepare for the experience of the common table?
  - Is there an alternate to Saturdays?
  - Lunch for sure \*\*
- .....

1. I wonder about setting this discussion in the context of emergence. That has been the theme for the year and the challenge. That these ideas have emerged from various discussions.
2. Purpose is support the charism of the Sisters through relationships and mission work. This can be measured.
3. Action is to broaden the involvement base of the communities through a combination of new ideas and retaining some of current structures that work
4. Action Steps
  - A. **Common table:** in the past Sisters and conscoiates meet together. There is broad attendance at Stirring the Fire. I would wonder if in small groups gather ideas how to design a common table as well as the feedback received.
  - B. **Network** of small groups . This doesn't eliminate some of the commission but many of us don't find that as a vehicle for involvement. I would wonder about a list in small groups about new ways such as book groups and other feedback that has been received
  - C. **Build community** through ritual and other methods. Again I would wonder about small groups listings ways
5. After small groups have listed specific ideas I would think about using a tool like dotmoracy. that is where each area has list of ideas and than

people are given dots and can select either 3 or 5 that are their top choices in each area. Then the top choices become the action area. You can do this on zoom as well as a doodle poll.

Last I would have sign up sheets at each table asking for a person area of interest as a way to begin to formulate how to implement these steps.

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**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

- I like the idea of engaging the different groups to respond about their involvement

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- Good idea (stories)
- .....

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- It was a phone call that brought me here
  - Still recovering from the Pandemic
  - “Operationalize”?
- .....

**Common Table**

- We should not suspend the Justice Commission. Does Marty lose his job?
- Schedule as needed for business – good idea

**Calendar & Format**

- Gather 5 times a year on Saturday
- All personal sharing, what about issues?
- Will there be input to community decisions?

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

- Why need to hear from existing ministries in small groups
- What business of the whole are you referring to?
- Is someone asking the small groups to consider common community issues?

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- Energize and engage are good words
- Does pastoral care mean caring for others
- Looking forward to having a place to invite others into our groups

Insights:

- Please keep the experimental nature of this, I like the goal and ways to evaluate. That will help everyone get excited about this.

**Common Table**

- Wisdom Ways (see the new booklet of possible events) gathers persons with all kinds of specific interests who might become part of Common Table or contribute to it.

**Common Table**

- Alternate Big Group and small groups
- Have leader and scribe
- Suspend structure to all gather show promised, partner, wider we
- Meet every other month for part personal story, part community in small groups

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories:**

to have Fun

- See better
- Hear better
- Do better
- To connect, to remember, to appreciate, to learn, to begin, to get done, to evaluate
- To feel better, to belong, to know/be known
- To call, to call out

Eric Fromm: To care, to respect, to respond responsibly, to know/have knowledge

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**Common Table**

- How about: Temporarily “repurpose” Community Assembly; continue Commissions until an assessment can be made about their viability. (Justice Commission is also an Office with staff; so you don’t want to suspend their work—nor the Relationship Commission while it has ongoing work to do. The Ministry Commission ended itself...
- Good idea to use Community Assembly time to experiment. There is a LONG way to go before we know how to populate the CbLG
- I’m happy with the vowed members moving meetings to an evening or late afternoon to conduct business.



- Yes! All are welcome, How can we make it possible for all to *attend* who wish to participate?

**Calendar and Format**

- Sounds good—again how to make meetings appealing to broader membership
- Please remember that agencies like The Bridge are no longer “ours”, even though their mission echoes that of the founders.
- I’m not familiar with how Stirring the Fire operates. Also. We have to be careful to not appropriate the work and format others have developed for our purposes. We need to not break something that others have built or make it less appealing because stuff like that is happening more frequently in other venues...
- Yes, share a meal.

**Network of Engagement Groups**

- Great idea as developed by Therese Sherlock and Karen Hilgers

**Content: Build Community and Mission Through Stories**

- Thanks for including Mission (being and doing) as one of the foci.
- I don’t think storytelling by itself develops Mission/Action. There needs to be a pathway from conversation to action/engagement/opportunity.
- Try to remember that there are many in relationship who are still willing and capable of **enacting /embody-ing** the Mission (care for the dear neighbor) and whose sense of belonging is motivated by that opportunity.
- Maybe we could do more to actually gather people in person for the spiritual activities and events that we already have frequently

**Insight in the Feedback**

- It’s been my experience that the expression and experience of Community, Relationships and Belonging motivates and energizes our external work

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**Common Table**

- If people are asking for help, how do we do that?
- Sounds like Community Assembly

**Calendar & Format**

- We need space to gather
- We need a convener team that calls for agenda items
- Change up the times

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

- If we come together, the work will emerge
- How do existing groups fit into the Common Table?

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- What is missing is the connections among the “wider we”

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**Common Table**

Is there a plan regarding reaching out to Consociates who aren't coming?

**Calendar & Format**

Afternoon session--would this be during the week or Saturday?

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

Won't disassemble any existing groups.

Who is reporting back to Common Table--would this be a rotating role or only one person?

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

Are these plans to expand our community partners?

Who is planning the gatherings/Common Table mtgs.?

**Common Table**

Continue with these ideas--we need to continue to have the kinds of conversations we had today.

ET--Please go back to the assignment given you by the Data Analysis Group. This is an unrefined experiment that is too large.

Ethics of Encounter.

**Calendar & Format**

“find ways to participate in ministries”--but that didn't require action. So actually we would be meeting every month

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

How do the this [Engagement Small Groups] notes get disseminated and how do decisions get made?

.....  
**Common Table**

Keep the Community Assembly. Thank you for all your work. We need ideas to discuss and move forward. The SJWs are interested in attending but they needed more time to plan.  
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**What keeps us coming?**

- Curiosity and responsibility
- Catching up with forward movement
- “Suspend” caught attention – not everything clearly designated
- Threshold
- OK with being confused/ too clear before
- Open to organic process
- Participation is evolution
- Memories of what happened before
- Energy is connected – not “me” but “us”
- Information
- Fear of missing out – relationships
- First hand information
- Exciting and real in person – not translated

**Common Table**

- How did Feb notes become this plan?
- Seems like the cart before the horse
- We need someone to organize
- This sounds like the Community assembly

**Calendar and Format**

- More Saturdays will get the same people
- Not sure that people want/can meet more
- This feels like adding more, not less
- Who holds what has been dismantled?

**Network of Engagement Small Groups**

- Small groups already working – not suspend them

**Content: Build Community and Mission through Stories**

- Clarify idea of Community-based Leadership Group – provide job description
  - Could Community Assembly planning committee become the CbLG?
- .....

**What engages you to come here?**

- Commitment to Community
- Importance of sharing our ideas for the future of the community
- Know what’s going on; I want to be here to share ideas
- Get to know and encourage others to come and participate in Community
- Learning about the community; I am committed to community and want to grow with everyone into the future.
- Want to understand the process and be part of it
- We need to gather together and not be separate groups
- Be committed to community. Would Consociates benefit from a deeper commitment to community

**Who is establishing the Community-based Leadership Group? Where are those discussions?**

- How do we get there?
  - 176 Consociates – everyone does not participate
  - How can we get more people at the table?
  - Where does this proposal bring us closer together? How do we make the Community Assembly meet our needs?
  - What is happening with the commissions?
  - How to bring together members of the many broader community to establish the CbLG?
  - How to come together to break down the silos, and see how we are living the common mission?
  - How to know people’s back story, establish relationships
  - Hilary knows native people – they say the Land acknowledgement is performative. What do we do about what we say in the land acknowledgement?
  - How to get information from all the groups to individuals?
  - We need internal structure
  - Consociates need to build relationships among themselves.
- .....

## **What energizes you to keep coming back here?**

- The Charism/Mission, which puts into words what I have felt all my life
- Envisioning religious life in the future – how this will encompass all, not just the “vowed”
- We’re really going back to earlier times, when women came together to figure out how to truly be present in the world, in ways that could help everyone make things better
- Appreciate that Community-Based Leadership (CBL) is inclusive and representative and a flowering of the structures that we already have (“commissions” “assemblies”)
- Excited to come together again after the separation during Covid times; even willing to drive over a half hour on a night when snow was possible, just to be together again
- Commissions have not always provided a connection to community
- Beguines<sup>1</sup> laywomen are a good example of what may be coming
- Spiral images of growing and connecting
- More committee work is beyond me now as I age. Yet I show up to support those doing the work. I show up because I love so many people here, as well as the Charism and Mission, which are part of me and the “Interconnected web of all that is and of which we are a part”<sup>2</sup>
- Imagine using what is working, leaving behind what is not, and remembering our stories
- There were many changes over time with the CSJs, including structures being placed on the women from the Church, and structures being challenged later. Those challenges after Vatican II were difficult for many who were conditioned to having answers, predictability, authority and hierarchy

## **Thoughts about Proposal:**

<sup>1</sup> [Beguines and Beghards - Wikipedia](#)

<sup>2</sup> [7th Principle: Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of Which We Are a Part | UUA.org](#)

- We don't want to throw out what is working, but the way the Community Assembly (CA) is functioning is not what was envisioned – more of one-time seminars rather than ongoing connections with the needs of the world
- The CA has been working for some people and not for others
- Appreciation for the ongoing theme of connection and belonging
- Relationship-building is hard to do; the CA has helped foster that work
- CA helps foster a spiritual community
- It feels like focus has largely been on belonging *within* the CSJ Community; is that enough?
- Came to the CSJs to be part of a group of amazing women (with some men added over time) to raise up the world, engage actively with others in the world
- Trying to add something to a CA agenda is very difficult, often cannot be done
- The CSJ's Charism and Mission has been sending some of us out into the world, to places we would not otherwise have been; how do we bring those connections back to the CSJ Community?
- How will Consociates' work become part of the CSJ Community – e.g. the wonderful Food Access Hub, Laundromat ([Beautiful Laundrette](#)) – which has upcoming community events!
- Appreciate that the “Common Table” would allow people to bring to the CSJ Community what our missions are in the world
- Stories and ideas that Consociates and all connected to this Charism and Mission are doing is important for Sisters and all in the CSJ Community to know about
- Could help bring together the connections with the “Wider We” that we are missing
- We need to develop a culture of gratitude for each other and for how we are allowing the Charism and Mission to move in each of us

- How we live our lives is a way of social justice – with gratitude for community, for each other, at the beginning, middle and end of our work
- Appreciate that the Engagement Small Groups could be a place where we share stories and break down “silos”
- Building Community and Mission through Stories could help us reach out and build connections among ourselves and other people
- Keep evolving – take the ideas and perspectives – and then just start and see what happens, what evolves and from what
- Invite existing commissions/committees to host discussions at the bi-monthly meetings
- Know that this proposal will continue to evolve as we evolve – trust in the work of the Spirit, the Charism and the Mission to lead us

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### **Small Group ZOOM**

#### **What brought us here?**

- Curiosity
- Hope for Success
- Interest in the content of the proposal
- Would like to see the community-based leadership group take form, but the proposal does not do that, so I come rather disappointed
- Not sure of the relationship of the proposal to the charge of the group



- The proposal will take a lot of leadership, meetings don't just happen, it needs leadership to bring it about
- The charge is to create that leadership group
- Puzzled by the whole thing, not sure how the proposal relates to the forming of the leadership group
- Disbands some existing leadership without replacing it
- What was brought forward today is one of the function of the community-based leadership group
- Cart before the horse
- What is the leadership about, what will this leadership group be commissioned to do

**Name your mission/interest/circle that you are involved with, where are you carrying the CSJ mission.**

- Bothered that there was no discussion of the first small group question
- This question asks us how we live out the charism
- Hard to name individual items, like Bread and Roses, ICOM, R&A Commission, but mission is part of everyday life
- Why are we doing this?
- Day to day interactions with people
- Eucharistic minister at Hennepin County Medical Center
- See some people who are difficult to see, interact with people that are difficult for me to interact with, the commitment I make helps
- Serve on Sister Assembly Coordinating Committee
- Meeting with people I don't ordinarily hang out with, being an active listener
- On the Leadership Team Council
- Zooming in when there are community events, staying connected from a distance
- Governance Committee
- Agrégee
- But I don't belong to any group that would have input to agendas for the "common table"
- Hard to find pathway back for discussions that happen in these groups around the community

## Reflections (in Zoom chat) from the open mic sharing time:

- It sounds like magic is going to happen. Who will do the planning of the common table meetings and who charged them to do it
- If it is the community based leadership group, who are they and what authority will they have?
- This all sounds good, but it is missing a foundation
- The community based leadership group will include people from all of us, sisters, consociates, friends
- We need a common project to get to know each other, navel gazing, just getting to know each other without a project, will not be meaningful
- Our common purposes bring us to know each other
- While I respect these concerns, part of me resonates with the idea
- As a candidate I got to know people by going to the assemblies in the dining room, finding a table, engaging casually, eating lunch. In the course of that social engagement, a relationship began. While projects help us bond, just getting to know each other helps us know where we came from, how we grew up, who our family is. I appreciate what they are trying to evolve here. Since the pandemic, meetings have felt empty, without that casual social learning about one another.
- Can we address both concerns?
- That feeling of coming together, getting to know people, is part of how we operate any time we meet. But the pandemic interrupted our usual operation even as it gave us the gift of bringing distant participants to our table.
- Who is going to do this planning? Is it the engagement team? Who will authorize them to do this work?
- Who will keep doing this planning as the sisters can no longer come and as the consociates can no longer come?
- Sometimes leaders come first, sometimes vision comes first
- I don't see plans for a leadership group there

- .....
- I really believe the CSJ Forum, properly managed, could do a lot to shore up this weak communication web that is being described. The forum can be a real planning and communication tool.
- .....