

MOVING FORWARD

Nonprofit Exploration Group

Q & A

January 2026

1. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT AT THIS TIME FOR CONSOCIATES, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SISTERS, TO EXPLORE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION?

It is imperative that Consociates, in collaboration with the Sisters, do this work now because there is a critical mass of Sisters and Consociates available, able and willing to assist in this work. An important step in this process was the Province Chapter's decision to move forward with 56 Sisters and Consociates affirming the Directional Statement, 2 unable to affirm and 4 abstaining.

Consociates, in the context of their lives and responsibilities, and Sisters, with their whole lives, have responded to the Spirit's call to live the CSJ mission. Together with others who share the CSJ charism, they commit themselves to addressing the needs of the times. The Province Chapter's Nonprofit Directional Statement represents the next evolutionary step in building a structure for relationships to continue into the future for the sake of mission.

A. Why the topic was on the Province Chapter Agenda

In Spring of 2024, the Province Chapter Planning Committee asked the Sisters what topics they wanted to discuss at the Province Chapter sessions. Resoundingly the responses came back saying the Sisters need to talk about three things: our properties, our Sister governance, and our relationship with the Consociates. The Sisters invited the Consociates to attend the sessions regarding relationship with Consociates and agreed to give them voice and vote at these sessions.

B. Change in the St. Paul Province

Change is not new to the St. Paul Province. There are numerous examples of governance and ministry changes beginning with the very first change of the log cabin from a place of teaching and learning to a hospital to care for those sick with cholera. Many recall the change from Delegate Assembly to Province Assembly, then, in 2015, from Province Assembly to Sister Assembly, Consociate Assembly and Community Assembly.

Also, change is happening throughout the CSJ Congregation at this time, for example, the development of the International Community within the CSJ Congregation. In St. Paul, Sisters are exploring ways to provide for Sister leadership in St. Paul into the future, and Consociates are committed to continuing the CSJ mission and presence locally, but not limited to, the Twin Cities area.

2. WHY DOES THE DIRECTIONAL STATEMENT SAY THAT THE CONSOCIATES WILL EXPLORE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SISTERS?

Consociates have made a formal public commitment to live the CSJ mission and charism in the context of their lives. They have an over 40-year history with the Sisters, a critical mass of persons available, and the organizational structure to take on the responsibility for moving the results of this exploration into the future.

3. THE SISTERS CURRENTLY HAVE A 501(c)(3). WHY CAN'T CONSOCIATES BE PART OF THE SISTERS' 501(c)(3)?

The Articles of Incorporation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Paul Province, state that “the corporation, at all times, shall be operated, supervised or controlled by or in connection with the Roman Catholic Church....[T]he corporation shall serve as a vehicle for implementing the ministry of the religious congregation known as the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Paul Province....The management and direction of the business and affairs of the corporation shall be vested in a Board of Directors.”

Individual Sisters are not members of the corporation; rather it is the business of the Province that is managed by the Board of Directors of the corporation. The Articles state that Province Leadership Team and Council constitute the Board of Directors. *In other words, St. Paul Province 501(c)(3) is a vehicle through which the Province conducts its civil business and implements its ministries and programs. It is not a membership organization.*

A. Relationship of the Consocium with the Province Corporation

Currently the Consocium is a *program within the St. Paul Province 501(c)(3)* which, according to its Articles of Incorporation “shall be operated exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes.” Also, the Consocium is primarily funded through the Province operating budget.

4. WHAT IS THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SISTERS AND CONSOCIATES?

Consociates, in the context of their lives and responsibilities, and Sisters, with their whole lives, have responded to the Spirit’s call to live the CSJ mission. Sisters and Consociates mutually enrich each other’s lives by praying together, learning together, sharing our hearts, planning events with one another, sharing meals with one another, celebrating together and in many other ways. Everything Sisters, Consociates and others who are called to live the CSJ mission of moving always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction do reveals the mission in action. From a daily practical perspective, Consociates and Sisters are companions on the journey of meeting the needs of the times.

Also, from an operational perspective, the Consocium is a program within the Province 501(c)(3). This reality places the Consocium within a corporation that, as stated in the Articles of Incorporation, “at all times, shall be operated, supervised or controlled by or in connection with the Roman Catholic Church” and whose funding is dependent on the strength of the operating budget of the Sisters.

A. Possibilities for Enhancing Relationships

The Chapter Directional Statement gives the Consociates, in collaboration with the Sisters, the opportunity to explore the development of a nonprofit organization which could enhance possibilities for responding to the needs of the times in new ways. Consociates would continue to live the CSJ mission and charism in relationship with the Sisters and others.

5. IS THIS JUST FOR CONSOCIATES?

No. All programs and activities related to the CSJ mission and fostering community, spirituality and justice could include Sisters, Friends of St. Joseph, Agrégées, St. Joseph Worker Community, Partners in Ministry, in addition to Consociates.

6. WHY IS THE NONPROFIT EXPLORATION GROUP EXAMINING THE FORMATION OF A 501(c)(3), WHEN THERE ARE OTHER TYPES OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS?

Nonprofit organizations can be broadly categorized based on their structure and purpose with the most common type being 501(c)(3) organizations. These are typically charitable, educational, scientific, literary, or religious organizations. Other significant categories include 501(c)(4) organizations (civic leagues and social welfare organizations), 501(c)(6) trade

associations, and 501(c)(7) social clubs. The most beneficial category into which the Consocium falls is the 501(c)(3).

A. Benefits of a 501(c)(3)

The CSJ Province Corporation is strictly aligned with the canonical leadership of the Province. A separate 501(c)(3) could grow beyond that and offer the charism partners an opportunity for

1. greater sustainability, as the Sisters' numbers decline.
2. a structure in which Sisters and charism partners can all take leadership roles.
3. greater autonomy of mission, while still staying in relationship with the Sisters and the canonical province.
4. growing beyond the canonical structure to serve a world in need.

Another benefit is that 501(c)(3) nonprofits are eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions such as individual giving as well as corporate and foundation grants.

B. What will happen to the CSJ Consociates in St. Paul if they don't form a 501(c)(3)?

Consociates have made a commitment to live the CSJ Charism in the context of their lives and will be able to continue to do so as individual Consociates. However, once there are no longer CSJ Sisters in the St. Paul Province, without their own 501(c)(3) status, Consociates will have no formal organizational structure to hold them together.

Consociates will not have the ability to receive tax exempt donations or grant funds. They will not have an operating budget to support their ministries, and they will not be able to employ staff to help them do their work. For these reasons, it seems imperative that Consociates, in collaboration with the Sisters, form a 501(c)(3) at this time.

7. WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The Nonprofit Exploration Group's work includes, but is not limited to:

1. Developing a Communication Strategy and Engagement Plan that includes, for example, this Q & A, Community Assemblies, Articles, Rapid Relays, and Emails;
2. Articulating a vision, mission, value statements and name for a potential nonprofit;
3. Drafting Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for a potential organization.

8. WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION?

The Nonprofit Exploration Group will complete its work by January 2027. The Group then will bring a recommendation for affirmation to the St. Paul Chapter body which is the group that approved the Nonprofit Directional Statement. If the Nonprofit Exploration Group's recommendation is approved, the results of the exploration will be ready to move into the implementation phase.

9. WHO IS DOING THIS WORK?

This work is to be completed by a Nonprofit Exploration Group composed of four appointed Consociates Anita S. Duckor, Joan Pauly Schneider, Deb Sheats, and Karen Zeleznak, one appointed Sister, Jean Wincek, CSJ and facilitator, Catherine Bertrand, SSND.