The Mystery of Transformation: Moving Always to the More

In early February of 2013, the Associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet were invited to participate in 'Moving Always to the More' enrichment sessions. Following the Acts of Chapter: Deepening Communion With Each Other, these sessions were specifically focused on deepening communion with each other, experiencing Sharing of the Heart, and enrichening State of the House.

The energies and renewed passion for living out the charism spread through the Associate Community as they prepared for the Associate Assembly Retreat 2013, "SACRED MYSTERY: We Participate in the Mystery of Transformation".

The Assembly Retreat discussions focused on deepening our understanding of who we are as Associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. How we are in relationship with the Sisters, with one another, and with the Dear Neighbor. In our ever-changing world we are called by the Holy Spirit into transformation as appropriate to continue living the charism and mission of Jesus Christ. In support of this mystery, the Associate Community created the following Prayer of Transformation.

We are a community of people connected, committed, and grounded in love. We embrace our baptismal charism of unifying love, empowered through the community of St. Joseph. We engage in a continual cycle of renewal hospicing old ideas and midwifing new. We open ourselves to the graciousness of God’s transformative action in and among us and our world. This requires us letting go, embracing the gifts and talents of each other so that together we might envision the possible and bring it to life. If we can dream it, we can make it happen.

During the following months, each Associate and each Associate Community were asked to participate in prayer, reflection, and discussion focused on living out the charism and opening our hearts to God’s transformative actions.

In preparation for the Associate Assembly 2014, “Unleashing the Fire of Unifying Love”, where the focus would be on structures, resources and relationships with the Sisters that will support Associate participation in transformation for the sake of the Mission of Jesus, several questions were asked of each Associate and each Associate Community.
The responses from each Associate (State of the Heart) and each Associate Community (State of the House) were collected and are summarized herein. Some of the questions were not qualitative and are presented as Emerging Themes.

Respondents: 125

State of the Heart

Based on the Prayer of Transformation, I give my heart to....(Select One)

Respondents: Prayer of Transformation

- We open ourselves to the graciousness of God's transformative action in and among us and our world
- We are a community of people connected, committed, and grounded in unifying love
- This requires us letting go, embracing the gifts and talents of each other so that together, we might envision the possible and bring it to life
- We engage in a continual cycle of renewal hospicing old ideas and midwifing new
- We embrace our baptismal charism of unifying love, empowered through our membership in the community of St. Joseph
- All of it
- If we can dream it, we can make it happen.
As an Associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, I value....(Select All that Apply)

![Graph showing respondents' values]

**Associate Personal Reflection Sheet**

Reading all the responders answers, it became apparent our Associates are involved in a most impressive series of Missions. Some personal, some associated with institutions and some helping the “Dear Neighbor”.

- Sandwich making for the poor and needy
- Helping our Sisters
  - Driving Sisters to appointments
  - Taking our retired Sisters on outings
- Help elderly Sisters and “Dear Neighbors”
- Working Social Justice Issues
- Helping our Missioned Sisters in foreign countries
- Home repair
- Alternative health provider for families
- Speaking out against violence toward women
- Community building activities
- Working with local Parish missions
- Providing clothing for homeless woman and children shelters
- And many, many MORE!
State of the House

Where is God leading us now as CSJ Associates?

Review of the answers in the Personal Communal Response sheets presented an Associate group that has a VERY STRONG FAITH and SPIRITUAL base rooted in unifying love for the Dear Neighbor without any distinction.

Concern is present relative to future Associate financial sustainability, defined financial role, respecting of each other’s boundaries and sense of uncertainty as to the role of association with our Sisters, as to accountability, and voice...

What needs to be transformed in Association for the sake of the Mission?

Answers to this question developed a strong response to Associate organizational structure and finances. Yet the responses still revolved around a strong desire to accomplish the CSJ Mission.

What in your present Association structure are old ideas that need “hospicing” and what new ideas need “mid wifing”

Several responders had issues with the terms Hospicing and Midwifing, old terms that need explaining.

Hospicing does not mean getting rid of all old, It means it doesn’t apply to current situation and we need to help it get replaced with something more appropriate.

Midwifing in this case means Having a more appropriate process, model, etc that needs to be introduced.

Summary of voiced Hospicing topics focused on the impressions Associates have as they feel perceived by the Sisters, divisions among the Associates and Sisters, needing to hospice the current hierarchical leadership model, we are separate from the Sisters and need to operate separately and undue concern about structure and finances.

Summary of voiced Midwifing reflects a very diverse set of ideas covering Organizational structure, financial structure, alternate forms of membership, gathering with other Associates in local and regional areas, governance and voice within the community.
What is the most exciting way in which you are part of this unfolding history of the community?

Of the four questions asked in the Communal Response sheet, this question reflected the most spiritual self development witnessing and the excitement of being associated with a community that helps ones’ spiritual growth. Other respondents elected to state their excitement being part of the CSJ/Associate transformation process or their skepticism as to why change.