



## CLOSING MESSAGE

30<sup>th</sup> Congregational Chapter – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015

Brigid Lawlor, Congregational Leader

*Have we been energized by the Spirit? Having deliberated here at Chapter, are we prepared to risk together for mission?* I believe that we can proclaim an unconditional “yes” to both of these questions!

We began this 30<sup>th</sup> Congregational Chapter on the Feast of Corpus Christi. As our conversations unfolded, I didn’t think that was a coincidence! In my opening talk, I quoted Ilia Delio. I’ll go back to that quote now, because I think her words reflect our experience. She said: *“The Eucharist...is the sacrament of evolution, because every act of Eucharist is an act of making a new future through a new divine presence, a new relatedness, a new freedom to love.”* (*The Emergent Christ*, p. 68)

**“The Eucharist...is the sacrament of evolution.”** At this Chapter, we reflected on our evolving understanding of God made visible in our relationships, and in our desire to be communion with all of creation. We experienced the presence of God in sacrament and in our building a community as a Chapter Body.

**“Every act of Eucharist is an act of making a new future...”** What is the new future we are creating? Didn’t our lay mission partners challenge us? Through our discussions together, with the inputs from Noreen, Winifred, and Cristina, we became convinced that we are called to embrace a new future that promotes an integrated approach to mission.

During the celebration of our first year anniversary of reunification in Caen, we expressed our historical evolution in the Prologue to the Constitutions, which we later unanimously approved. We articulated a desire to deepen our unity and to continue to experience the richness that reunification is bringing to us as a Congregation.

Brother Philip Pinto prepared us to risk! Do you recall his invitation to us? *“I am asking that you have the courage to listen to a God who is speaking to us from the midst of life today, urging us to lay aside our old ways of thinking, to trust the Word that is being spoken in the midst of life, to see a new world unfolding and to open our hearts and minds to this message.”* Constantly, we referred back to his many challenges.

I continue with Ilia’s words ... **“a new relatedness”**. We dialogued on topics of great importance, as we deepened our understanding of consecrated life today. We had moments of honest conversation which promoted unity, but also showed our diversity...and, at times, disturbed us.

The encyclical of Pope Francis, *“Laudato Si”*, was published during these weeks of Chapter. We discovered that we were discussing many of the messages contained

in it before we even read it! One quote which struck me forcefully and caused me to ponder further is: *"In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living centre of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love. Yes, cosmic!"* (166) We are part of the whole cosmos giving thanks to God! How magnificent! How privileged we are!

We engaged in a creative discernment process to elect our new Congregational Leadership Team. Wasn't it a great process! What a manifestation of the action of the Holy Spirit! Let us offer a special thank you to Jill McCorquodale and Patty Fawcner for their creative, patient, and loving facilitation.

We created a direction statement which points us towards the future. We elected a Congregational Leadership Team who will inspire and challenge us to live what we have written. One thought-provoking and active way would be: *"To see and hear the good news of Jesus through the eyes and ears of those who are oppressed."* We have prioritized focus areas for ministry. We made a corporate stance regarding the horrific situation in the Middle East at this moment in our history. Yes, this was a concrete example of where we encouraged one another to speak out with the eyes and ears of those who are oppressed.

Before closing the Chapter I have the joy and privilege of inviting our Congregational Leader elect, Sr. Ellen Kelly, to say a few words.

### Conclusion

During these days we have been *"awakened"*. With a heart filled with gratitude, I now officially close our 30<sup>th</sup> Congregational Chapter. Let us go forth *"awake"* to give witness to being *"communion"*, using our internationality - our global solidarity as Eucharistic people to *"wake the world"*.

While we sing *"Spirit of God"*, let us ritualize our going forth by coming forward to take the Spirit we placed on the tree, so that we can bring it home to our place of mission.



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