

October 23, 2024

Dear Associates,

Thank you to those who participated in the September Fall Reflection by gathering in person at JFC, in your prayer group or the virtual session. Our feedback from these discussions was then compiled along with the Sisters' feedback from their Local Chapter discussions.

A Request We have reviewed the Feedback and created a Synthesis of key insights. Please review and prayerfully reflect on the content presented in Synthesis.

An Invitation We invite and encourage everyone to send any specific suggestion(s) for practical actions to guider@bc.edu or mail them to Legacy Task Force, Joliet Franciscan Center, 1433 Essington Road, Joliet, IL, 60435. Your suggestion(s) should include:

1. **Description of the action item:** Clearly outline what the action entails.
2. **Objective:** Explain the goal or purpose of the action.
3. **Implementation:** Provide a plan for how the action can be carried out.
4. **Resources needed:** List any resources/support required to implement the action.
5. **Timeline:** Suggest a realistic timeline for the action.
6. **Due Date:** November 30, 2024.

We appreciate your input and look forward to receiving your suggestions.

Peace and all good things! With our gratitude,

Barbara, Darcy, Jeanne, M.J., Meg, and Sue

Synthesis of Key Insights, Strengths, Opportunities, Limitations/Weaknesses, Threats, and Where the Spirit is Leading Us

Key Insights:

- **Care and Concern for the World:** Be active in addressing local and global issues and concerns.
- **Role as Ecclesial Women:** Emphasize the importance of our presence and interactions within the church and among members of the faith communities to which we belong.
- **Franciscan Presence:** Focus on being present and listening to others.
- **Embracing Change:** Acknowledge the challenges involved and necessity of change.
- **Community and Support:** Sustain a sense of love, care, mutual support.
- **Franciscan Spirit:** Make it evident in actions and support for each other.
- **Grieving Our Losses:** Grieve together, holding fast to memories that are a source of consolation as well as the reasons for our hope in years to come.

Strengths:

- **Community and Support:** Compassion, trust, and mutual support.
- **Spiritual and Ecclesial Identity:** Commitment to prayer, solidarity and presence wherever we find ourselves.
- **Leadership and Legacy:** Supportive of those who lead and serve, remembering our rich history.
- **Adaptability and Resilience:** Flexibility and balance between contemplation and action.
- **Educational and Ministerial Efforts:** Commitment to lifelong learning and outreach.
- **Interpersonal Relationships:** Strong connections and open communication.

Opportunities:

- **Community Engagement:** Strengthen relationships and increase visibility.
- **Spiritual and Personal Growth:** Embrace change and focus on personal growth.
- **Collaboration and Networking:** Work with other congregations and organizations.
- **Advocacy and Social Justice:** Use influence to speak for the marginalized.
- **Technological Integration:** Utilize tools like Zoom for connectivity.
- **Leadership and Decision Making:** Develop necessary skills and foster open communication.
- **Ongoing Formation Initiatives:** Continue lifelong learning no matter where we find ourselves and encourage others to do the same.
- **Care for Creation:** Continue environmental activism and social responsibility.

Weaknesses and Limitations:

- **Aging and Health Issues:** Physical limitations and many health concerns.
- **Leadership Challenges:** The “laborers are few” to meet all of the needs.
- **Communication and Trust:** Difficult issues, lack of transparency and trust.
- **Fear and Resistance to Change:** Reluctance to face reality and make necessary changes.
- **Resource Limitations:** Lack of personnel and need for external assistance.
- **Individualism and Inward Focus:** Tendency towards individualism and internal focus.
- **Emotional and Psychological Barriers:** Fear, hopelessness, and judgmental attitudes.
- **Geographical Distance:** Challenges in supporting members at a distance.
- **Historical and Linguistic Gaps:** Need to document the history of our second century (1965 forward) in U.S. and Brazil, language barriers.

Threats:

- **Aging and Health:** Loss of members, ageism, resistance to prepare for change and adaptation to reality.
- **Emotional and Psychological Challenges:** Fear of change and loss of hope.
- **Leadership and Organizational Issues:** Increasing needs of members and the congregation and fewer Sisters to meet the needs, indifference to the need for collaboration and cooperation with others.
- **External Political and Economic Factors:** Impact of political changes and potential economic collapse.
- **Community and Social Dynamics:** Geographical distances and isolation.
- **Cultural and Social Issues:** Threats to democracy, racism, and clericalism.
- **Internal Challenges:** Complacency and unresolved conflicts.
- **Environmental and Global Concerns:** Natural disasters and global conflicts.

Where the Spirit is Leading:

- **Embrace Change:** Be open to transformation and adapt to new realities.
- **Strengthen Community:** Foster deeper connections and support each other.
- **Live Franciscan Values:** Continue activism for justice, peace, and care for creation.
- **Address Weaknesses:** Recognize and address fears and individualism.
- **Utilize Opportunities:** Engage in dialogue and collaboration with others within and beyond the limits of the Congregation.

**To review all of the Feedback received from the Local Chapters,
visit the Sisters' section under *Legacy Task Force*
on our Joliet Franciscan website.**