



May 22, 2025

cc

Dear Sisters:

Congratulations to all the sisters who gathered in discernment, and to everyone for supporting their efforts, in taking yet another successful step along the journey of discernment. It is a credit to the sisters who gathered that they journeyed together in such an honest, open, and respectful manner. Not only were they trying to accomplish the explicit “goals” of discernment, but they also unearthed many “gifts” of discernment:

- ♥ Developing greater personal awareness and insight.
- ♥ Deepening trust in one another.
- ♥ Growing in understanding one another anew.
- ♥ Testing out new ways of relating.
- ♥ Expanding the pool of wisdom.
- ♥ Seeking to understand how God might be calling them to serve.

The more these gifts were sought and claimed, the more opportunity there was for the Spirit to have greater influence upon the journey of each sister and upon the entire group. Their willingness to search together as intimately as they did will, no doubt, offer them greater insights into the promptings of the Spirit. In turn, this will allow the entire communal journey to be more grace-filled.

While 18 sisters had originally planned to attend this retreat, only 15 were able to fully participate. Pat Klemm did not attend the Discernment Retreat. She was unable to travel due to suffering some physical limitations. Furthermore, following the Regional Gatherings, Pat came to clarity in her discernment, and she decided to withdraw her name from any further discernment for leadership. Pat Tyre was also unable to attend because of an acute illness. However, she decided to remain in the process for discerning leadership. Judith Terrameo became ill during the retreat, and she was unable to participate on the third and fourth day. However, she will also remain in the discernment process.

You might recall that the two goals for the Second Discernment Retreat were:

1. To reflect upon, clarify, and further develop the evolving approaches to leadership/governance; and,
2. to discern how each sister might best serve the congregation in a new approach to leadership/governance.

The sisters worked hard to clarify and develop further the emerging model of leadership/governance that came from your input at the March Regional Gatherings. Additionally, they sought to discern where each of them might offer their own gifts and talents within the emerging model. It was a back-and-forth process of clarifying the model, discerning their place in it, adjusting the model further, discerning their place in it, etc.

This reciprocal process led to two outcomes. First, it assisted them in their personal discernment, which they will share with you at Chapter. Secondly, it led them to offer some suggestions for clarifying and improving the latest iteration of the model. The *"Synthesis of Discerners' Suggestions"* is attached to this document.

NEXT STEPS

Ongoing discernment

Please talk and pray with the discerners who were invited to the May 15 – 18 Discernment Retreat. Walk with them in their discernment and seek your own enlightenment as we move toward Chapter. Help each other become more enlightened and freer, while avoiding the politics of persuasion. Pray for your own interior freedom and detachment from a specific outcome.

Talk with any discerner about her experience of what she did, and what she discovered, while honoring the boundaries of privacy. *Please do NOT ask a discerner what "other" sisters shared, who talked with whom about what, or who is "leaning" in or out of the process.* You will hear directly from all of them during Chapter.

Small Group/Cluster conversations

Goal

Provide feedback regarding the *"Emerging Model of Leadership & Governance"* and the *Synthesis of Discerners' Suggestions*.

Process

- Step 1. Read and reflect upon the document, *"Emerging Model of Leadership & Governance"* (attached) and the *"Synthesis of Discerners' Suggestions"* regarding the model (attached).
- Step 2. Meet with your Small Group/Cluster and answer the questions on the *"Small Group/Cluster Feedback Form"* (attached).
- Step 3. The sisters in Brazil need to type up your feedback from your small group/cluster and email it to Joana Mendes (lsjoana@gmail.com) by June 28. The sisters in Bolivia, Jamaica, and the United States need to type up your feedback from your meetings and email it to Ted and Beth (DrTedDunn@me.com and DrBethDunn@me.com) by July 3. Responses must be typed (not handwritten, sent as pictures, or scanned images).

Timing

According to our original “*Roadmap for Chapter*,” you are scheduled to have Small Group/Cluster gatherings as your final preparation for Chapter. If you currently do not belong to a Cluster, you could join one to participate, meet with your local community, or arrange to meet with any small group of sisters. Please schedule these gatherings to take place in time to submit your feedback Joana **by June 28 in Brazil and to us by July 3 for Bolivia, Jamaica, and United States.**

Goals and Schedule for Chapter

The goals for Chapter are still being finalized. However, here is our initial “draft” of what we are likely to do at Chapter.

1. We will build upon the treasures we take from our ongoing journey of personal and communal transformation and explore the deeper invitations at our graced crossroads.
2. We will shape a new approach to leadership and governance, elect our new leadership, and discern how all of us will participate.
3. Within the context of our current realities and the critical issues we are facing, we will articulate our call and vision for Mission. *What is ours to do in Mission at this time in our Franciscan history?*

There will be more specifics to add to these goals, and you will receive the complete set of goals at the time of Chapter.

Schedule

You will also get a detailed schedule at the time of Chapter, but here are some highlights for your planning purposes.

Chapter will begin on Saturday, July 26 at 9:00 a.m. and end on Sunday, August 3 at noon (EDT). July 26 will be a day of retreat led by Meg Guider, OSF, culminating with Mass at 5:00 p.m. Daily Chapter sessions will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end by 5:00 p.m. (EDT). We will plan for periods of rest throughout the Chapter schedule.

Deliberative participants

If you are attending Chapter as a Deliberative participant, you are expected to be physically present the entire time. Please do not make travel arrangements that conflict with the beginning or ending of Chapter. According to your Constitutions, exceptions for “grave circumstances” can be made with permission from Margaret Magee as you Congregational Minister.

Consultative and Supportive Participants

As we have said throughout our planning, “All Are Welcomed.” Consultative and supportive participants are welcomed to participate in person or via Zoom. For those attending in person, hopefully you have registered. If you have not yet registered, please register on the portal as soon as possible. If you have any difficulty, please contact Claire Majot. All sessions will be available via Zoom. However, not all those sessions will be *interactive* where you can provide input.

Instructions for Zoom participation will be forthcoming from Ellen Winger and Claire Majot.

Chapter Planning Committee

In talking with the Chapter Planning Committee, it became clear that we needed to add a couple of sisters to the committee because of so many committee members discerning the call to serve in leadership. Sister Clare Bertero and Sister Eloenia Soares da Mota have graciously responded to our invitation, and they will serve as members of the CPC from now through Chapter. We are very grateful for their willingness to work with us on the CPC!

The Chapter Planning Committee will begin their meetings on Wednesday, July 23 at 10:00 a.m. (EDT).

Table Facilitators

Ted and Beth will meet with the Table Facilitators on Friday, July 25 at 3:00 p.m. in the Chapter room and periodically throughout the Chapter.

Discerners

Ted and Beth will meet with the Discerners for briefings and debriefings throughout the Chapter (as needed). Meeting times will be determined as the schedule for Chapter becomes more solidified.

Blessings to each of you and to all of you, as you continue your journey of personal and communal discernment.

Chapter Planning Committee

Aldenir Mota Ribeiro, OSF

Clare Bertero, OSF

Dayanne Santana, OSF

Dolores O' Brien, OSF

Eloenia Soares da Mota, OSF

Marlene Weidenborner, OSF

Consultants

Beth Lipsmeyer Dunn, Ph.D.

Ted Dunn, Ph.D.