

# Emerging Model of Leadership & Governance

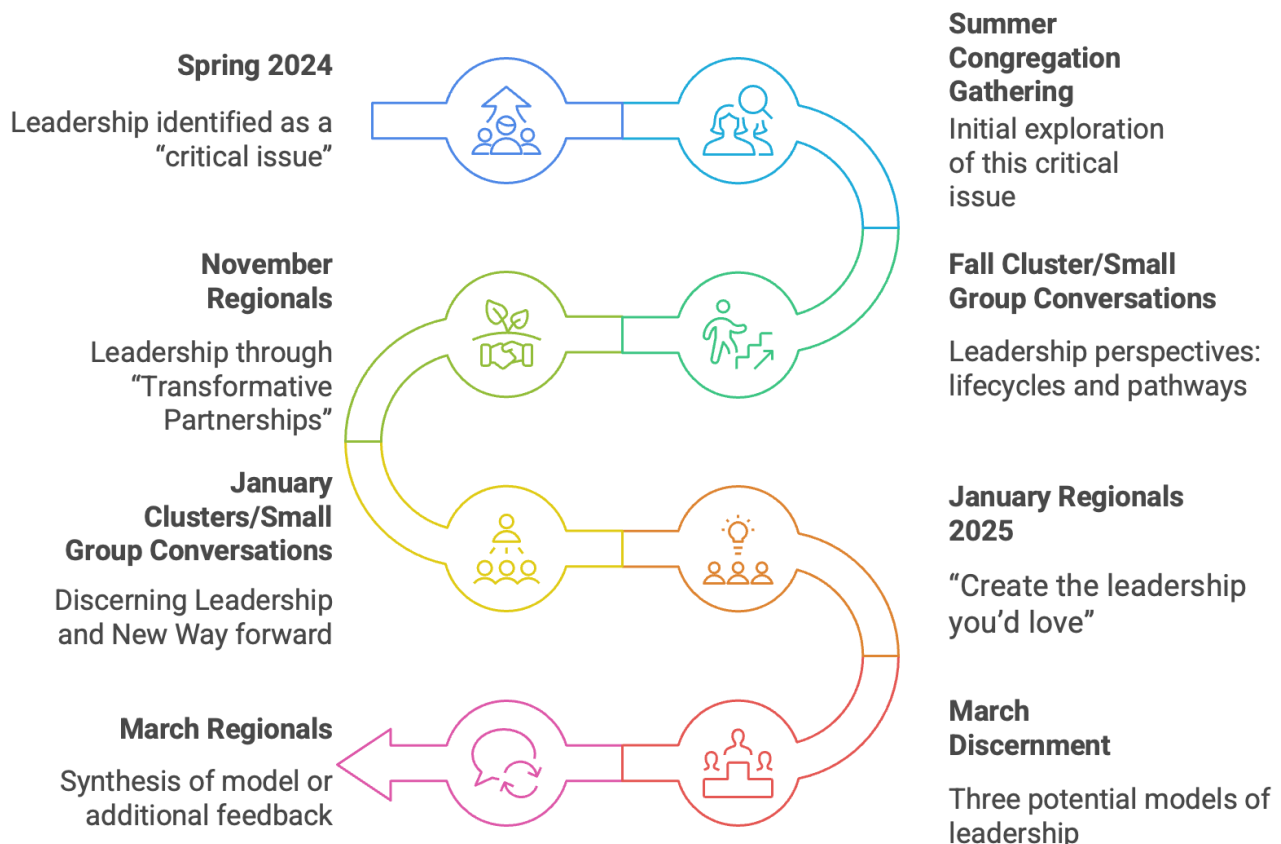
Based upon feedback on the synthesis provided during the Regional Gatherings (March 27 – 30)

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany  
Small Group/Cluster Conversations  
June/July, 2025  
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**This document provides the latest iteration of your emerging model of leadership and governance. It provides an outline of these basic elements and invites your further reflection:**

1. Steps you have taken along the way
2. Rationale for creating a new model of leadership and governance
  - a. Challenges that compelled you to “change”
  - b. Values that impelled you to “transform”
3. Latest iteration of your emerging model of leadership and governance based upon all prior steps, including the March Regional Gatherings wherein feedback was provided on the “synthesis” handed out on the last day.

## Steps you have taken along the way

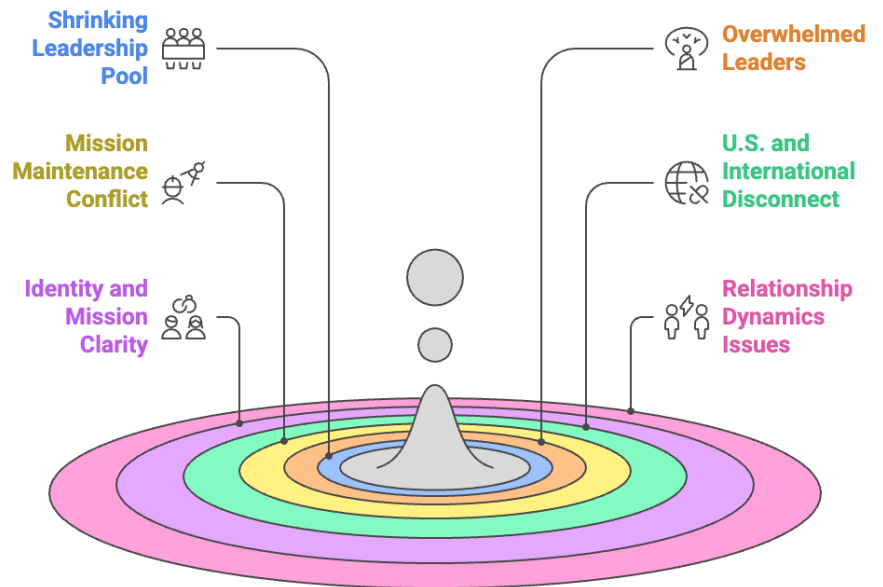


# Rationale for creating a new model of leadership and governance

## Challenges you identified compelling you to “change”

1. **Shrinking pool of leadership:** “Our demographics are such that we have a shrinking pool of recycled leadership.”

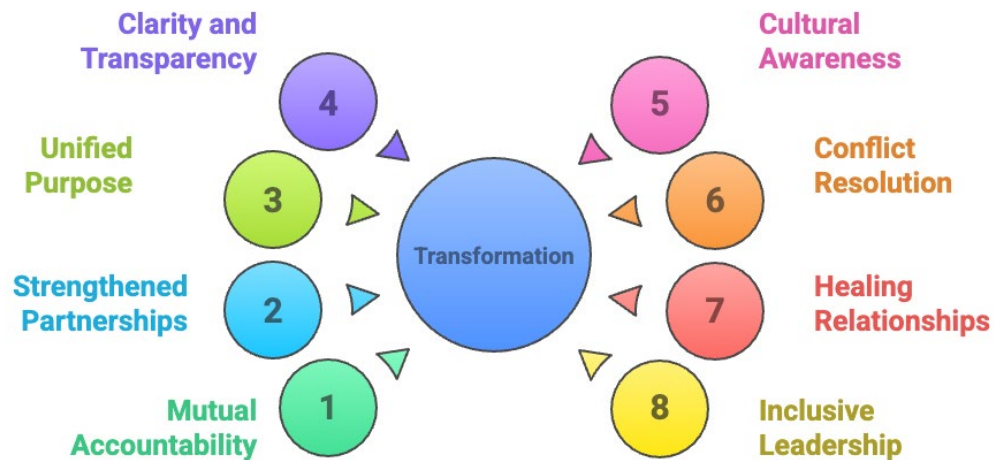
1. **Leaders overwhelmed and hurt:** “Our small congregational leadership team is spread too thin. They are overwhelmed and stressed by all the administrative tasks and travel.”



2. **Maintenance smothering mission:** “Maintenance needs are smothering the life out of mission, and our capacity to vision our future, by demanding all our time, attention, resources and energy.”
3. **U.S. Domination and Disconnect:** “Perceived U.S. domination over other countries. There is a disconnect between U.S. and Brazil, and to a lesser extent Jamaica, creating an experience of living parallel, independent lives rather than being in-it-to-together as one whole, interdependent, unified Congregation.”
4. **Identity, Relevancy and Integrity:** “There is a lack of clarity regarding who we are and what our mission is today.”
5. **Relationship Dynamics:**
  - “Conflict avoidance: leading to triangulation, criticism and judgement.
  - Workaholism: heavy focus on ministry to the relative neglect of community.
  - Individualism: doing my own thing, at the expense of community.
  - Complacency: I’ve paid my dues. Leave me out of it.”

## Values you claimed are impelling you to “transform”

“We desire:



1. **Mutual accountability, co-responsibility, and active participation** of all members in the life of community.
2. To strengthen the **partnerships** among ourselves, other religious, and laity
3. A deeper sense of **purpose and belonging** in community, as well as one, whole, unified Franciscan Congregation.
4. Greater **clarity, transparency**, and use of the **CARE skills** in our manner of relating and communicating.
5. Greater cultural **awareness, sensitivity, and acceptance** and to let go the judgments, criticisms, and caste systems that define who is more worthy or wise.
6. To **work through our struggles** and stop the avoidance of conflict that has led to so much triangulation, alienation, and periodic outbursts of anger
7. To **heal our brokenness**, repair the trust, and nurture our relationships to bring forth healing and wholeness.
8. To be **inclusive** and **collaborative** leaders who will partner with members in collective decision-making and creating our future.
9. To elect sisters to leadership who to **empower members and promote transformation**.
10. To engage in our **personal** and **communal soulwork** so we can let go of an old paradigm and embrace new ways of thinking and doing things so that we can become new again.”

## Summary of Rationale

In summary, you have not only recognized the need to change, but you have also come to see the values that entice you further toward congregational transformation. Therefore, the structures you create ought not merely address the needed changes. The structures you create need to be an outgrowth of the values your claim and transformative opportunities they offer. The structures you create need to be informed by, and supportive of, these values.

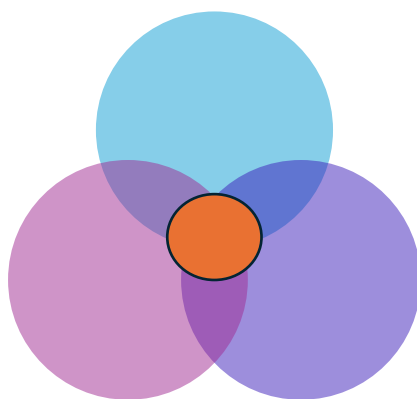
Furthermore, the structures you create ought not simply look good in theory. These new structures need to be aligned with who you are striving to become. They need to support the kinds of mindsets, heartsets, and skillsets that will transform the deep culture of your lives. Ideally, you will create the kind of leadership and governance in which you'd love to participate!

# The Emerging Model of Leadership and Governance

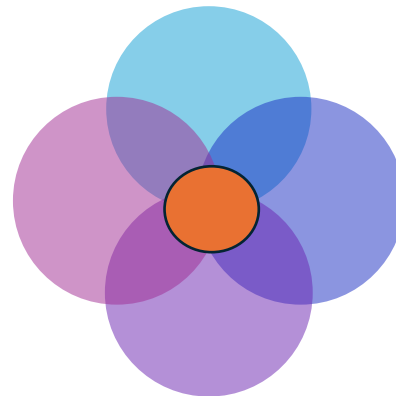
## Illustration of the Basic Structural Elements

The current iteration of leadership and governance modifies existing elements of your governance (e.g., Congregational Leadership and number of Regions) and adds new ones (e.g., Wisdom Circles). These proposed modifications and new elements emphasize your desired collaboration among Congregational Leaders, Regional Leaders and members at large. Additionally, they hope to alleviate the administrative burden of Congregational Leadership. Finally, Beth and I are offering a friendly recommendation that you add a new structure to support the emerging model, called a Guiding Team. Here are the basic structures for your review and consideration.

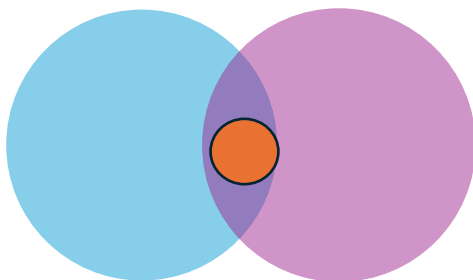
- **Congregational Leadership Team**
- **Regional Leadership Teams: Brazil, Jamaica, and the United States**
- **Wisdom Circles and Coordinators for each Region**
- **Guiding Team (a friendly recommendation)**



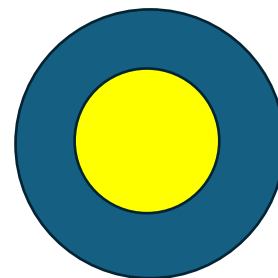
*Region 1: WC and  
Coordinators*



*Region 2: WC and  
Coordinators*



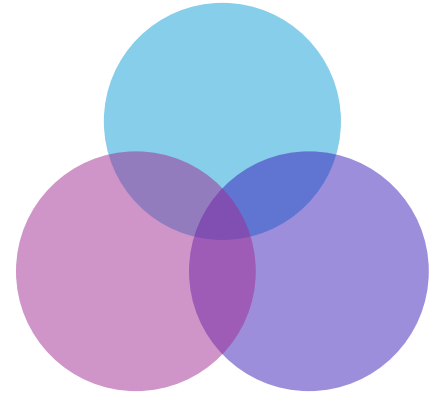
*Region 3: WC and  
Coordinators*



*CLT and Guiding Team*

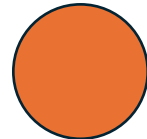
## Wisdom Circle (WCs)

- **Primary Responsibilities**
  - WCs are a crucial venue for sisters to offer their wisdom and directly contribute to the life and mission of the Congregation
- **Participation**
  - Total member participation is strongly encouraged
  - Having ALL members involved in some way in these WCs adds greatly to the sense of being-in-it-together as one Congregation.
  - This structure is especially vital for elders whose contributions might otherwise be limited in larger, more demanding gatherings.
  - Sisters select a WC of their choice based upon their passion and interests
  - Involvement of laity is an option to be determined by each WC
- **Number and name**
  - There may be two, three, or more WCs in each Region. The number, name, and focus of WCs are determined by the Regions (e.g., Community, Mission, Stewardship, Spirituality, etc.)



## Coordinators and Core Teams

- Each WC would have a Coordinator (or Co-Coordinators) who, with the help of a Core Team, would coordinate, plan, and facilitate the work of their WC.
  - The WCs select their Coordinators and Core Team in consultation with the RLT.

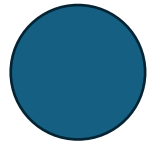


## Reflection Questions

1. *Do you support the creation of WCs with the rationale provided?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. *What modifications, if any, might strengthen the viability of these WCs?*

## Guiding Team (a “friendly recommendation”)

- **Purpose:** Their primary function of a Guiding Team is to guide the Congregation in its ongoing transformative journey. They *integrate*, *coordinate*, and *plan* processes used to carry out your Chapter directions, visioning efforts, and desired transformation across the Congregation.<sup>1</sup>
- The Guiding Team widens the base of leadership by involving more members in a leadership position (i.e., WC coordinators) who are all pulling in the same direction. The structure strengthens the *collaborative partnership* between leaders and members. A Guiding Team alleviates the potential siloing by the WCs and CLT by providing a forum for cross-conversation and integration.
  - For example, the Guiding Team would periodically reflect upon what is emerging in each WC along with the work being done by the CLT. In seeing the whole picture through these different lenses, they would be better able to discern the next best steps in the transformative journey. With a view of the “big picture,” they could better plan the goals and processes for assemblies, WCs, and other gatherings.
  - Note that the Guiding Team is essentially a *visioning structure* (not a governing structure). It provides leadership and guidance for the ongoing shaping of your future.
- **Composition:** The Guiding Team is comprised of the CLT, plus the Coordinators of all the Wisdom Circles (WCs) in the Congregation
  - For example, if there were 9 WCs across the three Regions, there would be 9 Coordinators. If the CLT consisted of 7 sisters, and you add 9 Coordinators, then the Guiding Team would be comprised of 16 sisters.



## Reflection Questions

1. Do you support the creation of a GT with the rationale provided?
2. What modifications, if any, might strengthen the viability of the GT?

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<sup>1</sup> Some communities call this structure an “Integration Team” because of its emphasis on *integrating* the work being done across the Congregation.

## Lay Participation

Is it legal to involve lay persons in leadership. Absolutely! It is not only legal, but also necessary because of diminishing sister resources. And it is not only necessary, but also among the most salient thematic expressions of the Church's evolution. Partnership with laity is key to the Church's future.

The recent Synod strongly encouraged *lay participation* and *experimentation* with new forms of partnership with laity. Church law (Canon 1284) recognizes explicitly that religious congregations may employ and delegate tasks to competent lay professionals. Indeed, your own Directory affirms this recognition (D89a).

You have indicated your need for “change,” and your yearning to “transform,” your current model of leadership and governance. You have especially noted the need for greater involvement of lay persons in administrative roles and responsibilities. In addition to their potential participation in Wisdom Circle, participation by lay specialists can be done in a variety of ways. Here are some examples that have already been raised among your sisters:

### 1. *Community Life Coordinator (or Healthcare Coordinator)*

- A Community Life or Healthcare Coordinator would be primarily responsible for overseeing and coordinating the physical and emotional care of the sisters.
- One medical professional per Region
- Hired by Regional Leadership Team

### 2. *Chief Financial Officer (CFO)*

- A CFO would manage the Congregation's finances, develops financial strategies, oversees budgeting and reporting, ensures regulatory compliance, and handles risk management. He or she would lead investment decisions, capital management, fundraising efforts, and maintain investor relationships. Additionally, a CFO would focus on cost efficiency and provide leadership to the finance team.
- The canonical Treasurer's role does not require personal expertise equivalent to the CFO's. Rather, the Treasurer provides canonical oversight, mission alignment, prudence, and ethical stewardship, while utilizing the CFO's expertise. The CFO and canonical Treasurer collaborate closely and complement one another, each contributing distinct expertise and perspectives.

### *3. Chief Operating Officer (COO)*

- A COO would oversee the day-to-day administrative and operational functions of the Congregation. He or she would be responsible for implementing Congregational strategies, optimizing operations, managing resources, ensuring efficiency, and aligning various departments toward organizational goals. A COO would collaborate closely with the CEO to translate strategic vision into effective, practical execution.

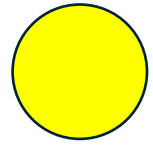
### *4. Director of Communications*

- A Director of Communications would provide expertise and leadership to strengthen the congregation's identity, visibility, and mission impact through strategic and effective communication practices. He or she would manage all internal and external communication channels, including newsletters, websites, social media, press releases, and promotional materials.

## **Reflection Questions**

- 1. What are your thoughts and feelings about involving laity more fully in your Congregation's administrative capacities?*
- 2. What are your thoughts and feelings about involving laity more fully in other non-canonical leadership roles?*
- 3. What are your thoughts and feelings about involving laity in the Wisdom Circles?*
- 4. Which existing structure and/or roles could be done more by laity to free sisters for other more desirable areas of service?*

## Congregational Leadership Team (CLT)



- **The CLT consists of 7 or 8 sisters**
  - 4 to 5 Congregational Leaders elected at Chapter
  - 3 Regional Leaders determined by each Region: Brazil, Jamaica, and the United States
- **Congregational Leaders**
  - Elected at Chapter
    - Congregational Minister, Associate Minister and 2 or 3 Councilors
  - Primary Responsibilities
    - Oversee, animate, and coordinate the life and mission of your Congregation as outline in your governing documents.
  - Residence
    - Where leadership lives is less important than their willingness to team, as needed, face-to-face and on Zoom. Thus, they could live in their own country.
- **Regional Ministers**
  - Elected by the members of
    - Each Region (Brazil, Jamaica, United States), elects their Regional Minister
  - Primary Responsibilities
    - Oversee, animate, and coordinate the spiritual and emotional life of the sisters, their ministry efforts, and ensure the financial viability of the Region.

## Reflection Questions

1. *Do you agree with having:*
  - a. *7 to 8 sisters on the CLT: Yes or No?*
  - b. *4 to 5 elected at Chapter: Yes or No?*
  - c. *Plus 3 Regional Ministers from*
    - i. *Brazil: Yes or No?*
    - ii. *Jamaica: Yes or No?*
    - iii. *United States: Yes or No?*
2. *Provide your rationale for your responses*

## Regional Leadership Teams (RLTs)

- **Regional Leadership Teams** are being proposed for each of the three main Regions: Brazil, Jamaica, and the United States.
  - Including a U.S. RLT was strongly suggested by U.S. sisters to alleviate the burden of CLT from becoming overly involved in regional/local issues.
- **Composition:** In addition to a Regional Minister, each Region would determine the composition of their RLT.
- **Lay involvement:** Some suggested that RLTs could include laity (as in Jamaica), to be determined by the Region.

## Reflection Questions

1. *The connection with Jamaica is essential. Yet, because of their demographics, some discerners wondered whether having a “Regional Minister” was the best way to maintain the needed connection. What are your thoughts on the best way to ensure the connection between Jamaica and the Congregation as a whole?*
2. *The connection between the RLTs is essential. Yet, given their needed involvement in their own Regions, might their connection be better represented on the Guiding Team (which is more about visioning), rather than the CLT (which is more about governance and requires more face-time)? Offer your thoughts and imaginings.*

## Change or Transformation?

Before the CARE training started, you began your discussions about “change vs. transformation.” Ted has provided inputs, handouts, articles, and videos describing the difference. Beth and Ted have asked: “*What are you seeking?*” We are asking again: *Now what are you seeking?* Are you looking simply to “change” structures to ease the burden on leadership? Or are you looking to “transform” the way you partner as leaders and members, to the transform the very culture of your Congregation, and give birth to New Life? Please offer your thoughts and reflections regarding what you are truly seeking at this point in your journey.