

"Towards a new configuration of the Congregation"



“Choose life with eyes fixed on the Lord”. The first invitation given to us by the 35th General Chapter is to “choose life”. This mandate was present throughout the process that the Congregation undertook over the last three years. The positive, participatory, responsible and co-responsible attitude of each sister and community was evident. The sense of being one has grown and strengthened through what we experienced together: prayer, reflection, work, search and discernment.

“Choose life with
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Lord”

With this experience gathered in the heart, we celebrated the Council of Congregation, Hawaii 2016. It is true that not all the sisters of the Congregation were physically present at this meeting, but all were present and close spiritually. For some months now we have joined in prayer for this meeting of the Congregation, asking the Spirit of God to continue to guide and accompany us in our search, and to inspire us to take the road towards the “New Face of Congregation”. He continues to inspire and strengthen us, so that we can continue with courage along the path he wants to take us.

“to define and approve the new configuration of the Congregation”

This Council of the Congregation had as its principle aim “to define and approve the new configuration of the Congregation” a task left by the 35th General Chapter. A very large and challenging responsibility. A very strong call to seek and to discern the will of God, “*Show us, Lord, your ways, teach us your paths*” (Ps 24.4). A call to rely on the certainty of his presence in our midst; to trust that He walks beside us, accompanying our days and nights, our fears and doubts...

To go deeper into this experience of search and discernment, we needed to put our minds and hearts in tune with the Lord “*the way, the truth and the life*”. Hence the need to start with a time of retreat, to help us fix our eyes on Jesus, who invites us at all times: to choose life, to choose his blessing, to receive and be channels of blessing, always searching for him, allowing ourselves to be guided by Him, allowing ourselves to get advice and to walk in his ways, to follow him in the happy moments and in the grey moments because He is faithful and his grace never abandons us.

We began the Council of the Congregation strengthened by this experience of encounter with the Lord; we felt the Spirit of the Lord was with us, because of the atmosphere of joy, communion, service, unity and peace that was evident in the group and so were confirmed in it. The main objective of this meeting was very challenging and daring, but we felt that to achieve it we were not alone. The Lord, the master of the work, assured us of his presence “*where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst*” (Mt 18:20).

From an attitude of reflection, prayer, search and discernment, a new organization of the Congregation was being designed and agreed upon, which responded to the mission left by the 35th General Chapter. A complex task, because we had to agree on the similarities and differences: cultures, criteria, attitudes, imaginary, proposals, resistances, thrust and possibilities. At the same time a hopeful task, because we felt in each sister the desire to seek in communion the way the Lord wanted to lead us to continue recreating our SS.CC. charism.

According to the new configuration agreed upon in the Council of Congregation and approved by the General Government, the Congregation will be organized into three geographic zones, with its specific internal structure and with some new instances of animation and government. To carry out this new organization a schedule of implementation was drawn up and approved. It will begin in February and will last until the next General Chapter to be held in September 2018. You will receive the complete and detailed explanation of all this, through the Major Superiors and Delegation Coordinators in the transmission of the Council of the Congregation, Hawaii 2016.

From the faith and confidence that is within us, we can say that the road ahead is beautiful, full of hope and the presence of God. Let Him lead us along the paths that that he wants to take us, so that his Kingdom may come to our life and ss.cc. mission; let us embrace with love and together, this future that lies ahead. Let “Life” always have the last word. May we nourish ourselves with the certainty that it is the Spirit who is guiding our lives and our history, may we set out on this new stage with unshakable faith and hope.

May we set out on this new venture to construct together, without denying fears, doubts, uncertainty ... but with absolute confidence in God's love, “*My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness*” (2nd Cor 12.9). Without risk, daring, courage and love, there is no prophecy or credible witness. Let us contemplate and welcome this new stage of the process of the Congregation in the light of the Word, and let us undertake this new path together and from loving intimacy with the Lord. “*He who began a good work in us, will bring it to fruition*” (Phil 1,6).

Thank you for the journey that each of you took throughout your years of religious life, and thank you for the love that will grow and give of itself on the road we still have to take. With Paul we can say: *“Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead...”* (Phil 3: 13-14), together we will write a new page in our congregational history where what is important is to choose life for us, for our communities and for the recipients of our mission, where the recreation of our SS.CC. charism is the most important. In this new step of the way, may Jesus Christ be our true master, we cannot only believe in Him, but also to trust Him.

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The road is long and perhaps beyond our human strength, however, let us walk along it with *“our eyes fixed on the Lord”* (Heb 12.2), with the power of his Spirit, listening to His Word, paying attention to his calls with humility and love.

Let us not allow despair or pessimism take the place of the fire of the Spirit, let us avoid becoming prophets of doom, of predicting no life, of grieving... Such a way of looking does not allow us to discover the Spirit in each of us and through us in our communities, and will not allow us to look at the blessings of life and mission that lie beneath our way. Let the fire of our charism be the revitalizing force that ignites everything that we experience, and with this strength let us welcome and undertake the way that Divine Providence invites us to go along.