



Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy

Congregación de la Hermanas de la Misericordia

12th March 2020

Dear Sisters

Lenten greetings and blessings to each one. At this time of great human fragility let us hold all who are affected in prayer and compassion.

Following our letter of January 23rd last, we want to introduce the **next phase of our journey** regarding revision of our Constitutions, especially of chapter 4 on structures and governance.

You will remember that the *Chapter Mandate 2018 – Faithful to God’s Call* – asked us to continue the process of revision and to take some further steps. It affirmed the need for change in our structures and that we had an excellent model in the work done so far. In concrete terms, what we have been contemplating for the sake of mercy mission, is the replacement of provincial/regional structures by a single unitary (one-congregation) structure, supported by flexible branches.

The Chapter Mandate acknowledged that we needed more time to go deeper into engagement with, education on and exploration of what our future might look like. As already mentioned, the Plenary Conference 2019 gave two days to consideration of this Call with the assistance of Lynn Jarrell (Canon Lawyer). The strong leaning from that Conference was that geographically-based branches might be the most suitable structure for our circumstances.

The plan now is that, as a Congregation, **we will take time for this next phase**, time to engage more fully with our ongoing journey, through a process of reflection, prayer and conversation at local level from September to December 2020.

A Constitutions Working Group (2020) now in place, will prepare a community process for this phase. The members are – Elizabeth Manning, Catherine Ryan, Maria Ngui, Kathy Rule, Córle McCarthy, Alyce Waters and Lily Sexton – and we are most grateful to them for their generosity in engaging with this work.

On September 12th 2020 in Emmaus, Dublin, this process for community participation will be launched, and will be presented to Provincial teams, local representatives and facilitators. They will then take it back to communities, clusters and other groupings over the following months.

Following that process, it is likely that there will be further phases of the journey during 2021 and beyond. At some point our common discernment will be ready to go to a General Chapter where the decisions will be made, the text of the revised Constitution will be finalised, and a request for approval from Rome will be made.

In the meantime, let us pray that Catherine’s spirit will continue to accompany us on these next phases of our journey.

With best wishes and love,

Congregational Leadership Team

Rachamim

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