

the transforming Spirit



Inter-Assemblies Document
2009 - 2015

OPEN TO
THE TRANSFORMING SPIRIT

WELLSPRING OF
PROPHECY AND HOPE

COMPANY OF THE
DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY
OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

July 18, 2009

My Dear Sisters,

May the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with us!

The pressing appeal launched by the 2009 General Assembly, to be open to the transforming Spirit, wellspring of prophecy and hope, invites us to commit ourselves with a new impetus and courage on the path that will take us through the next six years.

This Inter-Assemblies Document *Open to the Transforming Spirit* was developed through a process of prayerful reflection, patient work, and constructive dialogue that engaged the members of the Assembly as they focused on the four themes proposed for the study of this Assembly. An Editing Commission composed of three Sisters

brought together the underlying intuitions, points of convergence, appeals and most significant orientations to create a document draft that was approved by the Assembly.

Using this draft as a base, the Editing Commission continued its work in collaboration with the Coordination Commission and the General Council.

This document is thus the fruit of our discussions. It seeks to express in a simple way our joyful experience of listening to the Spirit in a communion of hearts, in an atmosphere of prayer and discernment, along with cordial and sisterly openness, respect and freedom. The document transmits our profound union with Christ the Servant and our desire to follow Him according to the charism of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise. It expresses our love for the women and men of our time, especially those most marginalized, and our commitment to seek them out where they are in order to be witnesses of God's tender love for them.

As you see, the document is divided into three parts:

1. An introduction that sets before us the reality of the world in which we live, and from there describes the deep longings of our hearts, represented symbolically through fire and thirst;
2. The appeals launched by the Spirit, which were the focal points that marked the pattern of reflection in Assembly;
3. Responses to be made that will motivate and energize our lives;

I hope that you will experience joy and gratitude as you receive this message that the 2009 Assembly places in your hands. Consider this as a gift, a sure guide by which the Spirit will lead us along our way.


As we approach the Jubilee year in which we celebrate the 350th anniversary of

the death of our Founders, we confide our journey to them. Through their intercession, we ask the Lord for the grace to live the charism of Charity, serving persons who are poor “with the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brows” (cf. Saint Vincent, Coste XI, p. 32) with a love that is humble and simple.

May Mary, the Mother of the Company, watch over us, help us to face the future with confidence, and be with us on our missionary way, so that like her, we may be transformed by the Spirit and be agents of

***“prophecy and hope,
now and everywhere”.***

With the assurance of my prayers,
affection and devotion,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Evelyne Franc". The script is cursive and somewhat informal.

Sister Evelyne Franc
Daughter of Charity

**OPEN TO
THE TRANSFORMING SPIRIT
WELLSPRING OF
PROPHECY AND HOPE**

The *General Assembly*, impelled by the breath of the Holy Spirit, brought forth profound thirsts, ardent longings, and pressing calls. We have been enkindled by the fire of a new Pentecost for the Company.

We instinctively recognize our globalized world as:

- ❖ a world where poor persons are becoming poorer;

- ❖ a world that is losing its values and points of reference, that is afraid and risks turning in on itself;
- ❖ a complex, diversified, technological world...

We are witnesses of the Spirit at work, releasing new energy, because we also see:

- ❖ women and men who live in solidarity, offering the best of themselves for a more just society in which people recognize one another as brothers and sisters;
- ❖ young people and adults driven by the search for meaning in their lives, for spirituality, and for God;
- ❖ people from various backgrounds who join forces to witness to truth, the value of life, human dignity, and the true meaning of freedom.

God loves this world and invites us also to love it deeply, to see the world as God sees it (cf. Gn 1:31; Jn 3:16). The charity of Christ urges us to see the world through the eyes of our Founders, recognizing the most vulnerable persons as priority.

May the Spirit come to quench our thirst, and to satiate our longing for truth and consistency so that we may be bearers of hope in this world. We are thirsting...

- thirsting to be more rooted in Christ, to enter into an intimate relationship with him;
- thirsting to live in deeper communion with our Sisters and in proximity of life and heart with people who are marginalized;
- thirsting to respond with creative charity to the appeals of persons

living in poverty and to carry out our service as a mission entrusted to our local community;

- thirsting to deepen our sense of belonging to the Company and to share our charism;
- thirsting for active solidarity in order to take care of the Earth created by God for the good of all.

Let us allow the Spirit to touch us, the Spirit who wants to make all things new and who, today, wishes to renew the very depths of our hearts and heal our wounds and those of all humanity.

Yes, let's open ourselves to the transforming guidance of the Spirit of God today! Let us be fired by the power of the appeals upon which we have reflected deeply during our Assembly.

APPEALS

1- Become ever more deeply rooted in Jesus Christ, "the source and model of all charity."

(Common Rules, I, 1)

- Give the Word of God a central place in our lives of faith:
 - recognize that God speaks to us through Scripture, the Church and life events;
 - rediscover the power of the Word at work in us.
- Deepen together our understanding of the message found in the Word of God, in

Church teachings and in our Vincentian heritage.

- Contemplate Christ and discover his action in the heart and life of those who are poor and allow ourselves to be evangelized by them (cf. C. 10).

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“If you remain in my word, you are truly my disciples”

(Jn 8:31 b)

2- Enhance “living together in great union and cordiality” as a prophetic witness of love and a way of hope. (cf. Spiritual Testament of St. Louise, Spiritual Writings, p. 835).

- Deepen a “spirituality of communion among ourselves” (cf. *Vita Consecrata* 51) and build communities where loving and trusting relationships flourish.
- Make of our local communities, communities where we really share our experiences of faith (cf. Lk 24:13-35), communities that are welcoming, joyful and open in view of the mission.
- Adopt, in the midst of a consumer society, a lifestyle that is simple

and balanced and that respects
the environment (cf. S. 8 d).

***"Everyone will know that you are
my disciples, if you have love for one
another."***

(Jn 13:35)

3- Serve by “coming and going” with courage and creativity to manifest God's love to persons living in poverty. (cf. Light of Pentecost of Saint Louise, *Spiritual Writings*, p. 1)

- Renew our ways of responding to the challenges of the new forms of poverty exacerbated by the global crisis and dare to take prophetic stances against injustice.
- Enhance our availability and our servant attitude, offering our time with joy and generosity, in free and unconditional ways.
- Witness to the love of Christ through our service, our lives and our proximity with persons living in poverty (cf. C. 16 b).

***"Let justice roll down like water,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing
stream"***

(Am 5:24)

***"Just as you did it to one of the
least of these who are members of my
family, you did it to me."***

(Mt 25:40)

4- Deepen our sense of belonging to the Company and take responsibility for the “Company of the future.” (cf. C. 59)

- Feed the flame of our charism, live as joyful and faithful members of the Company, and promote growth in our vocation of Daughters of Charity.
- Give new impetus to the missionary spirit of the Company in order to proclaim, by our words and our lives, the love of God the Father manifested in Jesus Christ (cf. C. 25).
- Revitalize youth and vocation ministry in order to enhance young people's awareness of their responsibility in the life of the Church and encourage their commitment to serving those who are marginalized.

- Intensify a Vincentian spirit of collaboration at all levels (cf. S. 9).

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***"Enlarge the space for your tent,
spread out your tent cloths, lengthen
your ropes and make firm your
stakes."***

(Is 54:2)

Trusting that the Spirit can do more in us than we can dare to imagine, we let the prophecy of Joel resonate within us:

“...I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young people shall see visions, and your old people shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit...”

(Joel 3:1-2)



RESPONSES

to be lived out wholeheartedly

Guided by the Word of God,
with a passion for the world
into which we are sent,
together we commit ourselves
to respond to
the calls of the Spirit today.

1- Become ever more deeply rooted in Jesus Christ, “the source and model of all charity.”

(Common Rules, I, 1)

- Cultivate a life of prayer that is creative and fed by the liturgy and the sacraments.
- Learn to discern together the action of the Spirit and reflect anew on our lives through the lens of Scripture.
- Rediscover silence that fosters attentive listening to *God* and one another.
- Seek formation in the Word (biblical studies, *lectio divina*). Share the Word with one another in community, and when possible, with all those present in our lives.

- Readjust the rhythm of our lives in order to nurture our being as Daughters of Charity.

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2- Enhance “living together in great union and cordiality” as a prophetic witness of love and a way of hope. (cf. Spiritual Testament of Saint Louise, *Spiritual Writings*, p. 835)

- Be open to each Sister, with a faith perspective that accepts differences as enriching.
- Courageously and honestly address the challenges of community life, availing of the benefits of reconciliation.
- Recognize in our sick and elderly Sisters a real source of vitality for the mission.
- Intensify the quality of our community sharing, in particular apostolic reflection, in an atmosphere of dialogue and listening to one another.

- Enrich our provincial and local community plans to include:
 - prophetic ways of being and acting in our service to persons living in poverty,
 - concrete choices relating to simple life style and greater proximity to persons living in poverty,
 - consistent actions regarding our use of Earth's resources and protection of the environment.

- Revitalize participation and coresponsibility to promote at all levels an ongoing attitude of discernment in view of decision-making.

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3- Serve by “coming and going” with courage and creativity to manifest God's love to persons living in poverty. (cf. Light of Pentecost of Saint Louise, *Spiritual Writings*, p. 1)

- Develop missionary priority plans in the Provinces as we continue the revision of works and ministries.
- Commit ourselves to discerning new ways to respond to the appeals that come from today's realities of poor persons (migration, human trafficking, AIDS, all that threatens life...).
- Help persons living in poverty to be agents of their own promotion and to make their voices heard.

- Renew our involvement in ministry to families and our educational approaches.
- Collaborate with associations and organizations working to combat the root causes of poverty, in order to promote justice, peace and respect for life.
- Cultivate ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue in the framework of collaboration in service of persons living in poverty.

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4- Deepen our sense of belonging to the Company and take responsibility for the "Company of the future." (cf. C. 59).

- Make better use of the writings of the Founders and be rooted in the Vincentian mystique in all our relationships.
- Support formation at all stages and an accompaniment of Sister Servants in their service of community animation.
- Revitalize the missionary vocation of the Company beginning with initial formation and continuing throughout our lives.
- Share our human, material and spiritual resources to a greater extent and enhance interprovincial exchanges to strengthen

communion among us and improve the quality and efficacy of our service. Continue our efforts to learn other languages.

- Intensify our networking in the Company, the Vincentian family and the Church.
- Revitalize youth and vocation ministry in collaboration with the local and diocesan Church.
- Welcome others into our local communities to experience prayer and service of persons living in poverty.
- Promote new forms of collaboration with lay people and support their formation in the Vincentian charism.

**By engaging in personal
and community reflection
on various levels,
we commit ourselves to developing
ongoing formation
opportunities in our Provinces
to assist us in responding
to the calls of this Assembly.
In this way, each one of us
and the Company throughout the
world
will be signs of
prophecy and hope
now and everywhere.**

Led by the Holy Spirit,
strengthened by
the love of Mary our Mother,

we welcome her invitation
with joyful gratitude
and take it to heart:

"Do whatever He tells you"

(Jn 2:5)





Prophecy and hope
now and everywhere