Dear Sisters and Affiliates:

We continue to unfold what began at our Risk Boldly the Future, 2013 General Assembly. It is a new time for FSPA and we need and welcome an abundance of leadership to bring the dreams of the General Assembly to life. Our Planning Assembly Team has prepared these chronicles and reflections to help us remember our work together, the vital work of Spirit, and our inspirations during the General Assembly. As you read, we invite you to re-enter the creative experience of the Assembly or enter for the first time. Notice what you are passionate about and see how you can join in moving the inspiration from our General Assembly to life in our community and the communities we serve.

We have each and all chosen the Gospel life of Jesus on which to model our lives. Because of that, we are called to the edge – to the place of prophets. We know we are committed to the evolution of consciousness and culture, living on the evolutionary edge, ahead of our time. At our General Assembly, we found ourselves using the tools and the experience we gained from the Vision Quest to move more deeply into and explore the Evolutionary Monstrance, Eucharistic Consciousness we shared at the General Assembly.

**VISION QUEST**

The Vision Quest we named in 2010, and have been living out since then, was the beginning of a gradual conversion that prepared us for our 2013 General Assembly. Our journey with Awakening Consciousness, Inner Transformation, and building Authentic Relationships has prepared us to move forward now into deeper partnerships in service to Mission. God within has been urging us, by our vows and by our commitment to the Gospel, into the creative process and faith-filled risk to help us grow through our relationships, spiritual practice, mission and ministries.
RISK BOLDLY THE FUTURE

Our theme, Risk Boldly the Future, helped us to open our minds and hearts to all that was in store for us at the Assembly. Sr. Gail Worcelo invited us to the evolutionary edge and to turn our exquisite attention to all that is possible for our beloved community. She helped us glimpse those edges and feel the tremendous faith and hope we need, present in the heart of Christ. Sr. Gail’s challenge to leap over the edge into love continues to echo in us. She encouraged us to embody Christ Consciousness fully as a community and to continue to boldly teach and share it with others. She helped us reconnect with our heritage and connect with our future through her powerful keynotes on the six moments of Grace, or evolutionary leaps. John McHugh witnessed to the power of who we are as an FSPA community through his powerful scriptural reflections and stories. Teresa Posakony and Tenneson Woolf helped shape processes that could generate more from our engagement with one another. As a community, we named the movements underway and the risks we can actually see ourselves taking. We organized around our passion for mission and the key questions which will help us move boldly forward in service to that mission. We reflected on what is emerging among us, where the Spirit is inviting us. We looked at what we will need to let go.

MOVING TOWARD ACTION

On Monday afternoon, our “Two Loops” process helped us name changes underway in six key areas of our community: Social Justice, Care of Creation, Spirituality Centers, Religious Life, Affiliation, and Sponsorship. Our communal energy was already in the evolutionary dynamic and we were ready to name the bold risks we saw in each area.

Two Loops Model for System Change

If we follow the trajectories of work, community, and systems, we see that they all have life cycles. They have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Human systems, like systems in nature, don’t tend to change through plans or dictates, but through emergence. The two loops framework helps us to see where various efforts are in their lifecycles. The loops reflect the natural dying and rising process.

The first loop speaks to what we experienced in the past that led us to the new. The second loop reflects the movement toward risk taking and new expressions, what is being born among us. We asked at the Assembly for people to name the “bold risks” and the "new" present in the second curve.

Individuals self-selected into an area of their choice.

Care of Creation and Cosmic Theology

First Loop: Promoting awareness and practices of sustainability with individuals, such as use paper not plastic; reduce; reuse; recycle; water conservation; composting.

Second Loop: Deepen our study and teaching of cosmic theology and creation theology. Focus on how we work toward broader systemic transformation such as creating local food systems, chemical free environments, corporate activism and the building of Eco-villages. Deeply integrate the values and practices with our own land and consider long term land conservation.

Affiliation

First Loop: Welcoming Affiliates and diversity into our community. Affiliates are partnering with the Sisters in many aspects of ministry, prayer, spiritual formation, and community life.

Second Loop: Recognition of the gifts of Affiliates, shared ministry, fostering Affiliate led initiatives, growth into a separate but connected identity. There is a deep desire among Affiliates to bring their gifts, leadership, and energy in service to the FSPA mission and community. Some are considering forms of co-living.
Spirituality Centers
First Loop: Areas of influence were through institutional education and institutional ministries.
Second Loop: Outreach from a perspective of care of creation, social justice, and spirituality. Embracing and promoting cosmic theology and awakened consciousness. Our centers are soul places for relationship, community building, action for social justice, inclusion, and holistic healing. The movement forward is to be much more collaborative, inter-spiritual, and aligned with deeper systemic change than it has been. We will continue to mentor and support next generations of leadership, formation and active experimentation at the edge.

Social Justice
First Loop: Peace and Justice Networks and place based ministry: St. Clare Health Mission, Place of Grace, 8th Day Center.
Second Loop: Movement to additional political involvement and education. Collaboration with other organizations on major issues such as immigration and human trafficking, homeless issues continue to be increasing. Ministry and Venture Grants and other financial contributions support innovation and a breadth of ministries aligned with local needs. We can imagine being called on to stand for new social justice issues in relation to the institutional church.

Vowed Life
First Loop: “You keep the rule and the rule will keep you.” The community membership was larger and more insular in the past.
Second Loop: Relational, welcoming and outreach toward partnership. Reinterpretation and evolving sense of the vows and perpetual adoration. Alignment with cosmic and creation theology. Deepening of a contemplative spirit and shared practices. Deeper roots in Franciscan values and lived spirituality. Charism is a gift of the Spirit and available to all, not just vowed members. Demographics call us to intentionality envision how we can be well as a smaller community.

Sponsorship
First Loop: Sisters staffed and managed institutions and schools. FSPA shared tradition and values.
Second Loop: Lay leadership and staffing. The need for increased board and staff formation and mission integration. Expanding definition of sponsorship and the need to get good at it! The need to focus on mission as a benchmark for decisions and evaluation. Growing clarity about who we are as Franciscans.
LOOKING AHEAD

On Tuesday afternoon we organized by decade, then across generations to identify “What are the essential movements for FSPA and Affiliates in the next four years?”

Essential Movements

Biological evolution is marked by moments of punctuated equilibrium, periods of definitive change. Community evolution is marked by essential movements, commitments discovered and brought to life by engaging one another. – Tenneson Woolf & Teresa Posakony

Introduction

First, we listened to a panel of two Sisters (Sr. Cecilia Corcoran and Sr. Eileen McKenzie) and one Affiliate (Emily Dykman) address the question, “What is the essential movement I see for this community in the next four years?” Next we explored this same question in small groups of similarly aged participants, and finally, in multi-generational conversations.

Sr. Sarah Hennessey and Sr. Julia Walsh gave us a taste, in prose and poetry respectively, of some “juicy morsels” from those conversations.

Essential Movements by Sr. Sarah

Holding hands, we peered over the edge a little. Sr. Gail asked us to go as far as we could to see what might emerge, to push ourselves towards a higher order of consciousness. That means moving from a “separation consciousness” to a “unitive consciousness.” As we move into this shift, we do the work of living diversity.

Since spiritual growth happens collectively, we feel called to deepen our partnerships and collaborate with the greater community for the Common Good of all, both within La Crosse and beyond it. We are committed to living into a multicultural, multigenerational congregation and society. As a community of givers, we want to receive the gifts of one another. This may look like a focus on intentional community living, or on deepening communication and mutuality between FSPA and affiliates, or on networking with the larger community to address issues that impact both human beings and the earth as a whole. We are awakening to the fact that we are part of the critical mass of Christ consciousness, not just alone in our separateness as FSPA.

We may need to let go in order to create the new. As we become smaller, we want to become more united without becoming more insular. In our smallness is a greater capacity for communication, and we can move to the margins more easily.

We are all here to support each other in leaping off that edge, into the unknown, the only place where possibility can become reality. By leaping we are not throwing away our tradition or our memories. We are simply pushing forward into the unknown, and like a slinky, our many coils of the past will come with us. We do not lose what we have gained; our past comes with us as we move into the future.

Like a young girl on a boat, we proclaim, “We are moving!” We are trying to move forward with deliberation and joy. Evolution is luring us into mystery. Still holding hands, balancing, together – we are dancing on the edge.
Fierce Hope

Into our shared
Future with fierce
Hope, we are
MOVING like Word
Made flesh, eager,
Alive, engaged,

United as Gospel
People enlivened by the
Evolutionary menstrual.

Eager, alive, and yelling YES
Leap off edges, lean into hearts
We will do what is ours to do.
We are doing what God calls us to.

Let's love our neighbor,
Let's live together, let's end trafficking,
Let's name our blessings, care for Earth,
Let's be sustainable, help the poor,
Let's care for the marginalized, reach out,
Stand up, build up. Peace. Love. Joy.
Let's cooperate, let's go on mission:
YES. YES. YES.

Like Chaordic creativity,
Contemplative compassion
And Cracking slinky's,
We are linked. As one
Together we lean into
Heart Exchanges fired-up for
Good Gospel activity.

Sunshine shines on our
Shoulders as we make our
Moving into modern lives and
Dance. FSPA vibrations
Blend generations and
Associations. Prayer songs

Ignite our lips as does the
Love force from the risky
Christic cosmos.
We are bigger than our limits,
We are bolder than
This June. Together we
Leap off evolutionary edges
And into what is ours to do.

~ Sr. Julia Walsh

WHAT IS OURS TO DO?

On Wednesday we spent the whole day rolling up our sleeves, self-organizing in small groups focused on “How can we boldly live compassionate action for the sake of mission?” These self-organizing groups reflected the abundance of passion for mission and the variety of ways Sisters, Affiliates and partners are working to move forward key areas of mission. The Venture Grants announced at the Assembly will help resource and inspire many efforts and initiatives. Driven by our mission, the Actions for the Sake of Mission groups that developed will join together with already existing FSPA grassroots initiatives to make a significant impact on many of the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Live Boldly in Compassionate Action for the Sake of Mission

Open Space Technology (OST) is a format for people to work in self-organized working and thinking groups. Unlike traditional conference formats, OST does not create an agenda in advance. Rather, an agenda is created live with all participants welcomed to name working groups that they would like to convene. OST also does not assign participants to groups. Rather, they are free to choose which groups interest them and to move between groups. OST is a form of distributive leadership. The working principle is that people take responsibility for what they love. At the Assembly, this meant Sisters and Affiliates creating 28 working and thinking groups related to “Living Boldly in Compassionate Action for the Sake of Mission.” A list of the groups is shared below to both witness the comprehensiveness of passion and to name key contact people, leaders in every chair, so that further spontaneous collaboration and creativity can occur.
### Open Space Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>CONVENER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How our Affiliates can get wings to fly</td>
<td>Sr. Catherine Kaiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Explore our margins are today</td>
<td>Sr. Eileen McKenzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spiritual Heart Transplants ****</td>
<td>Sr. Kathy Roberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sister/Affiliation Authentic Relationship</td>
<td>Krista Clements Orlan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How we can continue to grow the FSPA family</td>
<td>Mollie Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Partnering with Hamilton/Lincoln schools to promote peace/non-violence principles ****</td>
<td>Sr. Lucy Ann Meyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Explore evolutionary heart conversation units</td>
<td>Sr. Mary Kathryn Fogarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Crone work: Explore non-canonical status</td>
<td>Sr. Delmarie Gibney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Land/Carbon footprint</td>
<td>Sr. Paulynn Instenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mobility of programs and retreats through spirituality centers ****</td>
<td>Sr. Amy Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Establish an FSPA presence (Center) in Assisi ****</td>
<td>Sr. Silvana Panza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Arts, beauty &amp; creativity for expressing of deeper spiritual healing ****</td>
<td>Sr. Karen Kappell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>How we can connect with our priests to bring life to the church</td>
<td>Sr. Rochelle Potaracke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Create office of ministry</td>
<td>Sr. Maria Friedman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Housing for homeless families ****</td>
<td>Sr. Ronalda Hophan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Nourishing our mystical hearts – evolutionary monstrosity ****</td>
<td>Sr. Joan Weisenbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Inclusiveness of people living with disabilities to access Affiliate gatherings, to have them participate in our FSPA prayers</td>
<td>Pam Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Living authentically our Franciscan way of life</td>
<td>Sr. Jean Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Carbon Footprint</td>
<td>Sr. Helen Elsbernd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Create and implement joint ministry on the margins ****</td>
<td>Sr. Suzanne Rubenbauer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Create a place of common heart (Sisters/Affiliates) with marginalized/minors in Cedar Rapids ****</td>
<td>Sr. Theresa Keller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Intentional living communities ****</td>
<td>Margaret Bluske</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Ordained women</td>
<td>Sr. Constance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Right Sizing ****</td>
<td>Sr. Celesta Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>FSPA privilege and power: our generalate potential</td>
<td>Sr. Julia Walsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Eradication of modern slavery ****</td>
<td>Sr. Marlene Weisenbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>A new paradigm for Viterbo</td>
<td>Emily Dykman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Becoming an evolutionary monstrosity</td>
<td>Sr. Anita Beskar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second round of OST working groups was created by participants. This time, with the added challenge of specific next action steps, a number of groups gathered. Those with **** behind their listing plus another one (Bolivia Discernment Group with S. Eileen McKenzie as the contact) have continued moving forward from collaborations born at General Assembly.
AFFILIATION

On Thursday, Sisters and Affiliates met separately. Sisters again addressed the business of Assembly and for the first time, the Affiliates met for a day of imagining, generating ideas and planning parallel to the Sisters’ business day.

Our Affiliate community was energized by deep inclusion in this Assembly. As they step into more of their own identity, their contribution to FSPA mission and ministry is profound. They are part of the heart exchange and part of how we carry out our mission in a new way. This was the first Assembly where Affiliates participated on the General Assembly Planning Committee. It was a joyful new approach. FSPA Affiliates, just like Sisters, are longing for communion with others who have a large vision and want to work in partnership for the sake of Mission. Through them and with them, we reach deeper and deeper expressions of wholeness as individuals and as a community. Their energy and commitment are gift. Together we sing God’s dream into its fullness.

Affiliates

“What is ours to do?” This was the main question asked by Affiliation Co-Minister, Marci Madary, in the first ever Affiliate-only portion of 2013 General Assembly. It was an invitation and challenge to the group of 60 joined together in shared learning, relationship building, and innovative working groups in support of Franciscan charism.

In Marci’s words: “Gathering as Affiliates, we felt a deep connection with one another. We all had been drawn by the same charism; all called to live Franciscan values. We were able to talk about the gifts and challenges of being an Affiliate with FSPA. Enlivened by our sharing, the conversation inviting concrete ideas was filled with spirit and grace.”

There were practical ideas about assisting FSPA financially to demonstrate personal investment, restructuring the Affiliation Office to meet the demands of the growth, and using technology to help bridge the issues that expanded geography creates. Ideas in the spiritual realm surfaced: exploring the cosmic Christ, bringing Franciscanism to ever broader realms, and assisting the ongoing development of Affiliates by taking spirituality on the road. Ministry was an important aspect of the ideas that were surfaced. Action plans regarding reactivating the Renew Neighborhood initiative and exploring opportunities for extended volunteering were created. With intentional living communities, strengthening of companion communities, and assisting spirituality centers as the focus of other small groups, togetherness was shown to be valued.

As affirmed at the 2013 General Assembly, Affiliates and Sisters are important to each other. Affiliates have an authentic desire to continue to grow as partners, committed to strengthen the relationship and allow this movement of the Spirit to manifest in beauty, even when it is “messy.”
In the light of the Christic cosmos we make a heart exchange...

our community committed to connecting in creative unions leaning toward the evolutionary edge

humbly chaordically

bringing our mission forward in service of Gospel love.
Sisters’ Business Day

As always, Sisters enjoyed our Thursday business day and addressed several important issues...

Sisters’ Business Day Decisions

Sisters’ Business Day began with prayer in Mary of the Angels Chapel with the Affiliates. The Harvest Prayer was presented with word and gesture. After prayer, Sisters and Affiliates broke into their respective groups. Sisters (full participants and some participant observers) went to Marycrest Auditorium at Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare.

Sr. Helen Elsbernd, Assembly Chair, welcomed the Sisters, led us in the Vision Quest and Statement of Identity. Sr. Linda Mershon, FSPA President, convoked the assembly, and roll call was taken. The agenda was approved and four tellers were elected. Facilitator Teresa Posakony led the group in clarity circles around the questions, “Where is it that we’ve been led?” and “What do we want to move forward?”

Reports

The General Assembly accepted the Leadership report presented on Tuesday, June 18, 2013. Sr. Julie Tydrich, Treasurer, then gave the financial report which was accepted.

Proposals

The Assembly voted on the following proposals.

1. To amend the Book of Directives #46.1, deleting the word “perpetually.” And the paragraph in the Book of Directives will read as follows:

For the election of delegates to the general assembly, ballots are prepared which contain the names of professed sisters who previously indicated they are willing to be full participants in the general assembly process.

2. By the next General Assembly in four years, FSPA will move its Assembly of Affairs and its Assembly of Election to within approximately six months before the new congregational leadership takes office.

This proposal will be finalized at our Election Assembly in March.

3. FSPA will designate St. Joseph Ridge (Villa) land for educational purposes that relate to the preservation and sustainability of the land and the environment.

This proposal passed after discussion regarding clarification of what is meant by educational purposes.

Recommendations

Leadership Structure Committee’s report and recommendations were affirmed.

Sr. Rose Elsbernd presented on the election process which is being proposed for use at our March 2014 election. She recommended that we use the process as given in the Book of Directives with the addition of circles of discernment for those nominated.

Sr. Celesta Day made a recommendation which was passed onto leadership to consider hiring a consultant to look at right sizing our congregation, ministries as well as buildings.

Discussion

The spiritual renewal proposal was discussed. Sr. Donna Weber and Sr. Millie Tigges shared their desire in putting forth the proposal. The presentation by Assembly Keynote presenter Gail Worcelo, was what they were hoping for in the proposal. Several other spiritual resources were shared with the Sisters.
We had deep and fruitful conversations about many issues that are facing us at the present time. And we know that there are other challenges and opportunities unfolding before us in the years ahead. Some of those issues are named here:

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING US IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**

- Facilities planning for changing demographics and shifts in mission
- Growth in number of affiliates and new ways to organize and partner
- Redistribution of leadership with more leadership at local levels
- Possible covenant relationships with other religious communities
- Ecclesial relationships
- New perspectives on sponsorship
- How to keep the energy of the assembly moving

We thank God for the blessings and abundance experienced during the Assembly. We will embrace our opportunities as well as our challenges as we face the future with courage, hope and faith.

**FOR THE SAKE OF MISSION — RISK!**

Humbly yours,
The General Assembly Team

Madalene Buelow, Affiliate Sr. Sue Ernst Sr. Sarah Hennessey Sr. Kathy Roberg
Sr. Rosemary Desmond Sr. Joann Gehling Sr. Karen Lueck Sr. Eileen Shaw
Sr. Rose Elsbernd Joyce Heil, Affiliate Sr. Linda Mershon Sr. Corrina Thomas

**Resources from Assembly 2013 – Risk Boldly the Future**

Visit www.fspalive.org, select “Resources” from the top then “Assembly Documents” from the left to view daily news, poetry, videos and more.

General Assembly DVDs are available for loan in the St. Rose Media Center and Villa Library. To purchase a copy, contact Sr. Lisa Zmuda. lzmuda@fspa.org

The song, “Risk Boldly,” by Sr. Rosemary Desmond is available through Laurie Swan; email: lswan@fspa.org or phone: 608-791-5288

“Grace on the Margins”: CD available through Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, Seattle; phone: 206-223-1138.
RISK BOLDLY THE FUTURE: 2013 GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN REVIEW
Risk Boldly the Future

2013 GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN REVIEW

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

Modern Lives.
Sacred Traditions.

Prepared October 2013