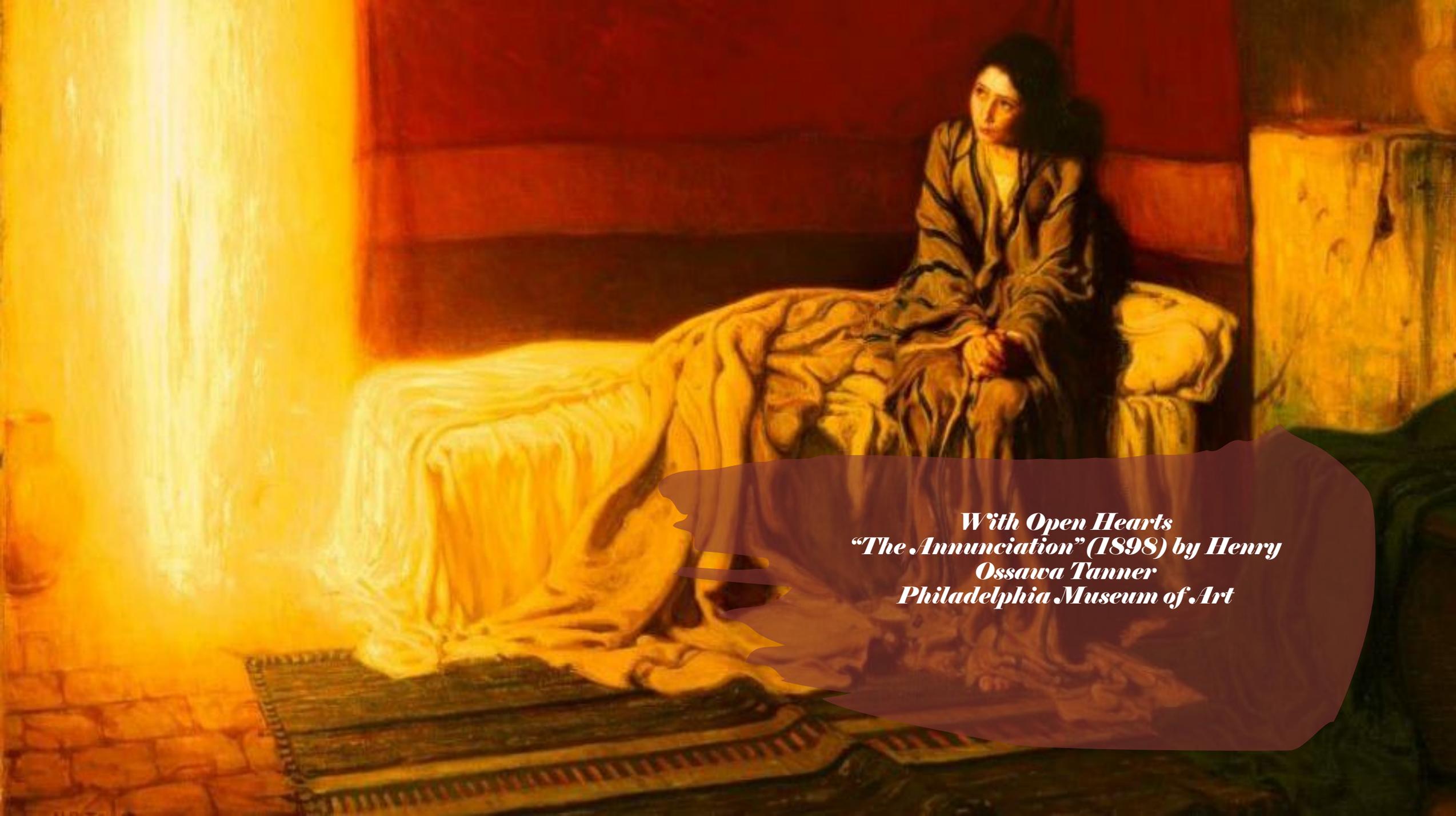




***At the Service of
the Church***

RECONFIGURATION PLANNING

RESPONDING TO YOUR NEEDS



With Open Hearts
“The Annunciation” (1898) by Henry
Ossawa Tanner
Philadelphia Museum of Art

From Law ... to ... Discerning God's Call



*“Not by might,
nor by power,
but by my Spirit,
says the Lord of hosts.”
- Zechariah 4:6*

Your Needs

- **Congregational Viability**
 - Reality Check
- **Governance Structures**
 - Values-based
 - Chapters vs. Assemblies
 - Collaborative
 - Covenant
 - Commissary
 - Recommendations/Appointment
 - Terms of Office
 - Evaluation
 - Members' rights
 - Alternatives?
 - PJP Options
 - Using existing or new?

God speaks
in the silence of the heart.
Listening
is the beginning of prayer.

—Mother Teresa

Your Needs

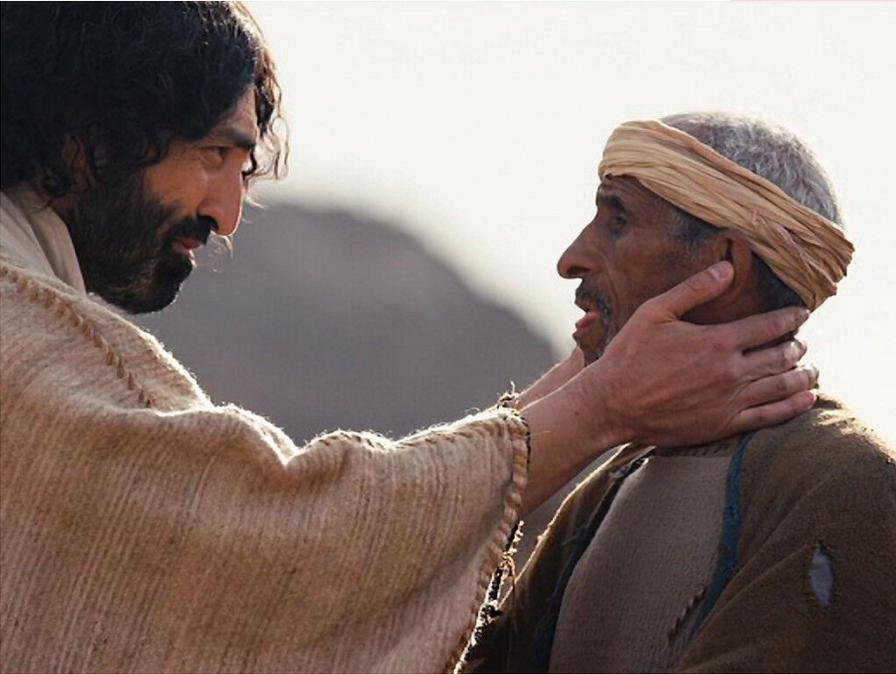
Asset Management

Processes for Grieving

- Future Care Needs – e.g., Will care for me?

Facilitation support

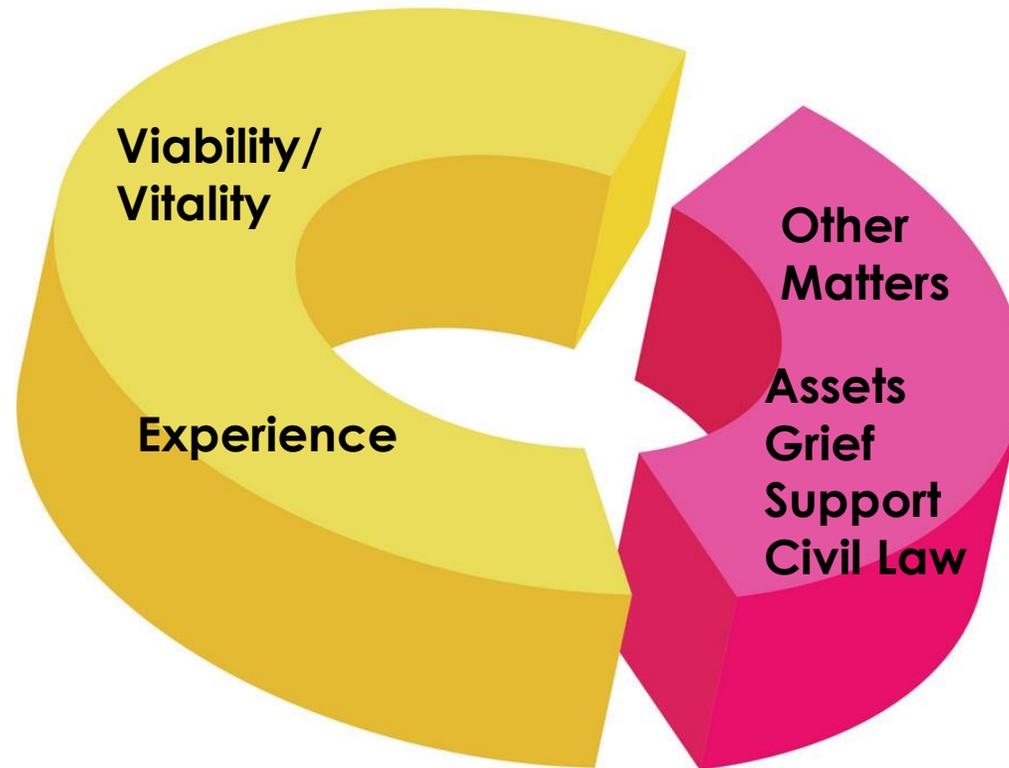
Civil law implications



wisdom

Other Needs?

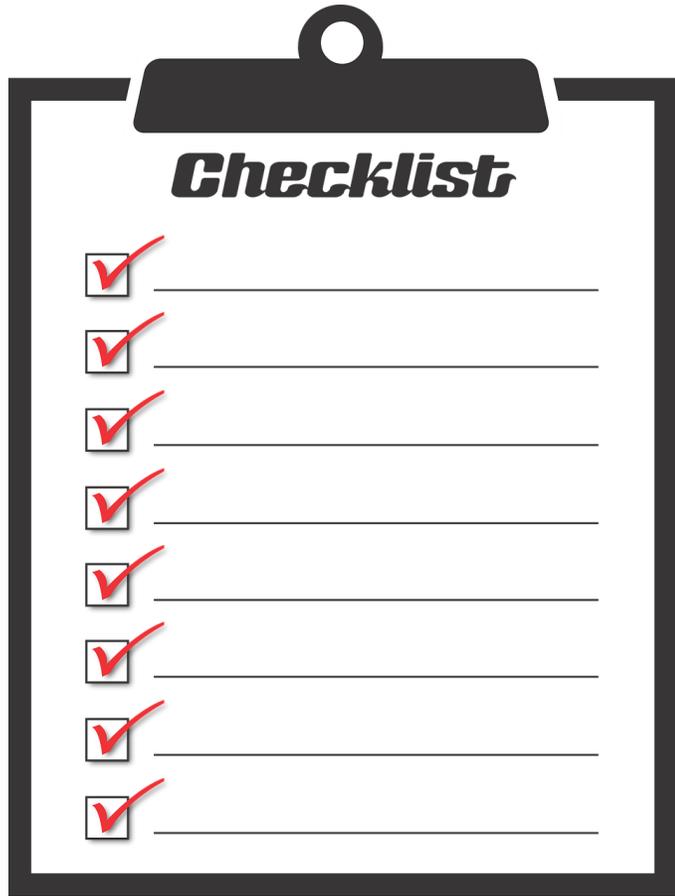
Conversation Structure



Viability/Vitality



- Foundation
 - Code
 - Constitution
 - Civil Bylaws



PJP

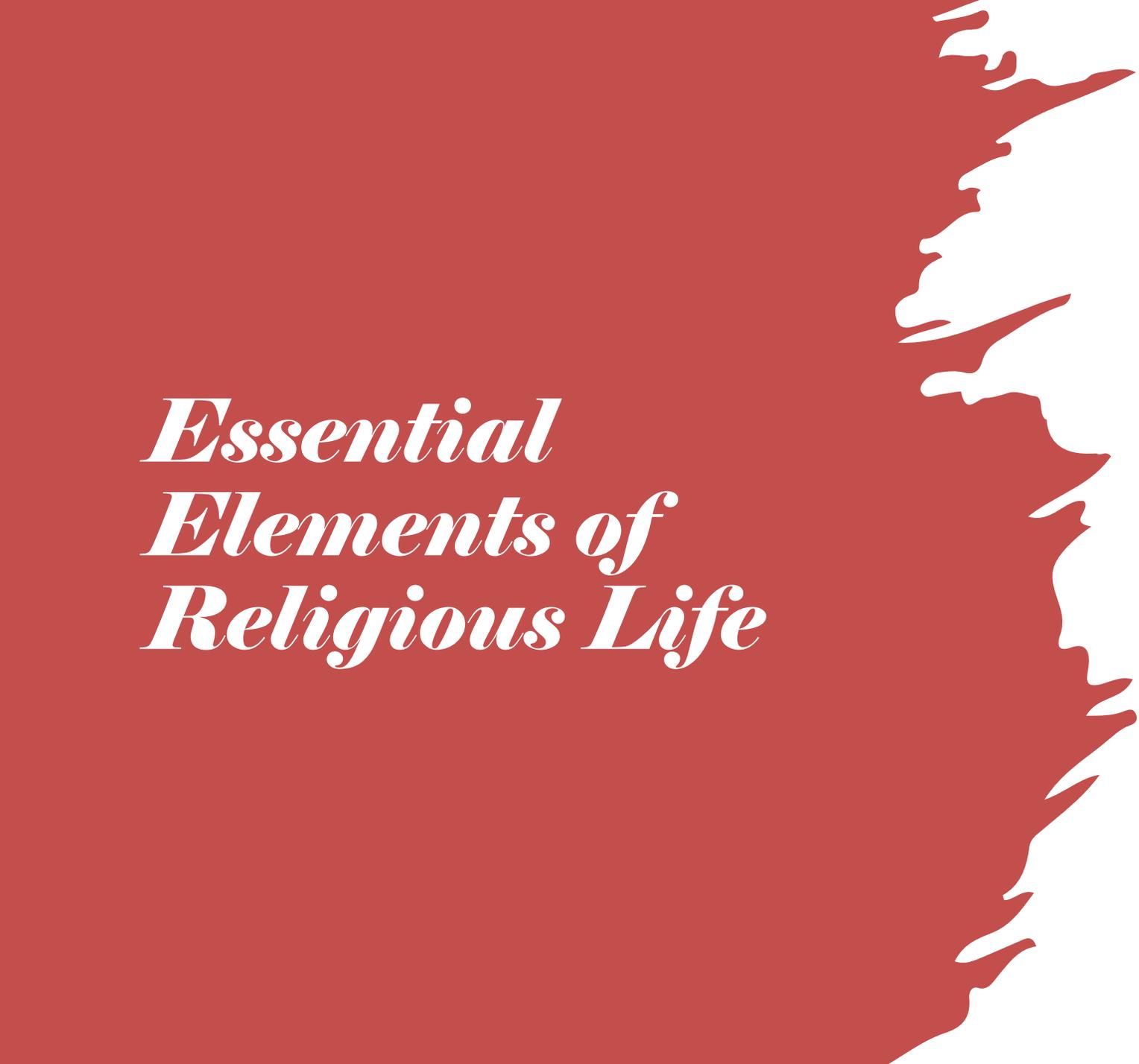
Requirements

- Established by competent authority
- Perpetuity (stability) – c. 120
- Rights & Obligations
- In the name of the Church
- Temporal Goods = Ecclesiastical
- Established by law or special decree

Religious Institutes

PJP by Law

- Can. 634 §1. **As juridic persons by the law itself**, institutes, provinces, and houses are capable of acquiring, possessing, administering, and alienating temporal goods unless this capacity is excluded or restricted in the constitutions.
- Can. 120 §1. A juridic person is **perpetual by its nature**; nevertheless, it is extinguished if it is legitimately **suppressed by competent authority** or has ceased to act for a hundred years.



Essential Elements of Religious Life

- SYNOD OF BISHOPS GENERAL SECRETARIAT, “The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and in the World: ‘*Lineamenta*’ for the 1994 Synod of Bishops,” in *Origins*, 22 (1992-1993), no. 5, 436.
 - cc. 573-578
 - Profession of evangelical counsels
 - Stable form of life
 - Commitment to follow Christ more closely & follow inspirations of Holy Spirit
 - Total dedication to God, who is loved more than all.

Role of Consecrated Life in the Church



SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree on the Sensitive Renewal of Religious Life *Perfectae caritatis*, 28 October 1965, in AAS, 58 (1966), 702-712, English translation in Tanner II, 939-947 (= PC).

Recognized as inherent to the life and sanctity of the Church (cc. 573-574)

PC no. 1 –
accommodate
the “needs in our
time.”

PC no. 2 - Re-
read & interpret
the “original spirit
of the Institute.”

c. 578 Can. 578
All must **observe
faithfully the mind
and designs**

of the founders
regarding the
**nature, purpose,
spirit, and**

character of an
institute

Role of Consecrated Life in the Church

- Establish new initiatives with the same creativity and holiness of their founders/foundresses who responded to the times emerging in today's world.
- See ST. JOHN PAUL II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Consecrated Life *Vita consecrata*, 25 March 1996, in AAS, 88 (1996), 377-486, English translation in *Origins*, 25 (1995-1996), no. 37 (= VC).



Vita Consecrata
John Paul II

Changing Reality



Diocesan/Vatican Reflections

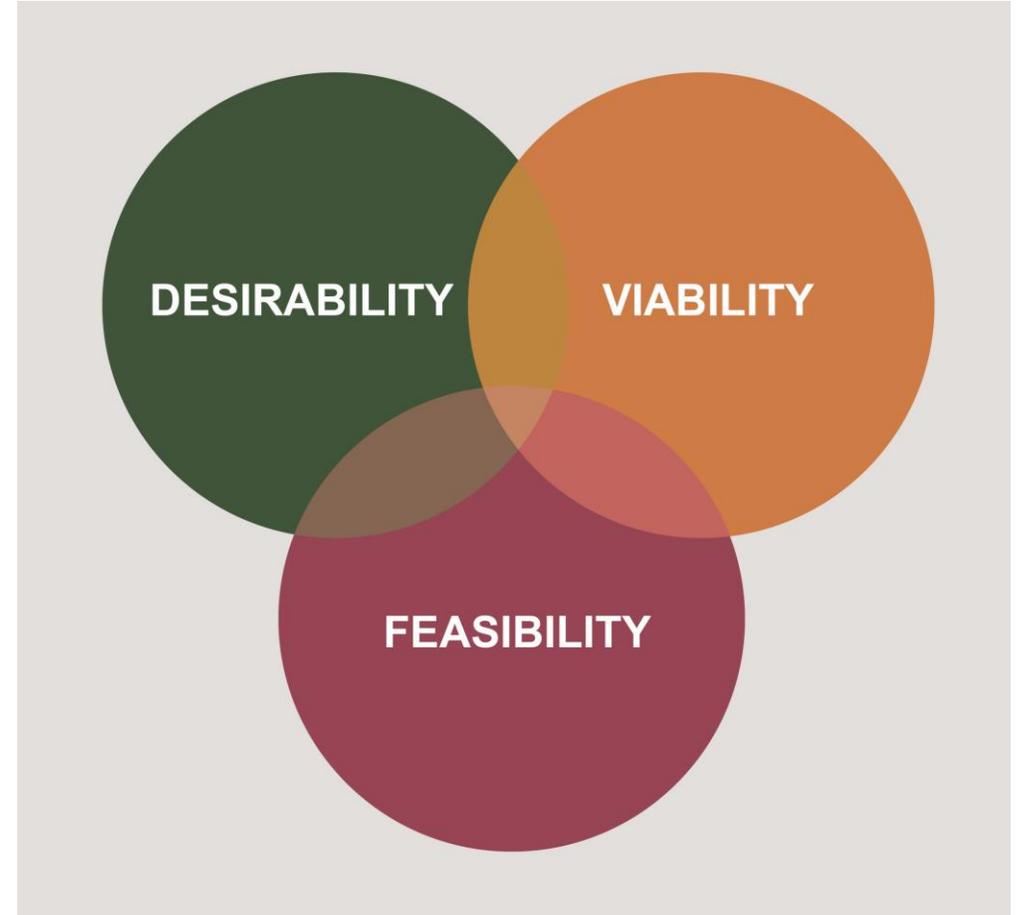
**The Congregation for Institutes of
Consecrated Life and for Societies of
Apostolic Life**

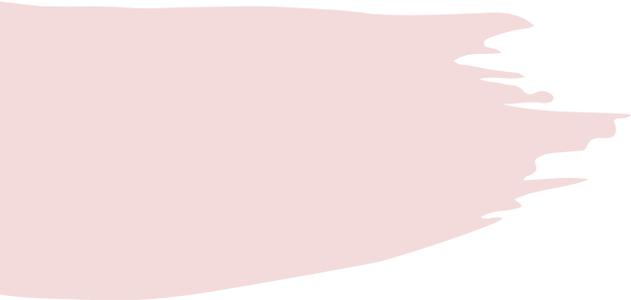
- Median Age
 - 70s or 80s
- No Professions for >25 years
- No pool for leadership
- No Diocesan Bishop requesting members to assist in apostolates
 - See ST. PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter issued motu proprio *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, II, Norms for the Implementation of the Decree *Perfectae caritatis* of the Second Vatican Council, 6 August 1966, in AAS, 58 (1966), 775-782, English translation in CLD, 6, 284-293, nos. 39-41,
https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19660806_ecclesiae-sanctae.pdf

Congregational Assessments

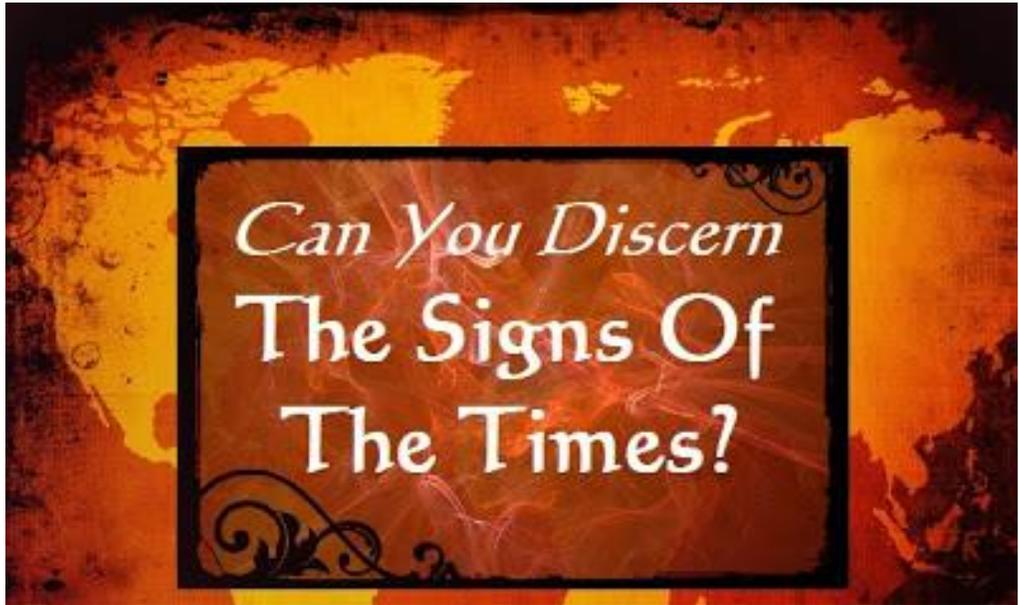
Looking Inward

- Capacity to achieve their purpose?
- Vibrant Spiritual Life?
- Pastoral Care of the Members?
- Management & Governance?
 - Demographics
 - Willing & Able
- Novices?
- Finances?
- External Supports?
- Relationship with the Diocese?





***Responsibilities
to Religious
Institutes?***



*Can You Discern
The Signs Of
The Times?*



for what
to be best in a
point of view.
Depression [di-
state of being de-
sad or desponde
mental disorder



The Cup of Blessing



New Horizons

Day-to-Day Survival

Focus on Emergencies



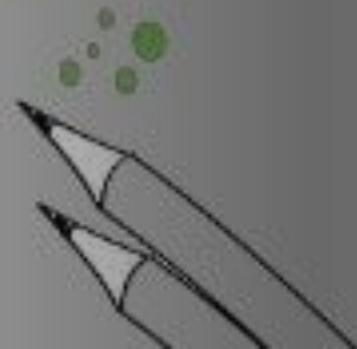
Our vision ... our mission

- Our vision for the future rests in our capacity to dialogue with reality, to fit into the history of humanity, and to wait patiently for this vision to become a reality over time.
 - See CICALSAL, *Economy*, 44.

Vision
Mission
& Values

CORE VALUES

*Values
Foundation*



OPTIONS

don't need to be complicated.



Let's simplify



*Completion ... or ...
Complete Transformation*



What Can
Transformation
Mean?

GOALS

New Expressions
of the Charism

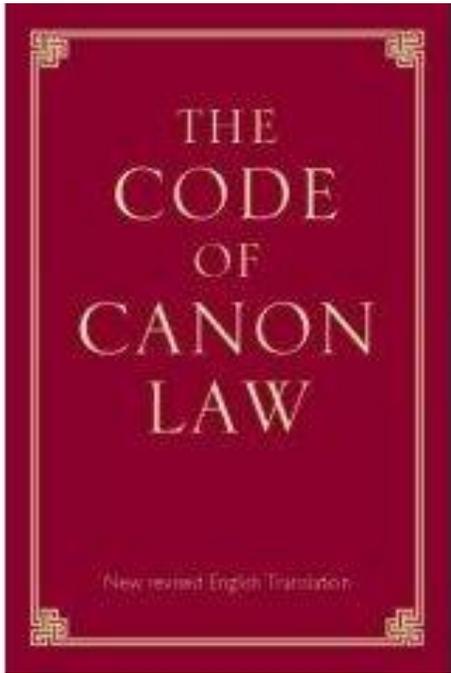
Peace

Assets

Care of Members

Partnerships





What Does the Code Envision?

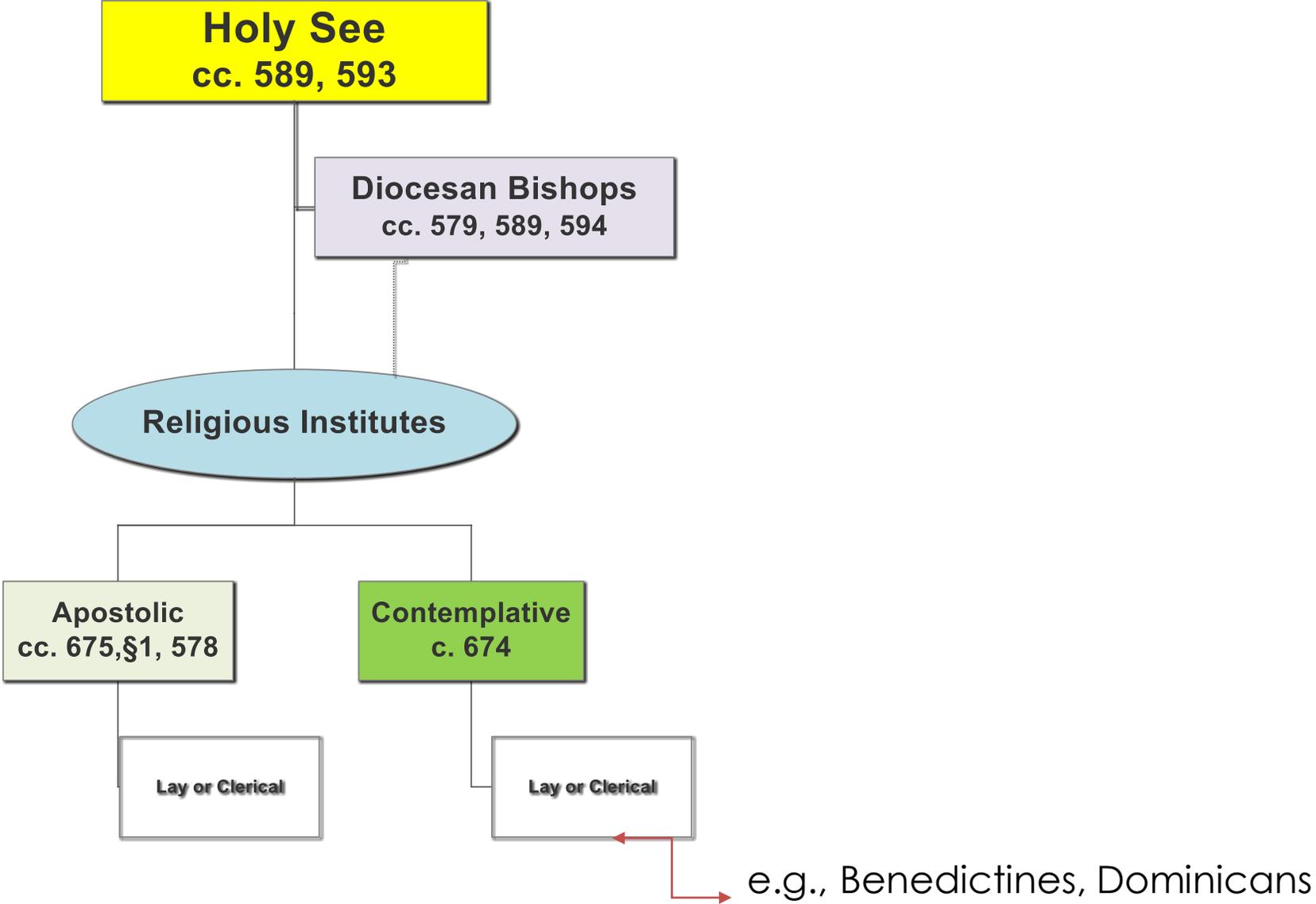
AUTONOMY OF RELIGIOUS
INSTITUTES (RI)



*Canonical
Categories of
Religious
Institutes*

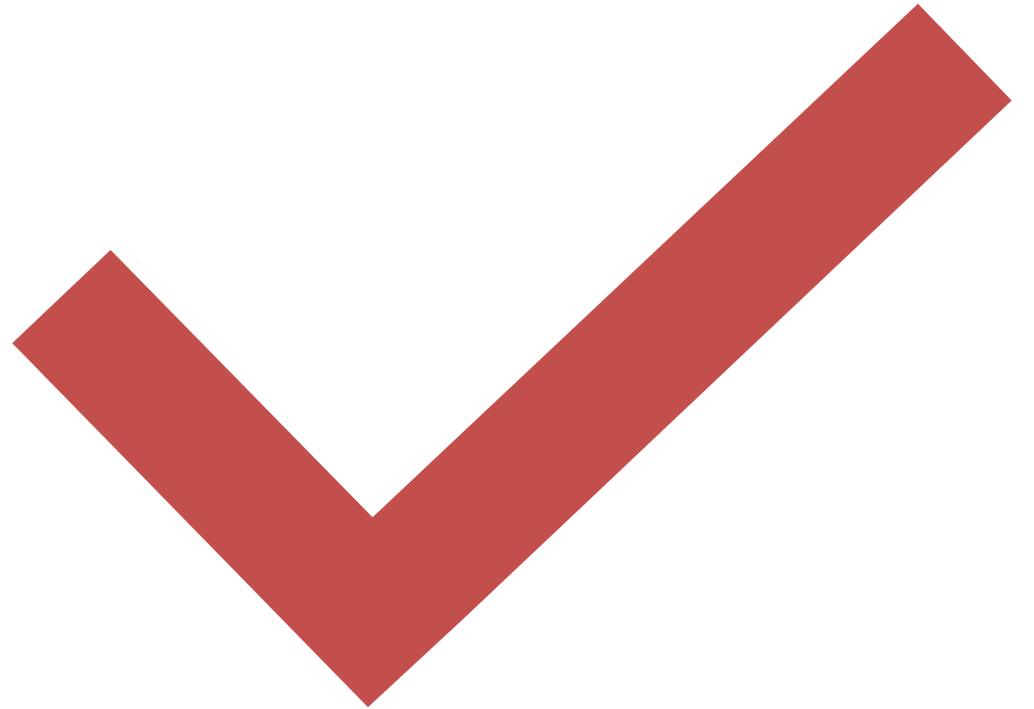
DIOCESAN RIGHT;
PONTIFICAL RIGHT;
APOSTOLIC;
CONTEMPLATIVE;
LAY; CLERICAL

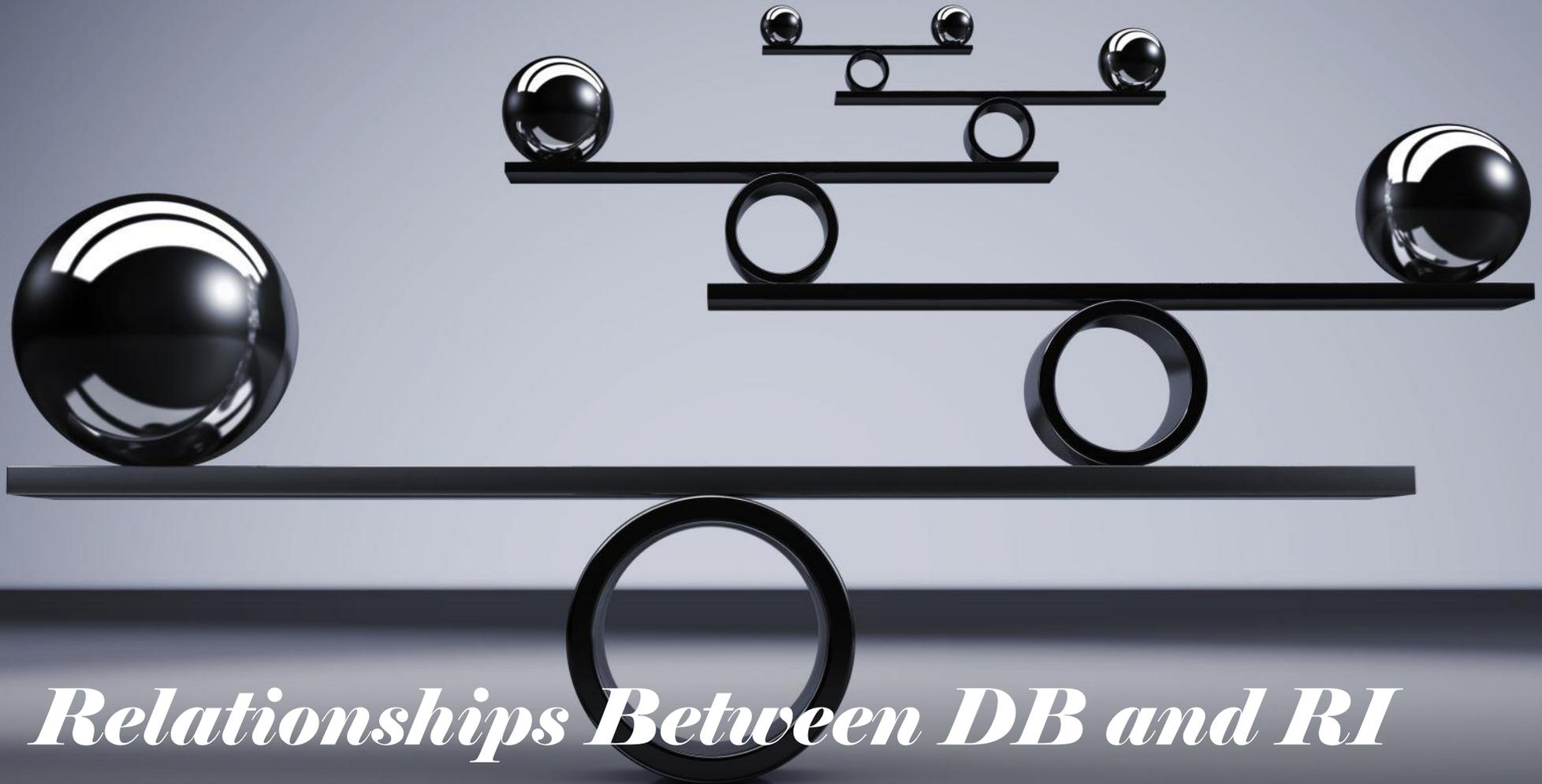
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES



***Relationships
Between DB
and RI***

MUTUAL RIGHTS & DUTIES





Relationships Between DB and RI

MUTUAL RIGHTS & DUTIES

Canonical Principles

Diocesan Bishop

POWER

Ordinary, Proper, Immediate

c. 381, §1

GENERAL PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Teaching, Preaching, Sacramental
& Liturgical Celebration

cc. 383, §1; 386, §1; 387

Relationship of DB & RI

RI Invited or Accepted by DB

RI Mission & Charism



Foundation for Canonical Principles



Canonical Principles

Religious Institutes

SUBJECT TO DB

Care of Souls; Public Worship; Apostolates in Diocese (c. 578, §1)

In relationship with Universal Church & Particular Church
(cc. 576; 590-591; 593-594)

Proper Law (c. 587) Approved by Competent Authority

Role of DB

1. Establishing an Institute
2. Relationship with an Institute
3. Governance
4. Spiritual & Material Care of Institutes
5. Apostolates
6. Suppressing Houses

Responsibilities Defined

(See E. MCDONOUGH, "Relationship Between Bishops and Religious, 72-73)

- [Chart - Episcopal Responsibilities re RI.docx](#)

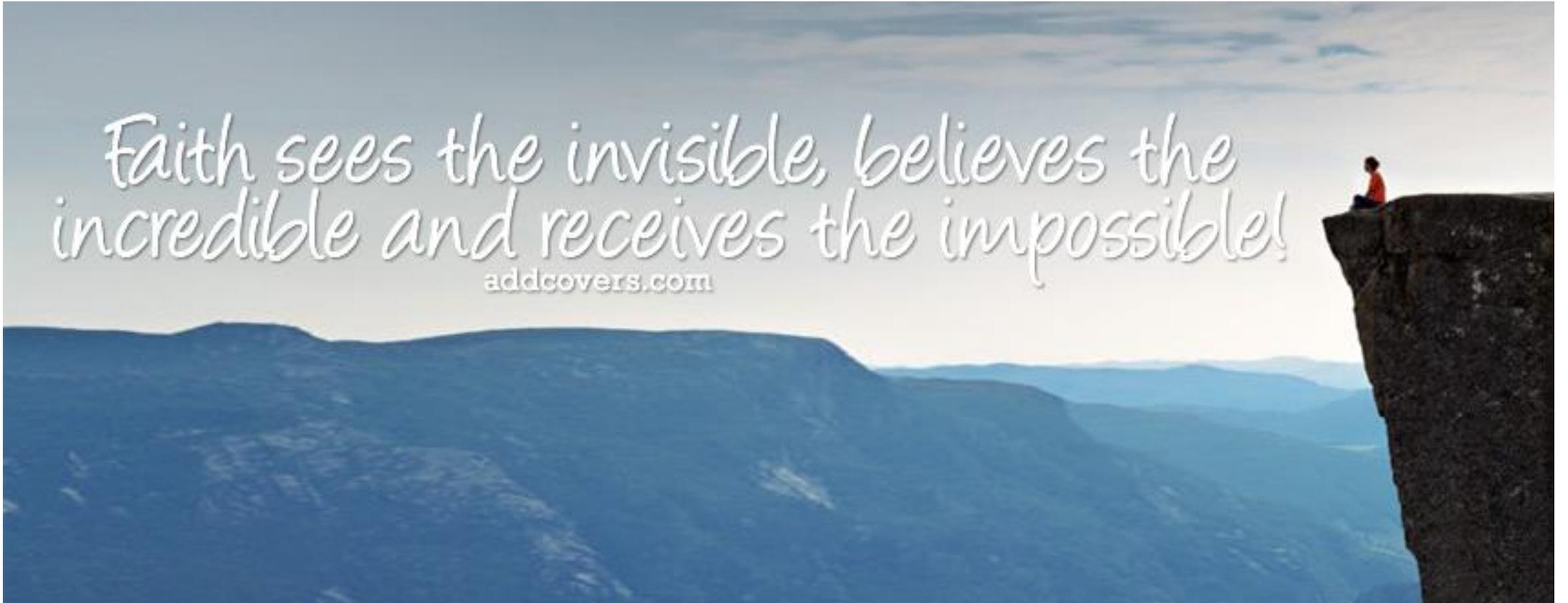
Temporal Goods

- Universal Norms (Holy See)
 - Canadian Episcopal Conference
 - Decree #38 (26-27 March 2019)
 - **\$5,745,931 CDN**
- Proper Law
 - Support Charism of founders, nature, purpose
- Intent of Donors

Assessing our Current Reality in Faith

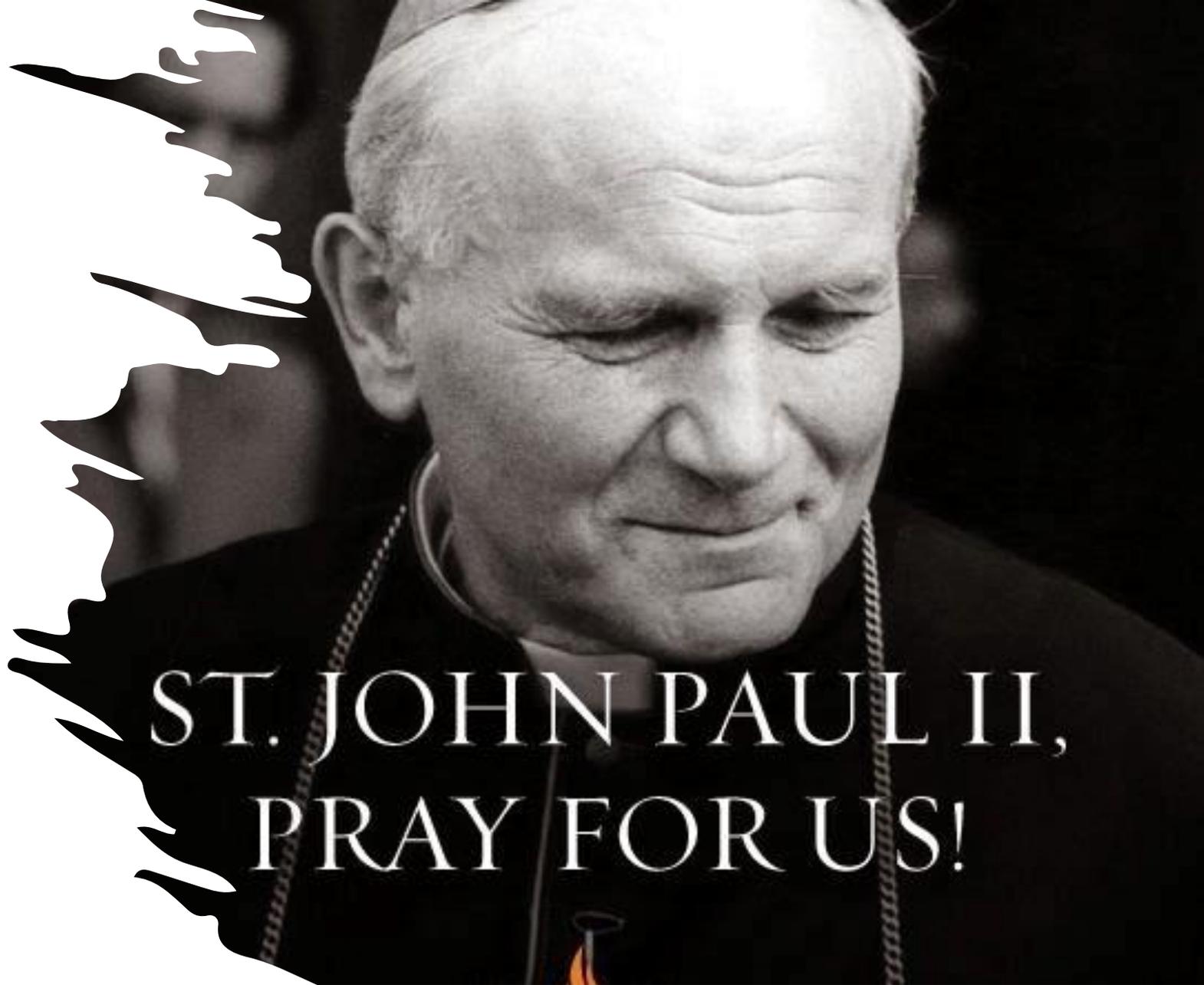
Faith sees the invisible, believes the
incredible and receives the impossible!

addcovers.com



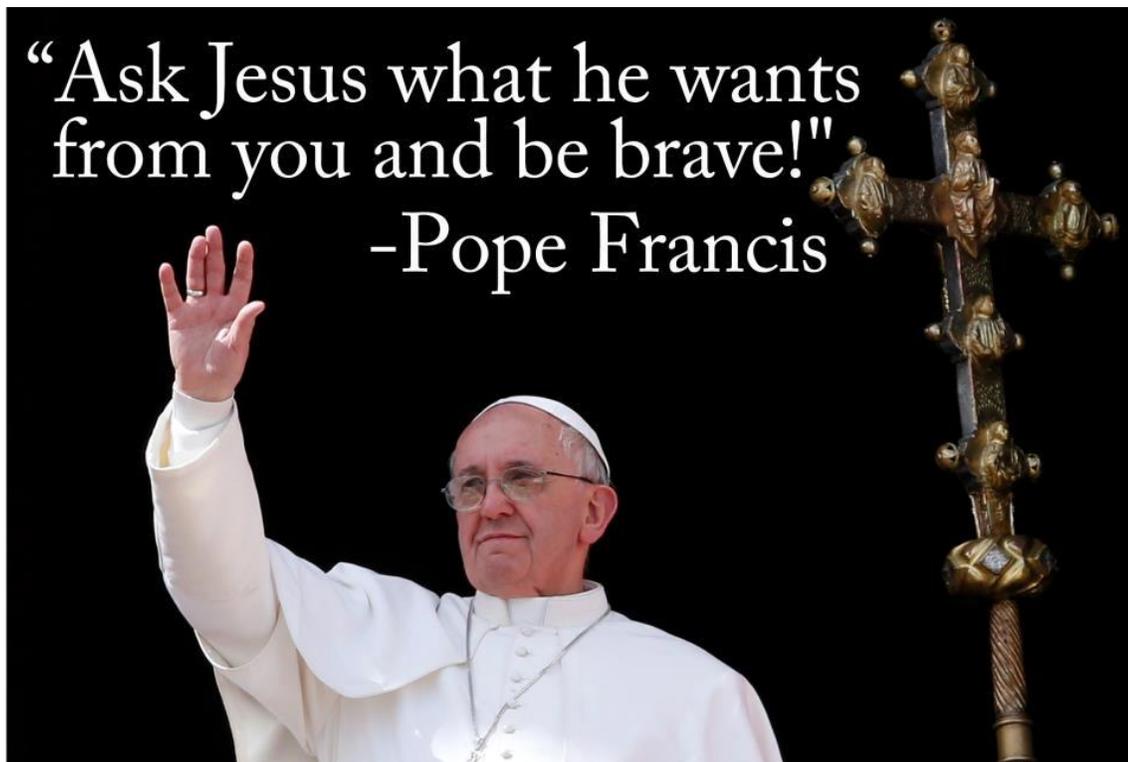
A Call to Faithfulness

- “What must be avoided at all costs is the actual breakdown of consecrated life, a collapse that is not measured by a decrease in numbers but by a failure to cling steadfastly to the Lord and to one’s personal vocation and mission.”
 - VC, no. 63.



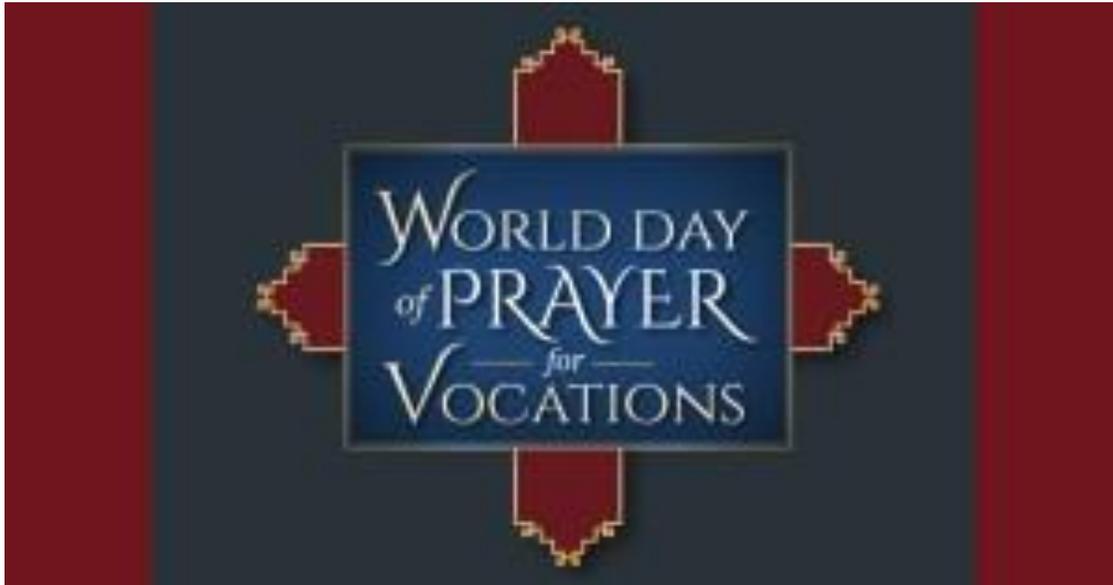
ST. JOHN PAUL II,
PRAY FOR US!

Be bold!



- Be bold & creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods
 - FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel Evangelii gaudium*, 26 November 2013, in *AAS* 105 (2013), 1020-1147, English translation in *Origins*, 43 (2013-2014), 421-466, no. 30.

New Forms of consecrated life



- Expect the Holy Spirit to raise up new forms of consecration
 - J. TOBIN, “A Great History Still to be Accomplished? Prospects for Consecrated Life in the Church – *Communio*,” in *Origins* (2014-2015), 257 (= TOBIN, “A Great History”).

Consensus
oriented

Transparent

Good

participatory

Governance: Basic Principles

- Realign internal governance
 - Demographics
 - Quality of Apostolic Involvement
- NB for all (who are capable) to understand & Participate

Follow the
rule of law

sim



Flying Together

Sources of Resistance



- Members' insecurity
- Loss of Hope
- Grief

Canonical Options





Time is of the
Essence

Progressive Dinner



Variations on a Theme

Options for Consideration

Constitution

- Chapters vs. Assemblies

Canonical Options

- 15 to 3

PJP Options

Economy At The Service of the Charism & Mission (CICLSAL)

Covenant

Collaborative

Commissary

Chapters vs. Assemblies

Can. 631 §1

- **Protect** patrimony
 - Fidelity to charism & mission
- **Promote** renewal
 - Nature of institute; purpose; spirituality; character; sound tradition
- **Election** of supreme moderator & council
- **Deal with Major Cases**
 - Initial and permanent training of members for apostolates
 - Possibility of unions or mergers
 - Financial administration
 - Spiritual life ...
- **Review Rules**
 - Constitution changes; directories; policies ...



Replacing General Chapter with Assembly

Rationale

- Age of members

Process

- Petition
 - Holy See (Pontifical Congregations)
 - Diocesan Bishop (Diocesan Congregations)

CICLSAL Responses

(1) 29 October 2013 (Prot. N. 111-1/19998)

After a careful review of the proposed changes and the reasons justifying this request, we are pleased to approve the new reading of article X, Y, and Z.

The Assembly participation list is formed and calls upon the direction of the Holy Spirit... The Assembly consists of all the Sisters who can and who wish to participate. All the professed Sisters who have made perpetual vows are eligible, unless excluded under the law... The participating assembly meets every two years to elect the person who will serve as the major superior... It will elect two councillors... If necessary, the Institute may appeal to another Institute to assume the functions of government when it is no longer possible to find people within the Institute in question.



CICLSAL Responses

(1) 15 January 2015 (Prot. N. 29690/2014)

We are grateful to Fr. “X”, who will be available to help, cordially assist, and provide spiritual support which will be important and appreciated.

However, Sister, we are not convinced that the solution (substituting an Assembly for the General Chapter and the designation of assistants) responds to our request. Indeed, it would be better to find a person who, while being experienced, can also accompany the Institute without too much difficulty for several years on a spiritual level (according to our information, Fr. “X” would be 83 years old), while available to support the Institute on a spiritual level, but not able to offer direction on governance and management of temporal goods.

This dicastery continues to reflect and to research in order to find the solution most appropriate for this Institute without excluding the possibility of the appointment of a diocesan bishop, as this has already been done in similar cases. Whatever it is, the dicastery wishes to stand at your disposal, available for you to contact us at any time to assist you.

Because the community asked to no longer elect councillors but to name them, the answer reads as follows:

The Dicastery can appoint as general councillors of your Institute, religious of the Institute of the Sisters of St. “X”.

CICLSAL Responses

(1) 6 May 2015 (Prot. N. 30871/2015)

With regard to the replacement of the General Chapter by a General Assembly, **we believe that it is still too early to approve this option**, given that the next General Chapter should occur in 2019.

Furthermore, considering your particular situation, **this dicastery would like to appoint an apostolic assistant to accompany you in the government of the Institute.** Such a measure does not prevent you from exercising your office of general superior of the Institute according to proper and universal law, but allows you to benefit from a close pastoral presence. This assistance could, as you suggest, serve as a liaison with this Dicastery. In addition, when the sisters are no longer able to assume responsibility for governance of the Institute, the Assistant may appoint an Apostolic Commissioner....

CICLSAL Responses

(1) 10 May 2016 (Prot. N. Q 14-1/2002):

... Re: the third point, of **the General Assembly replacing the General Chapter, we cannot approve the text as it is written currently**, even if your aim and motivation are justified. Because the General Chapter is the supreme organ of authority in the Institute, it cannot be deleted. However, your Chapter may vote for an amendment of the Constitution providing for participation of all perpetually professed members in the General Chapter, and permitting the general superior, with the consent of her Council, to identify and excuse those Sisters who are not able to participate in the Chapter due to failing health.

Your particular situation can also be presented to our department, who can then identify canonical options to accompany those Institutes who are struggling to assume their independence, and who also **need to rely on outside assistance, including the appointment of an Apostolic Assistant.**

CICLSAL Responses

(1) 20 April 2017 (Prot. N. M. 164-1/2017):

After reviewing the proposed text carefully, and due to the specific circumstances of your Institute, this Dicastery hereby approves changes to the constitutions in response to your request received by mail. As a result, **the next Chapter will be replaced by the General Assembly, which will be celebrated in the summer of 2020.**

In situations similar to yours, this dicastery has also **encouraged Institutes to seek help beyond their walls, in the church, in order to have assistance in governing the Institute** which has become too burdensome for the members, and to ensure respect of all persons within the Institute as well as the proper charism of consecrated life.

For this purpose, it is possible **to consider affiliation with another Institute** with more demographic resources (a union or a canonical merger is possible in principle, but without going so far, we can **consider appointing as a superior of your Institute, a superior of another Institute**, if it is difficult to find an experienced and competent person to take over governance of your Institute when it becomes necessary (in this case **you can apply for example, to the bishop of the place, who may delegate a person closer and more available, such as a priest or another religious**). These measures may be progressive, to allow mutual knowledge between your Institute and the person who will be of assistance to you....



Beyond Chapters & Assemblies?

15 ... to

CONGREGATIONAL RECONFIGURATION OPTIONS

1

When assessing congregational viability, the Holy See considers the following: (1) the institute's median age is in the seventies or eighties; (2) there have been no professions for more than twenty-five years; (3) the community is unable to provide superiors or leaders for its works; and (4) no diocesan bishop is requesting members to assist in apostolates.¹ At this point, religious institutes have options regarding their future, either preparing for a holy death or some reconfiguration of their existing structure. These include both options foreseen in canon law and others that are emerging as seen in recent practice.

Reconfiguration Option	Risks	Benefits	Canonical Reference
1. Do nothing	<p>Elected leadership will focus on managing day-to-day emergencies or merely surviving, given limited resources.</p> <p>The congregation will be viewed by the members and others in the Church as “dying.” The congregation loses its capacity to carry out the mission.</p> <p>The founding charism will no longer find viable ways of expression.</p> <p>The potential to “be bold and creative</p>	<p>The congregation is relieved of the burden of planning for its future...</p>	<p>Cann. 583, 584, 585 586 §1. 596 §1.</p>

International Congregations

Former structures
may not be
viable?

- E.g., Provinces

Unification of
divisions

Choose life!



Risk/Benefit Analysis



<C:\Users\bmaclellan\Documents\Religious Life\Reconfiguration Options\Reconfiguration Options - Risk Benefit Analysis - 16 Feb 2020.docx>

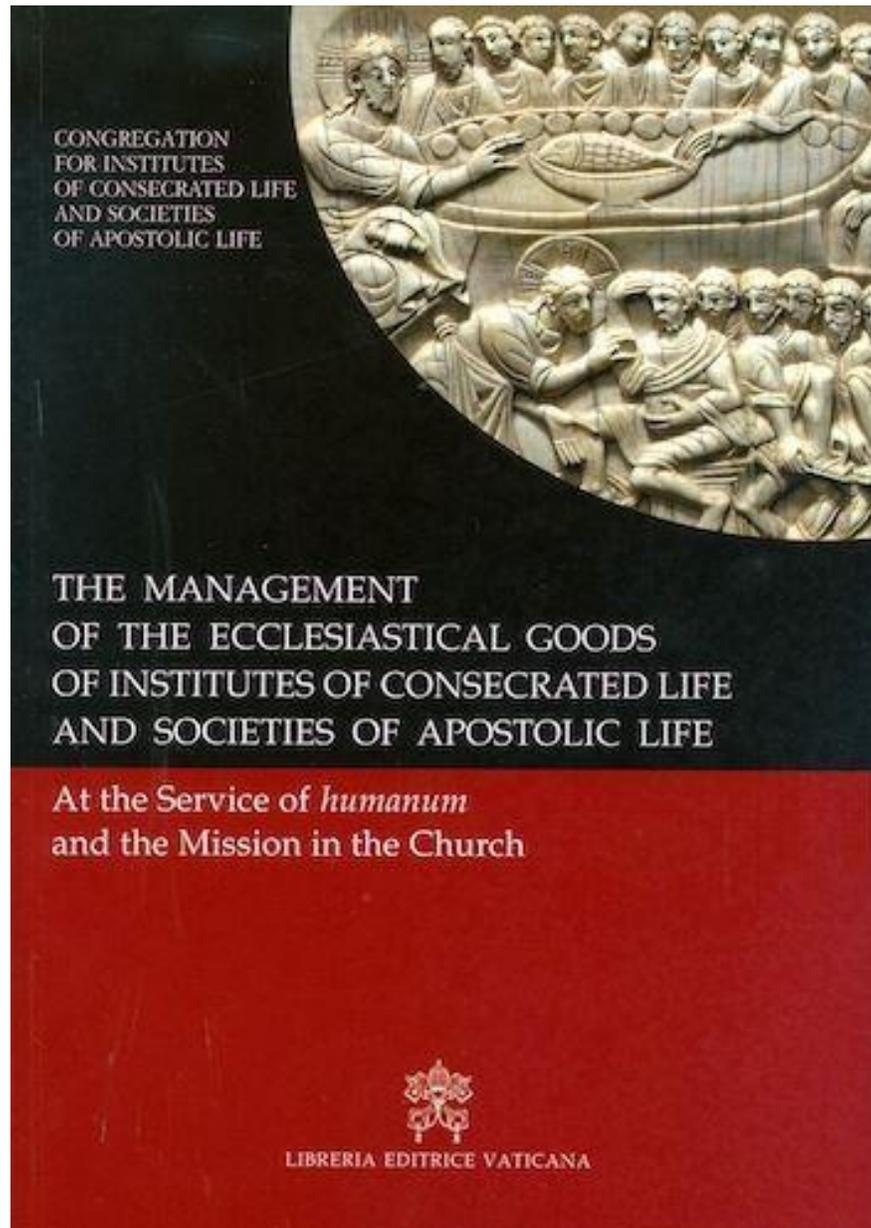
Economic Structures in Service to the mission

Guidelines for Reconfiguration

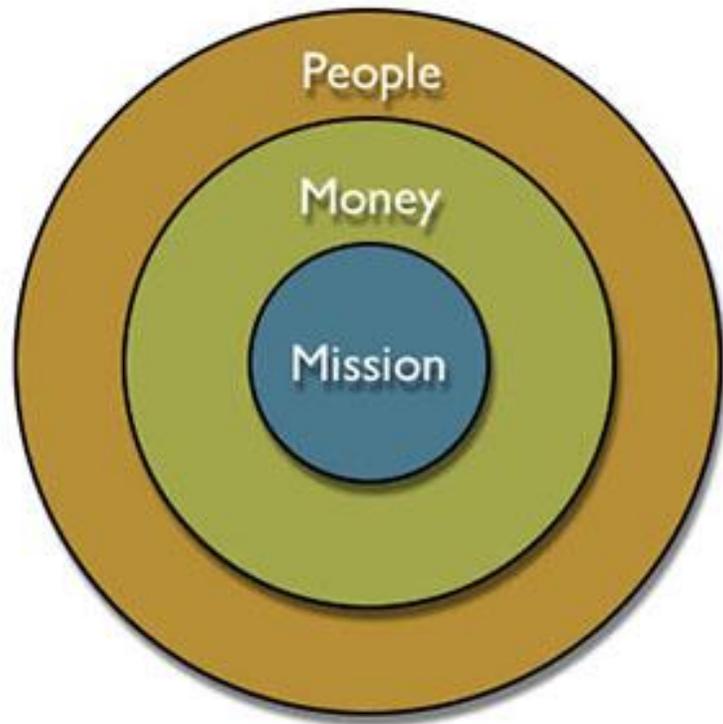
Continuation of Charism

Asset Management

- Religious Institutes will be called upon to make economic judgements in light of the congregation's charism and mission, as well as the overt and covert social and ecclesial implications of their decisions
- FRANCIS, "Message to the participants at the International Symposium on the theme: 'Management of ecclesial goods of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life at the service of humanity and the mission of the Church,'" Rome, 8 Mar 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140308_messaggio-vita-apostolica.html



Not Only Profitability



“I would hope that structures can be streamlined, large religious houses repurposed for works which better respond to the present demands of evangelization and charity, and apostolates adjusted to new needs.”

- FRANCIS, Year of Consecrated Life, 486.

Covenant Governance Models



Covenant

- Commissary identified in Covenant Agreement
- Congregation A assumes Covenant relationship with Congregation B
- When Congregation B no longer able to elect leadership, Congregation A agrees to assign a Commissary and assume responsibility for Congregation B



Collaborative



Commissary

Who can be a Commissioner?

- Religious man or woman
- Secular cleric with good understanding of RL
- Affinity with the Institute

Role of Commissioner

- Provide for all spiritual and material needs of the members
- Protect patrimony (c. 578)
- Safeguard temporal goods
- Inform members of progress of the Institutes
- Listen to their opinions on matters of major importance

Term of Office – Fixed with potential for renewal



Commissary

- **Commissioner**
 - Members participate in evaluation
 - Financial Administration
 - May use one or more competent experts **with prior written consent of competent ecclesiastical authority**
 - **Must keep members informed & listen to their opinions on matters of major importance ...**
- Can. 1280 Each juridic person is to have its own finance council or at least two counselors who, according to the norm of the statutes, are to assist the administrator in fulfilling his or her function.

Civil Law Realities

- Federal
- State
- County
- City
- +Canon Law



Choosing our Future



Restructuring Pre-Requisites

Transparent Dialogue

- Members
- Diocesan Bishop
- Holy See

Formal Request for approval of plan to Holy See

- 6 copies
- Chancery Fee of €500

Reconfiguration Options

Congregational “Will”



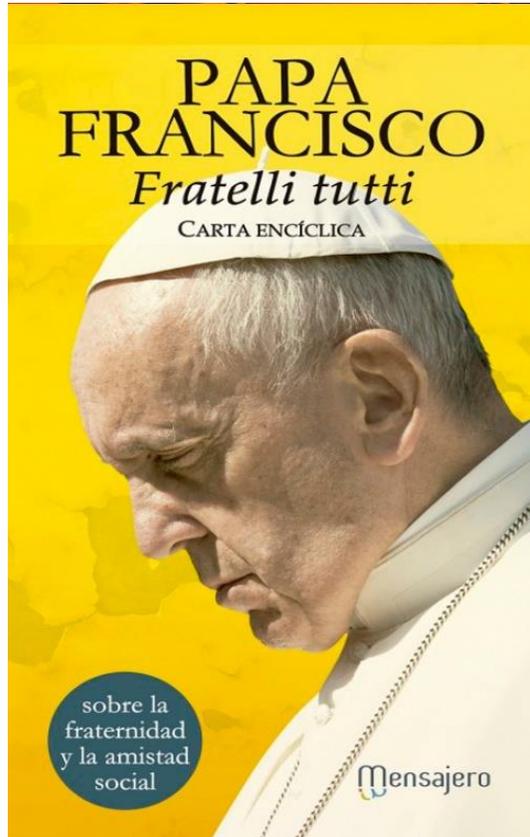
Our vision ... our mission

Vision
Mission
& Values

Our vision for the future rests in our capacity to dialogue with reality, to fit into the history of humanity, and to wait patiently for this vision to become a reality over time.

- See CICLSAL, *Economy*, 44.

Moving Forward

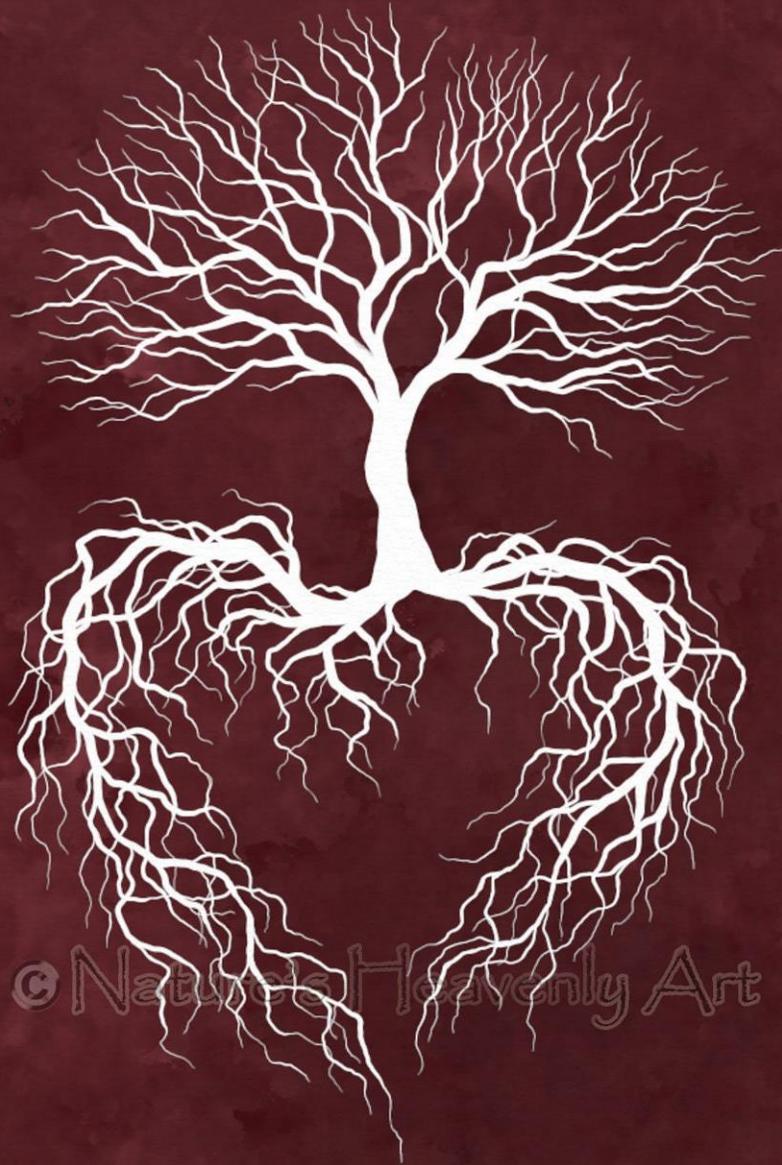


Call to the world - Universal
fraternity/sisterhood (no. 9)

Think of ourselves as a single family dwelling in
a common home (no. 17)

St. Francis

- *Calls for a love that transcends the barriers of geography”
(no. 1)*
- *Admonitions, 6.,. English Translation, in Francis of Assisi:
Early Documents, vol. 1, New York, London, Manila
(1999), 131.*



Fratelli Tutti

I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditions. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing ... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the ... securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile.”

- Francis, *Greeting to Young People at the Padre Félix Varela Cultural Centre, Havana, Cuba, 20 Sept 2015* (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 21-22 Sept 2015, 6).



? Our Invitation

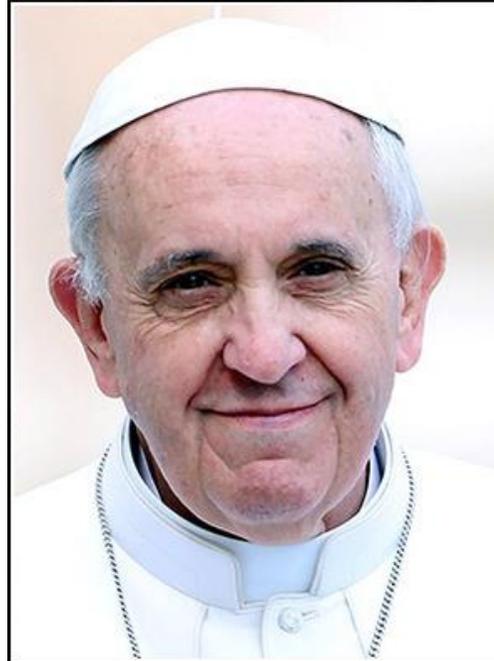


BEYOND
facilitation

Changing Structures

The whole Church is called to deal with the weight of a culture imbued with clericalism that she inherits from her history, and with those forms of exercising authority on which the different types of abuse are grafted ...

- Synod 2021/23, Preparatory Document, "For a Synodal Church," no. 6.



I tell priests to flee from clericalism because clericalism distances people. May they flee from clericalism and I add: it's a plague in the Church.

— *Pope Francis* —

AZ QUOTES

Our Choices?

Congregational working groups

- Research
- Develop strategies that are shared
- Implemented *ad experimentum*
- Include evaluation tools

Request constitutional changes as required

Transparent

CICLSAL as ally – not an enemy

Collaboration

Embodiment of *Fratelli Tutti* & Synodality



The Call of Grace

What Is Needed?





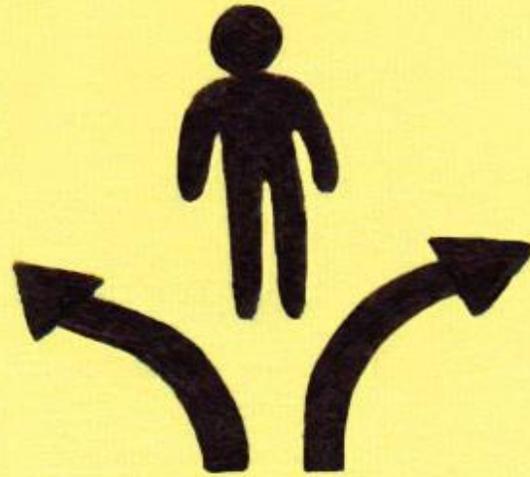
Hurdles

Next Steps?



DREAM
TEAM!

The Choice is
Ours



THE CHOICES WE MAKE
END UP MAKING US.



Questions/Comments?

Thank You!

Bonnie MacLellan, csj

2025 Main St. W.

North Bay, ON P1B 2X6

705-493-7874

bmaclellan@csjssm.ca

