

Big Picture Conversation # 1 Introduction

Chapter 2023- Monday, June 26th

From our earliest Pre-Chapter gatherings, as a congregation we raised the hope that “through the contemplative process, we might deepen our relationship with God, so as to transform our encounters with one another and our response to the needs of our world”¹. We made a concerted effort to focus on and speak of that which matters most. Pause for a moment and reflect. In light of our chapter process, have you noticed a change within yourself, within your local community, within our congregation?

From our many conversations in our local communities, among informal gatherings of friends, and during Pre-Chapter table conversations, we shared about how our relationship with God is evolving and how contemplation as a way of life fosters loving relationships. We discussed ways we can value more deeply God’s purpose in placing us together in community. We grappled with how best to develop skills necessary for healthy adult relationships, so we can vitalize our community living.

Our writing team prayed with and poured over all of our responses and the Spirit revealed the following essence.

- We desire to discover ways that will enable us to deepen our prayer and live in a manner that is reverent and loving with others.
- We express a yearning to be messengers, joyful bearers of God’s love and presence to one another, living religious life with greater intentionality.
- Our desires suggest that God is inviting us at this time to enter into a deeper friendship with a promise that this friendship will permeate the different aspects of life.
- By faithfully reflecting this intimacy, God’s presence will be brought into our places of ministry, the needs of the church will be addressed, and new members will be attracted to the heritage we claim.

And so, it is through this lens that we enter anew into our first big picture conversation - that which matters most, our experiences of God and who we are becoming in God through our prayerful, loving, relationships within, among and beyond.

¹*Hopes of the Chapter*. Pre-Chapter Meeting, March 19, 2022.
https://ihmimmaculata.org/wp-content/uploads/04_Hopes-for-the-Chapter.pdf