

INTRODUCTION TO BIG PICTURE CONVERSATION #2

RESPONSIBLE MEMBERSHIP

Good Morning, Sisters, and welcome once again as we open ourselves to deeper and renewed understandings of our shared IHM journey. Today, we continue to examine how together we can respond anew to our call to intentional community living and responsible membership.

In the book, “Religious Life for Our World: Creating Communities of Hope,” Maria Cimperman suggests that the goal of community is to “create the environment that leads people to their deepest longings and God’s deepest longings.” Throughout this Chapter process, we have prayed to the Spirit to create something new in our religious living and the way we daily encourage, support, and challenge one another into better and more authentic relationships.

Community should and can give us a place to be ourselves and to live into our best selves but this will only happen if each sister is willing and responsible enough to fully engage. A vibrant local community does not just happen nor does it depend only on congregational or local leadership. It takes work and investment on the part of each individual sister. The past two years of Chapter preparation could be a perfect indicator of how each local community responded to the invitation to go deeper into the process of responsible membership. Did we embrace the opportunity with eagerness and creative hope...or remain complacent because the extra time and effort interrupted our personal agendas? Definitely hard questions but so necessary for all of us. Being proactive and responsible members is no longer an option for us. Our future as a vibrant and vital congregation literally depends on this.

“Behold, I make all things new. Listen!” When we know our primary relationship is in God, we allow God to make all things new and if we listen...then we can begin to love others in healthy and mature ways.

In our conversations today, let us be honest, direct, encouraging, and challenging with one another. We are better together and our mutual loving support is more important than ever. Let us trust that God’s grace is truly enough for us in these uncertain times and treasure the gifts we have been given to share.