



The Ongoing Formation goals assigned by Chapter Implementation are:

**2019 - 2020** *“Cultivate a spirit of racial inclusion, cultural sensitivity and respect for persons with disabilities, generate an awareness of the dynamics of racism and understand its effects.”*

**2020 - 2021** *“Respond to the emerging needs for ministry with inclusion and cultural sensitivity.”*

Dear Sisters,

As Advent unfolds into Christmas, we invite you to ponder the OGF “Living Witness” narratives received from Sisters who considered the questions we posed in the September *Angelus* (repeated below) and shared in the October and November communiques. We believe that all IHM efforts since March are part of the Providential ways in which we have continued to be *Faithful Witnesses* and those efforts have made our assigned goal even more concrete in its reality evolving, still. This month we will share the responses for questions #3 and #4. Please note that narratives posted here will be shared anonymously (with the exception of the work of S. Helen David, shared here with her permission as it accompanies her visual responses to both our contemporary times as well as to our Community pondering for OGF.

**Members of the Committee:** S Patricia McDermott (council liaison), S. Sonia Avi, S. Joyce Bell, S. Dolores Joseph Bozzelli, S. Agnes Cummings, S. Rosemary DePaul, S. John Evelyn DiTrollo, S. Kathleen Douth, S. Judith Geschke, S. Lauretta Linsalata, S. Marie Claire Matsinger, S. Bridget McCullough, S. Patricia Mengel (Co-Chair), S. Patricia Micklos (Co-Chair), S. Francis Mary Murray, S. Anne Marie Stegmaier, S. Marie Danielle Bernadette Truex, S. Silvan Vega, S. Catherine Ward

### **Questions Being Pondered**

- 1) In light of our goal for 2020-2021, how have the past 6 months redefined your understanding of “emerging needs” in ministry?
- 2) In light of our goal for 2020-2021, where have you seen the need for more efforts with inclusion and cultural sensitivity in your local mission/ministry? Can you give specific examples of efforts made in your “world” in last 6 months?
- 3) ***In light of our goal for 2020-2021 & in consideration of our charism rooted in an awareness of Divine Providence at work, cite examples of the presence of Providence or a new awareness of how & where it can be more visible in this coming year.***
- 4) ***In light of the pandemic and ongoing civil tensions here in the U.S., what is your response to this goal as Fall 2020 unfolds?***

## December: “Living Witness”

**Goal:** “Respond to the emerging needs for ministry with inclusion and cultural sensitivity.”

**Question:** 3) In light of our goal for 2020-2021 & in consideration of our charism rooted in an awareness of Divine Providence at work, cite examples of the presence of Providence or a new awareness of how & where it can be more visible in this coming year.

### **Responses:**

- ✚ “God has been good to us and I see that people are praying more and have a greater understanding of how we should be more protective of each other.”
- ✚ “Divine Providence (and the Holy Spirit) are behind us and supporting us in our efforts to learn the many skills needed to teach and interact digitally.”
- ✚ “As days went along without change, there seemed to be a shift in the dynamic between and among sisters. This may have been due to conversations and sincere sharing on a deeper level. As I and other sisters listened, it was evident that we were all helpless and had to rely on God and God’s Providence. ‘Creative Hope’ took on a new meaning as we struggled to find ways to hang on within our convent and our place of ministry. We had God and only one another to depend on! Gradually, our faith in God and our need to trust in one another took over. The outside world had changed drastically, and we were thrust into this crisis without the usual external support that we had known so well and taken for granted for many years.”
- ✚ “As a local community, we believe these examples to be part of Providence at work:
  - Following protocols set by the CDC and the Congregation/Camilla Hall to prevent the spread of COVID-19,
  - Allowing *creative hope* to flow through our lives and into the lives of those we encounter,
  - Looking for opportunities to alleviate anxiety and fear through presence, prayer, thoughtful gestures.”
- ✚ “we keep talking about the *new normal*. The new normal may look very different than what we are used to and we may need to *be open* but also help others to be open as well.”
- ✚ “Personally, I believe that a deep reflection on the real gift of Incarnation will lead us to see that we are all created by God, loved by God, and empowered by God to ***choose creative hope***.”
- ✚ “Continuing prayer, flexibility – remembering that God is *in charge*, and being sources of hope and encouragement toward those whom we meet in ministry [is the invitation and the challenge for us all].”
- ✚ “The *ongoing formation* goal for this year *came at us directly* since the pandemic arrived and continued to challenge us all. *Emerging needs, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity* became more than cognitive exercises. Hopefully our shock in the reality of it all has become an exercise of *creative hope* grasped and shared at home, from a distance, and among the people we continue to serve in new and varied ways. The *means* may have shifted, but the *end* of service to and among one another is still the same part of Providence at work, concrete, and visible!

**Question:** 4) In light of the pandemic and ongoing civil tensions here in the U.S., what is your response to this goal as Fall 2020 unfolds?

**Responses:**

- ✚ “I try to keep abreast of civil tensions. The pandemic has deeply touched our community of St. Matthew. Four sisters have fallen ill to COVID-19 and one sister has died. Even though days have been long, I try to keep a positive outlook that I hope has some influence on the sisters with whom I live.”
- ✚ “In terms of the pandemic, I am trying to observe all of the directives coming from the CDC. In terms of civil tensions, I am devoting more time to reading, and active learning of the many complex factors which contribute to this huge problem.”
- ✚ “While relying on Divine Providence, I think we need to continue our human efforts to remove what divides us and look for what unites us daily in our world, our country, and our local houses. We must remove blame, resentment, and judgment of others and look for the values that we have in common. We will never think the same way about anything again and if we focus more strongly on the points we have in common and can agree upon... and minimize those we cannot compromise on... we will have a more peaceful existence in life, whatever challenges each day will bring us. There is no going back to life as we knew it to be, so let us move forward trusting in God... and each other!”
- ✚ “As regards the racism issues, I find myself more aware of and sensitive to the vocabulary I use when instructing teachers or conferencing with them. Most schools which I visit are multi-cultural, and I must use inclusive non-racial terms when I evaluate both students and teachers. After reading the articles by Sharon Durham, I am more aware than ever of how some seemingly innocuous phrases that I’ve used in the past, or observations that I’ve made (whether mental or verbal) could be considered biased. [This example made me really think]: ‘These (insert race of ethnicity) children are generally good students and do their homework; these (insert again) often struggle so don’t be surprised.’ As I begin this new school year, I have to examine more closely how I speak (and think) so that I can eliminate even subtle racism from my ministry.”
- ✚ “As a local community, we considered these responses to question #4:
  - Being sensitive and aware of the suffering people are enduring at this time,
  - Volunteering our service in various outreach programs such as:
    - The Patrician Society
    - Caring for Friends
    - Phone calls and/or attending to the homebound
    - Providing meals for the homeless”
- ✚ “My goal is to continue to learn ways to be an ally to all who are underserved and to share what I learn with others.”
- ✚ “The pandemic and the ongoing civil tensions send me to my knees in prayer. Intercessory prayer is a ministry with inclusion and cultural sensitivity during this pandemic.”
- ✚ “As a school where formation holds a prime place, the IHM goal inspires me to accent this dimension of inclusivity and cultural acceptance. I will be working on August 31 on ZOOM with faculty and will use

the breakout rooms to see how we as a school community can work locally to address racism and white supremacy. Our president set this as a direction for our year ahead in his opening letter to the faculty. I look forward to hearing creative ways that we can work together to build a peaceful outreach amidst these tensions in our city.”

✚ “Listening to one another [is vital]. Being more mindful of the challenges each person is facing during this time of uncertainty [is equally vital].”

✚ “I think it true that in my lifetime, I have never experienced such a collision of critical areas in need of my mindful, prayerful response. I was only a teen in the Vietnam era; I only listened as older family members recounted times of economic uncertainty or the prevalence of uncontrolled diseases. My awareness is heightened now *because* I am older *and* because we have a global set of challenges and a civil set of tensions all at the same time. What *is clear to me* is:

- that my approach and response must be consistently aware that *what I do matters*,
- that *how I move through one day at a time* **IS MY RESPONSE**,
- that all of humanity is struggling to keep their heads above it all
- that the *God of all grace also sees, responds through me, and empowers me to keep going!*”

*Article for Further Pondering:*

Linenkugel, Nancy (November 18, 2020) “Society is a Traffic Roundabout – or It Should Be,” Global Sisters Report. Retrieved from:

[https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.globalsistersreport.org%2fnews%2fsocial-justice%2fcolumn%2fsociety-traffic-roundabout-or-it-should-be&c=E,1,P7w63VnLFzhbRy-LpkJGmB8L1xYKvePxEQk7k08klyXnZlyZHMdPK3SGUU\\_5\\_fMemNDhV8QCKletVISPk6r-IHmzdw4JvUiZ5vELB5b-IV0Zg9\\_UbQ,,&typo=1](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.globalsistersreport.org%2fnews%2fsocial-justice%2fcolumn%2fsociety-traffic-roundabout-or-it-should-be&c=E,1,P7w63VnLFzhbRy-LpkJGmB8L1xYKvePxEQk7k08klyXnZlyZHMdPK3SGUU_5_fMemNDhV8QCKletVISPk6r-IHmzdw4JvUiZ5vELB5b-IV0Zg9_UbQ,,&typo=1)



*"Feminine Energy" [2020] @Helen David Brancato, ihm*