

CANADA/USA PROVINCIAL CHAPTER MINUTES

October 30 to November 2, 2009

PRESENT:

Provincial Team - Jackie Chenard, Mary Babic

Consultors - Isabel Lewis, Margaret Hughes

Location - St. Francis Centre for Religious Studies, Mono
Mills, ON

Facilitator - Jo Kennedy

Sisters -

Audrey Doetzel	Kay MacDonald
Audrey Gerwing	Lucy Thorson
Bernadette O'Reilly	Margaret Hughes
Celia Deutsch	Margaret McGrath
Connie Caron	Marge Zdunich
Donna Purdy	Maria Vigna
Elizabeth Losinski	Mary Babic
Isabel Lewis	Mary Ellen Coombe
Jackie Chenard	Pauline Greenizan
Jocelyn Monette	Phyllis Kapuscinski
Josie Germaine	Stephanie Schmidts
Joyce Sinnett	Sylvia Obrigewitsch
Juliana Heisler	

Friends of Sion -

Anna Paolo
Barbara Goetz
Claire Pace
Kathleen Rusnak
Kay Walkup
Murray Watson

Chapter Planning Committee - Sylvia Obrigewitsch, Maria Vigna

House Liaison - Elizabeth Losinski

Social - Connie Caron, Celia Deutsch

Decorations and Welcome - Stephanie Schmidts, Isabel Lewis, Audrey Gerwing

Gifts/Thank You's - Joyce Sinnett

Secretaries

Mary Ellen Coombe, Kathleen McAulay

Finances

Bernadette O'Reilly

Scrutators (revised)

Juliana Heisler, Maria Vigna

Agenda

Saturday

8:30am – Breakfast

9:15am – Prayers and Introduction/Overview

9:45am – Reflection on the past 6 years (small groups)

10:45am – Break

11:15am – Sharing our priorities (small groups)

12:30pm – Lunch

1:30pm – Pulling together our key priorities

2:45pm – Break

3:00pm – Key Priorities – continued

4:30pm – Mass

5:30pm - Supper

Sunday

8:00am – Breakfast

9:15am – Biblical Study with Rabbi Michael Dolgin

12:30pm – Lunch

1:30pm – Discernment and Election of Chapter Delegates

1:30pm – Associates and Friends Reflections

5:00pm – Finish

5:30pm – Supper

Monday

8:00am – Breakfast

9:15am – Interim/Formative Evaluation and Leadership Model

10:45am – Break

11:30am – Closing Remarks

12:00pm – End

12:30pm - Lunch

Friday, October 30, 2009

Welcomed by the PLT: Mary Babic and Jackie Chenard

Prayer prepared by Toronto cluster: Marge Zdunich, Lucy Thorson,
Pauline Greenizan, Jocelyn Monette, and Margie McGrath

Social Gathering

Saturday, October 31, 2009

The day began with Morning Prayer prepared by Josie Germaine, Connie Caron

Jo Kennedy, our facilitator, greeted everyone and talked about how she had thought of us several times in the past year. She said that there were three reasons why we had such an impact on her: 1. A recognition of our pioneering ways in religious life, reenergizing, redefining and remodelling; 2. Recognition of our openness to taking risks without knowing where we'll end up; and 3. Our willingness to let go and overcome the pain and fear.

Jo brought to our attention the quote from Theodore in our most recent Dynamic Movement of the Spirit.

"The works of God usually have weak, obscure and almost imperceptible beginnings, like small seeds which germinate for a long time in the soil before emerging above the ground to blossom and bear fruit under the rays of the sun. Convinced of these indisputable facts, I go forward resolutely as if I were certain of the future."

Theodore Ratisbonne, Memoirs, 1883

We were charged with the task over the next three days of looking at the priorities of this Province and the message we want to send to the General Chapter.

I. REVIEW OF MANDATE 2004-2009

To begin we broke ourselves into small groups to reflect on the following question:

How has our Province lived out the mandate of the last General Chapter -2004 to 2009? – What are we proudest of and what were the major challenges?

We brought back our reports on chart paper and posted them around the room. We did not discuss the reports but left them posted about the room for everyone to read. All of these reflections were certainly part of our consideration in moving to identify the key issues for General Chapter. The following are reports of the small group discussions as they appeared on the chart paper.

Group 1

How has our Province lived out our mandate?

1. R&E – Tikkun Olam; Biblical Justice; International
2. Living More Congregationally
 - a. Finance Team – Foundations/Funds
 - b. New Jewish – Christian work (devolution of SIDIC)
 - c. Associates
 - d. UNANIMA
3. Jerusalem – Ecce Homo , Ein Karem – two become congregational
4. Inter Provincial Connections
5. Looking at structure of community in our Province
6. Developing Friends and Associates

What are the Challenges?

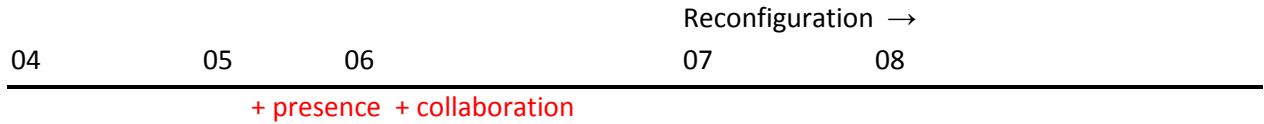
1. Reading “Signs of the Times”
 - Ecology
 - Scripture
 - Human Heart
 - Nature
 - World Issues and how we impact
 - Lobby Skills
2. Vocation Development
3. Community Formation

Group 2

1. Integration, Deepening of Charism
 - a. Discovering our roots in Bible and Jewish sources re justice and healing brokenness
 - b. Engagement in UNANIMA
 - c. More people giving workshops on Bible
 - d. Interfaith study of sacred texts (Bible, Jewish sources, Qur’an)
2. Reconfiguration
It’s begun:
 - a. International finance team ↔
 - b. International Jewish – Christian team ↔
 - c. Central American Second Formation ↔ Province
 - d. Elizabeth/Teddy/Louise Road Show ↔
 - e. Strasbourg Group ↔
3. Challenges
 - 1) Reconfiguration
 - We want friends/associates to be part of this

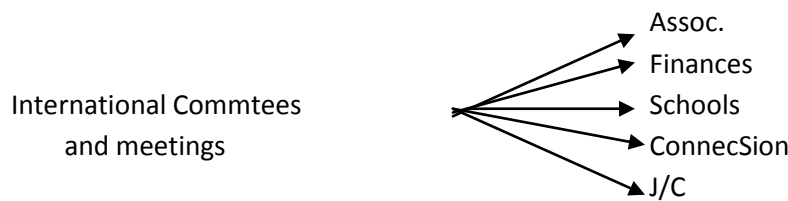
- 2) Risks, stretching involved in everything
- 3) Membership and what this will mean for us

Group 3



Jerusalem – process of decision making

International formation Vocations /Provincial Formation



Group 4

Charism:

Taking more personal responsibility for living and sharing our charism

- e.g. Sion Newsletter (full of stories and involvements) more effective than vocation brochures
- areas developing programs around charism issues and topics i.e. Toronto, Saskatoon
- Study sessions for Sion and Friends

Re-configuration:

Uneasy about geographical basis

Regrouping – “Congregation Unity”



Jerusalem:

Concerned and confused about Ein Karem:

- Re: un-examined assumptions
- Brothers and sisters have capable administrators
- Adequate personnel
- Don't have: Visas, Action Plan
- Asking “Chemin Neuf” to leave: what are the implications of this?

Group 5

Lived Well:

*Education in Sion Schools – charism lived as a priority for life, for living and working with others; discovering one’s own “blessing” in order to be a blessing, and to understand the marginalized, other faiths and traditions and work for peace & justice.

*Extended idea and living community/communion:
congregational teams (Friends, JC, Finance) Associates
-Interprovincial:
-Intraprovincial: Friends and Associates

*Our Presence in Jerusalem and meaning for us:
Young sisters: ConnecSion
Schools: possibly having Jerusalem Day

*Deepening/Study of the Word: Tikkun Olam study (To Be A Blessing)

*Strengthening areas/area life/local leadership

*Reconfiguration
from geographical model to living areas: (congregational teams) and other inter-connections. Movement

Group 6

Proud of...

-Developments of Associates/Friends

-International Participation – Teams

-International Meetings

-International Experiences – Winnipeg

Developing Congregational Identity

Challenges

-aging

-languages/cultures/legal, political structures

-vocations

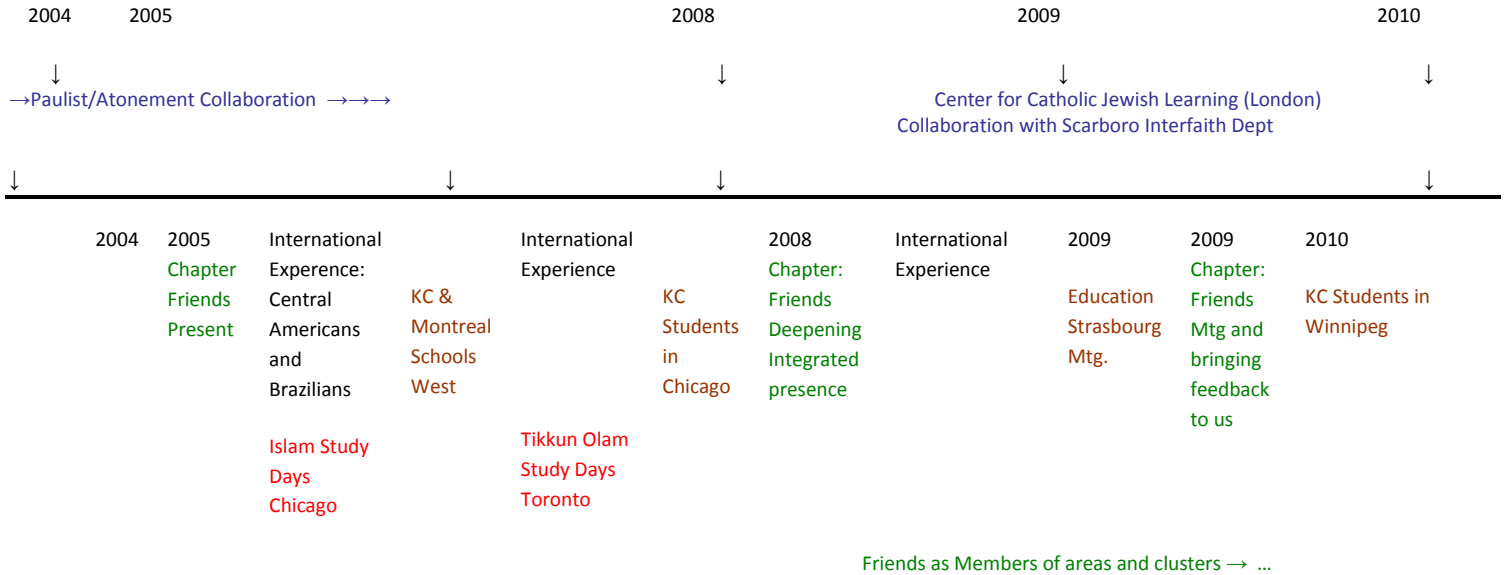
-communications

-forms of community

International Teams/Meetings:

Finance ----- Jewish-Christian ----- Friends ----- ConnecSion

J E R U S A L E M



II. REVIEW OF KEY ISSUES FOR GENERAL CHAPTER

Sylvia Obrigewitsch reminded us that a first report on the five key issues for the General Chapter and the names of the General Chapter delegates will be sent in the next two weeks. A second report due in March 2010 will be produced by PLT and the elected delegation.

In the same groups as the morning session, we shared our hopes and the key issues that we had prepared and brought to Chapter with us. Each group was asked to bring back to the large group all the issues that surfaced. Maria Vigna, Sylvia Obrigewitsch, and Jo Kennedy grouped these issues into areas as best they could. Six priorities seemed to emerge along with some hopes. We agreed that the hopes cut across all of the other themes.

Hopes for the General Chapter 2010

To be open to the spirit to know where we have to let go, change, die and to resurrect in our ways and in our structures.

To be bold and courageous. Have the courage to make choices to respond to the pressing needs of our world that call out to our charism and be open to let go of present realities to free us to act on our choices.

The Following Key Issues Were Identified

1. Jerusalem
2. Community
3. World issues – mission, ministry, how do we practice UNANIMA
4. Communication – technology and transparency
5. Re-configuration – cross cuts all – a new foundation –reconfiguration
6. Vocation/Formation/ different forms of Membership

We divided into small groups by interest to work on short statements for these key issues that would form the substance of our first report to General Chapter. Each group brought back a statement and Sylvia Obrigewitsch was charged with the task of putting the report together. Over the rest of the day, each group sharpened their statements and the following report was agreed upon.

CANADA-US PROVINCE HOPES AND KEY ISSUES FOR THE GENERAL CHAPTER IN 2010

Preamble - Our **hopes** for the general chapter and the importance of **communication** are two elements which permeate all the key issues which our province presents.

OUR HOPES

That we:

- have the courage to be bold and to make choices and respond to the pressing needs of the world that call out to our charism,
- be open to the Spirit to let go and change in order to free ourselves to act on our choices

COMMUNICATION is a tool that enables us to relate to each other, and share our lives.

We appreciate the successful efforts that have already been achieved at both the general and provincial levels. These need to be further developed. We have identified some challenges confronting us and we offer the following recommendations:

Challenges

1. Our diminishing numbers increase the possibility of isolation
2. Differences in culture and language
3. Effective Communication
 - a. Among ourselves – deep listening empowering us to courageous action

- b. With the Outside world
4. Communicating our congregation and our charism to the world
5. Developing our processes/skills/resources for making corporate statements
6. How do we identify target groups i.e. –youth-vocations, social justice networks, etc.

How to further communication:

- 1) Development of our technological resources
- 2) Develop technical skills to maximize these resources

Web, Teleconferencing, SKYPE, You Tube, Twitter, Blogs, RSS, Twitter

- 3) Communication Consultants Team? (local or international)

KEY ISSUES

1. Jerusalem

Jerusalem has been a priority of the Congregation for a number of years and always will remain at the centre of our charism. However, our institutional presences there in Ecce Homo and Ein Karem pose very serious concerns in a number of areas, in particular, providing sisters to live in them.

We present, for reflection at the General Chapter, the two following questions which we hope will assist the General Chapter to look at our presence in Jerusalem from a new perspective:

- a) Do we need our institutions in order to live out our charism?
- b) Are there other ways of living our charism there?

2. Looking At Community in a New Way

We affirm that Community is an important topic for the general chapter to consider. We live in societies in which community is disintegrating rapidly. In such a reality, where isolation can be destructive, it is crucial to live community to sustain ourselves and to witness its value to others. We experience community as a reality which cannot be defined only by structures and is not limited to Sisters of Sion alone.

Some of our experience of the more profound elements of living community that we are challenged to live today are:

- Inclusive, open to others
- A place of prayer and faith-sharing

- Demanding investment of time, resources and self
- Requiring face-to-face times
- Calling for mutuality, respect, fidelity
- A place for personal and community discernment
- Life-giving; a place to share life and support others' lives.
- A group that celebrates reconciliation
- A place of affirmation and challenge
- Where we are grounded

We believe that it would be valuable to speak as a Congregation about what forms the basis or essence of community.

What can we as Congregation do to strengthen these values in our communities?

3. Reconfiguration

Given the realities of the Congregation in terms of numbers and aging, all of Sion is looking at a restructuring so that it may better serve these changing realities.

We support this.

At this moment this restructuring, which already includes new forms of provincial leadership and international participation is being called 'reconfiguration'.

Our provincial chapter sees this reconfiguration in the following way:

- That reconfiguration, rather than being seen as geographic, be understood and lived as an organic, natural movement, a process of the "whole".
- We would see our friends, associates, teachers, etc. as participating in this movement.
- This movement is for the sake of the presence and energy of the charism in and to the world.

Implications

Being organic means that:

1. Congregational Teams presently working would continue and new ones may be formed.
2. Provinces who see the need and desirability of joining one another may do so.
3. Other provinces may share personnel and/or common projects across provincial boundaries and borders.

4. Chapters and other Congregational gatherings would be open to associates, friends, teachers, etc.

4. Charism and the World

Given the on-going imperative to interpret the signs of the times through the gift of our charism, we recommend that the General Chapter:

1. Listen to the world realities:
 - a. The cry of the earth
 - b. The cry of the vulnerable and the exploited
2. Engage our charism with these realities
3. Call us to concrete action

5. Vocation and Formation

We are aware of the work begun in the 2004 General Chapter. We acknowledge the contribution of the international formation meeting (2006), as well as the inter-provincial collaboration that has taken place during those years. We are not here proposing an international formation program. Rather we recommend that the General Chapter mandate the formation of an International Vocations Committee (re Vowed Life) which would be concerned with these areas:

1. Providing on-going oversight regarding what is happening throughout the Congregation
2. Be advisors to general leadership and provinces
3. Provide resources, leadership and guidance
4. Investigating different forms of belonging
5. How do we make ourselves known?

Another issue of the day

During the day another important issue emerged: **Ein Karem** and the pending decision about the partnership with the Fathers of Sion regarding Ein Karem. This issue was not scheduled to be part of this Chapter and there was insufficient time to add it to the agenda. It was decided that those interested in discussing this issue meet in the evening.

Mass at 4:30 pm. Presider: Fr. Murray Watson. Prepared by the Saskatoon area

Sunday, November 1, 2009

Sunday morning began with prayer prepared Lucy, Pauline and Phyllis and then a study session led by Rabbi Michael Dolgin, well known to us and member of the R & E Board. We had a very stimulating time together studying the text about Abraham in Gen 11: 27 – 12: 3.

These are some of the key ideas, insights and thoughts that emerged from his presentation and which were used in our thank you to him:

- We are on a journey and we are going on a journey.
- What's the grace being given?
- At what point along a journey do we realize/learn the religious significance of it? How does God show, how do we recognize a new place? Continuity may not necessarily reside in the firm roots where the journey began.
- Listening to what we are saying. Learning more intense ways of listening: "Do your ears hear what you mouth is saying?"
- Faith requires that we make a commitment even if we are wrong, even when we don't know. "Sin boldly".
- Being "gloriously imperfect"; being "exactly wrong".

III. ELECTION OF CHAPTER DELEGATES

We were reminded that Jackie Chenard was our ex officio delegate and we needed to elect 4 delegates and two alternatives. We were also reminded of the criteria for delegates sent to us by the General Chapter planning committee.

To begin the discernment process for the election of Chapter delegates, we divided into small groups and were asked to come to agreement on up to six names. We presented those names to the large group and created the following list:

Mary Babic

Kay MacDonald

Marge Zdunich

Celia Deutsch

Margaret Hughes

Bernadette O'Reilly

Mary Ellen Coombe

Elizabeth Losinski

Phyllis Kapucinski

Jocelyn Monette

Pauline Greenizan

Each sister was able to speak to the assembly. Celia Deutsch and Mary Ellen Coombe withdrew their names.

The final slate for election of delegates was:

Mary Babic	Elizabeth Losinski
Kay MacDonald	Phyllis Kapucinski
Marge Zdunich	Jocelyn Monette
Margaret Hughes	Pauline Greenizan
Bernadette O'Reilly	

Change of Scrutator

The chapter decided to ask Juliana Heisler to be the scrutator with Maria Vigna, because Kay MacDonald was on the slate for election.

We were given ballots and asked to write 4 names.

Results of the first ballot

On the first ballot, we elected our first 3 Delegates and our Second Alternate.

1. Mary Babic
2. Kay MacDonald
3. Marge Zdunich

Second Alternate: Margaret Hughes

Elizabeth Losinski and Jocelyn Monette were tied for 4th Delegate and 1st Alternate.

We took a second ballot each and voted for either Elizabeth Losinski or Jocelyn Monette.

Results of second ballot

Elizabeth Losinski is the 4th Delegate and Jocelyn Monette is the 1st Alternate.

Final Election Results

Chapter Delegates: Mary Babic, Kay MacDonald, Marge Zdunich, Elizabeth Losinski

First Alternate: Jocelyn Monette

Second Alternate: Margaret Hughes

IV. MEETING OF FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES

(concurrent with Election)

While the election of delegates was proceeding, our Friends/Associates met to consider three questions. They brought a summary of their discussion back. The following is the report from Kay Walkup, Kathleen Rusnak, Anna Paolo and Claire Pace. (Murray Watson and Barbra Goetz were unable to stay longer)

What do we bring and what do we have to offer

A spiritual connection – Theodore – hearts as big as the world – we think that we have that to offer, solidarity and support and extension of the charism, truth – interfaith and ecumenical – respect identification – life experience, work, and ministry. We’re witnesses, ambassadors; we interface externally with the Charism. Internally – we can serve, collaborate, attend, to connect, accompany and journey together – we are companions.

What do we need

We need to know more of the scope of the work of Sion, here and around the world. We want to know more about Sion’s Constitution – “the little red book” – and have a desire for appropriate inclusion and knowing.

What boundaries/obstacles exist Boundaries are not necessarily bad things; we are still discovering what they are. We recognized a real need for a connection to also exist between and among the Friends of Sion.

Suggestions on how to be more connected

Shared emails – Kay Walkup, Barbra Goetz, Anna Paolo to meet as the Team for Associates and Friends in the Province - a desire to know more Friends in other areas, how they came to know Sion and how they live out the charism.

Each of them then spoke more personally of their own story of connection to Sion. We finished the afternoon together on an inspiring note and also a reminder of the next day’s task: to evaluate/review our current PLT model and our own area/cluster projects of life.

EIN KAREM PROJECT REVISITED

A group did meet and prepared a letter/statement for review and signature by those who so chose. The letter would not necessarily go from the Chapter, but from those who signed it.

Monday, November 2, 2009

We began with Morning Prayer prepared by Audrey Gerwing and Isabel Lewis

V. EVALUATION OF NEW MODEL OF PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP

As we began the morning together, we recognized that we would only have time to begin this evaluation process. Jo reminded us that we had given ourselves a new model of leadership at two levels – at the Provincial level, (2 leaders and 2 consultors) and at the local leadership level. These structures were created to help us strengthen and live out our charism as a group and individually as women of Sion. We need to remember that we are learning as we go, learning by doing and so there will be mistakes, misunderstandings and that it takes time to do things differently, to form the right configurations and that it is worth the time.

We divided into our area/cluster groups to consider the following questions:

1. What's working well and why?
2. What are we struggling with? What's hard and why, at a local and provincial level?
3. What could we do differently and better with this model between now and the next chapter to improve on the model?

Feedback from each cluster

1. **Montreal** - Jackie Chenard, Josie Germaine, and Connie Caron

What's working for us

- point person who relays important information
- We understand each other's strengths and weaknesses – and the trust level has risen
- Twilight retreats once a year
- Connie comes twice a year – feels more connected – less isolated – renewal of vows
- Meetings have not been as regular as hoped
- Provincial – we stress discernment – communicate with the PLT as needed – hasn't been a necessity, but feel one coming up soon.

- Receive the minutes, news on time. In our area the point person (Josie) has taken much of the responsibility away from the PLT. The model is new and seems to be working. Think that the local areas have to take on more responsibility.

What do we need to do better

- Have to involve Connie Caron more – speaker phones, change time of the year for visits.
- With Barb Goetz, we continue to find ways to involve her.
- Yolande-Rachel Dufresne is really not well right now.

Provincial – we think that it's been too much work for two people – but that we can take on more work to ease that burden.

2. **Saskatoon** - Donna Purdy, Juliana Heisler

- Alice Godin and Terry Horvath are planning on moving to Saskatoon from Edmonton.
- Local Level – working quite well. Reminded group of the struggle to deal with Acadia. Regular monthly meetings. Point person concept is working very well. This year the point person is Kay MacDonald.
- Life amongst ourselves – we have regular monthly meetings and often get together for meals and birthday/feast celebrations.
- One improvement is that we come together for a business meeting once a month for two hours – it would be helpful to have more family/community type get-togethers.
- Provincial – the point person concept works well.
- We feel gloriously independent. It's up to us to go back to Saskatoon and share with the Sisters there what we've been blessed with here.
- We need to reach out beyond ourselves more – we need to cultivate more associates.
- Elizabeth Losinski is coming to give a talk on Theodore, so we could invite people to attend.
- If Kay MacDonald were here, she would speak very strongly about the fact that the consultors were not elected and the Canonical implications.

3. **Mid-West Region** - Mary Ellen Coombe, Stephanie Schmidts, Kay Walkup

- Strongest thing we have to say about ourselves is that we haven't given up. It takes a lot of time. Still struggling to build those relationships. The three of us that are here have strong relationships and we have to get the other two more involved.
- Technology has been a large learning curve for us – e.g. Skype
- We know that we need to have a face to face meeting as soon as we can.
- We know that our biggest need is just to make that regular connection – we have some dates set.
- Provincial Level – we have only positive things to say about our communication and we are very grateful to them for their support of our efforts. We're grateful for the times the Provincial team has initiated conversations with us.

4. **Toronto Cluster** – Elizabeth Losinski, Joyce Sinnett, Margie McGrath, Lucy Thorson,
Pauline Greenizan, Jocelyn Monette, Marge Zdunich

- Also have not given up.
- We have been finding other ways to do things that offers a freedom. We are working with lay women. So we have more flexibility – on a journey of discovery. We use books to generate different ideas.
- Then we have found that we need other ways to meet.
- We know we need to deepen relationships at the local level.
- We're finding it a struggle to find the time, energy, honesty, we have to claim our own individual needs – faith, sharing, at a deeper level.
- Big issue is trust – faith-sharing. To be ready for great honesty.

- We have expectations of each other due to lack of communication. We can't control everything and try to always fix things.

Provincial level

- What's working well: happy to have found good professional help in the shape of Kathleen McAulay.
- Things to do better – because of the struggles with this model due to lack of time and consideration last year. We convinced the PLT to go back to the Chapter minutes to find the role descriptions – which are not clear. Bigger issue is communication. We need to hear from the PLT as group of 2 and group of 4 as to what they are doing and what they need from us.
- Canonical – provincial minutes need to be fuller and more honest – they are our archives – in our lives if we don't have sufficient information the trust disintegrates and there is not support.

5. **Eastern Seaboard Community** – Audrey Doetzel, Celia Deutsch, Sylvia Obrigewitsch, Phyllis Kapuscinski, Kathleen Rusnak and Claire Pace

- The conversation that we had this morning indicated to us what very positively has developed for the Eastern Seaboard Community. Our conversation moved us to considerable depth.
- We began our group with a project of life.
- We set an agenda for monthly teleconferences – we have stayed committed to this.
- We've made an effort as much as possible to visit with one another, not as yet as a whole group.
- We have a good trust level established within a short time period. Kathleen Rusnak and Claire Pace (Friends of Sion) have been much involved in our

communication with each other. We need to clarify the process of communication back to the province in regards to friends/associates.

- Point Person role has been shared. Right now, Kathleen Rusnak and Claire Pace are our point persons. We need clarity on the role of the point person and how they work with the group.
- Over the past months, some degree of discernment has been necessary. How do we discern together as a group; to what degree are we able to bring our deeper discernments to each other, with the lack of opportunity and how much of that can be done in a teleconference for deeper faith sharing.
- It raised for us the question: which discernments do we bring to the group, or esp. to the PLT? There are some things with this model that may not be possible.

RE: the Leadership Team:

- There was consensus among us that is positive and that we give high marks to the team. We have felt free to reach out and consult with them and are grateful at how they have reached out.
- The model of the leadership: the two elected leaders and the consultors. We are not clear on how the consultors are involved. That is a big question. Another is re: the job load and the work commitment and what do they need from us. Have we held up our end?

- Question – PLT– is it the structure as it was in the minutes of the last Chapter of a council of two and consultors who came in occasionally or has it shifted into a council of four – that is not clear in the minutes.

6. **Winnipeg** – Bernadette O’Reilly, Maria Vigna, Margaret Hughes

- Project of Life – until the summer we were doing very well with it – we’re back on track and most of the things on the Project of Life have been very real.
- The point person has not been a very significant part of our lives.
- Lorraine Lachance is a part of our area and comes regularly for Mass and to share community with us.
- We know that we could do a better job connecting and developing connections with Friends.
- In terms of the Provincial level – our feeling was positive and any contact that we have had has been positive. We need to give it time.

7. **Toronto** Marion St. - Audrey Gerwing, Isabel Lewis, Mary Babic + Anna Paolo

Local level

- It has been life-giving to have consistent faith-sharing in community meetings together; our faith-sharing goes deeper and helps us to understand one another in the face of good and difficult moments as they happen.
- We have tried to keep the mandate, to open ourselves wider by widening the tent pegs through General Chapter Preparation reflections with Anna Paolo
- We also do this in sharing our Retreat Days with ourselves and 3 other women, sharing our reflection and prayer together, followed by supper.
- We struggle with time and consistency, to be in communication and in touch with our other clusters. We have come together for feasts and speakers.
- We must continue to try to keep connected.

Province level

- It’s been helpful to have outside help: in Kathleen McAuley. What we’re learning is that this model is still in a 'to-be-developed' stage – it’s in process – like the Rabbi said – that takes time.
- One of the questions we had: Is two, too few and what would that mean; how can we help to lighten that load. We have to continue to take responsibility.

8. Team Evaluation

History and Evolution – Jackie Chenard, Mary Babic

In the beginning, we met on our own to prepare, and then with the consultors, to try to situate the province’s new model of leadership within the whole of what had happened in the Chapter, and the resulting mandate with its recommendations and directions for all.

At first, we two, and then again as a group of four, we spent a lot of time in our first meetings looking at the Mandate and the minutes of the Chapter to see what “strengthening the areas” and “local leadership” might look like or mean, and then, in trying to create a way of operating as a leadership team that would support this vision and complete the work that is needed to be done at a provincial level.

We reflected on feedback from some members in the Province about how the model might work.

We also called to mind Chapter conversations about the fact that for all of us, the new model would involve some experimentation at the beginning, so it was good to take the time to try to work the structural questions out. As such, we worked more often at the beginning of the first year with the consultants present; this helped us to have a broader base of reflection for decision-making.

The objective was to clarify and name clear tasks for the two of us based on our roles, which were different than those of the consultants, and to communicate the list of these tasks to the province: preparation and follow-up from meetings, visits to areas/clusters, and liaisons with committees/teams/GLT.

We found that having those defined, clear tasks was a great help to the two of us and that how we now operate within those roles and to complete the tasks has also evolved.

Sometimes something comes up and we don’t go directly to the consultants but wait until we gather more information. Sometimes matters develop as we go along. Working within this model means that sometimes we are doing duplicate work on two levels: we have discussion up to a certain point, and then bring the consultants, who have not yet been in the conversation, up to speed in order to broaden the reflection towards decision-making.

We are still evolving the best ways and times to connect with the consultants during the meetings when they are not present.

Experience of Roles and Tasks of the Affirmed Members of the Team –

Jackie Chenard, Mary Babic

Workload – We have found that two people to do the workload that was normally done by 3 or more, in and as a leadership team, is hard to balance with our other ministry commitments.

As a result of this workload, Mary cut back her parish commitments soon after the beginning of the mandate from 100% to 80% and at the beginning of this second year from 80% to 50%.

In the beginning, due in part to different working schedules, it was not easy for us to connect, and at times it meant late hour phone calls or working together on the weekend. Later on and now, we have the same days where Jackie is at home and Mary is at the Provincial office and we can more easily set regular times for communication. Trying to keep office hours has not been possible and may not be realistic.

Our Administrative Assistant, Kathleen McAulay, has been working with us since February 2009. She helps us with organizing, typing, keeping the office running, mailing, filing, and some information gathering.

Experience of the Role of Consultors – Isabel Lewis

The following reflections and evaluations will be based on the minutes of the Chapter, 2008 document. As I read it now, it does not present a clear picture of choice, but rather a statement of acceptable possibilities.

As you recall, three models of Leadership were described for our consideration. After discussion, the chapter tended to favour Model B and then moved to alter this model to provide for two or three consultors. A slate of possible names for this responsibility was created and approved by the chapter. After a process of discernment, the core team of two persons was asked to select two or three consultors from this list.

I think that it is important to point out that much of the previous discussion on the topic of leadership was based on a model of an elected team.

The focus of the chapter discussion on consultors was to list what they were for and what they need to be. I have chosen items from this list, which I think we have focused on during our past year.

1. Role to be centered around the mandate and the way it is lived out
2. Broaden the base of reflection
3. Be involved in major decision making
4. Bring diversity to the table (regions, style of thinking)
5. Come to the PLT meetings well-prepared

Experience of the Role of Consultors – Margaret Hughes

The role of the consultors has been to broaden the base of reflections. Throughout the first year, we were acquiring experience with the model and building our knowledge of it, on our feet, slowly sorting and sifting the roles, conversations, and decisions that were appropriate to the affirmed leaders, and which ones were framed in a discussion of the whole group.

My experience of the role is that it is very different from the role of councillor on a team with a provincial in these ways:

- Consultors are involved at the discretion of the affirmed leaders. Thus, there are conversations and topics that we are not involved in from start to finish. Sometimes,
- we are brought into a conversation as it evolves, and our reflection and input are sought.
- We are not involved in direct follow-up but may be involved in giving feedback on minutes, and various documents produced in the follow-up work.
- The workload is significantly less for us than for the other two. Whereas this is built into the model, it does leave Mary and Jackie with a huge amount of work. At times their work is amplified by the necessity of communicating with us for the purpose of bringing us up to speed on a certain topic.

- There is a discipline needed as a consultant, to reflect, share, discuss, brainstorm, and sometimes not be in place to see a piece of work through to its conclusions.
- There is a gift in not attending every meeting but there is a tremendous discipline needed for long and longer Skype or phone conversations.

General Learnings – Jackie Chenard, Mary Babic

We are finding that between us and as a group including the consultants, even though we are different, we are able to work together, to learn from each other, to make mistakes and to correct and learn from them.

In the 2008 Chapter Minutes, one of the roles of the consultants was mentioned as being to lighten the burden. We find this to be true in terms of helping to broaden the reflection, but this is not so in terms of lightening the workload.

The use of the Discernment Process that was written up at our 2008 Chapter, which forms an important part of strengthening the area, is new for us. We are learning as we go, fine tuning ourselves and our process as we try to follow it, as a Province and as a team. From our perspective, the role of the point person seems to be helpful in some of the areas of the Province, and where we have had contact with them, it has been beneficial. We continue to learn different ways of how best to support sisters, clusters and areas.

Using Skype has been very helpful, especially in communications between the consultants and ourselves during meetings where we are not all together.

It has been good for us to do this evaluation at the beginning of the second year.

Jo thanked everyone for their feedback and hard work and asked for those that have further questions, that they contact each other in the coming days and funnel those conversations back to their point persons for communicating to the PLT.

EIN KAREM REVISITED:

There was some confusion expressed about the process for deciding that the Ein Karem issue would not be discussed as part of the Chapter. It remains a question for clarification for another Chapter – How do we get things on the agenda? How can we more clearly communicate with each other?

ADJOURNED

Our time together ended. Chapter remains open because the Provincial Statute must be reviewed and approved before the General Chapter. The PLT will be communicating further with us.