



**November 8 – December 1, 2021**

October 12, 2021

Dear Sisters,

As the Special Chapter approaches we invite you to pray for the capitulants and the organizers in a special way. As a virtual Chapter, this is yet another unprecedented moment during this COVID time. In some ways, perhaps it is providential that a Chapter calling us to explore new ways of organizing ourselves and sharing resources in renewed ways is being conducted in a new way! As we well know from experience, this format will bring both opportunities and challenges. At the same time, we are called to exercise resiliency and flexibility in order to be open to the Spirit calling us forth to live our mission in new ways!

It is also the moment for us to consider how we as USC Province want to live this time in an engaged and prayerful way. We would like to offer four optional ways for increasing our collective sense of engagement, solidarity and discernment as we *together* move into this space of the 2021 Special Chapter.

First, we share with you the document prepared by the Special Chapter Preparation Committee: ***Synthesis of Provincial Chapter Documents: Preparation for Special Chapter 2021***. The Mother House shared this document with the capitulants as part of their preparation period for the Special Chapter. The synthesis is intended to stimulate further reflection and deeper discussions. It offers an overview of all Provinces' responses to the questions we received from the Mother House as well as questions for further reflection. The document calls us to deeper reflection and analysis on a number of points including, but not limited to, the centrality of mission; RSCJ-lay relationships; the significance of mutual trust and co-responsibility; the issues surrounding authority and accountability; how we envision the Society in 15 years; and a re-examination of the words and terminology we use to either describe or prescribe life as we see it. Finally, section III of the document includes questions for further reflection. The synthesis is not meant to be read from start to finish in one sitting, but rather is intended as a document to read and reflect upon in parts, to bring to prayer and to stimulate ongoing conversations. Perhaps it gives rise to new insights, perspectives, and questions in you. We encourage you to form ways of sharing your insights, lights, questions and challenges as they relate to us as a Province and as members of the Philippine Region as well as the international Society.



Another option is to follow in the steps of the capitulants' experience. In preparation for the Chapter, the capitulants were invited to **become a discerning community** by participating in three spiritual conversations between April and September, each time with a different group of sisters. The meetings were an invitation to listen to and to share with one another in an atmosphere of prayer and discernment.

Now, in a spirit of solidarity and discernment we invite you to consider forming spiritual conversations using the same questions given to the capitulants as your springboard. We encourage you to explore how you might engage in a diverse group of RSCJs that may include individuals with whom you might not ordinarily find yourself in conversation. Perhaps they are members of a different generation, ministry area, region of the Province or even members of another Province within the Philippine Region.

The purpose of these conversations is not to “produce” answers but rather to foster spaces of spiritual hospitality that might lead us to consider alternative viewpoints and lead us to deeper reflection. The questions have been adapted slightly for our reflection as members of the USC Province as well as the Philippine Region and the international Society.

### ***First conversation: Becoming one body***

#### Questions:

- What is the biggest challenge and the greatest opportunity I see in my province in the present situation?
- Bring one “symbol” (image, object, etc.) to express what you are sharing.

### ***Second conversation: Becoming bread***

#### Questions:

- Where do I feel I am in the process of ‘becoming bread’? Am I feeling the need for patience? Am I like a mixed yeast? A dough? Is there a hidden process offermentation? Am I a kneaded dough? Am I passing through the fire?
- When I think about the possibilities that might emerge from the Special Chapter what generates a sense of fear, resistance, hope, excitement, etc. in me?

### ***Third conversation: Setting sail together***

#### Questions:

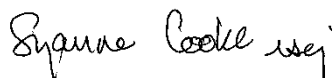
- What do I hear God calling us to let go, to leave on the shore and what essential is Godcalling to take with us on the boat? What is this call to us as a Province? As a Philippine Region? As international Society?
- What do I need to empty *myself* of to listen to the Spirit and whatever we are being called to as USC Province? As the Philippine Region? As part of the international Society?

Thirdly, the Liturgy Committee for the Special Chapter has prepared *Journey of Prayer Toward the Chapter* – a Novena for the nine days preceding the Chapter. They have developed this for the entire Society as well as the capitulants so that we can all prepare our hearts and minds together for the journey.

Finally, all members of the Sacred Heart family are invited to follow news and updates posted on <https://specialchapter2021.rscjinternational.org/> You will find that some pre-Chapter items are already posted.

In the words of Barbara Dawson and the General Council “Let us entrust this process and our discernment to Mary, source of God’s presence among us, so that we too may open our hearts to God’s call to us now and continue to reveal God’s love as women of faith among the people of God.”

United with you in a spirit of prayer and cor unum,



Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ



Imma De Stefanis, RSCJ



Marina Hernandez, RSCJ



Lynne Lieux, RSCJ



**Spirit of light,**

Dwell in each RSCJ, in the whole family of the Sacred Heart  
so that your priorities become ours.  
May your inspiration enlighten us.  
May your power enable us to act.