

Ser y de Actuar en Comunión (Being and Acting in Communion)

edited by Sister Jeanne Marie Gocha

The Congregational Chapter 2007 experienced an urgent call to be and to act together in new ways as one congregation. It was recommended that we “initiate and advance conversations and activities among members, associates and partners in ministry across the congregation. We do this in order to strengthen our experiences of Communion and to deepen self-understanding, the expression of our mission and the structures of the evolving congregation.” (Acts of Congregational Chapter Recommendations)

To this spirit, Sister Maria Rubina invited the congregational vocation/formation teams to meet in Peru in September 2009. This gathering marked the first time the vice province has hosted a congregational meeting. At the Casa Central in Lima, Sisters Rosario Bobadilla, Anne Davis, Francine Costello, Jeanne Marie Gocha, Eva Messina, Angela Pacheco and Jill Underdahl joined with Sisters Maria Rubina, Sally Harper, Zaida Perez and Gloria Zapata for a deep and lively exchange of ideas and issues, regarding vocation/formation ministry throughout the congregation. The time also provided many opportunities to gather and share meals, much conversation and many good times with our Peruvian sisters, most especially with our younger sisters in formation both at the Casa Central and the formation house in Canto Chico.

Coming together as one congregation was enriching for both formators and women in formation. We now share our reflections on this memorable experience with you.

Rosario Bobadilla, CSJ (SL)

I consider this experience to be a grace from God ... I had a deep experience visiting our dear neighbors of Canto Chico, Huancayo and Chinchá. I listened with awe to the theological reflections of our sisters in formation who live in communion with the Sacred Mystery who unifies us in constant love with one another and with the dear neighbor. I praised our dear God for the grace of the vocation he gave to these dear sisters ... Working with the Vocation/Formation Team in Peru has motivated me to work with young adults more directly and to share with them what it is to be a



*Sister Jeanne Marie Gocha, CSJ
Vocation/Formation Director*

CSJ at this time and in this beautiful Pachamama place.

Nancy Chisi, CSJ (P/Novice)

For me the presence of our sisters meant that the seeds sown in Le Puy really took root, grew and multiplied in other continents, finally coming to Peru. I was happy to meet each of the guests and to



Sisters at the Center House: (back row) Sisters Martha Álvarez, Rosa Luz Condo, Sonia Palomino, María Rubina; (front row) Sisters María Vasquez, María Schuh, María Dolores Muñoz, Betty Conrad

share community, even for a short time. It was significant for me because I expanded my world.

Francine Costello, CSJ (CLT)

A visit with our sisters in Peru is an ever new experience to me ... Through the days with them, each one was available to help out in whatever way she was able ... Our younger sisters are confident women, mature for their age, expressive of a deepening faith at community prayers and giving a sense of comfort with everyone ... Most touching to me was the deep sharing of their vocation by the five women in the formation house. They spoke from deep experiences of God of their desire to be of service to their people, of their search for a meaningful role as women ... I liked the way these women saw themselves in their neighborhood as “neighbor to the neighbors.”

Anne Davis, CSJ (LA)

My experience was one of feeling very much “at home” and comfortable. I thoroughly enjoyed being with our sisters—sisters whom I can now call by name, sisters whom I can think about and pray for as we live our CSJ life more deeply connected with one another. My Spanish language skills are limited, but I found that we were able to communicate in ways that are deeper than the limitations of language ... Our Consensus Statement calls us “to move always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction.” I experienced this spirit of discernment and movement as I entered into the life and the expression of mission and ministries of our sisters in Peru. I continue to reflect on my experience at our formation house in Peru and the beautiful ways our newer members are present to our “dear neighbors” through visiting families and

welcoming the neighborhood children into the formation house each afternoon for assistance with their homework.

Jeanne Marie Gocha, CSJ (A)

I am always grateful to meet as Carondelet and to come to know better another part of our congregation. What a gift to spend such time with our sisters in their home which has become another home for me. Our bonds of oneness are strengthened in the personal meeting of sisters, the sharing of our stories as well as the creation of new ones, and the treasured memories we now hold. The greatest source of hope for me was to meet and share with the younger members of community, our junior sisters, novices and candidates. These young women embody our charism and minister to the “dear neighbor” with joy, energy and a groundedness in our mission of unifying love that is exciting to experience.



Congregational Formation Group from the United States: Sisters Francine Costello, Jill Underdahl, Rosario Bobadilla, Angela Pacheco, Eva Mesina, Anne Davis, Jeanne Marie Gocha

Eva Messina, CSJ (H)

I am thankful for the hospitality of our sisters in Peru. Not only were they hospitable, but they truly share themselves and their people. I realized that our young sisters are entering because of a deep and mysterious faith that is ingrained in the people of Peru, even without the so-called religious education that we Americans have access to. I have this sense that the future of our congregation is moving toward South America just as in the nineteenth century the “Little Design” took root in our country and grew. More than ever, I want to learn to speak Spanish, so that I can

really communicate with our Peruvian sisters. They have a wealth to share with us.

Angela Pacheco, CSJ (LA)

The opportunity of having our Congregational Vocation/Formation meeting in Peru was an experience of “being one” with our sisters. We were immersed in a culture of many differences while at the same time experiencing many similarities as Sisters of St. Joseph. We experienced great hospitality, “oneness” in sharing prayer, meals, conversation, laughter and joy. When we visited the Formation House Community, I was filled with hope as we listened to the vocation stories of our younger Peruvian members. All of these women expressed deep faith and a sincere desire to grow in their love for God and in the service of the “dear neighbor.”

Maria Rubina, CSJ (P)

Being able to accommodate Francine, Anne, Jeanne Marie, Eva, Angela Rosario and Jill was a joy and a dream come true, in addition to complying with the mandate of the Congregational Chapter to start to think and act as a unit. Having these women with us was a gift from God that has made us sisters. Through our sharing in prayer, fraternal life and the “dear neighbor,” we have further strengthened our identity CSJ ... For our younger sisters, it was the chance to meet sisters other than those in leadership roles and a real and loving way to experience the reality of the congregation, its size, its wealth and generosity.

Mary Luz Salazar, CSJ (P/Novice)

I sense the Spirit is moving and the sisters I met were alert with eyes open, ears alert and vigilant to welcome the Spirit in what God is communicating to the congregation. I thank God for inspiring us and the congregation for being willing to experience a new place to meet and welcome us from our cultures, seeking new strategies and tools with a broader vision for the mission. For this reason, your visit here to Peru filled me with great joy and hope. Thank you for this time.

Mery Soncco, CSJ (P/Novice)

From the moment we were told of the coming of the sisters on the Vocation/Formation Teams to Peru, I waited with great joy! It is the first time I experienced a visit by our North American Formation Directors. For me, their presence among us means the further opening of the path of unity, belonging and communion from the “Little Design.” It has been a time to enjoy

their presence and share around the table as equals. These relationships that now exist make our community stronger because as we grow, we are strengthened to minister to the people. I am grateful to the vice province for giving us this time to know one another better and to share life and even more grateful to God for giving us His Spirit that encourages us to find ways to respond to our chapter call.

Jill Underdahl, CSJ (SP)

Visiting the Sisters in Peru was a marvelously moving experience for me. I gained broader perspectives on congregation and global realities. Meeting the women in formation and other sisters in Peru excites my vision of the congregation. There is much for us to learn from one another and to teach one another about our unique experiences, perspectives, languages and cultures. Visiting Peru opened my eyes and heart and expanded my imagination in ways I am only beginning to realize.



Women in formation (standing) Sister Zaida Perez (director), Sister Martha Alvarez, Sister Rosa Luz Condo, Sister Sonia Palomino, Senaida Jarro, Sister Mary Luz Salazar, Sister Nancy Chisi; (kneeling) Sisters Maritza Jarro and Mery Soncco