

Justice Commission Charter

Vision

The Justice Commission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Consociates expresses the great love of God and love of the dear neighbor without distinction by working for systemic change and by promoting awareness, education and action through its members and the broader community.

Purpose

As an appointed commission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the Justice Commission is based upon the belief that justice is the work and responsibility of both the whole community and each individual. The Commission's focus is education, advocacy and action leading to systemic change in communion with those who are marginalized.

Responsibilities

The Justice Commission grounds its work in Congregational Acts of Chapter and Catholic Social Teaching by:

- Raising awareness through education
- Providing opportunities for advocacy
- Considering requests to take action for systemic change
- Supporting the goals of the working and task groups

The Justice Commission encourages partnering with new eyes by:

- Being vigilant in identifying the unmet needs of the time
- Seeking opportunities for working and task groups to actively connect with partners that share a similar mission

The Justice Commission recognizes its role in relationship to the Province's responsibility for Ministry by:

- Dedicating itself to understanding that role as expressed in the Constitution of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (C-14):

"Our congregation from its foundation has been dedicated to the exercise of 'all of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy of which woman is capable and which will most benefit the...dear neighbor'—ministry to orphans, the sick poor, young girls, the destitute and others in need. We continue in this spirit and engage in works of compassion and mercy which respond to the spiritual and corporal needs of persons in our times.

We do this in a way that:

- Heals and reconciles.
- Serves all persons without distinction.
- Makes known through our lives the gospel we proclaim.
- Enables others to assume a more active responsibility for continuing the mission of Jesus.
- Recognizes and defends the human dignity of all persons.
- Promotes justice with a particular concern for the poor.

As Sisters of St. Joseph our mission is that of the church: to continue the mission of Jesus. It is our responsibility both as a congregation and as individuals within the church to share the task of identifying and responding to spiritual and material needs. In doing so the Province Leadership Team collaborates with bishops in order to give effective direction to our ministry. The expression of these needs varies with times, cultures and conditions of persons. The congregation, confirming a particular expression of ministry, sends its members in the name of the church to share in the building of God's reign of justice, love and peace through our charism of unity and reconciliation [which is now referred to as *unifying love*].

We use our gifts generously in embracing the command of Jesus: pray, heal, teach, love and forgive. In gentleness, peace and joy we strive to become more loving and effective instruments of Christ's zeal, knowing he is faithful in accomplishing His mission through us."

- Seeing its work in the context of Christian liberation of persons as expressed in the Complementary Document of the Sisters of St. Joseph (CD-13A):

"Each member is called to live in a way that assists in the Christian liberation of persons. As a work of the Spirit, Christian liberation is a continuing effort to recognize, affirm and defend the inherent dignity of all persons against every type of discrimination and against every form of violence and oppression which deny full human development. Each member realizes that, to carry out the social mission of the church and of the gospel, her witness at times will necessarily be counter cultural. Regardless of illness or age, a member by her very life continues the ministry of unity and reconciliation [*unifying love*]."

- Recognizing the primacy of an informed conscience as expressed in the Complementary Document of the Sisters of St. Joseph (CD-13C):

"The congregation encourages each sister to witness in areas of concern according to the dictates of an informed conscience, and it supports the right of members to take a public stand on matters of justice. Since both the individuals and groups reflect the congregation and the church by what they say, they act interdependently with the congregation and the persons with and for whom they take a stand."

Operational Plan

- **Membership on the Justice Commission**

The Justice Commission is generally composed of 15-18 persons. Commission members may include sisters, consociates and partners in mission. Ex-officio members include the Justice Co-Directors, St. Joseph Worker in the Justice Office and Province Leadership Team liaison to the Justice Commission.

- **Terms**

Members are appointed by the Province Leadership Team and Council for a term of three years and may be invited to consider a second three-year term. A person may be re-appointed to another term on the Commission one year after their original term has been completed.

- **Leadership**

The Justice Commission is led by co-chairs who agree to a two-year nonrenewable term. Co-chairs are affirmed annually by the Justice Commission at the September Justice Commission Meeting.

- **Working and Task Groups**

Typically, working groups meet once a month, September through May. Working Groups must include at least one member of the Justice Commission. They may choose to meet during the summer months. Task groups meet as necessary. These groups prepare and present their goals to the Justice Commission in the fall. Each group is accountable to the Justice Commission. Working and task groups:

- Conduct research and social analysis on relevant justice issues
- Identify individuals and agencies which can serve as resources
- Facilitate collaboration with/among these groups on specific issues
- Take action for systemic change supported by the Justice Commission

➤ **Meetings**

The Commission generally meets 9 times per year from September-May.

➤ **Accountability**

The Justice Commission is accountable to the Justice Co-Directors, with whom it evaluates its goals and activities annually; it is ultimately accountable to the Province Leadership Liaison to Justice, and the Community Assembly. The Justice Commission and its working and task groups prepare an annual report of its goals and implementation for the Province Leadership Team and the Community Assembly.

Work Plan

The Justice Commission will:

- Steep itself in the role of the Justice Commission in relationship to the Province.
- Determine the outreach of the Sisters and Consociates to assess the needs of our time in the breadth of our mission and vision.
- After discussion in 1994, the Justice Commission decided to discontinue using Robert's Rules, especially the use of voting to make decisions. At the November 1994 meeting the group discussed and agreed on a consensus format for the Commission to use in decision- making:
 - Encourage discussion by every member;
 - Consider it important that all voices and points of view are heard.

(Revised 8/20/15) (Revised 12/10/15) (Revised 8/2/16)