



## Hopes and Aspirations For the Future of Our Ministries From the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace

### **Introduction** [References taken from the Constitutions of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace]

Our congregational commitment to live and proclaim Christ's gospel of peace directs our decisions regarding ministry. (C. 20). Our history calls us to a special love of those who are poor ...our response demands a firm commitment to work for justice in solidarity with our Sisters and brothers. (C. 21) In facing the challenges of our times and uniting with the church's concern for peace, we respond with the flexibility required by changing needs and remain open to engaging in new forms of ministry. (C. 27)

As the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace consider new ways of sustaining the ministries we have faithfully and joyfully carried on for the past 128 years, we are eager to ensure that the tradition of compassionate service continues. In this document we offer our hopes and aspirations for the ministries presently undertaken, for all that may develop in the future, and for the women and men who commit themselves to this work of service.

### **The Mission of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace**

Although expressed in different words in different times, we believe that our mission as Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace is to make Christ's gospel of peace come alive through works of justice. It is in this belief that we love and labor faithfully to carry on this mission through education, healthcare, and social services. We believe that through extending compassionate care to others, especially to those who are most vulnerable, we bring forth the 'reign of God' here and now, helping to make our world a more just, loving and peaceful place for all. The commitment now, as in the past, must be to this Mission of Jesus, summed up in the call to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with God. This is the heart of each ministry and so must remain.

We ask that those who minister in education, healthcare, and social services reflect often and deeply on this Mission. May it always be a source of inspiration and strength for all who serve God's people.

### ***Hopes and Aspirations For Our Ministries***

We expect that any ministry carried on in the name of Jesus will be a place of care and compassion for all, especially for those who are frail and vulnerable, for those who are poor and on the margins of society. We offer to those who are entrusted with these precious works of hope and healing the words of Margaret Anna Cusack, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, "*I am considering now the very important question of a work which should be of future benefit to the people.*" And again: "*But it did matter to me a great deal in view of my love of the poor, that I should do all I could for those whom he had loved so well.*"

We hope that each person who participates in, as well as those who receive benefit from, these works of compassion and care will find in each of the ministries a spirit of peace, respect, collaboration and justice. We hope, further, that their spiritual needs and aspirations will be encouraged to flourish and grace the ministries. We ask that those who nourish and sustain these ministries may be good stewards of all that is given into their hands – people, resources, earth itself. Our hope is that they will be wise and generous and will gently care for the gifts given, that each gift may in turn be given again to the glory of God’s great vision for the wholeness and healing of all. As new circumstances require new responses we expect that the ideals noted in the opening paragraph above will continue to direct choices and decisions in ministry.

### **From Present to Future**

In prayer and contemplative discernment and in faithfulness to the Vatican II mandate to *‘read the signs of the times’* the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace have responded to the challenge of the times and the conditions in which we live. This has led us to far distance places as well as to situations close to home as we minister to God’s people. We have heard the call to service from bishops and priests, from lay men and women, from socio-economic situations, and from the poor and vulnerable themselves. A focus on wise and practical responsiveness is fundamental to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, and we expect the same gospel sensitivity among those with whom we collaborate in ministry and to whom we entrust the work of these precious ministries. We expect of ourselves and of our lay partners and collaborators an openness to the present and emerging needs of the times in which we live and particular sensitivity to the call of those who are suffering. Such openness requires wise and discerning hearts and an unwavering reliance upon the Spirit of God.

We expect a willingness to reach out to others, and we rely on the competence, talent, wisdom and willingness our co-workers bring to the tables of conversation and to the work of ministry. We can accomplish together much more than we can ever accomplish alone.

We recognize that as ministries evolve and change so, too, will organizational structures. These are critical times, times that require a willingness on the part of all who are involved to discern carefully the call of the Spirit, and to respond with creativity, courage and trust in God’s faithfulness. Together, we can do that.

### **Conclusion**

We are confident that the ministries begun by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace will thrive and will serve well the people of God as new forms of leadership, partnerships, and collaborative enterprises emerge. Served and governed by competent people committed to the ministries, the Mission of Jesus will continue for generations to come. We are certain that in the words of the Prophet Micah we, together in ministry with others, will strive always to *act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God and one another*.