

Brief reflection from Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM at the March 18 Community Assembly

You are a large congregation compared to most in the United States. And, this can make deeper conversations and community planning more difficult and complex. This symbol/image illustrates in general the work of all communities at this time in our history.



The Heart...

Attending to the heart, the core, the essence of our life is essential. This includes our attention to the quest for God, the vowed life, spirituality and prayer, relationships and the communal life. This work asks the question: In the end, when our congregation has transitioned to something new---when we no longer own or operate land, buildings or sponsored ministries, when we no longer have new members or enough Sisters for internal ministries, who will we be? What will be core of our life for a new time?

The Path...

The planning path included all the practical work that needs to be done to be ready for a different future. This is complicated and complex work, which includes a long loving look at reality, considering possibilities, and assessing resources and assets. It also includes consultations, conversations, and deep inner freedom among members.

The Circle...

This is the circle of relationships—consultants, attorneys, canonists, ministry partners, colleagues, networks and other entities. Collaboration in a variety of ways is so necessary in shaping something new. No one can go into the future solo, regardless of how large or small they are.

The focus of the “Discovering...Committee” is on the heart of your life---to explore the evolving meaning of your life, to deepen the connections among you, to expand your vision, and to ground your communal heart for discerning decisions. This is all designed for the community to enter into decisions from the best of who you are----because your path of planning is not a business plan; it is a plan for your very life.