

# 14<sup>th</sup> SSpS GENERAL CHAPTER CONGREGATIONAL DIRECTIONS



"The Spirit of God has consecrated me to bring  
good news to the poor and to proclaim the year of  
God's grace."  
*(Luke 4:18-19)*

# INTRODUCTION



Our story begins in the loving heart of the Triune God. Out of the loving communion of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, creation was born. Love is both: the movement inward to deeper communion and outward—inviting others into this communion.

In the fullness of time, the Author of life entered the story. Empowered by the Spirit, Jesus proclaimed the Reign of God and beckoned all into friendship with the Triune God. By his words and deeds, Jesus invited back to communion all those who, in one way or another, had fallen out of it or had been pushed to the margins. He reached out to all but especially to sinners, the poor, the sick, women, and people of other beliefs. He lived the good news he proclaimed in his stories and parables: No one is excluded from the Reign of God!

The transforming power of the Spirit challenged Jesus to expand his consciousness when he wanted to limit his ministry to his fellow Jews. The Spirit challenged the young Church, too, to share the good news beyond the boundaries of their religion and culture.

The same Spirit filled our Founding Generation with the burning desire to reach out to people far beyond their own horizon, and to share with them the greatest gift of all: the all-inclusive love of God. Their total commitment to mission and sense of purpose sustained them in difficulties and enabled them to make daring decisions and joyful sacrifices. Their audacity continues to inspire us.

As SSpS today, we continue the story our Founding Generation began. The story of God's love from the beginning of time must be told ever new—in new words, in new lives. At this 14<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, we experienced the Spirit—the protagonist of mission—calling us to be "accomplices" in her mission and drawing all into deeper communion with God and in God. We are to be the good news we proclaim. The Spirit impels us to conversion toward deeper communion with God, with others, and with all of creation. In that light, justice, peace, and integrity of creation are not merely something we do; they are at the very heart of our religious missionary vocation toward communion.

Inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit at this 14<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, we, SSpS, commit ourselves to the following directions for 2014-2020:

## **TOWARD COMMUNION WIDENING THE CIRCLE**



## COMMUNION WITH GOD

We nurture our personal relationship with the Triune God as the source and center of our life and mission. We treasure our name, Missionary Sisters, Servants of the Holy Spirit. It gives expression and impetus to our missionary spirituality and charism.



- ***We strive to rediscover the Holy Spirit as primary agent of mission, who accomplishes God's mission through us.***

## COMMUNION WITH THE MARGINALIZED AND EXCLUDED

The needs of our planet are overwhelming and ever changing. Our Charism calls us to serve those who most need to receive the good news of God's all-inclusive love. Their stories become our story, and our story cannot be told without them. We engage in ongoing communal discernment of our priorities with the eyes of the Good Samaritan: he knew when to stop in order to help and when to place the injured one into the caring hand of others. In our diverse global context, poverty, exclusion, and deprivation take on manifold expressions. Jesus answered the question "Who is my neighbour?" with a story, not with a definition.



- ***We engage in ongoing communal discernment of our priorities, sharing our stories and experiences to see more clearly who the Lord is calling us to serve.***

- ***As individuals and communities, we enter the process of conversion toward greater communion and friendship with those we serve.***
- ***We identify the root causes of poverty and injustice and work for systemic change.***
- ***We evaluate our existing institutions and ministries and adapt them to better respond to the needs of the marginalized and excluded.***
- ***We acknowledge our own poverty and vulnerability and accept the help of others.***

## **COMMUNION WITH CREATION**

We have grown in the awareness that all creation and life are interconnected and reflect the love of the Triune God. The Spirit has taught us to see that our mission to share "life in fullness" encompasses not just all people, but all of creation. We realise that Mother Earth has been violated and deprived of her dignity. As she suffers, so does all life.

- ***We evaluate our lifestyle and our ministries through the lens of integrity of creation.***
- ***Our decisions and plans reflect our commitment to justice for creation.***
- ***We engage in ministries that protect and promote the life and wellbeing of all creation.***



## COMMUNION WITHIN OUR CONGREGATION

Humankind is expanding its consciousness to global horizons. At the same time, peoples struggle to maintain their cultural identity and national sovereignty. Our interculturality as SSpS is an expression of the Spirit's many faces. We experience both the richness and the struggles of intercultural and intergenerational community living.



- ***We become aware of and honestly own the lights and shadows of our intercultural and intergenerational living. We open ourselves to continuous transformation as we befriend diversity and the unknown.***

Our formation today, both initial and ongoing, asks us to be open to paradigm shifts in the expression of our consecrated life, community life, and leadership styles. Congregational structures and leadership styles have to facilitate participation and communion. We experience the value of communal discernment and participative leadership. Moreover, the way we use our resources, both human and financial, and the way we make decisions and carry out our ministries have the concerns of the poor at heart.

- ***We evaluate and re-form congregational structures to best serve our mission.***
- ***We use appropriate methods of communal discernment in our decision-making.***
- ***We examine our lifestyle in the light of our total commitment to mission and concern for the marginalized.***

## COMMUNION WITH OTHERS

The movement towards globalization and planetization is changing our patterns of collaboration and communication. We are called to join hands with all those who are inspired by the same Spirit, such as our lay partners in mission and those who belong to other organisations, cultures and religions. Our efforts to promote universal communion would be incomplete without building bridges of friendship with people of other beliefs. Sharing our stories allows us to discover the God of many names and faces.

- ***We respect the distinct vocation of our lay partners and engage in mutual discernment and decision-making for the sake of the mission.***
- ***We network with other organizations and widen the circle of collaboration and friendship.***
- ***We reverently enter into a dialogue of life and action with people of other beliefs.***
- ***We creatively and responsibly use social media and modern technology to share the Good News of God's love.***



## CONCLUSION

We, SSpS, are part of a Church that goes forth as a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, and who bear fruit and rejoice. We are blessed with “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (EG)—the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis—through which the Spirit calls the Church to an ongoing pastoral renewal and to enter into a new chapter of evangelization marked by enthusiasm and vitality. We believe that communion and mission are profoundly interconnected. Therefore, we move forward, boldly taking the first steps to go out to others, to seek those who have fallen away, to stand at the crossroads, and to welcome the outcast. (cf. EG 24).

Jesus finished his Spirit-filled announcement in the synagogue, proclaiming: *This passage has been fulfilled as you have heard it read. As He spoke, all eyes were fixed on him* (cf. Lk. 4:20-21). Likewise, we, SSpS missionary women disciples, fix our hearts and eyes on Jesus as we make his mission our mission. May nothing inspire us more than his life, impelling us onwards! (cf. EG 3)

Following the example of Mother Theresia Messner, with joy, hope, and trust, we go forth:

**EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT,  
SHARING GOOD NEWS  
AMONG PEOPLES.**



Approved by the 14<sup>th</sup> General Chapter on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2014 in the Motherhouse, Steyl