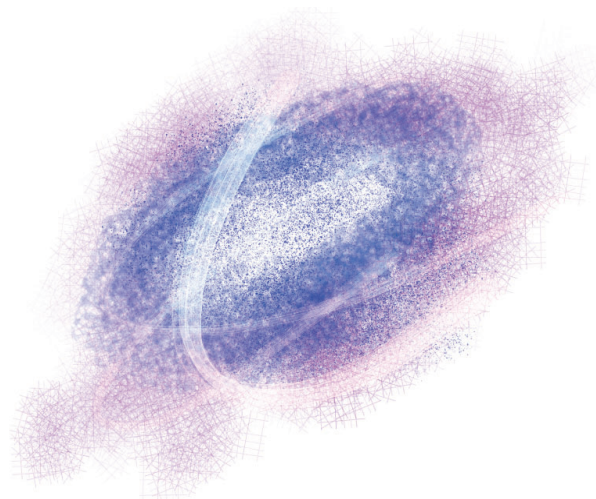


# Widening the Circle of Love





## Women of Hope and Energy for a Broken Church and World

‘...what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes,  
what we have looked at and touched with our hands,  
concerning the word of life – this life was revealed,  
and we have seen it and testify to it.’<sup>1</sup>

As pilgrim companions for 200 years we know that ‘Le Bon Dieu conduit tout lui-même.’ We rejoice that the Risen Jesus, source of our hope, joy and energy, is present and active in us and all around us.

In gratitude for this we want to live with deeper conviction as consecrated women, giving all that we are and all that we have. We are women of the Resurrection, messengers of the Good News<sup>2</sup>, living out this desire in the divided and often suffering reality of our Church, World and God’s entire creation.

Filled with energy and enthusiasm we offer healing, listening, a loving welcome and the hope of reconciliation; we are called to be co-workers with Jesus the Christ, who is transforming the whole of creation.

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1 1 John 1: 1-2a (NRSV edition)

2 Constitutions No. 3

# Compassionate Action — Widening Our Circle of Love

‘Compassion is the language of God’...an ‘act of justice’.<sup>3</sup>

We continue to widen our circle of love to embrace all people, especially those who experience exclusion, exploitation, and injustice.

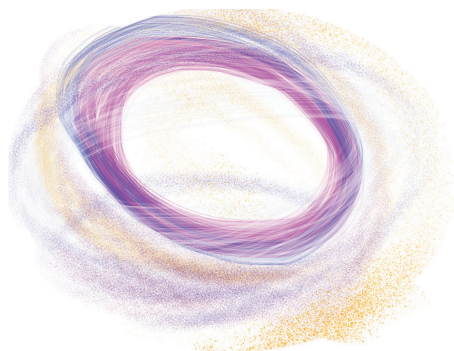
In particular, we offer our compassionate action to:

- ◆ Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- ◆ Trafficked persons
- ◆ The economically disadvantaged
- ◆ Vulnerable women and children

We will do this by:

- ◆ Becoming aware and raising awareness of the complexity at the root of these issues.
- ◆ Collaborating and networking
- ◆ Doing what each of us can, where we are
- ◆ Continuing to use our financial resources and influence to alleviate the plight of suffering people and to effect change.

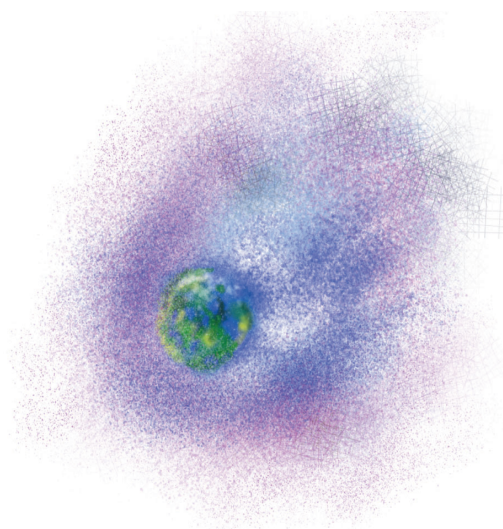
Aware of the gift of the ‘other’, we commit to sustain and enhance life in our common home.




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<sup>3</sup> Morning Meditation, ‘Compassion is an Act of Justice’, Pope Francis, 16 September 2013





## Care for Our Common Home<sup>4</sup>

The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely.  
 Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf,  
 in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face.  
 The ideal is not only  
 to pass from the exterior to the interior  
 to discover the action of God in the soul,  
 but also to discover God in all things.  
 Saint Bonaventure teaches us that  
 'contemplation deepens  
 the more we feel  
 the working of God's grace within our hearts,  
 and the better we learn to encounter God  
 in creatures outside ourselves.'<sup>5</sup>

We recognize God's Spirit in the global movement which is raising the awareness of how we are destroying our Earth.

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4 Laudato Si', Encyclical 'On Care For Our Common Home', Pope Francis, 24 May 2015

5 Ibid. No. 233

Concerns around the care of our Common Home are of great urgency and we cannot delay addressing them. We judge them to be matters of deep justice.

Because our actions flow from a faith perspective, we will continue to deepen our awareness and understanding of creation theology. Likewise we will deepen our contemplative awareness of the whole cosmos.

We want to help each other to reflect constantly on how our lifestyle decisions, small or large, affect the earth and the poorest peoples of the Earth.<sup>6</sup>

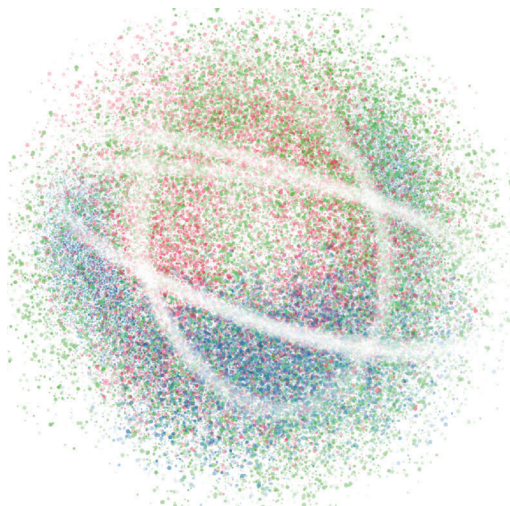
We will make connections with others, especially younger people, who are passionate about ecological issues. We will join with them in positive action to bring about change.

We are faced not with two separate crises,  
one environmental and the other social,  
but rather with one complex crisis  
which is both social and environmental.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Ibid. No. 49, 'Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach ... must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.'

7 Ibid. No. 139



## Governance in the Light of our Present Reality

Jesus, the Incarnate Word, Beloved Son,  
joyfully and gratefully receives all from God  
joyfully and gratefully  
gives all away to God and to us.

We are caught up in this flow of love,  
given, received and given.

All our governance, relationships and communication  
flow from this love poured out upon us by the Spirit,  
love which sends us on mission,  
source of our union in the one Body.<sup>8</sup>







We appreciate the gift of our diversity and complexity. Therefore, the structures of our governance may evolve differently in each part of the Society. We value the significant role of intermediate leadership at this time. We embrace our evolving understanding of being one Body across the whole Society so that our gifts will be shared to the full where they are best used for mission.

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<sup>8</sup> Spiritual Exercises, [230 - 237]; FCJ Constitutions: 273, 5, 14, 15

We recognise the importance of the role of local leaders who are responsible for the union of minds and hearts at the local level, caring for sisters and supporting their life and mission. Given that local contexts vary across the Society, we encourage each sister to continue to take responsibility for her relational living, so as to widen our circles of love.

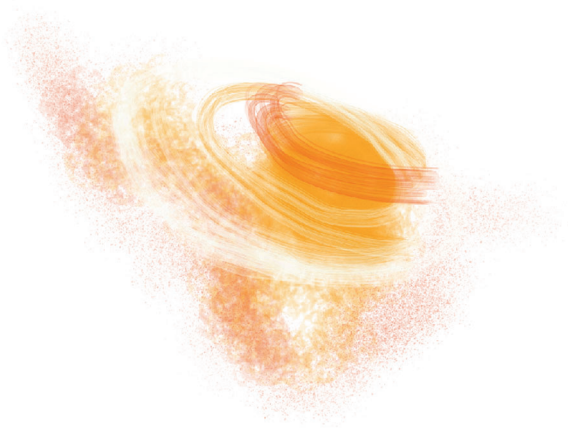
We encourage further exploration of the following principles flowing from our Constitutions:<sup>9</sup>

-  discerning love
-  union of minds and hearts
-  availability for mission
-  subsidiarity and accountability
-  participation
-  communication

... every man and woman who assumes  
the responsibility of governing  
should ask themselves these two questions:  
Do I love my people, so that I may better serve them?  
And am I humble enough to hear the opinions of others  
so as to choose the best way of governing?<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> FCJ Constitutions, Forward, p. i; Supplementary Code 80.

<sup>10</sup> Morning Meditation, 'Pray for politicians that they govern us well', Pope Francis, 16 September 2013



## Companions in Mission

My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an 'extra' or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing.<sup>11</sup>

As Faithful Companions of Jesus we rejoice in the growth and diversity of the Companions in Mission over the past eighteen years. We thank God for the enthusiasm, gifts and commitment of each one, dispersed over eleven countries. This new expression of the Charism is a source of inspiration and hope and we truly value the treasure that the Companions in Mission are to the FCJ Society and to God's world.

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<sup>11</sup> Evangelii Gaudium, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, Pope Francis, § 273



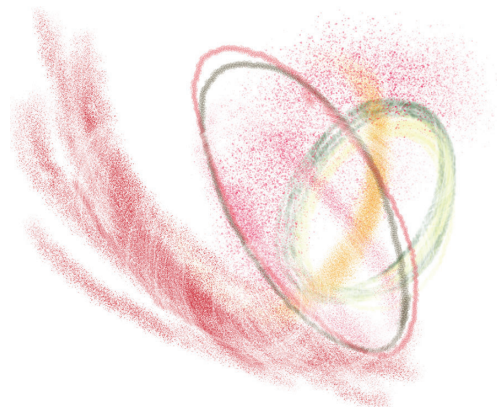
In deepening collaboration with the Companions in Mission we will support their growth and development, foster union of minds and hearts, offer companionship, and provide sufficient resources into the future.

Together, we celebrate the relevance of the life of Marie Madeleine for the people of our time.

Together, we will invite new Companions in Mission, including younger members and we will offer them appropriate formation, flexibility in the way they live their commitment and loving support.

Together, we delight in the evolution of the Companions in Mission and rejoice in the increasing leadership of the groups by Companions in Mission. We recommend that a Companion in Mission be appointed as an International Coordinator, working closely with an FCJ Sister, to carry forward our joint vision.

Together, we are ready to welcome new initiatives that will widen the circle of companionship for mission.



## Vocation Ministry

Never has there been so great a need  
as there is today for spiritual guides,  
fathers and mothers  
with profound experience of faith and humanity,  
over and above their intellectual preparation.  
In this area, the Synod devoutly hopes  
for a rediscovery of the immensely fruitful resource  
of consecrated life, especially its female form,  
and of well-formed laypersons, young and old.<sup>12</sup>

Our thirst for mission in God's world impels us to seek ways to ensure our charism as Faithful Companions of Jesus lives into the future.

We experience our FCJ life as a blessing and a joy and we want to share it.

At this time in history there is a unique call from the Church and from young people for consecrated religious to make available their particular gifts of vocational discernment and accompaniment. We will respond communally to this cry.

We will evaluate what we are doing and engage in fresh, contemporary approaches to invite new members. It is good to involve young people in ministry alongside us, offering a place to serve, and a way of letting them express their response to 'I thirst'.

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12 Final Document from the Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment, no. 97, §2

Our FCJ communities are called to be places of welcome and hospitality where young women will encounter the joy of a life shared in common.

As Faithful Companions of Jesus across the world we commit ourselves to embrace vocation ministry as an integral part of our life and mission. Every FCJ Sister is essential in this ministry, and is called to offer herself appropriately and with great hope and love for the mission of Jesus.

**The time is now!**

The Spirit is stirring new insights  
around our identity and mission  
as companions of Jesus,  
drawing us more deeply into the mystery of God.  
Jesus accompanies us.  
We are called to do the same.

‘I am with you always...’<sup>13</sup>

**SENT IN HOPE AND JOY**

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13 Matthew 28:20 (NRSV edition)

