



SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH PARTICIPATE IN A GENERAL CHAPTER YEAR **Impelled by God's Inclusive Love– What is a General Chapter?**

For those who are not part of a religious congregation, an aura of mystery often surfaces when they hear that the sisters who minister among them are meeting for “chapter.” Sisters have done this for centuries but, as the needs of our world evolve, so does the process of General Chapters. During 2017-2018, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston and associates will gather for Chapter Weekends in September, October, February, and March. Each time we prepare for a General Chapter, we select a theme. Through prayer, discussion, and listening the theme that has emerged for our 2017-2018 Chapter is “Impelled by God’s inclusive Love”.

The entire General Chapter process is a time of communal discernment and decision making that emerges from communal and personal prayer, contemplative listening, and conversation. We gather in the name of Christ Jesus, impelled by God’s inclusive Love, and confident that the Holy Spirit breathes with and within us.

We call the October and September weekends “Chapter of Affairs”. This is a time for sisters and associates to be together in community; a time for discerning the needs of our times; and a time for evaluating the life of the Congregation in the light of these calls.

The February and March weekends are called “Chapter of Elections.” As we consider that to which God is calling us at this time in the life of our Congregation, our Church, and our world, we ask one another who among us might the Holy Spirit be inviting to lead us in implementing these calls. And so, the Chapter of Elections leads to identifying a new leadership team.

Sisters who commit to full participation in all Chapter weekends are eligible to be voting participants during the General Chapter. For the 2017-2018 Chapter, 110 sisters have committed to this form of participation. Other sisters and associates will be present as consulting participants. Sisters and associates who, for reasons of health, distance, or personal commitments, cannot be present have committed to be supporting participants through prayer, dialogue, and implementation of Chapter decisions.

As women of the Church and rooted in the Gospel, we realize we are part of an ever-widening circle of relationships. We count on the prayers of all sisters, associates, partners in ministry, family, friends, benefactors, and our “dear neighbors” near and far. As we enter into this Spirit-led year, we invite you to join with us in our Chapter Prayer:

God of mercy and compassion, lover of us all be with us.
Help us to be attentive to your presence as we gather and discern.

Your inclusive love is boundless; it stretches our minds and is beyond imagination.
You know us through and through, you know our gifts and goodness, our fears and frailties and our hidden hopes.

Open our eyes to see things anew,
Open our ears to hear the cries of the poor,
Open our hearts to the needs of our broken world.
Nudge us to discern with realism and openness.

Compel us to respond with creativity and courage, with generosity and love.

Rekindle in us the desire to love as we have been loved and guide us as we make decisions for an unknown future.

Amen.

Logo Design: Ann Marie Grady, CSJ
Prayer: Rosemary Mulvihill, CSJ
Article: Joanne Gallagher, CSJ

Contact: Joanne Gallagher, CSJ, Director of Communication, joanne.gallagher@csjboston.org , 617.746.2110

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The Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston is a Congregation of vowed religious women and associates who minister in the Greater Boston area and beyond. They trace their roots from LePuy, France (1650), Lyon, France (1807), St. Louis, MO (1836) and arrived in Boston, MA in 1873. They identify with the cries of a world, stunned by violence and seek to reopen communications in divided communities, to search for shared values, and to empower individuals to explore common ground for the healing of humankind. They are part of The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph composed of more than 4,500 members, 2,800 associates, with NGO status in the United Nations. For more information visit www.csjboston.org