



SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS CORE VALUE TWO

Make one in the Bond of Charity, our living together in community and communion is our “First Apostolate.”

Discussion Summary:

Discussions about this core value highlighted four areas:

- The challenge of the core value itself, especially the phrase “First Apostolate.”
- What living together in the community met compared to being in communion
- A new vision regarding what community life means
- What the role of Companions is in community life.

CORE VALUE: Both discussion groups agreed that they felt that this core value was more applicable to the European units than those in the United States. There was also a consensus regarding objecting to the term “First Apostolate.” All agreed that this established prioritization where it was not needed. All felt that the ideal is that the apostolate and community life should be woven together, and the focus should be on serving the people of God. It was also discussed that if community life is to be prioritized in the future, then apostolates should only be accepted if there is a guarantee that members can live in community while serving.

COMMUNION COMPARED TO COMMUNITY: Both groups spent a great deal of time discussing the challenges and benefits of living together. All agreed that there needs to be some flexibility in this process, and to succeed, everyone involved must make it a joint effort. The groups also discussed the differences between living in community compared to living in communion with each other. Most preferred the latter because it emphasized building relationships, which is core to how the community defines itself. The groups also agreed that an essential factor to consider as we move forward is that all needed to be anchored by a shared vision, unified goals, common corporate statements, and common communal prayers. That brings community together past the literal sense.

NEW VISIONS REGARDING COMMUNITY LIFE: There was a lot of energy and discussion about exploring new visions about community life. Mission houses were discussed again, including expansion to other urban areas. The discussion also included the possibility of lay people living in community with members and the need to explore the benefits. Groups reported that continued use of technology would help support communion life. Other discussions included defining new visions where people are engaged in multiple ministries and focused on sharing community and supporting each other under one roof. Others discussed that community life should not be focused on building literal, physical communities but exploring other

NEW VISIONS REGARDING COMMUNITY LIFE (CONT'D): creative possibilities of bringing members and Companions together. Groups agreed that it was important in the future that community life not be established so members can establish “islands” and that there needed to be intentionality coming from the top down regarding how to build community. The groups also discussed utilizing different models of community life in different areas if they are successful, as well as exploring the European Model of “Charismatic Families” (Religious community members and laypeople) who are joined together because of a shared mission.

ROLE OF COMPANIONS: Companions came up in many of the discussions. The groups agreed that there needed to be better ways to integrate Companions into the community because, as some noted, the members do not understand the Companions connection with community. The groups also noted that Companions have an easier time with the concept of community because of their commitment to their monthly gatherings. Some groups noted that the idea of living together with members might be appealing for some Companions but challenging for others. All agreed that as the new province develops its understanding of community, there was concern regarding if Companions will be included in that vision. There was some hope that this integration could provide new energy for our redevelopment.

ONE ADDITIONAL NOTE: A comment was raised regarding the polarization faced in our country today. If we could develop an example of a healthy and vibrant community life, which would include how we deal with disagreements, this might be a good model for the country.

Identify one concrete implication you believe this Core Value has for the mission of the new province:

- Continue to explore how to better integrate Companions, including structurally.
- Expansion of communal apostolates. Shared ministries beyond the borders of individual parishes and ministries.
- Need to be able to cross boundaries and be given opportunities to contribute
- Trying new things, what is stopping us?
- Intentionality starts with an “I.” The conversion to a more robust community life begins with the individual.
- Community life must strive to form an intentional community rather than just living together
- We need to imagine a community life that is flexible from place to place and person to person.
 - Flexibility needs to be in terms of apostolates and different roles/stages of life.
 - Balance the call that individuals have to different ministries and sharing in community life with others
 - In Europe, there are “charismatic families” consisting of religious community members and laypeople with a shared charism.
 - Would different models work in different places around the country?
- Discernment is difficult because of the changes going on in ministries and the community.

- “First Apostolate” – There is a lack of comprehension regarding the integration of ministry and community life.
 - Many disagree with this sentiment – it prioritizes community life over apostolate
 - Should be synthesized
 - Ministry and spirituality connect, community flows from that
- New to create new ministries around existing structures
- Living out community life is not necessarily in a literal, physical sense, but being anchored by a shared vision that serves as a rudder for what we do, regardless of physical community.
- We need a unified goal as one community, common corporate statements, both at the provincial and personal level, we need a process where we can own the core value both personally and as a corporate entity
- Mindfulness regarding staying connected with each other, nurturing relationships, and looking out for each other
- Have to get comfortable going outside our comfort zones.