

# Frances Heery, General Chapter Facilitator

Frances Heery, a Catholic Laywoman, who comes to us from Ireland, will be the Facilitator for the 25<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. Frances has worked with *Faith and Praxis Associates International* as an associate for the past six years delivering leadership programs for Religious Leaders in Rome and internationally. She comes with the referral of the *Union of International Superiors General* and the recommendation of Brother Emili Turú, FMS, its director. Frances has extensive experience working internationally with Chapter facilitation and formation programs. She has provided support to leadership teams to discover dynamics that foster collaborative working together, as well as those factors that hinder working well as a team. She has facilitated various congregational gatherings as well as chapters and assemblies. Francis has worked as a teacher, psychotherapist, trainer and supervisor in the educational and health sectors. She holds Master's Degrees in Science in Organizational Analysis and in Arts in Counseling Psychology.



Frances was present at the Biennial Assembly, held in Krakow, from September 11-17, 2022. During that time, she was able to become immersed in the Felician Way and to participate in the various discussions on the Chapter theme and goals, hopes and dreams, blessings and challenges. She presented a reflective presentation on the meaning of Chapter, of listening to one another in order to discern together and make shared decisions emphasizing the similarities between communal discernment and synodality to which Pope Francis calls the entire Church. Frances concluded her presentation by encouraging the Assembly participants *to act from a place of abundance as cocreators, serving the Gospel Mission, for when we do this together, possibilities for partnership seem endless.*

The role of the facilitator at the Chapter will be to support Franciscan values and the theme of the Chapter throughout its proceedings. The facilitator is vigilant in ensuring that the guidelines in the *Chapter Handbook* are implemented. As a member of the General Chapter Planning Committee, before and during the Chapter, she leads the group in using the methods or processes which would enable them to achieve their goals, suggesting changes as necessary. Some of her functions during the Chapter will include: coordinating the daily agenda; ensuring that discussions run smoothly, that everyone has an opportunity to speak, and that emotions do not dominate; encouraging the delegates to listen to one another and to be open to the Holy Spirit; and remaining responsive to the needs of the delegates but neutral to the issues discussed. She is morally obliged to maintain secrecy about all the Chapter matters even after the Chapter has concluded.

Initially, as indicated in M-43 from Sister Danat Marie, the original plan called for the facilitator to be a Felician Sister. After further consideration this idea was abandoned and an outside facilitator was sought. Rev. Timothy Norton, SVD was to have been the Facilitator. But Providence stepped in and Father Norton was appointed to become Bishop in his native Australia. Time and distance would preclude his continuing in the role of facilitator. Frances had been a part of the initial interviewing process and Sister Danat Marie and the Council enthusiastically turned to her.