



GUIDELINES FOR RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS

Especially for Discernment for Elected Office

As a delegate to the General Chapter, engaged in communal discernment for election, I commit to the following guidelines as we discuss persons to be considered for election. I promise:

1. To focus on sisters' strengths and gifts rather than on their personal limitations.
2. To share a concern or a reservation about a sister **ONLY** if at least one of the following applies:
 - a. The sister herself has publically shared the information about herself in writing or speaking.
 - b. The information raised is something already generally known (e.g., ministry, residence, education, profession group).
 - c. I have spoken directly with the sister herself about my concern. **Note:** Even if this has happened, it is still critical to consider the implications of sharing concerns about another with additional persons.
 - i. Will this damage the individual's reputation?
 - ii. Will this contribute positively to the communal discernment process?
 - d. There is a serious reason a sister should not be considered to be voted upon and she will not withdraw her name voluntarily, then present your concern to the president of the Chapter.
3. To recognize that hearsay, gossip and second-hand information have no place in communal discernment and are, in fact, toxic to the process.
4. To acknowledge that I can only speak for myself: "I am concerned..." rather than "I heard someone else say..." or "Someone who knows her said..."
5. To refrain from interpreting another's silence to mean either agreement or disagreement. Everyone has a right to refrain from saying something about a person being discussed.
6. To recognize that political behaviors such as caucusing, campaigning, electioneering or trying to manipulate a process are not compatible with communal discernment. In fact these behaviors are toxic to the process
7. To follow these guidelines both in formal community conversations as well as in smaller, informal and individual conversations.