



INTRODUCTION:
Walk with Wisdom Today and into the Future

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Walk with Wisdom is an invitation for sisters, associates, and anyone connected to the family of Joseph to reconnect, find renewal and reflect on what it means to live the charism and mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Our shared charism affects us individually and corporately, today and into the future.

Through shared experiences, prayer and contemplative conversations, we will deepen and grow our faith community. Together we will explore texts, including the maxims given to us by Jean-Pierre Medaille, S.J.; sacred scripture; letters from Pope Francis; and the writings of scholar-theologian Walter Brueggemann.

We have created this curriculum to respond to the call of Pope Francis for personal renewal. In his introduction to *The Joy of the Gospel*, he invites us to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ. He asks all of us “to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since ‘no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord’.”¹

José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M. explained this call in more detail in *Rejoice!*, his letter to consecrated men and women in preparation for the Year of Consecrated Life:

[Pope Francis] invites us to remain for a long time, on an interior pilgrimage, before the dawn, when in warm environment of friendly relationships, the intellect is led to open itself to mystery, the decision is made that it is good to set out to follow this Master who alone has the words of eternal life (Jn 6:68). He invites us to make our whole ‘life a pilgrimage of loving transformation.’

Pope Francis calls us to pause at the opening scene: ‘the joy of the moment when Jesus looked at me’ and to recall the important and demanding underlying meaning of our vocation” ‘It is a response to a call, a call of love.’ To stay with Christ requires us to share our lives, our choices, the obedience of faith, the happiness of the poor, the radicality of love.²

Walk with Wisdom is a tool to help us join in this pilgrimage. We will explore our charism and mission, remembering who we are and how we wish to live in commitment and communion for the love of God. In our learning communities, we will encourage one

¹ Pope Francis, “Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World,” *Vatican Press*, 2013, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

² José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M., “Rejoice! A letter to consecrated men and women,” *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/rc_con_ccsclife_doc_201402_02_rallegratevi-lettera-consacrati_en.html.

another to be open to mystery. We will recommit our support for one another in living our ministry of transforming and healing the world through right relationship, unity and reconciliation, hospitality and care for the Dear Neighbor without distinction.

This curriculum contains six modules:

1. Living Charism Today and into the Future
2. Charism and Worldview
3. Living Beyond Stereotypes
4. Unconditional Listening through Difficult Conversations
5. Healthy Conflict, Healthy Community
6. Whole Mission, Authentic Charism

It is important that small groups establish themselves as committed learning communities that will meet regularly over the course of a year or so to explore all six modules together. It is in these ever deepening conversations, shared experiences, and communal worship that we become the stronger family of Joseph. From these collective learnings, larger opportunities will present themselves to broaden our renewed awareness in committee meetings, local homes and communities, at Assembly, and in our daily ministries, taking us from today into the future. This process can become a model that allows us to more intentionally share in the presence of God with one another.

A volunteer facilitator is needed for each session and need not be the same person throughout the entire series. The group may decide who leads and how each session is led using the facilitator's guide offered for each session.

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

The facilitator need not worry that she is the teacher of the group. The facilitator's role is:

- a. To take responsibility for preparing and reading all of the materials that will be shared at a particular session,
- b. To assist the group in centering and starting prayer,
- c. To watch the time or to ask another group member to be the time-keeper for the session,
- d. To help illicit full participation by allowing space for those who are reserved to share and tempering those who feel the need to fill silence with chatter. Space and silence allows time for those who need it to process, absorb and reply.

Remember everything we do in the presence of God is a kind of ministry.

When we remember that we are in the presence of God, every task, no matter how mundane, becomes an act of worship, a word of praise offered to God. We begin with worship, end with worship, and ask for a moment of silence whenever awareness of God's presence seems to be slipping. The role of the facilitator is to draw our attention back to this awareness from time to time.

Reinforced process is just as important as a product.

When we focus on a product, we are tempted to paper over unresolved differences in the name of unity, often generating a lowest-common-denominator solution that will not stand the test of time. When we focus on the process—opening ourselves to the Holy Spirit and truly attending to each other—unity emerges strong and deeply rooted, knitting the group together in shared experience of the divine. We must remember that unity does not equate with uniformity. The role of the facilitator is to help the group be curious and open to the differences that surface as we explore how those unique perspectives and gifts make us the family of Joseph.

Respect that there is no time but the present.

We encounter God in the here and now. It is only in the present moment that we can experience and respond to the flow of divine energy. The more moments we use well and experience deeply, the more alive and fulfilled we will feel.

GROUP DISCUSSION/WORSHIP SHARING GUIDELINES

1. Allow silence before and after each person speaks.
2. Listen attentively and respectfully.
3. Do not react to or critique what others have said, but express your own concerns and insights as deeply and honestly as you can.
4. Speak as much as possible from your own experience.
5. Expect to speak only once during consideration of a given item until all have had a chance to speak from the heart, then open the floor for more exchange.³

³ Modified from Deborah Haines, "Friends and Clerking Advice." *FGC Connections*. Spring 2004.

SESSION TIMING

Each session is designed to be completed within three hours. If your group would like to meet for a shorter or longer period of time, use your discretion. Each session can be modified to meet your needs.

PREPARING FOR EACH SESSION

All participants should prepare for each session by reading the materials outlined for each module in the Readings for Participants document, which can be downloaded from the Walk with Wisdom website: walkwithwisdom.org. We recommend printing this document and bringing it with you to each session along with a journal and pen.

In order to fully experience all of the activities, only the facilitator for each module should read the Facilitators Guide for that session ahead of time.

A NOTE ABOUT CONFLICT

As we share our deepest understandings of the charism, our faith, and what it means to be a member of this community, differences will emerge. Often we are so wedded to our beliefs that we feel the need to defend them. One of the Walk with Wisdom modules is dedicated to helping us explore healthy conflict. For it is in conflict that we grow and can become stronger together. As we work through this series, please hold an open and curious heart. Remember that understanding someone does not mean you condone or approve. Rather, you seek to better understand their experiences and beliefs, as you hope they seek to understand yours. This is part of building the beloved community. Should conflict arise, the facilitator will draw the group back into the presence of God and help the group assess how to move forward.