

Message to Ministry Boards by Sister Charmaine - Winter 2022

Hello and welcome! Even though we are already into February, on behalf of the NEW Provincial Council of the Atlantic-Midwest Province, I would like to wish you a heartfelt happy and blessed New Year. You may have heard that the previous Council served an extended time, and that a new Council was appointed to serve in leadership for the next four years. The new Councilors are Sisters Mary Roy Weiss, Paula Dukehart, Mary Fitzgerald, Nancy Gilchrist, Margaret Malone and myself. I am serving a second term as Provincial Leader and we formally began our work together January 24 of this year. The new liaisons to the ministries will soon reach out to you to introduce themselves and hopefully also visit your ministry.

Here we are in a new year - 2022. I don't know about you, but for me there is something exciting about a new beginning. A new beginning is always a gift and for us as people of faith, also a grace. Hidden in the gift lies a **tenderness** as we approach this newness with curiosity, care and respect. We don't know this 'newness' yet. We need to tread carefully and find out what it holds: perhaps a promise, or an invitation, or a challenge...

Hidden in the gift of a new beginning is also **hope**. A new beginning is filled with hope, often a hope-filled anticipation. We hope for ourselves, for each other and our communities, and for the healing of a wounded world and a fragile planet. We anticipate improvement, transformation and healing. But hope, I believe, is only one side of the coin.

Every hope comes with a **call**. The gift of a new beginning comes with a call. For hope to materialize, we need to make it happen by hearing and accepting the call. The call speaks to us of a future. The one who calls us is our God who calls from the future, who calls us to set out and to get on our way; to roll up our sleeves and get to work, motivating ourselves and animating others to join in. In Blessed Theresa, our Foundress, we have a wonderful example of tenderness and materializing hope by embracing God's call. Perhaps our recent celebration of Christmas evoked in your hearts feelings of tenderness for the newborn Christ, and feelings of hope in knowing that God is with us in Christ Jesus. Perhaps you resonate with the shepherds in the field or the three wise men and are called to set out, to get on your way to meet the 'newness' face-to-face.

As you are gathering here as a board in this new year of 2022, I invite you to contemplate possible newness before you. What might be new for your work as a board? Are you perhaps welcoming a new board member? Did your ministry welcome new students, clients or staff and faculty? Did you secure new donors over the holiday season? Are there new ideas for your board, new plans and programs surfacing among you? Are there new experiences that you carry as a result of the pandemic and its impact on your ministry?

-Pause-

Process for reflection and sharing:

I invite you to pause and prayerfully reflect for a few moments on the reality of newness in your work as a board and write down your thoughts. Perhaps the following questions may start your pondering:

- 1) What new things may be surfacing in your work as a board?

- 2) Do you welcome this newness as promising, or see it as a challenge?
- 3) As you look at the work of your board and your particular role on the board, what requires your tenderness? Your hope? What requires you to set out, and get on your way?
- 4) To engage this newness, what do you need from the other board members? From God? What do you need to do for yourself?

Then I would ask your board chair to lead you in a bit of sharing, with your neighbor at the table, or with your whole board—and record all your thoughts concerning welcoming the gift of a new beginning.

Please pause the video, and when you've completed your sharing, turn it back on. Thank you.

Resume video / Closing

Welcome back! I hope you had a fruitful reflection and conversation with each other. I assure you, the new Provincial Council will engage similar questions with each other so that we remain good stewards of our mission to 'make one' and our ministry of education. On behalf of our Provincial Council we thank you for your service on an SSND sponsored or co-sponsored ministry board and assure you of our prayers for you. Please call on the department of Ministry Services for any support with board orientation and board development needs. May your prayer at the beginning of your board meetings be a channel of grace to embrace the change that comes with the gift of a new beginning. And may your prayer encourage you to serve the gift of your call with tenderness and hope.

As our SSND Constitution says: You are Called and You are Sent!

Many Blessings for 2022!!