

September 25, 2020

Pioneer, Resurrection and Pentecost People

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Who we are today as Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth and SCL Associates is irrevocably linked with from whence we have come.

As we have in the past, today we find ourselves living “between times,” encountering change of unknown proportions and exploring opportunities for transformation. In the midst of transition and in the face of uncertainty, with a strong foundation and profound faith, we are a Pioneer People, a Resurrection People and a Pentecost People.

A Pioneer People

Our roots run deep in a pioneer spirit. A legacy of risk-taking in responding to needs pulses through the history of our Community.

Called to “come North,” Mother Xavier and our foundresses ventured into unknown territory. They were fearless in their mission pursuits as were those who only a few years later travelled to Montana and other states, and eventually to Peru and other countries. As a Community, we have weathered the rough waters of financial challenges, the earthshaking changes of Vatican II, and the unsettling times of trial and loss.

We stand now at yet another decisive fork in the road. Seeking to identify what course to follow, we are buoyed by prayer, partners in collaboration, and firm resolve that we are part of something larger than ourselves: the Charity Federation, the Vincentian Family, the Church.

Our lasting pioneer spirit undergirds our introspection and contemplation, and propels us to explore new expressions of our charism, of religious life and of collaboration. The future – waiting to unfold – beckons us to “come forth.”

A Resurrection People

Hope is a constant that has kept our SCL Community vibrant. Grounded in Catholic-Christian values and beliefs, ours is a heritage of being hopeful and of instilling hope.

From classrooms to patient rooms to orphanage dormitories, our pioneer SCLs broke new ground and helped pave the way to better lives for those they served. In succeeding years, the Sisters’ mission remained their unspoken yet lived mantra as they continued to work tirelessly to help people open doors to new possibilities. As a Community, we have strived to see the face of Christ in others and to be the hands of Christ with and for others. We share this commitment among our Sisters, Associates, employees and partners in ministry.

Today, we continue to serve and act for justice as we study and discern opportunities to perpetuate our charism. We engage in thoughtful reflection, dialogue and planning. We maintain deep trust in the hope and promise of the Resurrection as we chart a course into a future some of us may not see or experience.

Imbued with the charism of Vincent, Louise and Xavier, we brace ourselves for more change as we help shape that future. We prepare ourselves to accept that religious life as we have known it may take on new forms – still in response to critical needs with preferential option for those who are vulnerable and underserved, and on behalf of justice. We anticipate needing to let go of old “wineskins” and identifying and filling new ones that overflow with charity (Matthew 9:17). With Resurrection hope, we “look forward to the good that is yet to be” (Mother Xavier Ross).

A Pentecost People

We are a Community that has never rested on our laurels. Many times, we have been unaware that we had them! Energized by the Spirit of Pentecost, we have fulfilled countless opportunities to make things new. We have mended broken bodies; educated and formed many minds; innovated and acclimated; and pushed boundaries toward new horizons of understanding, discovery and compassion.

Renewal in the Spirit is our trademark as a Pentecost people. We stand steadfast in our charism as we seek to extend our capacity to serve in new and different ways. Dwindling numbers of SCLs and the aging of both Sisters and Associates in no way diminish who we are. Rather, these realities require that we stretch our imaginations and use these “between times” to re-vision ways to sustain our charism and to respond to existing and emerging critical needs.

The opportunity still remains to tap into the creative insights and energy of the SCL Associates. As collaborative partners, they can add value and different perspectives to the discussion and discernment. They can share their professional and personal experiences and passion for ministry while respectful matters (canonical and others) that are solely the domain of the Sisters. As we pool our collective best thoughts with open minds and hearts, the Spirit will be among us, guiding our journey through these between times toward renewal and new times.

Closing

As Pioneer, Resurrection and Pentecost People, we affirm the guiding spirit of the charism given us by Vincent, Louise and Xavier. We commit to continue to strive “to do right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). During these between times, we draw on the rich reserves of our history and traditions; we vision the future through the lenses of charity and justice; and we respond yet again to the call to be bold pioneers and hope-filled trailblazers, invigorated and impassioned by our charism and the Spirit.