November 2, 2017

Journey of Oneness update: Learn more about ongoing critical function development work
In the October 19 issue of Mercy Now we shared a brief recap of the development teams meeting, held October 17-18 in Baltimore, Maryland. Today we highlight additional details about development work, including:

- What is development work?
- Organization of teams
- Important considerations for development work
- Quotes from new development team members

Development Work: What It Is (and Is Not)
As a reminder, the work of redesigning the critical functions of the Institute began over a year ago. Design team members and leaders began the work to ensure that the critical functions are best able to support the life and mission of the Sisters of Mercy as a unified whole. There are three phases to the critical functions work: design (which concluded in April 2017), development (current phase—some functions are expected to complete in May/June 2018) and implementation (will begin sometime after the development phase).

The task of the development teams is to generate recommendations and transition plans for each of the critical functions. The development teams must base their recommendations on the work already done by the design teams—as facilitator Marisa Guerin explained, “They must honor the intention of the design work,” not spin off in an entirely new direction. She compared the phases of the process to a three-person relay race. The development teams received the baton from the design teams and must do their part before passing the baton to the third and final runner in the race, the implementation teams.

It is important to remember that the development work—and all of the critical functions work—is not what the Journey of Oneness is all about. As Sister Pat McDermott explained, “The Journey of Oneness is about Sisters of Mercy—who do we wish to be into the future? How do
we choose the path of Mercy? How do we place ourselves in a position of most potential to respond to God’s poor?”

The critical functions work, including the current development phase, is simply a necessary process to ensure that the Institute can run smoothly and support the life and mission of the Sisters of Mercy as a unified whole.

Development Work: How It’s Organized

11 development teams: Currently there are 11 development teams, one each for various critical functions of the Institute: archives, association, communications, health and wellness, human resources, information technology, justice, ministry, mission advancement, new membership and stewardship. As a reminder, work related to sisters’ life and governance will be operating in a more integrated manner and is on a different timeline. Each of the 11 teams is comprised of sisters, associates and/or staff. For continuity, each development team includes a few members of the design team for the same function, though there are many new faces as well.

Consultations: The 11 development teams will conduct consultations with members as needed to get feedback on their overall approach.

11 project coordinators: Each team has a project coordinator to lead and manage the work of the team.

Coordinating Committee: The Coordinating Committee—comprised of the Institute Leadership Team (ILT) and Ruth Thomas, Institute Chief Operating Officer (COO)—will pay attention to development work as a whole and provide oversight for the 11 teams. Project coordinators will provide regular updates to the Coordinating Committee.

Leadership Advisory Groups: Two to three CLT members will serve on a Leadership Advisory Group for each team. The Leadership Advisory Groups will serve as a leadership resource to provide a perspective from the whole and to ensure the development teams address important considerations outlined below. They will also be advisors to the Coordinating Committee through periodic consultation.

Important Considerations for Development Work

Sister Pat McDermott shared several important considerations for the development work, and the teams had the opportunity to discuss the impact of these considerations on their task. These considerations included:
1. Being faithful to the intention of the design produced in the first phase. Pat affirmed that the ILT and CLTs had reviewed and discussed each design and affirmed their overall direction.

2. Being mindful of the international and intercultural realities of our Institute. The teams will consider the international dimension of each function.

3. Continuing the Institute’s commitment to dismantle institutional racism. While we have grown in our consciousness, there is an opportunity to think about how the future processes and structure for any of our functions further our efforts to dismantle institutional racism.

4. Considering the impact of their work on the day-to-day lives of sisters.

**Reflections from New Team Members**

Anne Searl, who serves on the human resources development team, offered this reflection: “I felt like there are many moving parts in the Journey of Oneness, of which I am one part. Each part is significant and has a purpose. The parts moving together make it all work.”

“The compassion, mercy and collaboration that I felt was overwhelming,” said Associate Paul Clark, a member of the association development team. “In order to embrace change, all voices need to be heard and respected. This is exactly what I felt happened.”

Lynn Poly serves on the mission advancement design team. She said, “The collaborative and thoughtful conversations with my counterparts from across the Institute is very energizing to our work. I’m confident this exchange of practices and ideas will allow us to offer a map for the future for the Coordinating Committee to consider.”

Sister Eileen Dooling of the ministry development team noted, “Sisters and colleagues gathered and set about to do some serious work. We have wonderful colleagues, committed and competent, with a sense of humor. It was a privilege to be there.”

Eileen added, “The meeting also gave me the sense of being about something very important—not self-interest, but the opportunity to participate in bringing God’s mercy to this troubled world.”
Sister Pat Flynn, Institute Leadership Team, closed the meeting with a brief reflection. “There’s been a lot of planning, a lot of questions raised, a lot of challenges put forth,” she said. “But I’ve also been seeing something else: the relationships we’re forming with one another. We are becoming the Journey of Oneness as we sit around these tables.”

The 11 development teams will continue their work in the coming months. Teams are expected to submit their recommendations to the ILT by May/June 2018, though timelines will fluctuate based on the individual work plan of each team.

First photo: Sisters Priscilla Moreno, Mary Kay Dobrovolny, Karen Scheer and Cynthia Serjak greet one another on the first morning of the development teams meeting. Priscilla, Mary Kay and Cynthia serve on the new membership development team, and Karen is part of the ministry development team.

Second photo: Rich DiNapoli of the information technology development team (standing) visits the archives development team, seated from left: Monte Kniffen, Betsy Johnson, Maureen Keyes and Kathryn Oosterhuis.

Third photo: Ellie Albright and Julie Moreno of the human resources development team check in on the second day of the meeting.

Fourth photo: The justice development team enjoys a brief break during the meeting. Standing from left are Mike Poulin and Sister Mary Ellen Howard. Seated from left are Sister Rose Marie Tresp, Sister Suzanne Gallagher and Maggie Conley.