



## **Brief History of the Institute Reconciliation Process**

1. The Institute Leadership Conference (ILC) minutes show that a small task force of the ILC was established in 1991 to create a Reconciliation Process for the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy. The document was approved by the ILC on November 1, 1992. The task force consulted canonist Jordan Hite who noted that having such a process is a service to the Congregation and not necessarily a requirement and that it is not necessary to have the process ratified by chapters or assemblies. This original document worked through Regional Communities and was in place for nearly a decade.
2. The Commission on Women in/of the Church coordinated a gathering in March 2005 for Institute leadership and those who were serving on Institute or Regional Boards of Reconciliation. The gathering had the following purposes: to educate regarding rights and responsibilities within the Church; to create a positive attitude toward reconciliation processes; and to provide tools for sharing the learning with others in Regional Communities. The sub-group of the Commission who planned this event offered seven follow-up recommendations to the Institute Leadership Team (ILT). Five of the seven recommendations focused on orientation and training for persons involved in reconciliation processes. One specific recommendation was to explore the creation of an Institute-wide reconciliation board rather than in a board in each Regional Community.
3. The ILT created a task force in 2006 to:
  - Review the materials gathered by the Commission on Women's sub-group for the March 2005 gathering;
  - Review and assess the current reconciliation process in the Institute and Regional Communities; and

- Develop a model for an Institute-wide reconciliation process which would be presented to the ILC for approval before implementation.

The members of the task force were: Kathleen Sullivan, RSM (Chair); Mary Gemma O’Keeffe, RSM; Catherine Darcy, RSM; Janet Ryan, IHM; with ILT liaisons Patricia McDermott and Linda Werthman.

4. The ILC was asked to review a revised Institute Reconciliation Process and, in March 2009, all members of the Institute were invited to offer suggestions for changes. Over 255 sisters reviewed the revised document and 14 made responses. Responses were very positive and included comments such as: great clarity; appreciate that professional assistance is offered; helpful that the board will eventually offer educational experiences to sisters; affirm having one board that can be used Institute-wide; reflects a positive approach to addressing conflict; appears to be just and fair to all.
5. Additionally, professional consultation was sought both internally and externally.
6. The final document was approved by the ILC at their meeting in January 2010 and is the document currently utilized within the Institute.