



Executive Committee Established

Sr. Therese Leckert (New Orleans St. Mary) has worked tirelessly as Chair of the Cluster Coordinating Committee (CCC) from its beginnings. But when the Cluster grew from three to seven congregations, the CCC decided it needed an Executive Committee instead. Sr. Rene Weeks (Great Bend) and Sr. Barbara Rapp (Kentucky) graciously stepped up to the plate to join Therese in her leadership role. These three individuals have hit the ground running and have been working hard ever since to advance the work of the Cluster.

Sr. Rene Weeks began her current ministry last fall in the poorest region of southern Colorado, where she has been helping reorganize and revitalize in a parish that has been without a resident pastor for a couple of years.

Rene is a member of Great Bend's Visioning/Planning Committee and the Commission on Preaching. She was also one of the wordsmiths who helped formulate the text of the congregation's new Mission Statement and its Organizing Principle. Rene formerly served the Congregation as Prioress (1986–1990) and in 2001, she was a member of the Veritas III pilgrimage to Iraq.

Among her hobbies and leisure activities, Rene loves to cross-country ski, to hike, and to walk with her dog Lucky, and is an avid reader. She takes nature photographs, which she makes into greeting cards, and plays both piano and organ.

Sr. Therese Leckert has long been a champion of collaboration. Missioned in Peru for four years, she valued her connections with the Maryknoll missionaries there. Later serving in formation ministry, she collaborated within the Dominican Family, and when elected to leadership, she worked for the establishment of the Dominican Sisters

Federation and Dominican Alliance. Her Cluster work has been a natural outgrowth of her value of the collaborative process. "I feel privileged to be involved with the Cluster and to work with so many faith-filled Dominican women," she says.

Sr. Therese previously served her congregation as Prioress, and since then has been in ministry at Dominican High School, New Orleans. This year she was again elected to congregational leadership, where she will serve as assistant prioress until 2008.

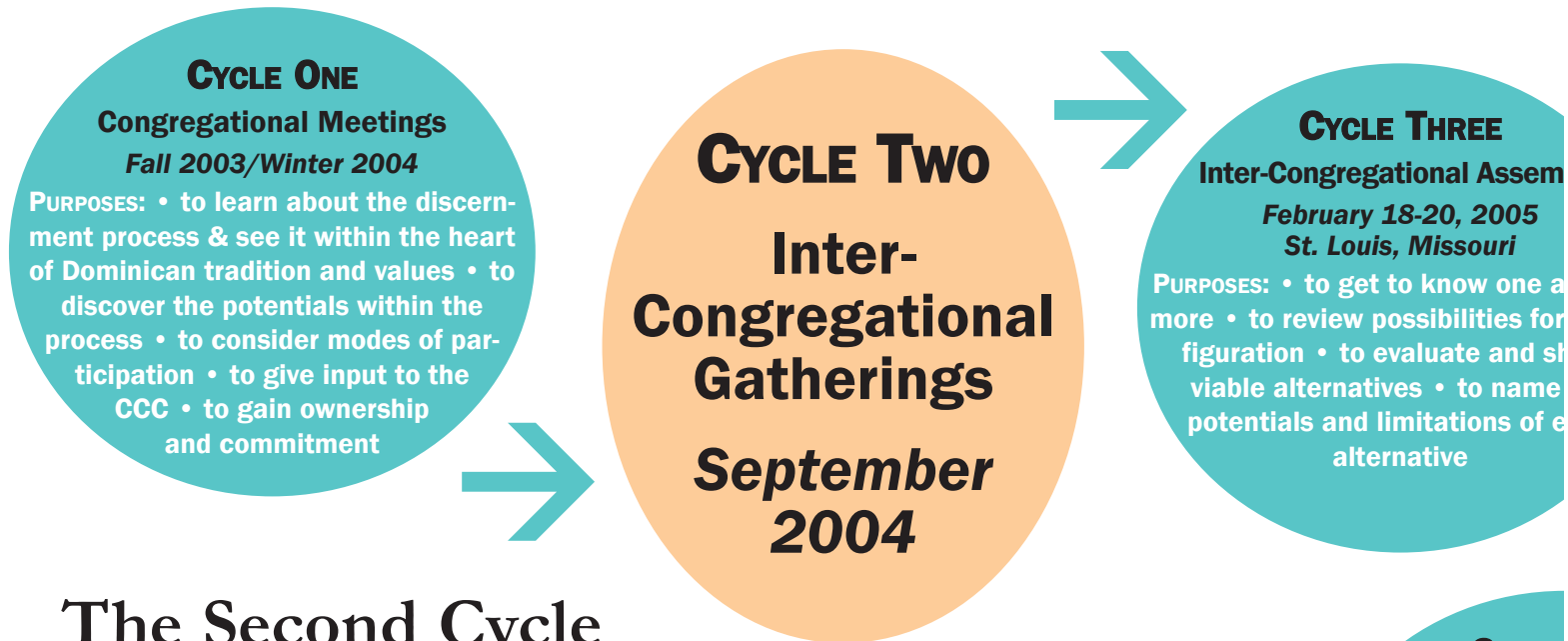
Having been taught by Dominican Sisters since the first grade, **Sr. Barbara Rapp** was instilled with Dominican values – and a passion for education – from a young age.

Sr. Barbara initially taught math and religion at the junior-high level in Memphis. Later, she was principal of two Chicago elementary schools, and then Director of Institutional Advancement at Aquinas Institute. In 1996 Sr. Barbara was elected to the Governing Board of the Dominicans of St. Catharine, Kentucky. In 2002, she was elected to a second term and will serve until 2008.

In her free time, Sr. Barbara enjoys weaving and cross-stitching. She particularly enjoys making personalized Christmas stockings for the many babies born in her large family every year. Some of her other creations have been framed and used in fundraising for the congregation.



THE SEVEN-CYCLE CLUSTER DISCERNMENT PROCESS



The Second Cycle

We embark on the second discernment cycle of our Cluster journey with hearts filled with anticipation – and a bit of trepidation – but knowing that we will be led by the Spirit as we progress in the Cluster process. This will be the first time that members from all seven congregations will meet with one another for the purpose of furthering discernment.

The two inter-congregational gatherings are scheduled for this fall, with one in Columbus (September 10-12) and one in New

Orleans (September 24-26). The gatherings will follow similar schedules and will include the same prayers and rituals, as well as parallel working and reflection sessions.

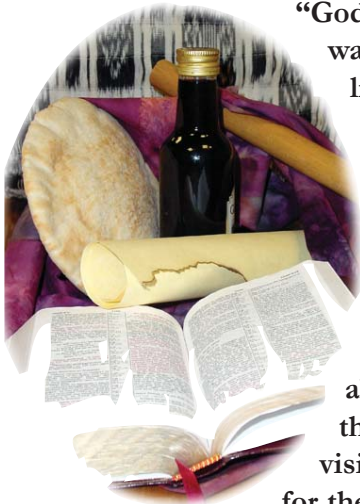
One purpose of the gatherings is to foster new relationships among members from different congregations. Tables will be organized to help sisters get to know one another, and at one point in the weekend, participants will gather according to age cohorts. Friday evening will include an opening ritual, introductions, and a review of the weekend agenda. On Saturday morning, participants will view and reflect on a video about the sacred story of each community, prepared by the Congregational Histories subcommittee. That afternoon there will be a discussion on Dominican Life and Mission, and

later participants will hear reports from and give input to the Cluster subcommittees and task force. After Eucharist and a social evening on Saturday night, Sunday morning will feature time for participants to reflect on and offer dreams for reconfiguration.

These gatherings hold much promise and represent the next step on the Cluster Journey. The Cluster Coordinating Committee and its working groups will take the sisters' input from these gatherings to distill and work on before the next discernment cycle, which will be one inter-congregational assembly to be held February 18-20, 2005, in St. Louis.



Sessions of the Columbus Inter-Congregational Gathering will take place at Alumni Hall, on the campus of Ohio Dominican University, adjacent to St. Mary of the Springs.



“God of the Journey, we walk the way as followers of Dominic. We, like him, carry our knapsack and are nourished by the Bread of Scripture and the Bread of the Eucharist. Let this knapsack remind us that we journey in great trust, that what is essential we carry with us and all else we need will be provided along the way. May the fruits of this gathering lead us into a new vision for the future that is your will for the Dominican Family. Amen.”

from the Opening Prayer Ritual

Following the theme A Dominican Journey in Faith, knapsacks filled with necessities for the journey will be on hand throughout the weekend and will be the focus of the prayer and rituals we will celebrate together.

CYCLE SEVEN

CCC Report to Leadership

Spring 2006

The CCC compiles input and presents recommendations to the leadership, including an indication of membership support. This action in the seventh cycle completes this seven-cycle process and leads to the discernment by leadership.

CYCLE SIX

Congregational Meetings

Winter 2005-2006

Further personal discernment (if necessary)

CYCLE FIVE

Inter-Congregational Convocation

*November 4-6, 2005
St. Louis, Missouri*

PURPOSES: • to celebrate the process thus far • to present, clarify and evaluate proposed structures for reconfiguration • to consider congregational implications of proposed structures • to indicate strength of support for the proposed structures



The New Orleans Inter-Congregational Gathering will take place at the Doubletree Lakeside Hotel, beautifully set along Lake Pontchartrain, just outside New Orleans in Metairie, Louisiana.



Subcommittee Update

The **Resources Subcommittee** recently met in New Orleans for the first time. All subcommittee members were responsible for bringing with them completed questionnaires containing information on their congregation's resources, including properties, membership (cultural demographics and cohorts), ministries, living configurations, and Associates. The committee was pleased that they were able to review and pull together the large volume of data in just one weekend meeting. The data collected from the seven Cluster congregations has now been compiled and graphs and charts have been created. All members will soon be receiving this information, and details will be posted on the Cluster website (www.dominicancluster.org) prior to the September Inter-Congregational Gatherings.



Members of the Resources Subcommittee posed for a photograph along Bayou St. John, at the rear of the EMD's Central House: Seated, left to right — Sr. Jeanne Moore (New Orleans EMD, CCC liaison) and Sr. Judith Lindell (Great Bend) Standing, left to right — Sr. Rosemarie Robinson (Akron), Sr. Mary Faith Geelan (Columbus), Sr. Marie Jeanne Surette (Kentucky), Sr. Suzanne Brauer, (New Orleans EMD), Sr. Judene Lillie (New Orleans St. Mary's)

Cluster Calendar



2004-5

Please take note of the upcoming Discernment Cycle Two inter-congregational gatherings and Discernment Cycle Three inter-congregational assembly. Look for a review of the September gatherings and more information on the February assembly in the next Cluster newsletter!

- ✓ *Inter-Congregational Gathering I in Columbus*
- ✓ *Inter-Congregational Gathering II in New Orleans*
- ✓ *Inter-Congregational Assembly in St. Louis*

September 10-12, 2004

September 24-26, 2004

February 18-20, 2005

Visit the Cluster website at www.dominicancluster.org



THE DOMINICAN CLUSTER
c/o 2320 Airport Drive
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