



Sisters of Charity *New York*:
Sponsored Ministries
September 29, 2012

Tennessee Valley Authority

- ▣ We interact with stories on various levels
 - Face value
 - Personal
 - Universal
- ▣ Sisters of Charity
 - Every day story
 - Founding story
 - “Deep story”



Deep Story

A possession

An inheritance

God's gift



Through your ministries the
“deep story” of the Sisters of
Charity:

- ▣ Rises up to meet the contemporary world in all its concreteness;
- ▣ Mediates redemption for another age;

The “world” is put on notice!

Exodus 3:7-8

- ▣ I have seen the misery of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know well what they are suffering: therefore I have come down to deliver them.
- ▣ Sisters of Charity response to the needs of the contemporary world:
 - Creating community with new immigrants
 - Providing housing for the homeless
 - Educating first generation students
 - Offering hope to children



Signs of the SC Deep Story



What do they need?

Once upon a time, the story goes, a teacher traveled with great difficulty to a far away monastery because there was an old monastic there who had a reputation for asking very piercing questions. Holy One, the teacher said, give me a question that will renew my soul. Ah yes, then, the old monastic said, your question is What do they need? The teacher wrestled with the question for days but then depressed, gave up and went back to the old monastic in disgust. Holy One, the teacher said, I came here because I am tired and depressed and dry. I didn't come here to talk about my ministry. I came to talk about my spiritual life. Please give me another question. Ah well, of course, now I see, the old monastic said. In that case the right question for you is not *What do they need?* The right question for you is *What do they really need?*

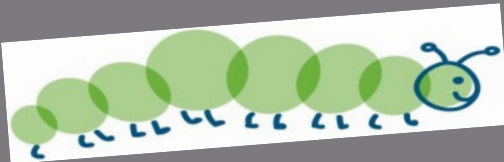
Signs of the Times

UNIVERSAL

- ▣ Hunger for Spirituality
- ▣ Crisis of Individualism
- ▣ Globalization from below
- ▣ Science after Einstein

LOCAL

- ▣ People seek HOPE
- ▣ People seek community
- ▣ People seek to find a “voice”
- ▣ People seek connections between creation and humanity





The New York Foundling
Abandon No One

Challenges to Opportunities

Economic
Climate:
Escalating
Expenses;
Insufficient
donor base;
Cut-backs;
Need for
marketing and
branding

Bureaucratic
Red Tape:
Government
policies are
unwieldy;
Increased
government
scrutiny

Diminishing
resources:
Fewer Sisters of
Charity;
Shortage of
graduates who
enter into field
of social services;
Difficulty in
building an
experienced
work force

Broken
System:
Poor and
vulnerable
persons are
not treated
with
dignity in
our society

Resistance
to change:
Difficult to
“let go” of
the
familiar;
“We’ve
always
done it this
way”

Your Gift to the World

- ▣ What are the aspects of the “deep story” of the Sisters of Charity that remain alive in your ministries today?
- ▣ What are the gifts your ministries bring to the world?
- ▣ What are the “non-negotiables” needed to keep your mission alive?



A “Non-finito” World: Frontiers are Disappearing

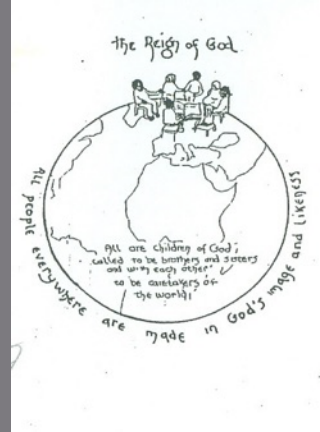
“We must obey the forces we want to command”.

Francis Bacon

Examples of great things “unfinished:”

- ▣ “Schiavi” of Michelangelo
- ▣ Unfinished Symphony of Schubert
- ▣ Cathedral of Barcelona
- ▣ *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas

The significance of “non finito” in the world today...



- ▣ It's our sole certainty ~ we don't know what's going to happen
- ▣ It's the will to act while leaving the future open
- ▣ It's actively participating in a world that is in the process of “becoming”
- ▣ It is a deliberate choice about how to live in the world...a world that is not ordered or linear, a world where there is increasing confusion about what is urgent, what is important, and what is essential.

Spirituality of Leadership

**We need now to think of ourselves
as the discerners and the
conveyors of each new vision.**



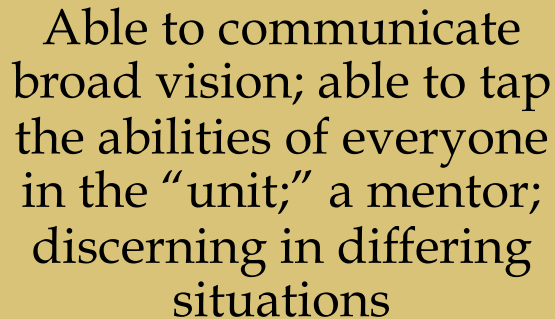
Do you resonate with these traits?

Highly
organized;
competent;
straightforward;
efficient; skilled
in your area of
expertise

Tactical;
technologically
proficient; a
problem solver;
responsible;
trusted and
trustworthy

A good role
model; able to
be directive;
able to
communicate
effectively

With which of these traits do you resonate?



Able to communicate broad vision; able to tap the abilities of everyone in the “unit;” a mentor; discerning in differing situations

Able to be surprised; often asks questions about the questions; an implementer of solutions; a creator of solutions; easy with ambiguity

Courageous; imaginative; innovative; magnanimous; creative; strategic; apt to say “yes” rather than “yes but;” respecter of diversity



QUESTIONS for Leaders & Followers

- ▣ **Who ARE WE at OUR deepest level?**
- ▣ **What is OUR highest future possibility?**



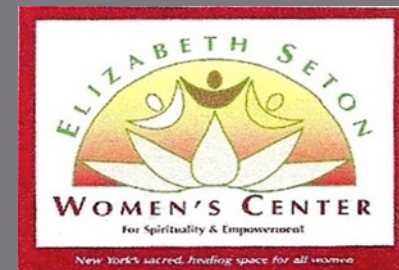
Luke: 6-12

It was at this time that Jesus went off to the mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night in prayer.



Reflective persons have the capacity to be transformed ~

- ▣ *to grow in their ability to understand themselves deeply*
- ▣ *to recognize the call to make a difference in the lives of those whose life journeys cross theirs*
- ▣ *to realize their inalienable relationship with everyone else in the world*



The Vision of Louisville



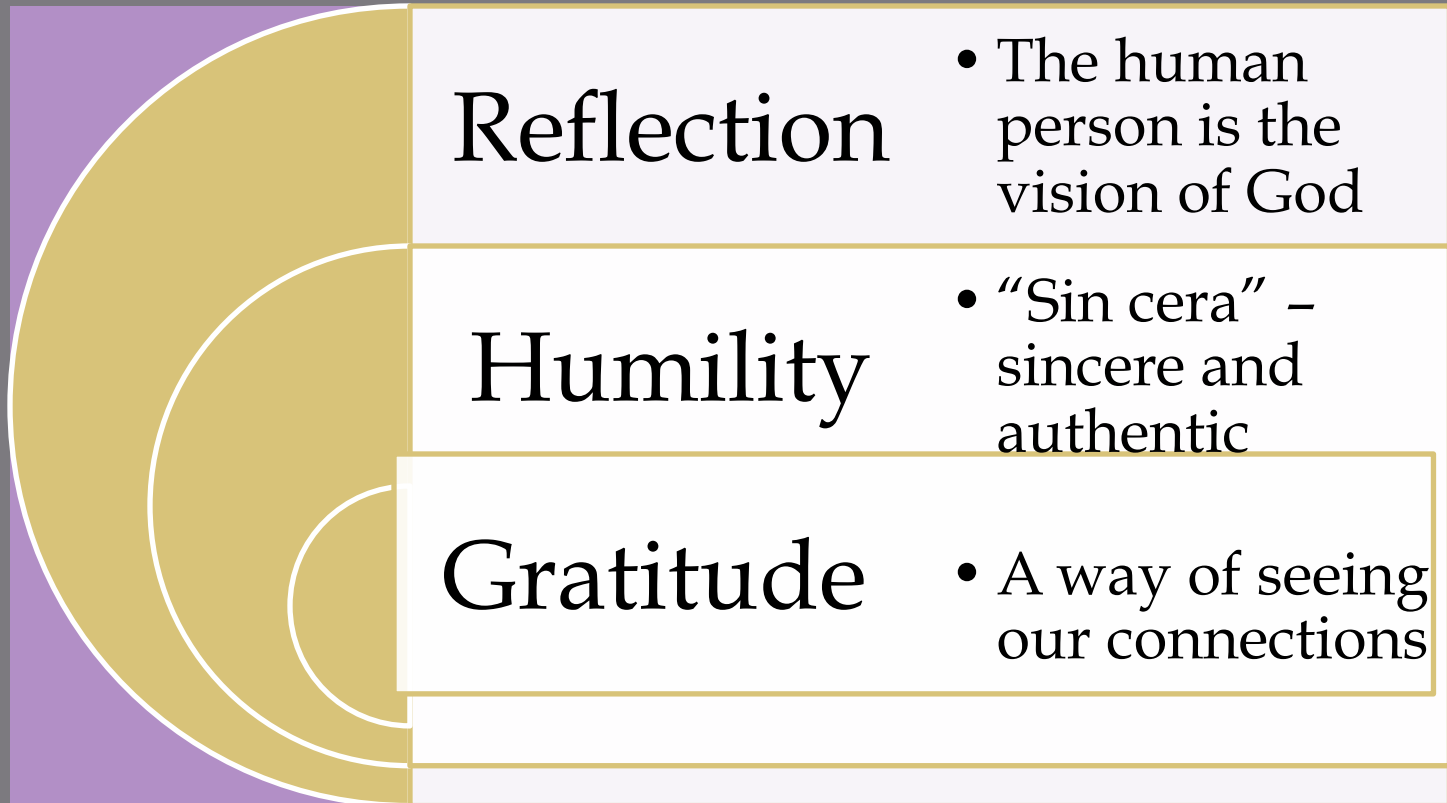
“In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers....There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.”

If only people knew they were
shining like the sun!



Always remember the QUESTIONS

- ▣ How can we love more fully?
- ▣ How can we be more generous?
- ▣ How can we be more just?
- ▣ How can we be more compassionate?
- ▣ How can we be better listeners?
- ▣ How can we see with new eyes?
- ▣ How can we learn together?
- ▣ How can we be the change we want to see? (from Ghandhi)



Three keys to spiritual leadership

Duomo



**We remember that faith
was born in wind and fire,
not to sweep us heavenward
like a presumptuous tower,
but to guide us down
the dusty roads of this world
so that we may lift up the downcast,
heal the broken,
reconcile what is lost
and bring peace amidst unrest.**

**O God, give us the courage we need to change,
the faith we need to serve your people;
bless our work done in your name today. Amen.**



Adapted from Garth House, Litanies for All Occasions