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

- Strong sense of mission
- Respect for Heritage
- Building of Community
- Vision and Core Values
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
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?
“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
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.
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
Spirituality

Manager

Manager/Leader

Leader
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!
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)
Reflection
• The human person is the vision of God

Humility
• “Sin cera” – sincere and authentic

Gratitude
• A way of seeing our connections

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