



Presentation: **SYNTHESIS OF YOUNG SISTERS' RESPONSES**

As you could read in the overall introduction to the synthesis, in the third part of the document, you found the synthesis of responses from Sisters 7-10 years vocation.

You know that we sent a questionnaire prepared by the preparatory commission to all the Sisters of this age group, 370 Sisters.

It was very interesting to read their responses. They expressed their convictions powerfully and, for the most part, in a very precise and concrete way. There were also suggestions, dreams and their questions for the Company today.

We can say unequivocally that we found their reflection rich and profound. They offered us a fresh perspective, which invites us to review our life from their experience and welcome being called into question in order to accompany them better.

The synthesis consists of two parts.

The first part, pages 33-35, contains the young Sisters' responses to the first question asked them, *Of the 4 challenges, which one do you find the most important for the Company?* Some of them, as it happened, mentioned more than one, which explains the difference between the number of challenges selected and the number of Sisters.

The second part, pages 36-38, contains the response to the second question, *Is there another challenge that you consider a priority for today and tomorrow?*

You will note that sometimes a response could have gone in another category, but our primary concern was remaining faithful to their ideas and not losing any of them, accepting the risk of these minor discrepancies!

1st part:

THE FOUR MAJOR CHALLENGES

Before reading their responses, we thought that the Sisters would have chosen human rights and care for our common home as most important. In fact, not at all. The majority of them placed the mystique of “living together” first; passing on the faith and Christian values to younger generations came next, then human rights and finally care for our common home. We indicated the number of Sisters to give you an idea.

The desire for “living together” comes out in relation to each of the four challenges. For this reason, the first part of the synthesis is entitled: *Holding fast to hope at the heart of fraternal relationships.*

We also chose to keep their phrases as they wrote them, particularly with the three titles, “Without quality living together, goodbye to the Company,” “Pass on what gives us life” and “Harken to the cries of the poor.” Our concern was to communicate their ideas to you but also their state of mind.

Concerning “living together,” the Sisters expressed, without judgement or discouragement, their sincere desire to respond to the call to live fraternity. They emphasized the necessity of a quality “living together” in the broad sense of the term. Above all, and this is encouraging, we observed that they do not want communities that are self-centered and focused on personal comfort. A sense of a certain maturity comes out, at least in what they desire.

They desire instead communities capable of supporting each Sister in order to live mission well. For example, “*The role of the local community is indispensable for carrying out the mission entrusted to us.*”

They also hope that communities might adapt more fully to today’s realities. Here is a quote that illustrates this: “*We can no longer live as in the past if we want to continue responding to missionary challenges today.*”

Then come a series of realistic suggestions that show their desire to be fully involved in the Company. It seems that they aspire to participate in a concrete way in the life of the Company from within their local community.

For transmission, they emphasize witness. We had thought that they would have stressed new means of communication, but in reality, their concern is mainly sharing their joy of belonging to Christ, sharing their faith and the charism.

They would like to be closer to young people and are interested in a vocation culture.

See the 7th point on page 34: *“In such a secularized world, form Christians committed to following Christ and defending human rights.”*

We recognize that they are clearly reasoning as Daughters of Charity with regard to transmission: be well-rooted in Christ in order to defend people’s dignity.

Human rights and care for our common home

Less Sisters brought out these two challenges, but if we read their responses carefully, it seems that these two topics were treated as already being an essential part of their lives. Perhaps this is the reason that they do not consider them the most important calls.

They are part of the Pope Francis generation, and they have probably assimilated these two dimensions while recognizing – fortunately – that they need formation. *“It is important for us to be educated in this area”* (they are speaking of human rights here).

They grasped that defending human rights is consistent with our charism: *“This challenge is the one most closely tied to the reason we exist.”*

In terms of care for our common home, they placed a lot of importance on the need for an ecological conversion in order to get to the point of changing our life style. You saw that they ask themselves very practical questions.

2nd part:

OTHER CHALLENGES FOR THE COMPANY OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

We entitled this second part “Ephata.” The challenges were classified by theme and, here as well, with quotes from the young Sisters as we found them in their responses.

Following our work of synthesis, we would like to share with you what struck us the most about this generation:

Their thirst for a community life, in other words, for a quality “living together,” for mission. They value the necessary attitudes (respect, listening, fraternity, openness...), and it seems that they are aware that this requires mutuality, particularly among different generations.

Their strong conviction of the importance of life witness. For them, passing on the faith and Christian values should take place primarily through our daily life witness, which must be credible. They are concerned that our charism be lived well today.

Their deep desire to go forth, to not remain in their comfort zone, to go where those who are poor feel hopeless.

Their frequent insistence, coming from different continents, on greater involvement in family ministry.

Their wish, expressed several times, to live mission in international local communities among those who are most poor.

We also asked ourselves some questions:

1. What might the young Sisters’ cry about the “mystique of living together” really mean for us? It is clear that it is a priority for them.
2. How can we help them, knowing that quality “living together” is one of the greatest challenges for perseverance? The whole Church is concerned about the many departures from Institutes, realizing that quite often difficulties with community life are among the reasons mentioned.
3. They stress formation heavily (page 36). It is an ongoing topic that the Company takes seriously at all levels. How can we allow them, in the very first years of their journey, to have enough time for anchoring themselves in their vocation and to receive the accompaniment that they need?
4. Concerning the revision of works (page 37), they make a good comment that deserves to be taken into account. They are afraid of “*becoming a powerful NGO in which we do a lot of good but do not pass on the Gospel.*” How can we dare to revise? This is a big question for each Province and the entire Company.

CONCLUSION

Preparing this synthesis was a great joy for us. You will have the opportunity to refer to it during the Assembly, but today we can begin a short time of discussion to question ourselves and enlighten each other about this generation of Sisters to whom we have the desire to pass on the best and whom we want to help in their vocation journey.