

# Cluster/Small Groups Results

Fall, 2024

## Common Ground in United States, Brazil, and Jamaica

The responses from the United States, Brazil, and Jamaica emphasize the crucial role of faith, community, and service. All three countries recognize the importance of spiritual direction and care in fostering societal betterment. They share a vision of developing strategies that address social issues while staying true to their religious traditions. There is a mutual acknowledgment of the transformative power of embracing spiritual means and the commitment to living out their values and identity through dedicated service.

## Distinctive Differences

### Completion Tasks

#### United States

Focus on ensuring access to healthcare and education, particularly related to aging, and developing legal safeguards for finances and properties. Specific tasks include creating comprehensive plans for assets and addressing the psychological impacts on sisters due to losses and changes.

#### Brazil

Emphasizes maintaining Christian Franciscan identity, knowing the Church's history, and the witness of Franciscan women. It stresses a transformative vision starting from Initial Formation and aims for abundant fruits in numbers and commitment.

#### Jamaica

Completion tasks include: Strategic planning, divestiture or management of properties, legacy and succession planning, care for aging members. We also recognize that we are at the "Crossroads" stage in our Lifecycle, needing to decide whether to continue our current path, or embrace transformation for the future.

## Desired Newness

### United States

Achieving these tasks aims to alleviate anxieties and uncertainties, allowing for effective responses to contemporary needs. It seeks to broaden spiritual perspectives and potentially lead to new ministries that cater to growing spiritual awareness among the laity.

### Brazil

Cultivating a transformative vision that starts from the Initial Formation to strengthen the Christian Franciscan identity and witness. Specific examples of desired newness include: fostering a deep sense of purpose and belonging within the Franciscan community; educational programs to inspire current and future generations; active participation in communal life, promoting inclusive leadership and collective decision-making processes; transparency, unity, and mutual support; establishing outreach programs that address social and environmental issues, aligned with the Franciscan values of peace, justice, and respect for creation.

### Jamaica

By accomplishing these tasks, we hope to foster: Revitalization: A renewed sense of purpose and energy, embracing transformative decisions that may be radical in nature. Sustained Mission Impact: Continuation and promotion of ministries that benefit the marginalized and Legacy Preservation. We envision a New Life that builds on our current phase, recognizing that we are at the critical juncture of “Crossroads” and must make deliberate choices to move forward with integrity and faith.

## Soulwork Needed

### United States

Requires active involvement, deepening communal life, and addressing global issues through inclusive leadership, open communication, and collective decision-making. Emphasizes transforming personal attitudes, embracing detachment, surrender, courage, and trust, and building community relationships through caring presence.

### Brazil

The specific soulwork needed in Brazil focuses on deepening the Christian Franciscan identity and the witness of Franciscan women. Emphasizing the importance of communal life, inclusive leadership, open communication, and collective decision-making, the soulwork in Brazil requires personal transformation, courage, trust, and a dedication to building and nurturing community relationships through caring presence and collaboration.

### Jamaica

We recognize the need for: **Deep Interior Work:** Integrate strategic planning with personal and communal spiritual growth, focusing on who we are becoming rather than solely on our actions. **Embracing Transformation:** Cultivate the ability to let go, surrender, and embrace new possibilities, acknowledging that this may involve grieving and allowing space for new growth. **Community Nourishment:** Find ways to nourish one another and strengthen community bonds, balancing personal needs with those of the community. **Spiritual Practices:** Engage in regular prayer, reflection, and participation in the sacraments to foster spiritual resilience and openness to change.

# United States: Synthesis of All Responses

## **1. *What are the most important completion tasks that are ours to do as a country?***

To address the ongoing needs of all FSA sisters, it is vital to ensure access to healthcare and necessary education, particularly concerning the aging process. This includes developing legal safeguards for FSA finances and properties, ensuring just and equitable stewardship in line with the FSA vision and values. Additionally, there is a need to address issues related to properties and sponsored ministries. It is crucial to develop a comprehensive plan for our assets, including properties, buildings, and finances. This plan should involve specific steps for activation and processes to manage the psychological and emotional impacts on sisters due to losses and changes. Many have shifted their perspective on "completion" to see it as an ongoing process of planning for a future beyond themselves, aiming to live with dignity while gradually moving toward a vision for new life. Education in the aging process is necessary to prepare for current realities and to realistically assess mutual expectations.

## **2. *If we were to accomplish these tasks, what is the New Life we hope could emerge as a result?***

By accomplishing these tasks, we would free ourselves from the lack of planning, alleviating anxieties and uncertainties. This newfound freedom allows us to respond effectively to contemporary needs in alignment with God's people and creation. It broadens our spiritual perspective, potentially leading to new ministries that cater to the growing spiritual awareness among the laity.

## **3. *What is the soulwork you need to do, personally and as a country to succeed in these efforts?***

The soulwork required for success involves several key elements. Firstly, it necessitates a commitment to active involvement and the realization that one cannot achieve goals alone. It involves deepening communal life, living the Franciscan call, and addressing global issues through platforms like Laudato Si and the Catholic Climate Conference. It also requires inclusive leadership, open communication, and collective decision-making to involve everyone in creating a shared future.

Additionally, it emphasizes the need to transform personal attitudes and embrace detachment, surrender, courage, and trust. Building community relationships through caring presence and being open to ideas from members of different countries is crucial. Avoiding isolationism and working towards solutions that benefit the entire community are essential aspects of this soulwork.

## Brazil: Synthesis of All Responses

### **1. What are the most important completion tasks that are ours to do as a country?**

- Form partnerships with other congregations facing similar situations.
- Establish partnerships with lay people.
- Begin associating more with other religious congregations, such as the Sisters of Mary Immaculate.
- Increase openness to joining other groups of women religious.
- Work on improving openness not only to other religious groups but also to laypeople and associates.
- Renew leadership by avoiding the re-election of the same sisters to promote transformation.

### **2. If we were to accomplish these tasks, what is the New Life we hope could emerge as a result?**

If the outlined tasks are accomplished, the new life that could emerge involves several key aspects:

- **Enhanced Community Integration:** Sisters will present their talents effectively in dioceses, aligning their contributions with the needs of the community, fostering continuity, and proactive planning.
- **Celebration and Healing:** Life's milestones will be celebrated more frequently, and personal pain will be acknowledged and healed through the power of prayer, contributing to a stronger sense of community and individual well-being.
- **Improved Communication:** A sense of security and belonging will be established, reducing rumors, and promoting the use of social networks responsibly for work and communication.
- **Leadership Transformation:** New, capable leaders who can guide the sisters through transformation will be installed, ending the rotation of the same leaders.

This leadership will involve collective decision-making and active participation from all members.

- Empowered Decision-making: A renewed leadership approach will foster a culture of knowledge-sharing, self-awareness, and collective decision-making, ensuring that all sisters have a voice during these challenging times.

### **3. *What is the soulwork you need to do, personally and as a country to succeed in these efforts?***

To succeed in these efforts, Brazil needs to undertake significant soulwork, both personally and collectively. This entails fostering creativity, wisdom, and a supportive environment for growth. Key aspects include embracing new ways of doing things, learning to work effectively in groups, and developing united and collective leadership. An openness to change, willingness to let go of past practices, and a commitment to personal and community transformation are essential. Facing challenges with courage and allowing old paradigms to die so that new, innovative ideas can flourish is critical for progress.

# Jamaica: Synthesis of All Response

## **1. What are the most important completion tasks that are ours to do as a country?**

We identified several critical tasks to address as a country: *Strategic Planning, divestiture or management of properties, Legacy and Succession Planning: Care for Aging Members: (healthcare, living arrangements, and spiritual needs)*. We also recognize that we are at the “Crossroads’ stage in our Lifecycle, needing to decide whether to continue our current path, or embrace transformation for the future.

## **2. If we were to accomplish these tasks, what is the New Life we hope could emerge as a result?**

By accomplishing these tasks, we hope to foster: *Revitalization: A renewed sense of purpose and energy, embracing transformative decisions that may be radical in nature. Sustained Mission Impact: Continuation and promotion of ministries that benefit the marginalized and Legacy Preservation. We envision a New Life that builds on our current phase, recognizing that we are at the critical juncture of “Crossroads” and must make deliberate choices to move forward with integrity and faith.*

## **3. What is the soulwork you need to do, personally and as a country to succeed in these efforts?**

To succeed in these efforts, both individually and communally, we have identified that we are on the “Pathway of Fruition” and have chosen to continue on the “Path of Transformation”. To support this path, we recognize the need for: *Deep Interior Work: Integrate strategic planning with personal and communal spiritual growth, focusing on who we are becoming rather than solely on our actions. Embracing Transformation: Cultivate the ability to let go, surrender, and embrace new possibilities, acknowledging that this may involve grieving and allowing space for new growth. Community Nourishment: Find ways to nourish one another and strengthen community bonds, balancing personal needs with those of the community. Spiritual Practices: Engage in regular prayer, reflection, and participation in the sacraments to foster spiritual resilience and openness to change.*