

# INTERCULTURALITY AND INTERCONGREGATIONALITY IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

Findings and Recommendations  
from a Colloquia Series on Best Practices



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## INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years, conversations and workshops on interculturality and even more recently, intercongregationality have been more prominent in religious life circles. Congregations are finding that newer members are increasingly diverse in race, ethnicity, and country of origin, and consequently, the need for a deeper understanding of culture and skills for living interculturally has grown. Many religious congregations also are experiencing a decrease in the number of their members. Less able to maintain large institutions and staff ministry sites independently, these congregations have joined forces, working interdependently and sometimes living intercongregationally, in order to serve the people of God.

Recognizing that the future of contemporary religious life will be one that is diverse, inclusive, and collaborative, the Religious Formation Conference (RFC), in collaboration with two organizations that also serve religious life—the Asociación de Hermanas Latinas Misioneras en America (AHLMA) and the Leadership Collaborative (LC)—wrote a grant proposal to the GHR

Foundation titled *Interculturality and Intercongregationality: For Now and into the Future*. One of the purposes of the proposed project was to create and implement a colloquia series in which a diverse group of newer members, elected leaders, vocation ministers, and formation personnel might explore current experiences of intercultural and intercongregational collaboration in religious life and map future possibilities for it.

This article focuses on the creation and implementation of the colloquia series. The process for the selection and the gathering of the members of the Planning Committee and colloquia design is found in the Appendix. The following outlines the key areas explored, the identification of best practices for living interculturally and intercongregationally and their implications for the reality of religious life today. The preparation, the implementation of the colloquia, and the compilation of the results occurred over a period of two years.

### Introduction | Reflection

What does interculturality look like? How would you define it?

If you've lived in an intercultural community, what was that experience like?

Why is intercultural humility and an openness to intercultural living important?

## KEY AREAS AND BEST PRACTICES

The colloquia process centered on three pivotal themes: *radical welcome, communication, and power dynamics*. A fourth conversation on *intercongregationality* was added later. The committee identified the first three themes based on an initial survey sent to a larger pool of potential participants. While not all these individuals who answered the survey could participate in the colloquia series, their answers provided more insights and experiences from which the themes were lifted as most important to focus during the colloquia.

Here, the committee presents a summary of the insights for each theme. In small groups, the participants meticulously reviewed the notes compiled during the

weekend sessions from September 2023 to April 2024. The planning committee members recognized the importance of the participant's active involvement in this review process. They tried to tap into this as much as possible to produce the following results. The colloquia participants were instrumental in identifying the key themes and insights that emerged from their experiences, dialogues, and processing during the weekends and virtual gatherings.

### Radical Welcome

The participants felt strongly that radical welcome involves diving into the depth and reality of the intercultural experience in community living. They highlighted *education for all, both the dominant and*



**minority cultures in the community**, as an important need. Participants mentioned that this education is not merely about acquiring knowledge or even skills in intercultural living but an ongoing process to which the community commits.

**Storytelling** is an effective way to make a member of the minority feel seen and heard. Specifically, we need to encourage minorities to not just identify and clump themselves together as “non-white” but **be intentional about naming and owning their identity**. For those who are part of the dominant culture, **cognizance of the diversity within the minority** is particularly helpful. For example, knowing the difference between the Spanish-speaking countries represented in a congregation would help honor this diversity. During the process, colloquia participants identified their specific ethnicities and were proud of who they were and where they came from, which helped to strengthen their pride and avoid minimizing their identities.

Participants engaged in a discussion and proposed the example of **an onboarding process sensitive to the realities of newer members**, especially those from non-dominant cultures. According to the participants, this can be a tangible commitment a religious congregation can make to promote radical welcome. The process of storytelling mentioned earlier can foster a radical welcome in the community.

Sharing life stories from established and newer community members was seen as a means to foster authentic and deep relationships. Many participants shared how informal storytelling in spaces created because of circumstances during the pandemic helped them build communion and connection with other members of their respective communities.

In terms of leadership, one of the practical suggestions mentioned included **leaving the circle of leadership open to welcome the participation of more diverse community members**, particularly encouraging and nominating those who belong to the minority. Colloquia participants want to see leadership reflect more of the diverse reality of religious life. However, members included/nominated in these roles could also easily be tokenized by congregations to check off a diversity box. To walk this fine line, the participants recommended giving those elected to leadership what is necessary to ensure their readiness for their new roles and to avoid pitfalls such as stereotyping. This can include **training, mentorship, or other things identified as necessary** by the minority member to feel most prepared to assume leadership roles. While acknowledging an appreciation for the guidance that those who have been in leadership offer newer, more diverse members, the participants also cautioned about too much guidance that could interfere with their ability to bring their experience and perspective in fulfilling their role.

This fine line must be constantly navigated. There are many positives to having mentorship for those new in leadership, including guidance in their new position of authority and learning how to use their power and control purposefully. However, former leaders, especially those of the dominant culture, must consciously check if they are allowing the new leaders to exercise their own skills or are being influenced by them in an unhealthy way.

The colloquia participants hope that changes in how we welcome newer members and encourage a more diverse leadership will translate into more long-term work examining structures within our congregations that hinder the process of a genuinely radical welcome. This means being more conscious and critical of the processes in place and changing them if we find these practices have been consciously or unconsciously perpetuating experiences of fear, rejection, and suspicion, especially towards the minority members of a congregation.

## Communication

Communication was another major topic that the colloquia dove into deeply. Communication goes beyond language barriers and language learning. Participants identified several central themes in their conversations about how different cultures within their congregations communicate with one another. According to them, as members of religious communities, we must encourage one another to go deeper into knowing each other and interacting intentionally. **Relationship building** comes out of communication, and we create intentional, caring communities when the following key characteristics of communication are present:

First, **a spirit of openness** is needed to bring a positive attitude to communication, making it possible to open a space for honest yet safe conversations.

Second, the participants named **compassionate listening**, which pertains not only to

### Radical Welcome | Reflection

Name a time you felt radical welcome was operative in a group in which you belonged. What made it radically welcome?

What role can storytelling play in bridging divides between majority / dominant cultures and minority / underrepresented groups?

What structures and / or processes in your congregation hinder radical welcome?

What strategies can be employed to better support newer members and / or those taking on leadership roles, especially if they are from a minority community?

attentive listening to someone who is sharing deeply and offering help or prayers but also to the appreciation of different communication styles.

Third, ***assumptions must be avoided*** in communication, which necessitates suspending judgments and maintaining our curiosity.

Finally, participants once again brought up the importance of ***storytelling, which is done intentionally*** so that sharing on a deeper level, including the sharing of cultures, can be facilitated.

The participants' recommendations as best practices in this area include creating ***regular community opportunities to share, pray, celebrate, and play*** together. They also recommend ***incorporating workshops on learning and understanding communication styles and skills into initial and ongoing formation programs***. Participants mentioned the importance of learning how to engage with curiosity and asking questions. Lastly, they recommend ***providing formation opportunities for interculturality***, which may include workshops, language acquisition, and learning about and celebrating cultural feasts and traditions besides one's own.

## Power Dynamics

The participants who sifted through the conversation notes on power dynamics named several points that surfaced during the process. Many of the concepts they mentioned overlap with the ideas of the other two themes, such as the ***intentional use of storytelling***, especially when a new member enters the community, ***the encouragement of more diverse leadership*** (including the empowering of younger members), and ***providing support and mentorship, attentive listening, attention to communication styles***, especially those that are influenced by culture, and ***openness and initiative to learn about one another's cultures***.

The participants also mentioned the ***breaking of the culture of silence***, especially around issues of racism, diversity, trust (or the lack thereof), stereotyping, and fear, as other essential issues to pay attention to concerning power dynamics.

The group also named several best practices not mentioned in the other two themes to highlight what works well or could help with power dynamics. The South African philosophy of ***Ubuntu*** was central to the discussions throughout the colloquia series

## Communication | Reflection

Why is relationship-building crucial to effective communication?

How do assumptions and judgement impede communication?

What is the role of curiosity in the communication process?

but more so during the conversations on this particular topic. Ubuntu means humanness and reminds people of the belief, “I am what I am because of who we all are.” Ubuntu is part of the Zulu phrase, “Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,” which translates to a person being a person through other people. It is the nebulous concept of common humanity, of oneness: of you and me both (Ifejika, N. 2006).

From this beautiful African concept, the participants of the colloquia identified several important practices to foster interculturality in communities, including the **creation of processes for participatory decision-making, developing a synodal approach to dialogues, relationships, and leadership as well as deep contemplation to accompany the dialogues on culture, diversity and the negative aspects of these such as stereotypes and prejudices.**

Another theme that the participants named concerning power dynamics is **empowerment**. They noted that everyone needs

support and encouragement to grow and develop self-esteem.

**Mentorship and coaching opportunities can help**, and the group mentioned having mentors available for newer members to access if they need mentor support. Finally, under empowerment, the group suggested creating **spaces for prospective community leaders to take risks and safely process their experiences**. This can be done by holding at least an annual leadership workshop with diverse facilitators.

Another theme in the discussions on power dynamics was a **pastoral approach** to power. The participants talked about the importance of compassion, servant leadership, active listening with a heart centered on God, giving and receiving mercy, and praying with one another to appreciate each other’s spirituality. A practical way to live this out could be dedicated retreats to interculturality and power dynamics that can help. Lastly, on the theme of power dynamics, the participants also talked about the **spirituality**

## Power Dynamics | Reflection

Why is “breaking the culture of silence” important when it comes to issues of racism, trust, fear, etc.?

How does the South African concept of *Ubuntu* relate to power and interculturality?

How does participatory decision-making and synodal dialogue encourage empowerment?

In what ways does one’s leadership style / attributes impact intercultural awareness and living?



**of leadership** in the sense of **leading from the place of God**. The group asks leaders specifically to engage in personal work and self-discovery to assess how their leadership impacts relationships. The group mentioned leadership training as something that would be helpful for this.

### **Intercongregationality**

The last topic that the colloquia explored was intercongregational living and collaboration. The participants explored and discussed themes connected to intentionality, the challenges and potential gifts of intercongregational living that they can see and have lived, and some best practices that can be gleaned from these discussions and experiences.

All participants were conscious of **the intentionality required to start any community, but more so when starting an intercongregational community**. They named the importance of even what may seem basic, such as **discussing what community means**. They agree that expectations need to be addressed and set from the beginning and that each community member is aware of and contributes their gifts to the building of the community. They also noted the importance of **the commitment of home congregations** and the need for them to support the community fully and commit personnel to be part of it (to avoid cases where religious are reassigned after they have committed to being part of newly formed intercongregational houses).

From the perspective of the colloquia participants, there are plenty of challenges in forming an intercongregational community—these range from core values/belief systems-related issues to more practical considerations. For example, anything new or different is always challenging for an individual and, more so, for a group. Participants raised questions about the compatibility of charisms and values they prioritize between members of an intercongregational community. They also named possible unconscious biases (apart from culture), particularly in men’s communities, where there is a distinction between brothers and priests. The processes for integrating members, recreating community with one another, and being able to let go of the old ways of doing things to create space for what is emerging (creating new wineskins) are full of questions to explore. As is generally the question regarding religious life and our diminishing



numbers, the participants also asked how realistic intercongregational living between communities will be, given congregational members' age and energy.

Despite these challenges, the colloquia participants saw a lot of potential gifts that intercongregationality can bring about. With different religious men/women living and sharing life together, there is much to learn from and be enriched by one another, particularly in living the Gospel daily. With aging communities, younger folks can have an opportunity to live with those closer to their ages and go on missions to where some of the greatest needs might be present and where older, retired members of their community cannot go anymore. This means that new ministry possibilities open up where different congregations can collectively address a need and pool resources together to do the church's work where it would not be possible for just one congregation to do so. In addition, all these benefits of an intercongregational community can also serve as a profound witness to a divided world.

Intercongregational communities are signs of new life and hope - an expression of

religious life that could attract new vocations.

Like the previous themes discussed, intercongregational living needs best practices to flourish and prosper. Colloquia participants agree that it is a process that will require time, patience, and trust in the community. Story and charism sharing will be a vital ingredient in facilitating this process. Communication skills are also critical. Religious willing to form these communities together will also ensure they are constantly working on their communication skills. An interesting final point that the colloquia participants arrived at while exploring this topic is the widening of the definition of intercongregationality beyond living physically together as a house community but also to a more intentional ministry collaboration among different religious orders. This collaboration will be about a specific need/ project, intentional in why it is happening, and could be extended or short-term, depending on the circumstances. The participants wonder if this kind of intercongregationality is actually more doable than intercongregational community houses.

### **Intercongregationality | Reflection**

What does community mean for you and how does it inform the work of interculturality?

What challenges and opportunities exist around intercongregational living?

Story and charism-sharing are vital components of intercongregational encounter. What might this look like for the future of religious life?

## IMPLICATIONS

Finally, what do these findings mean for religious congregations and their members?

This colloquia series was meant primarily to inform congregational leaders and vocation and formation directors, and it is also hoped that the audience will expand beyond this initially targeted audience. The focus topics and the results from the in-depth discussion on each are also meant to inform the dominant white culture and dominant age group in religious congregations.

The late Fr. Anthony Gittins (2015) said, “The future of international religious life depends significantly on the ability of each community (local and institutional) to live interculturally; those that fail to do so will fragment or die.”

This colloquia series hopes to help move present-day religious congregations along interculturality and intercongregationality for the sake of the flourishing of the mission through religious life.

The results clearly show that religious congregations must take a more proactive approach to deepening and widening education on cultures other than their dominant culture. In particular, the dominant culture members are encouraged to be more conscious of their processes and to learn ways that are more sensitive to minority members. This, of course, requires more than a box that is checked off after one or two workshops on diversity. One of the more concrete actions that could come from this is

for congregations to take full advantage of formation offerings regarding culture, racism, diversity, and equity. There is obvious financial and emotional commitment and cost if congregations hope to effect a transformation towards radical welcome of newer members, more effective intercultural communication, and equitable power dynamics. Congregations will have to wrestle with how much willingness they have to invest in steps that will bring them closer to exercising true intercultural practices. In this regard, it is important to be aware that the burden of this process should not be on minority members but on the dominant culture members’ commitment to awareness of their unconscious harmful practices towards the minority. This will require a lot of courage, humility, and personal work.

In addition, different organizations that serve religious men and women must collaborate more to address the topics of interculturality and intercongregationality as part of their service to religious life. These topics could be incorporated into existing programming, and new programs could be created to provide more in-depth formation on these areas. Younger religious will benefit from inter-congregational activities and formation programs as their congregations continue to decrease in number.

The results of this colloquia series must be considered, knowing that this process had limitations. Because of scheduling conflicts, participant availability, and many other reasons, the selection of participants was

limited by who was available and willing to commit to the series of weekends and Zoom days for the study. There was a lack of African-American representation among the religious who participated. There were also more women than men. All of the religious who participated in the colloquia were fluent in English, whether or not it was their first language. In order to ensure a more diverse group of participants, the committee recommends that a future study have a larger budget to support simultaneous interpretation and a Planning Committee

with more members to oversee the technical details of language translation. A further suggestion of including diverse gender identities was also mentioned by several participants. It is to be noted that the committee tried to recruit as diverse a group as possible for this colloquia series. In this regard, the primary recommendation for further studies is to keep striving for more equitable distribution for participants considering age, gender, ethnicity and culture while still centering the voices of the minority.

### **Implications | Reflection**

Do you agree that interculturality and intercongregationality are integral to the full flourishing of religious life? Why or why not.

How can religious congregations take a more proactive approach to deepening and widening education on cultures different from their own?

What programs, resources, etc. exist to help religious women and men live interculturally?

## Final Integration | Reflection

What did you find surprising about the findings? Why?

What recommendations did you find challenging? Why?

What best practices can be incorporated into your community life and / or ministry setting?

What is one idea you'd like to spend more time with?

What other / new questions arose for you?

What is one action / next step you can take to be more intentional around interculturality?



## **APPENDIX I**

### **LIST OF COLLOQUIA PARTICIPANTS**

Benedict Ayodi, OFM Cap  
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Immacolata Cassetta, CND  
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Trish Doan, CSJ  
Nkechi Iwuoha, PHJC  
Tracy Kemme, SC  
Kristian Laygo, SDB  
George Litiya, OMI  
Joyce Mbataru, CCVI  
Theresa Nguyen, IWBS  
Albert Rivera, FMS  
Mario Serrano, OFM Conv  
Corrina Thomas, FSPA  
Priscilla Torres, OP  
Bang Tran, SVD

## APPENDIX II COLLOQUIA DESIGN

### Preparation

During the summer of 2022, Sister Ellen Dauwer, SC, the Executive Director of RFC at that time, invited Sister Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM, to serve as facilitator for the creation and implementation of the colloquia. Six other persons were chosen by the grant's Steering Committee to be part of the Planning Committee. The seven-member Planning Committee was diverse culturally, included men and women religious and one affiliate (lay woman), and represented six different religious congregations. Unfortunately, within the first year of the project, some of the members had to withdraw from the committee because of ministerial demands, congregational responsibilities, and the time commitment involved to see the project through to its end. Sisters Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM, Herlinda Ramirez Machado, CSJ, and Romina Sapinosa, SC—the remaining members of the Planning Committee—moved the project forward. The Planning Committee faced many challenges during the two years that its members worked together. Many came to the first Planning Committee Meeting on September 10, 2022, with a desire to be part of a project that would explore interculturality and intercongregationality, but also with a question about why these topics were being explored now since they were not “new” topics for many congregations and

almost certainly not for newer members. After some conversation, the committee concluded that it was essential to explore both topics in depth and to gather best practices for living inter-culturally and intercongregationally for the sake of those entering religious life in the future.

During the preparatory phase, initial concerns included: identifying a pool of participants, deciding the number of gatherings and whether they would be in-person or virtual, setting dates for each colloquium, and finding a place that could accommodate the committee and participants during the in-person colloquia. These issues were addressed simultaneously. Since the grant stipulated that the colloquia participants were to be “a diverse group of newer members and elected leaders,” the committee began by coming to an understanding of what was meant by a “newer” member. They decided that “newer” would be someone who had at least five years of experience in his or her congregation and was no more than ten years perpetually professed. The committee agreed that it was important to encourage the participation of younger elected leaders, vocation and formation ministers who have a critical role in accompanying new members and shaping the future of religious life. Other elements considered essential for creating a diverse group of participants were gender, culture, language, and level of experience living interculturality and/or intercongregationally.

The Planning Committee solicited names of potential participants from the Steering Committee, which included the executive directors of RFC, AHLMA, and LC. The committee members also brainstormed personal connections who fit the criteria for participation in the colloquia. A total of thirty-nine religious, twenty-one women and eighteen men, were asked to consider participating in the colloquia. Twenty-one responded positively. Eleven were women; ten were men. Over the course of several months, before the first gathering even took place, four of the men and one of the women, for health and ministerial reasons, withdrew their names from the participant list. The sixteen who were left remained committed throughout the colloquia series. Details about the participants can be found in the table on the next page (page 16).

At the same time that the Planning Committee was creating a list of participants, it also began to investigate locations for hosting the colloquia. They chose the Carmelite Spiritual Center in Darien, Illinois, because it was centrally located for those who had to travel from different parts of the United States and because it was available in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.

The committee scheduled the colloquia close together, so that the momentum and energy would continue from one gathering to the next. Participants attended two virtual and three in-person gatherings.

Another concern during the preparatory phase of the colloquia was the need to identify topics that could be explored during each gathering. With that in mind, the committee sent an online form to participants inviting them to respond to these questions:

- How have you been positively impacted by living interculturally and/or intercongregationally?
- What have you found challenging in your experience of living interculturally and/or intercongregationally?
- What topics do you think are essential to include in our conversations?
- What unspoken feelings/thoughts need to be spoken aloud if we are to engage seriously with the topics of inter-culturality and intercongregationality?

The participants engaged the four questions openly, honestly, and deeply. From their responses, four topics emerged: Radical Welcome, Communication, Power Dynamics, and Richness of Cultural Diversity.

### **Implementation**

The colloquia series started with three zoom gatherings in August 2023. In each gathering, five or six participants came together to meet one another and share about their congregation's culture. Participants were asked to bring an article that represented a value or tradition important to their



DIVERSITY OF COLLOQUIA PARTICIPANTS		
GENDER	Women	10
	Men (2 brothers; 4 priests)	6
AGE	35 - 40	1
	41 - 50	5
	51 - 60	7
	61 - 66	3
YEAR OF FIRST PROFESSION	1981 – 1990	3
	1991 – 2000	4
	2001 – 2010	7
	2011 - 2020	2
CONGREGATIONAL ROLE <i>(Several participants had multiple roles.)</i>	Temporary professed / student	1
	Vocation minister	4
	Formation minister	8
	Interculturality resource coordinator	1
	Elected leader	6
CULTURE / ETHNICITY	Kenyan	2
	Nigerian	1
	Zambian	1
	Filipino(a)	2
	Latino(a)	4
	Indian	1
	Italian Canadian	1
	Vietnamese	3
	White Anglo	1

congregation and to tell the story of their personal connection to it.

These initial zoom gatherings set the tone for subsequent colloquia in which story-telling, deep listening, and nonjudgment became key aspects.

Richness of Cultural Diversity, one of the topics elicited from the online participant survey, was a theme underlying each virtual and in-person gathering where participants were invited to bring all of themselves—body, mind, and soul—into the space.

Diverse traditions, values, foods, art, music, and dance were welcomed and appreciated by all throughout the colloquia series.

Radical Welcome was the focus of the first in-person colloquium, and the topics of Communication and Power Dynamics were explored during the second in-person gathering. In the January zoom, participants looked at the wealth of information that surfaced from the previous colloquia, and they highlighted and organized the main themes, major learnings and best practices. During the final gathering of the colloquia series, the focus of the first day was on Intercongregationality. On the second day, the sacred moments and images of the colloquia were recalled, and art and movement activities were utilized to strengthen the circle of community and solidarity among the participants.

Prayer rooted in gospel events and Catholic tradition, such as the Walk to Emmaus, the Trinity, and the Pentecost, set the theme for each gathering. A sacred space with visual images within the meeting room both centered and grounded the participants. Prayer and ambiance created a safe space for all to share their experiences of living interculturally and intercongregationally.

Every gathering utilized storytelling which has the capacity to move a topic below the surface or cognitive level and to reach down deep and touch a person on the affective level. Storytelling and deep listening took place in dyads, triads, and small group coffee conversations. Afterwards, participants were

encouraged to journal and/or use art materials to reflect on their own sharing and their conversations with others. They were then invited into the large group and asked to respond to the question—What needs to be said out loud? Participants shared their insights and their suggestions with passion, great humility, concern for newer members of the non-dominant culture, and hope for the future of religious life. Using the technique of World Café, the committee was able to harvest the best practices for living interculturally and intercongregationally.

## APPENDIX III REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### Introduction

What does interculturality look like? How would you define it?

If you've lived in an intercultural community, what was that experience like?

Why is intercultural humility and an openness to intercultural living important?

### Radical Welcome

Name a time you felt radical welcome was operative in a group in which you belonged. What made it radically welcome?

What role can storytelling play in bridging divides between majority / dominant cultures and minority / underrepresented groups?

What structures and / or processes in your congregation hinder radical welcome?

What strategies can be employed to better support newer members and / or those taking on leadership roles, especially if they are from a minority community?

### Communication

Why is relationship-building crucial to effective communication?

How do assumptions and judgement impede communication?

What is the role of curiosity in the communication process?

### Power Dynamics

Why is "breaking the culture of silence" important when it comes to issues of racism, trust, fear, etc.?

How does the South African concept of *Ubuntu* relate to power and interculturality?

How does participatory decision-making and synodal dialogue encourage empowerment?

In what ways does one's leadership style / attributes impact intercultural awareness and living?

## **Intercongregationality | Reflection**

What does community mean for you and how does it inform the work of interculturality?

What challenges and opportunities exist around intercongregational living?

Story and charism-sharing are vital components of intercongregational encounter. What might this look like for the future of religious life?

## **Implications | Reflection**

Do you agree that interculturality and intercongregationality are integral to the full flourishing of religious life? Why or why not.

How can religious congregations take a more proactive approach to deepening and widening education on cultures different from their own?

What programs, resources, etc. exist to help religious women and men live interculturally?

## **Final Integration | Reflection**

What did you find surprising about the findings? Why?

What recommendations did you find challenging? Why?

What best practices can be incorporated into your community life and / or ministry setting?

What is one idea you'd like to spend more time with?

What other / new questions arose for you?

What is one action / next step you can take to be more intentional around interculturality?

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## GRATITUDE

Thank you to the **GHR Foundation** for providing the resources to create meaningful space for the exploration and the ability to offer these learning to deepen our understanding of what is vital for the future of religious life.

Thank you to all the Colloquia participants for their commitment to the process, for the vulnerability of sharing their own and holding each other's stories.

Thank you to Herlinda Ramirez Machado, CSJ, Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM, and Romina Sapinoso, SC who dreamed, explored, and created the process for the colloquia. A deep gratitude for the gift of time, talent and energy you give to this effort and for the final offering in this report format.

## A COLLABORATIVE OFFERING

