

To: The General Chapter Delegates
FROM: Sister Rose Miriam Wegman
RE: Report of Meeting of English-speaking Group on Habit Study
DATE: November 21, 1972
ACC '72

The English speaking Sisters from the North American provinces and their regions met at three different times—each time for several hours—to discuss the question of religious dress. The discussion included such topics as:

1. the results of the questions in the ISS which dealt with religious dress
2. the decision of the delegates at the 1970 General Chapter to have religious dress settled on a cultural rather than provincial basis until a study was done
3. the results of the Habit Study Commission of the North American Provinces which was constituted by the North American delegates at the 1970 General Chapter, what constitutes a religious dress
4. the directives of the recent apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI

The discussion was both lengthy and open, and represented a wide variety of opinions. After the first meeting, chapter sisters were invited to submit proposals and/or motions for discussion and possible action at the second meeting. Eleven proposals were submitted. These were grouped into five categories, and, at the second meeting, chapter sisters were asked to offer advantages and disadvantages for each of these five categories. After this and a time of silent prayer, a straw vote was taken on each of the eleven proposals and motions that had been offered by the chapter delegates. The straw vote indicated a need for continued dialogue and a third meeting was scheduled. At the third meeting, four motions were offered, discussed, and voted on. Before the balloting, it was decided—by vote—that for a motion to carry it would need a 2/3 majority. Three of the four motions did not receive a 2/3 majority. The following motion carried:

In order that the North American Provinces may better implement action for simplicity of life reflected in their clothing, all decisions pertaining to clothing be placed on a provincial basis. Any such decision will, of course, be in accord with YOU ARE SENT and paragraph 22 of the Apostolic Exhortation.

This motion which takes into account the variation in need from province to province as well as the need for provincial directions, passed by 42 “yes” votes and 12 “no” votes.