

Sisters of the Basic Christian Community
Way of Life Rooted in the Charism of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
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August 15, 2007

Like women dedicated to Christ in the early Church called Deaconesses, we, Sisters of the Basic Christian Community, commit our lives and service to the following of Jesus. We will do this by outreach to the poor of our own local communities and through them to the poor in other areas of the world. We hope to understand and respond to the systems of injustice that create imbalances, greed, and broken relationships causing destitution for many of our brothers and sisters.

Like these early 'home churches" we, too, gather locally for prayer, faith-sharing, and the breaking of bread. Resources are shared with those in need in the community and beyond. Voluntary and mutual sharing of spiritual and material goods in a spirit of thanksgiving will hopefully characterize the life of our local churches.

The mission of the Sisters of the Basic Christian Community is to live and promote the Gospel mission of unity. This "unity" is characterized by BEING ONE, by becoming one with our Earth as well as our sisters and brothers locally and globally. Our mission is to grow in communion with God through these gifts of creation and persons. We open ourselves to God's Spirit, present and active in this time and place, redeeming and healing the past, and drawing us together into an evolving future of paschal hope.

We, Sisters of the Basic Christian Community, promise to:

- * live simply, trusting in God's providential care and guidance, sharing what comes our way with those in need; we sustain ourselves and our ministry through our own labor and through the charity of others.
- * live chastely, as appropriate to married or single-life callings, allowing God to be the Center of our lives; we remain faithful to a spiritual practice of contemplative prayer, reflective Scripture reading and faith-sharing. We return to the Acts of the Apostles as paradigm for our vocational call to discipleship.
- * live obediently, discerning our calls to justice and charity through the signs of the times, listening to the Spirit, both within ourselves and others, bringing our personal decision-making to a spiritual director, representative of the community, or to a listening group made up of community members.
- * live non-violently, following the radical call of Jesus to self-transcendent love, through dialogue, forgiveness, reconciliation, mutual service in community with the poor and the marginalized, and daily conversion of heart.

Though permanently committed to the people of one local church and surrounding area, we will be in close communication with Sisters in other local communities. We will look to our local church to act as the 'sending community' when needs of people and churches in distant areas call our members to share personnel and resources for the sake of Gospel values. We may volunteer to be sent and to invite others to join in these efforts, at home or abroad.

Because of the richness of various religious traditions and relationships with women religious who have served in the locale, some of us may wish to affiliate with congregations who have various structures of Association.

To be "sister" within the Basic Christian Community (i.e., local church) would signify vocation, relationship, and mutual caring and service within and beyond the home community. We offer our respect and love to persons of other faith traditions (or of no faith tradition) in the same manner of sisterhood, living thankfully the Spirit of Jesus who acknowledges no barriers in the divine communion shared within the Trinity with created and human reality.

We look to Mary, the mother of Jesus and first disciple, as truly our sister and model of faith, hope and love.