October 24, 2011

Dear Sr. Conan and Members of the General Council,

We thank you for your letter of appreciation and your invitation to hear the heartbeat of God in the reality of our world. The 4th International Conference of Heads of Sacred Heart Schools in Taipei has been an exceptional moment for union. As you imagined, we have spoken of both God’s aching heart and God’s joy and hope. Our theme, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, has served to call us forward together. We have exchanged ideas about programs and projects which help students develop habits of mind and heart which lead to decisions based on Gospel values. We have begun to identify those competencies essential to develop in all members of our communities so that all may be critical thinkers and compassionate actors. Throughout our dialogue the common theme has been to continue to manifest God’s love. Sophie’s vision informs our actions. Inspired by the depth of commitment each one brings to the work of Sacred Heart education, we are filled with hope and gratitude.

Mission flourishes when collaboration is lively. It is first about the sacredness of collaboration that we write to you today. In April of 2000, Heads of the International Sacred Heart Schools met in Joigny and prepared a document for submission to the General Chapter. In that document the Heads shared their vision of collaboration. We quote the 2000 document:

We (Joigny Conference Participants) wish to value and be enriched by the energy produced from the combination of

- Religious 
- Lay
- Formal Education
- A Other Forms of Education in the Society

The Joigny participants expressed the hope that “…the Provinces clarify and design structures that enhance dialogue”. Chapter 2000’s call From Collaboration to Reciprocity is in sync with this understanding of collaboration. We in Taipei agree with the Joigny participants that our relationships as leaders of the Schools of the Sacred Heart and RSCJ bear fruit when the relationships are rooted in genuine collaboration. Chapter 2008’s Letter to the Family of the Sacred Heart reinforced the idea of collaboration as an act of inclusion finding its root in sharing the Society’s “…spirituality, life and mission.” Chapter 2008 delegates named all collaborators as part of the Society and spoke of all who are engaged in educational undertakings, both formal and popular, as “colleagues who carry the mission and charism for and with the RSCJ.”

We share this same belief about collaborators. The sharing of mission and charism inspires all of us as Sacred Heart Educators. During these days in Taiwan we have discussed our hope to deepen collaboration locally and internationally. We know that each province is unique just as each School of the Sacred Heart is unique, but common to all is the mutual desire to further the Society’s mission. To act on this desire long into the future, we the participants in the 4th International Conference for Heads of Schools of the Society of Sacred Heart look to you and the
General Council for assistance because we believe that mutual animation of mission is a source of hope for the entire Family of the Sacred Heart and for our world.

How can you and the General Council help us deepen collaboration as we move into the future?

- Please help us by facilitating dialogue with the Provincials throughout the Society about the necessity for collaboration in formation to mission programs for the school communities. We recognize the need for such programs as being our mutual responsibility and that each brings a unique and significant perspective to such programs.

- We as leaders of the Schools of the Sacred Heart need your help as leaders of the Society in knowing the mind and heart of Society in the face of current realities. Please give us access to the thinking that has led to Chapters and the follow-up to these direction setting moments in the Society’s ongoing development. Include us in these processes so that together we can respond to Christ’s Heart beating in the reality of our world.

- In our effort to support the emerging International Network of Sacred Heart Schools, we hope to create certain structures. The first is a page that will serve as a gathering place to exchange information and ways to share among the Schools of the Sacred Heart. We hope you will assist us by allowing us to link the page to RSCJInternational [http://www.rscjinternational.org/] as well as to websites of provinces. We will need guidance in some cases to secure correct data about formal and popular educational endeavors. We long to be in union with the Society in its works.

- As you visit the communities of the Sacred Heart throughout the world and as the provincials visit communities within their provinces, please seek us out. We long to be in dialogue with RSCJ about mission. Receiving your letters for feast days would be most meaningful.

Please know of the excitement that we have in our hearts as we work with youth. In them we see great hope and desire for meaningful lives. Please understand that Sacred Heart Educators across the world take great joy in our work as we help young people experience the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within their hearts and respond to Christ’s love by becoming God’s face in our world.

As we close our conference, please know that we pray for you. Let us as leaders within the Family of the Sacred Heart continue to pray for one another. May we be inspired by Mater who knew in the depths of her heart the truth and could with confidence discern the essential.

Sincerely,

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