

# **IHM Chapter Direction – Exploration into Spirituality**



## **Movement 4**

### **A Guidebook**

***October 2022 – April 2023***

# **Welcome**

**Welcome to the fourth and final movement of Exploration into Spirituality, a journey whose seeds took root back in Assembly 2017 and which has been nourished through not only this process, but in the unfolding of our own lives individually and communally as an IHM community.**

**Together we've journeyed through Movement 1, exploring our personal spirituality and the particular experiences that shape who we are and our relationship with God. In Movement 2, we looked at our common experience in the IHM story and the contours of our IHM spirituality. And most recently in Movement 3, we explored how our spirituality is inextricably linked with our calling to God's mission, particularly on the call to justice.**

**Now in Movement 4, we set our eyes on the horizon and how God is moving with us into the future. Truly it is an unknown future. There is no script. There is no instruction**

**manual. Yet we have a strong foundation in the IHM charism,  
which lives in us, as surely as it has in every IHM and Associate  
all down the years.**

**Ours is not to stand back.  
Rather, we are called to set out  
once again like our IHM  
foremothers did, going step by  
step and trusting in Divine  
Providence, in the love of one  
another, and in our call to  
embrace the world.**



***Teresa of Ávila setting out from the Monastery of La Encarnación to  
begin the reform of Carmel; photo by Julie Vieira***

**And what a world we live in! The universe is constantly unfolding and each day, it seems to get more expansive. We see this vividly in the images from the James Webb Space Telescope. In the enterprise of spirituality, we are invited to experience this unfolding and expansiveness in even the tiny galaxies of our own lives.**

**In this fourth movement then we take time to listen to God calling us into the future. How will we choose to be in this – individually, in the IHM Community and through the unfolding universe? What will be our guiding lights as we go forth together? What small steps will incarnate the hope that we have for ourselves and the world?**

**Truly we were made for these times. We have what we need for the journey and trust that God will provide along the way. *Sólo Dios basta*. Teresa of Ávila reminds us that God alone suffices.**

**It is time to set out once again.**

# A guide to the Guidebook

This is your guidebook. As with any great adventure, it helps to have a guidebook to offer an overview of the process, highlight key aspects of the journey, make connections and provide resources. But it is just that: a guidebook. You have the freedom to wander and explore spirituality in ways that are most intriguing and meaningful to you.

In this guidebook you will find the following:

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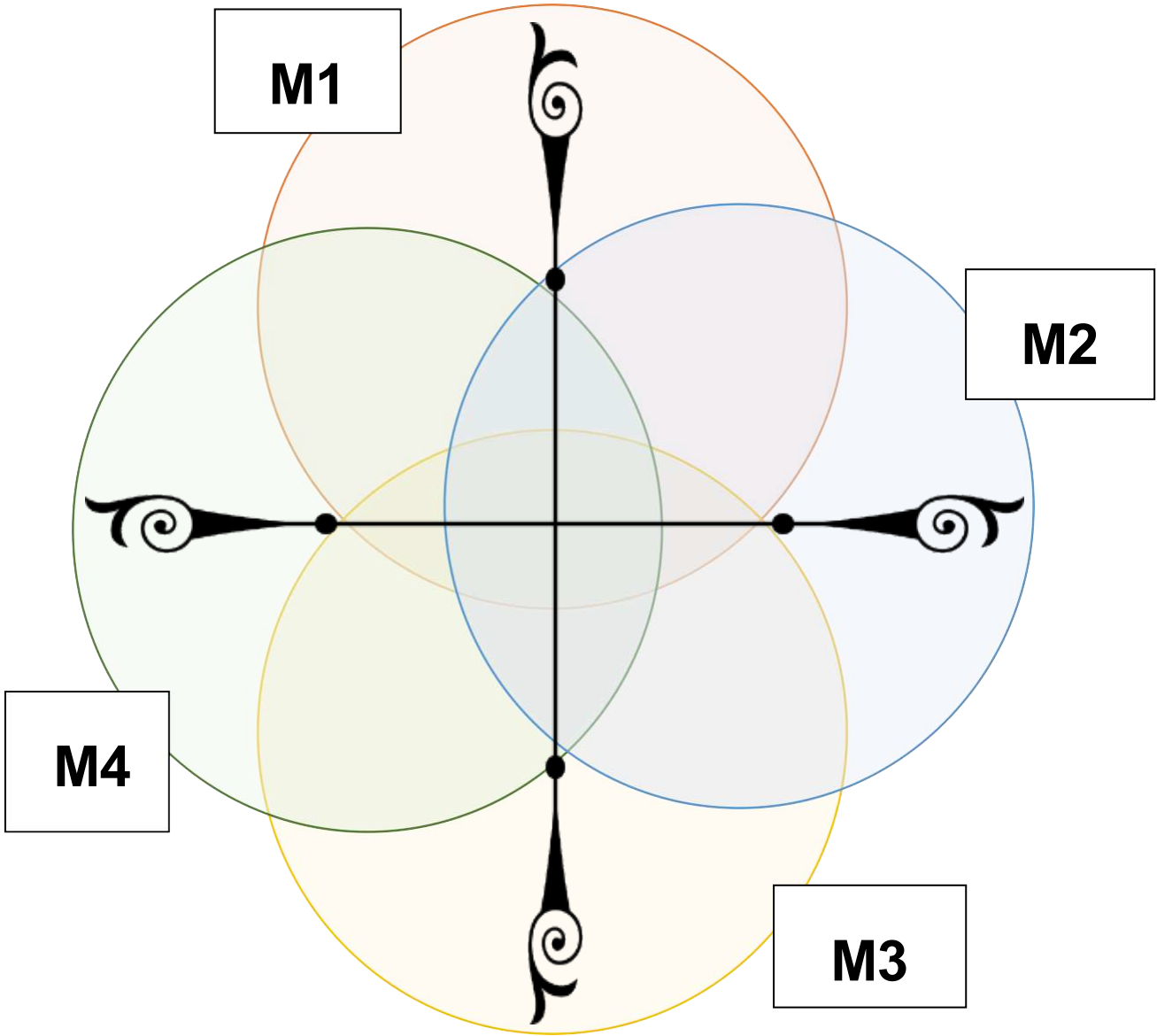
As you begin this adventure, you may wish to have a dedicated journal or notebook to jot down your reflections. Be creative! Your “journal” might be a painting canvas, musical composition, or podcast. Find the medium that allows you to be yourself.

# **I. Reminders about the process**

## **The Process**

**“IHM Chapter Direction – Exploration into Spirituality” is a process comprised of four movements, distinct yet interrelated. Each movement is approximately six months long and goes from February 2021 to April 2023. The topics will evolve as we journey through each movement.**

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| <b>Feb. 1, 2021 – Sept. 14, 2021</b>   | <b>Movement 1</b> |
| <b>Sept. 15, 2021 – March 14, 2022</b> | <b>Movement 2</b> |
| <b>March 15, 2022 – Oct. 14, 2022</b>  | <b>Movement 3</b> |
| <b>Oct. 15, 2022 – April 15, 2023</b>  | <b>Movement 4</b> |
| <b>Easter Season 2023</b>              | <b>Afterglow</b>  |





## **Navigating the Movements**

**Like movements of a musical composition, our movements build upon one another. Yet each is also self-contained and devoted to a different but interrelated aspect of our exploration into spirituality. In each movement, we ponder, “what is the gift to us from this?” We continue to gather these gifts so that we can see a more complete picture of how the Spirit is moving in our lives and as an IHM Community called to be women and men of the mission. “Movement” also suggests fluidity, shifting, change, development and transformation. These meanings correspond well with spirituality and also with the process that has been designed.**

**The process can be overwhelming when a person thinks they are being asked to do everything suggested. However, this process invites us to try something new, to pick and choose what and how to do elements of the process according to their needs, interest, schedule, energy and other things happening**

within the six months. The guidebook points out the main pieces to tap into; however, it is up to each person to work through it in their own way, on their own timeline.

## Where to go for help

### Help with the process

Please contact any member of the Direction on Spirituality Committee.

- Maria Antonia Aranda Diaz      +1 915-261-3047  
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## **Help with Accessing Materials**

**Whether you need help with printed material, digital material or finding things on the IHM website, please contact the Communications Department.**

- [\*\*communications@ihmsisters.org\*\*](mailto:communications@ihmsisters.org)

## **Help connecting with others**

**It is important to connect with others during this process to share, pray together and discuss. If you would like help making those connections, consider contacting the following:**

- Members of your Governance Circle**
- Mission Councilor**
- Pastoral Care staff**
- People in your local IHM Community**

## **Ideas, suggestions and feedback**

**This process of exploration into spirituality is unfolding and evolving. We welcome your ideas, suggestions and feedback on the process. Please contact the members of the Direction on Spirituality Committee using the information above.**

## **II. Entering into Movement 4**

**The focus of the fourth movement is moving into the future. We are invited to explore how we want to live – individually, in the IHM community, and through the unfolding universe. What does it mean for us to step forward into the future and to “enter more deeply into the liberating mission of Jesus Christ as we come to understand it anew through the mystery of the Sacred Universe,” as we proclaimed in our IHM Chapter 2018?**

**You are encouraged to begin with the Invitation, followed by the Discovery and then the Engagement. You will also find various ways to connect with others during this movement as well as to integrate with other processes and happenings within the IHM Community and beyond.**

## **Invitation**

**As we transition into Movement 4, let us recall our exploration into the unfolding adventure of Spirituality since Assembly and Chapter 2018.**

- **The focus of the first movement was our personal exploration into spirituality, delighting again through reflection and sharing in the wonderful flavor and texture of our unique search for the sacred as it emerges from the life-journey of each person. This personal exploration prepared us to probe IHM spirituality from a new depth of freshness, again discovering the distinctive signs of the presence of the Spirit of God.**
- **The focus of the second movement was IHM Spirituality and its distinctive characteristics: Biblical-Liturgical, Alphonsian, Ignatian, Feminist, Ecological and Contemplative. We looked at IHM Spirituality and its development historically in relation to world events, the**

**church, religious life and IHM life. We also entered into a more contemplative space to explore Chapter 1 of our *IHM Constitutions* through both the Invitation video, “Drawn Together in Community,” highlighting Chapter 1 of our *IHM Constitutions* and the Weaving Our Roots Retreat.**

- The focus of the third movement was the interconnection of spirituality and mission, with a particular focus on justice. We explored the IHM commitment to justice through a video of how people in the IHM Community have experienced the inextricable integration between the love of God (spirituality) and the love of others (justice). We also reflected on Affirmation 10 and how Catherine of Siena writes about the “two feet of love.” We were invited to create a mindmap of our own experience of spirituality and justice.**

Now we are invited into Movement 4 through the video “Contemplating the Prayer of Unfolding.” In this video, we pray and reflect on the IHM community’s “Prayer of Unfolding” following the *Lectio Divina* and *Visio Divina* traditions in which a text (*lectio*) is read or an image (*visio*) is gazed upon slowly, meditatively and repetitively to immerse ourselves in God’s call to us.

The video can be found on the IHM website in the private section. Look for the section “Our Life Together” and then click on the link “Chapter Direction on Spirituality.”



## **Reflection questions accompanying the invitation video**

- 1. How is what catches my imagination being felt in me and my relationships within the community and the universe?**
- 2. What am I being asked to hold as I journey into and through Movement 4?**
- 3. In this invitation, what do my senses know and perceive as playful, urgent, unheld?**
- 4. What do I notice that gives challenge or insight?**

## **Discovery**

**Discovery is an opportunity to learn together so that we have a common experience and a common constellation of ideas to inform us within the flow of the movement.**

**The three sections of this “Discovery” present different doorways to exploring how we find ourselves situated in the Sacred Universe. These reflections will provide a framework for us to engage more deeply in how we want to live in the future.**

### **Why does the Sacred Universe matter?**

**The first section is a reflection from Nancy Sylvester, IHM, which explores our evolving faith journey in light of the Sacred Universe, especially with the new images from the James Webb Space Telescope. This reflection begins on page 20.**

## **Psalm 8, The Hymn of Creation**

**Our second reflection comes from Maria Antonia Aranda Diaz, IHM, and invites us to pray anew with Psalm 8. This reflection begins on page 34.**

## **Poetry and art resources**

**Finally, we offer a variety of poetry and art that gives us creative ways to explore the connection between spirituality and the Sacred Universe. This begins on page 38.**

## **Connecting with others**

**Please see the “Ways to Connect” beginning on page 76 for ideas on how to share these experiences with others.**

# Why does the Sacred Universe matter?

Nancy Sylvester, IHM

*The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) pictures show us what stars looked like some 13.1 billion years ago. We look back into time and see things we never could before because of what is available to us today. It deepens our understanding of the past so we can move into the future. I find in our 2018 Chapter direction a similar invitation. We articulated that our charism is to understand the liberating mission of Jesus in light of the Sacred Universe. This excited me because it invited an integration of the work we as a congregation have been doing, my work these past years and my own faith journey. Like the JWST, what we are learning from evolution, quantum physics and the development of consciousness invites us to reflect on the insights of our faith ancestors from a new perspective. The evolution of our faith in this context is just emerging and is full of questions and wonderings. No one reflection can address this and certainly not this one. Yet I*

***want to draw on my experience and the integration of the various mystics, theologians and scientists I've studied. It is not a scholarly article; rather, it is an experiential one. My hope is that as you read it, you will recognize your own journey and continue to ask questions and explore what all this means to you and to us as a Congregation moving into the future.***

**Why does the Sacred Universe matter? Because it helps us to understand who we are, why we are here and our journey from and into God today.**

**Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry wrote in *The Universe Story* an awe-inspiring explanation of our evolutionary journey beginning with the First Flaring Forth some 13.8 billion years ago. Rather than devaluing our earlier understanding of creation, for me, this incredible journey confirms that *energizing divine loving\** permeates the entire**

**Universe and the process by which we have evolved.**

**\*Awkward as it may be, I want to use different language to express divinity to emphasize a dynamic process rather than a static object.**

**This evolutionary context through which to view our origins in the Sacred Universe invites us to tell the story anew. As believers, we enter the story and reflect on the beauty, the good and the true deeply embedded within this emerging narrative.**

**As the pictures from JWST emerged, one astrophysicist reflected on what does it matter that we are learning about the birth of stars. The response was simple yet profound-- without stars we would never be here. I feel a sense of awe in realizing that the stars are our ancestors. I hear in that response the echo of our ancestors in faith writing.... Let there**

**be Light! ... You are the light of the world...The Light shines in the Darkness...**

**Light, energy, stars permeate the Universe. From the First Flaring Forth emerges the essential elements for all of life. Throughout space and time, evolution continues. Cooperation and competition; creation and destruction are part of the process. Allurement, emergence, transformation and interrelatedness are some of the powers of the Universe which Brian Swimme writes about.**

**Out of the supernova explosion, our Earth Home evolved some 4.6 billion years ago. Life as we know it started its journey from single-cell organisms to more complex sentient beings, including humans. Each new emergence signified greater complexity and diversity. Each stage evolved, incorporating some of the earlier stages. There is novelty and always there is the connection, the interconnections, the relatedness.**

**As I read Genesis' account of the seven days of creation, I sense our ancestors' intuition that there was greater diversity and complexity as life developed. And for each day, they wrote that God saw it and knew it was good. The world we inhabit is good.**

**I am filled with such gratitude when I reflect on the great diversity of species that inhabit our Earth Home. The abundance of life forms, each evolving from the same source yet each with its own beauty and purpose. The world we inhabit is good and beautiful.**

**With the emergence of the modern human, consciousness achieved the self-reflective capacity to think about our thinking. Many scholars believe that the next stage of evolution will be at the level of consciousness. As our consciousness continues to evolve, new questions will need new responses and ways of thinking. Consciousness is developing toward seeing the interrelated whole first rather**



than the parts, becoming more complex and diverse, embracing paradox and expanding the capacity for integration.

I resonate with a more recent ancestor in faith, Teilhard de Chardin, who understood evolution as moving forward toward the fulfillment of life. He described “evolution as Christogenesis, where God within and God ahead is the same God (Omega) who is coming to birth in the physical universe; incarnation and evolution are united.”<sup>1</sup> Or as an Anglican theologian and biochemist, Arthur Peacocke, writes God is both “being” (who God is) and “becoming” (how God acts in the world).<sup>2</sup> Both captured in their own way God rooted in this Earth Home as well as in process.

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<sup>1</sup> Ilia Delio, *Making All Things New: Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 177.

<sup>2</sup> Laurie Brink, *The Heavens Are Telling the Glory of God: An Emerging Chapter for Religious Life; Science, Theology, and Mission* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2022), 215.

**I hear an echo in John's Gospel which reveals that Abba God, Jesus and the Spirit will come and dwell within us...we will do the works of Jesus and even greater works...we are to Love one another as we have been loved...and the Spirit of truth remains with us and within us.**

**The world we live in is good, beautiful and true as we awaken to the awareness of *energizing divine loving* embodied in all beings. With our developing consciousness, our role as humans is to contribute to and shape our future. As our ancestors in faith would say, we are bringing about the kingdom of God...proclaiming the good news of the Gospel.**

**Experiencing divine mystery through the lens of the Sacred Universe is life-giving and challenges me to continue the Incarnation individually and collectively as the Body of Christ. The future is unfolding in us and our choices make a difference.**

**So how might we understand the liberating mission of Jesus within the Sacred Universe? I believe that the liberating mission is rooted in Jesus' call to become fully alive, to have life and to have it abundantly. Furthermore, within the context of the Sacred Universe, that mandate is for all of life—sentient and non-sentient beings. Thomas Berry's words are critical for us to understand that we are a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects. This perspective is helpful as we grow in our awareness of the unhealthy aspects of the various systems and structures humans have created in our developmental process over the centuries.**

**As a Congregation, we have for decades addressed systemic change and are continuing to do that in new ways. We are awakening to how a normative culture of white, Christian, Western European males prevent the fullness of life for many. Previously we knew that living life fully required one's basic human rights, economic wellbeing, political and religious freedom, and living without violence and in peace in**

**a place one can call home. Today our evolving consciousness leads us to accept one's sexual identity and gender identification; respect one's race and embodiment of its unique gifts; and acknowledge the rights of our precious resources—water, air, soil—and of course, the health of our Earth Home. As IHMs, we have and will continue to do good work in these areas.**

**What might be emerging at this moment in our evolutionary journey? For me, living my faith within the Sacred Universe is making some claims on me.**

**The first is to deepen my awareness that I am, we are, creating the future. What we do is part of the unfolding Universe. It is to know that even though I live only decades in a billion year Universe, I count and what I do and how I think and feel make a difference. We are continuing the Incarnation here and now. What we do helps shape a future in which life can be lived fully.**

**The second is to truly know that all beings are in communion with each other. I must love as I am loved. As humans, we are more alike than different. The growing divisions and polarities within the human community cry for healing. The Gospel's call to love one another is emerging as a radical challenge to me.**

**The third claim is to enter more deeply into contemplation. To create the spaciousness within to continue experiencing *energizing divine loving* and to find ways to communicate these emerging understandings of faith.**

**Such claims are not only personal but also communal. I hope we continue to explore our faith and our future through the lens of the Sacred Universe. Perhaps each of us can take the time to reflect on what realizations and claims the Mystery of the Sacred Universe makes on us. And how do we as a congregation integrate these claims into our spirituality, ministry, and community life as we live into the future the liberating mission of Jesus?**

**Then no longer a question, we will know why the Sacred Universe matters!**

## **Select resources**

*... to continue the reflection on the Sacred Universe and our faith*

## **BOOKS**

### **Theology**

**Elizabeth Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014); *Creation and the Cross* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018)**

**Ilia Delio, *Making All Things New: Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015)**

**John Haught, *The New Cosmic Story, Inside Our Awakening Universe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017); *God After Einstein* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022)**

**Laurie Brink, *The Heavens Are Telling the Glory of God: An Emerging Chapter for Religious Life; Science, Theology, and Mission* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2022)**

### **Science**

**Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1992)**

**Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, *The Quantum Society* (New York, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1994)**

**Joel R. Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams, *The View from the Center of the Universe* (New York, New York: Riverhead Books, 2006)**

**Paul Levy, *The Quantum Revelation* (New York, New York: Select Books, Inc., 2018)**

### **Spirituality**

**Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Wisdom Jesus* (Boston, MA: Shambhala Press, 2008); *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening* (Lanham, MD: Cowley Publications, 2004)**

**Laurie Cassidy and M. Shawn Copeland, *Desire, Darkness, and Hope-Theology in a Time of Impasse: Engaging the Thought of Constance FitzGerald, OCD* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2021)**

**Michael Morwood, *Prayers for Progressive Christians* (Kelmor Publications, 2018)**

### **OTHER RESOURCES**

**James Webb Space Telescope**



**“Seeing the Universe Like We’ve Never Seen It Before” at <https://bit.ly/jwst-video>**

**“Ultimate Space Telescope” by NOVA on PBS at <https://bit.ly/ultimatespacetelescope>**

**Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue website at <https://iccdinstitute.org/>**

**Mary Ellen Sheehan, IHM, *Interfacing the Universe Story, the Christian Story, the Earth Story, and the IHM Story*. IHM Sisters, Monroe, Michigan: January 2007 at <https://bit.ly/interfacing-four-stories>**

**Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’ | On Care for Our Common Home* (May 24, 2015) at <https://bit.ly/laudato-si-francis>**

**The Planet Earth Series by the BBC Natural History Unit at <https://bit.ly/planet-earth-series>**

## **Psalm 8, The Hymn of Creation**

**Maria Antonia Aranda Diaz, IHM**

**Psalm 8 is a hymn whose main theme is that human beings (man, woman), despite their apparent insignificance, are created divine as co-workers of creation. The hymn proclaims this task as a ministry granted by God to the person, from an ancestral belief of the people of Israel.**

**It emphasizes that the human being is like a humble and weak boy or girl, but at the same time, is someone who can cooperate in the liberation of the misuse of nature's resources and human capacities.**

**People have the task of God to take advantage of the will of the known and explore the unknown for the good of our common home.**

**Psalm 8 is a hymn of creation, and “God saw that everything created was good, in God's cosmic universe.”**

**The People of Israel, at the time that Psalm 8 was written, was not going through a pleasant situation, but an enemy spirit had inhabited the Earth. They were slaves in Mesopotamia. There was no homeland, no temple, no religious life, they had lost families, etc.**

**However, human beings since creation (Gen 2. 19-20) see reasons to thank God for the creation and our place in relation to the Created Universe.**

**Prayer is the strength of Hope. Hope exists, but with prayer, it blooms. Nature must be protected with love, which one day will triumph, although we do not know how. Prayer enlightens us in every way in our bodies and our life.**

**We are all capable of bringing joy. We must take advantage of our life in happiness and not in sadness, in dialogue and not in silence, in action and not in passivity. We must think that we are doing the will of God despite our limitations and weaknesses.**

**In the letter to the Hebrews, we are told that the human being was crowned with honor and glory after having suffered. The passion and death of Jesus freed creation from a situation of precariousness and limits. Our life, like that of Jesus, is to serve and not to oppress.**

**Above all, we must continue to promote the care of our Common Home and thank God for what we can share with others from the smallness of our life and actions.**

## **Psalm 8**

**<sup>1</sup> Adonai, Our God, how majestic is your Name in all the earth!**

**You have placed your glory above the heavens!**

**<sup>2</sup> From the lips of infants and children**

**you bring forth words of power and praise,**

**to answer your adversaries**

**and to silence the hostile and vengeful.**

**<sup>3</sup> When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers,**

**the moon and the stars which you have set in place—**

**<sup>4</sup> What is humanity that you should be mindful of us?**

**Who are we that you should care for us?**

**<sup>5</sup> You have made us barely less than God,**

**and crowned us with glory and honor.**

**<sup>6</sup> You have made us responsible**

**for the works of your hands,**

**putting all things at our feet—**

**<sup>7</sup> All sheep and oxen,**

**yes, even the beasts of the field,**

**<sup>8</sup> the birds of the air, the fish of the sea  
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.**

**<sup>9</sup> Adonai, Our God,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

### **Poetry and art resources**

**Enjoy the following poetry and art as doorways into our exploration of spirituality and the Sacred Universe. Savor and stay with those pieces that speak to your heart and pray with them.**

**Please note that the quotes and poems that follow are in their original language and are not translated to preserve the natural flow and rhythm of the original.**

***God's Grandeur***

**– Gerard Manley Hopkins**

**The world is charged with the grandeur of God.**

**It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;**

**It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil**

**Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?**

**Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;**

**And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared  
with toil;**

**And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell:  
the soil**

**Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.**

**And for all this, nature is never spent;**

**There lives the dearest freshness deep down  
things;**

**And though the last lights off the black West went**

**Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs**

**—**

**Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah!  
bright wings.**

***The Sun Never Says***

**– Hafiz in *The Gift***

**Even after all this time  
The sun never says to the earth,  
“You owe Me.”  
Look what happens with  
A love like that,  
It lights the Whole Sky.**





– Kathleen O'Brien, IHM

***En perseguirme, mundo***

**– Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz**

**¿En perseguirme, mundo, qué interesas?**

**¿En qué te ofendo, cuando sólo intento**

**poner bellezas en mi entendimiento**

**y no mi entendimiento en las bellezas?**

**Yo no estimo tesoros ni riquezas,**

**y así, siempre me causa más contento**

**poner riquezas en mi entendimiento**

**que no mi entendimiento en las riquezas.**

**Yo no estimo hermosura que vencida**

**es despojo civil de las edades**

**ni riqueza me agrada fementida,**

**teniendo por mejor en mis verdades**

**consumir vanidades de la vida**

**que consumir la vida en vanidades.**

***Solar Generosity***

**– Brian Swimme, “The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos”  
(1996)**

**The sun each second transforms four million tons of itself into light .... Human generosity is possible only because at the center of the solar system a magnificent solar generosity pours forth free energy day and night without stop and without complaint and without the slightest hesitation.**



– Rose Ange Leddy, IHM



– Rose Ange Leddy, IHM

***Luna Virgen***

**– Maria Antonia Aranda Díaz, IHM**

**Luna que alumbras de Noche**

**Como un faro del Señor**

**Luna que muestras**

**La grandeza de Dios.**

**Esa luz que yo recibo**

**Es la luz que me abrazó**

**En momentos tan difíciles**

**En que Jesús me escucho.**

**Es Jesús el Salvador y redentor**

**Es Jesús el sanador**

**Que se muestra como Madre-Padre**

**Con gran gozo y mucho amor**

**Hay experiencias de vida**

**Que se viven con dolor  
Pero en la palabra divina  
Reconocemos la Misericordia de Dios**

**Luna bella, Luna Virgen  
Tu que velas nuestras vidas  
No permitas que me pierda  
Alúmbrame y acompáñame toda la vida**



**– Richard Tomasek, SJ,  
“For me, the moon is  
Mary”**

***Theosis***

**– Helen Opreysek, IHM**

**Not magic,  
but miracle  
and mystery  
wrought in paper flesh  
by breath of life  
set singing  
wordless songs  
of praise**

***De Spiritu Sancto | To the Holy Spirit***

**– Hildegard von Bingen**

**Holy spirit, making life alive,  
moving in all things, root of all created being,**



cleansing the cosmos of every impurity, effacing  
guilt,

anointing wounds.

You are lustrous and praiseworthy life,

You waken and re-awaken everything that is.

Praise to you, O Wisdom worthy of praise!

*Pied Beauty*

– Gerard Manley Hopkins

Glory be to God for dappled things –

For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;

For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that  
swim;

Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;

Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and  
plough;

And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

**All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.**



**Boris-  
Quinteros,  
“Taita Kambo”**

## ***Mi Gente / Canto***

**– Juanita Bernard Robles, IHM**

**Mi gente, mi gente**

**De culturas diferentes**

**Que la vida nos unió en un mundo indiferente**

**Sigue la vida cambiando**

**Mientras el pueblo camina**

**Entre risas y entre llantos**

**Que se oyen en cada esquina**

**(CORO)**

**Las personas compasivas**

**Son esperanza y amor**

**Acogen los inmigrantes**

**Sin mirar raza y color.**

**(CORO)**

**Nuestro destino común  
Es el móvil que nos une  
A una nueva relación  
Solidaria e inclusiva  
(CORO)**

**Nuestro destino común  
Es el móvil que nos une  
A una nueva relación  
Solidaria e inclusiva.  
(CORO)**

**La gente sigue soñando  
Que llegara un nuevo día  
Donde el clamor de los pobres  
Tendrá eco en nuestras vidas  
(CORO)**

**Listen on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/mi-gente-ihm>**

**– Sung by Sandrita Poupart Valentin, IHM**



– Kathleen O'Brien, IHM

***O most noble Greenness, rooted in the sun***

**– Hildegard von Bingen**

**O most noble Greenness, rooted in the sun,  
shining forth in streaming splendor upon the wheel  
of Earth.**

**No earthly sense or being can comprehend you.**

**You are encircled by the very arms of Divine  
mysteries.**

**You are radiant like the red of dawn!**

**You glow like the incandescence of the sun!**

**O Virtus Sapientiae | O Moving Force of Wisdom**

**– Hildegard von Bingen**

**O moving force of Wisdom, encircling the wheel of  
the cosmos,**

**Encompassing all that is, all that has life,**

**in one vast circle.**

**You have three wings: The first unfurls aloft  
in the highest heights.**

**The second dips its way dripping sweat on the Earth.  
Over, under, and through all things whirls the third.**

***To Live in Love***

**– Mary Ann Huddleston, IHM**

**To live in love  
is to live  
on the peak  
of a mountain,  
where one day  
your heart  
pirouettes to the sun,  
and the next  
it is chasm'd below.**

**And who dares  
the dance  
or the distance?**



**– Edith  
Kenny,  
IHM**



## **Engagement**

**The central engagement activity of Movement 4 is to look to the future by reflecting on the signs of the times and on the intentional action of *hoping*. This engagement is for us to do individually as well as in groups that take us beyond just ourselves in the IHM Community. Both are assessing the signs of the times and hoping to require not only our own commitment but a partnership with others who have similar commitments. In expanding our conversation partners, we hope to learn, share and grow our networks of relationships in service to mission as we move into the future together.**

**This activity includes three pieces:**

- **Reading the reflection “Signs of the Times” (page 35)**
- **Reading the reflection “Hoping” (page 37)**
- **Facilitating/Joining a “Focused Conversation” Group (page 39)**

**Note: The above material is on the following pages of the Guidebook. The articles are also located on the private side of the IHM website in a separate document that you can use to share with conversation partners beyond the IHM Community. The document is called “Focused Conversation Articles.” To find it, go to the section “Chapter Direction on Spirituality” on the private side of the IHM Website under “Our Life Together.”**

# Signs of the times

Sue Rakoczy, IHM

**What is happening around us? What is our world saying? Who is in the headlines? These are the “signs of the times.”**

**In his conversations with the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus chided them for being able to comment on the weather—fair or stormy—but told them, “you cannot judge the signs of the times” (Mt 16:3).**

**At Vatican II, the bishops found that phrase an apt way for people to engage with their world. In *Gaudium et Spes*—the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World—they wrote:**

**To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in**

language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics. (*Gaudium et Spes* §4)

Lamentably the signs of the early 1960s continue today:

Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic power, and yet a huge proportion of the world's citizens are still tormented by hunger and poverty while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy. Never before has man [*sic*] had so keen an understanding of freedom, yet at the same time, new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance. Although the world of today has a very vivid awareness of its unity and of how one man depends on

**another in needful solidarity, it is most grievously torn into opposing camps by conflicting forces. For political, social, economic, racial and ideological disputes still continue bitterly, and with them the peril of a war which would reduce everything to ashes.” (*Gaudium et Spes* §4)**

**Inclusive language began to be used in the early 1970s—this is why this male language sounds strange to our ears.**

**We can add the climate crisis and the increasing number of climate tragedies—severe drought, stronger and more devastating hurricanes and typhoons, rising sea levels and loss of biodiversity as species die. Millions of refugees have fled their homes due to war, political ideologies and climate change.**

**COVID-19 has impacted everyone everywhere and the world has dramatically changed since early 2020. There is increasing political polarization in the United States and the rise of autocracy in some countries. The war in Ukraine has devastated that country and led to rising international**

tensions. The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, 2022, by the US Supreme Court, has magnified the level of disagreement on abortion.

On the other hand, there is some global awareness that we are one human family and must act together so that life for all can flourish. Ecological awareness and action are growing at all levels—but of course, not quickly enough. The James Webb Space Telescope images fill us with awe at the immensity of the universe. In the United States issues such as engaging with the effects of systemic racism and the affirmation of the dignity of LGBTQIA persons are seen by many (but not all) as a Christian response.

**For Personal Reflection:**

**What signs of the times can you add?**

**In the light of the Gospel, how might we as individuals and community actively respond?**

# Hoping

Sue Rakoczy, IHM

Think about the different ways you might use the word  
“hope.”

*I hope that it will rain soon.*

*I hope that my friend will recover from her operation.*

*I hope that countries will address the climate crisis more  
urgently.*

*I hope that there will be fewer incidents of gun violence.*

*I hope that COVID-19 will disappear.*

These are all valid ways to “hope,” but they assume that  
“hope” is an object we can see, grasp and experience. We are  
outside of “hope” and its appearance in our lives and the  
world is not something we can make happen.

**However, the South African feminist theologian Selina Palm offers a radically different perspective. She speaks not about “hope” as a noun but “hope” as a verb—*hoping*. (Selina Palm, *Hoping, in A Time Like No Other: Covid-19 in Women’s Voices*. Edited by Nontando Hadebe, Daniela Gennrich, Susan Rakoczy and Nobesuthu Tom. South Africa: Circle of Concerned African Theologians, 2021, 216.)**

**We create hope, increase hope, expand hope. God is not the object of our hope, but a “life-giving spirit present in our hopeful acts no matter how small they may seem.” (Palm, 201)**

**Palm describes five ways to engage in *hoping*:**

**Lament**

**Recognize limits**

**Understand time differently**

**Imagine creatively**

**Seek right relationships**



## **What might this mean for us?**

### **Lament**

- **Lament of what is painful and causes suffering**

### **Recognize limits**

- **We cannot do it “all”—we need others to build and create communities of hope**

### **Understand time differently**

- **Respond to the present as God’s time.**
- **We travel together as a human community and need to respond to the present—not project into the future that we do not know.**

### **Imagine creatively**

- **Embrace awe and wonder that we are alive—the universe is alive.**
- **How shall we respond?**

## **Seek right relationships**

- **Hoping is a communal experience and no one can be excluded.**

**We may think we know how to desire hope, live hope. But the late feminist theologian Dorothee Soelle “suggests that the character of hope is like a baby beginning to walk.” (Palm, 201) Each step gives more confidence. Each practice of hoping builds communities of hoping. Each experience helps us to “give a reason for the hope that is within you.” (1 Peter 3:15)**

**Think about experiences of hoping in your life. What were they? How did they change you? How do they remain with you now?**

**For personal reflection:**

**How do you recognize hoping in your life? In the lives of others?**

**How do you express hoping?**

## **Focused conversation**

**A focused conversation is a way to “broaden the field” and hear fresh perspectives and insights about our changing world and its needs. We invite every Sister and Associate, if possible, to host or co-host a Focused Conversation on Movement 4’s theme of moving into the future that includes people other than the IHM Community. Invite friends, colleagues, family members, staff members, parishioners, book club members, members of the Huddle, volunteers and so on. We envision small conversation groups -- even groups of 2-3 people can be effective.**

**The focused conversation can be done face-to-face, by phone; or by using video platforms such as Zoom, FaceTime, or Microsoft Teams. Depending on the number of people you invite, give yourself sufficient time to have a meaningful conversation.**

**We have prepared a guide for you that includes reflection on the articles “Signs of the Times” and “Hoping” (see previous pages in the Guidebook), conversation together and the opportunity to share your group’s learnings with the rest of the IHM Community and our conversation partners. The guide, including a form to use to share your learnings, can be found below in the section “Facilitator Guide for Focused Conversation.”**

**As a facilitator or co-facilitator, your role is to convene a group and share with them the necessary materials. For IHM Community participants, everything needed is in this Guidebook. For invitees beyond the IHM Community, please print or send them a copy of the articles “Signs of the Times” and “Hoping” for their preparation. The articles can be found in the PDF document “Focused Conversation Articles.” To find it, go to the section “Chapter Direction on Spirituality” on the private side of the IHM Website under “Our Life Together.”**

**As mentioned, your group may wish to share your learnings with the rest of the IHM Community and all of our conversation partners. Please use the form below (page 42) so you can share your group's insights. Please complete the form and send it to Bee Butcher at [bbutcher@ihmsisters.org](mailto:bbutcher@ihmsisters.org) by March 15. The learnings will be collated and shared with the community.**

**Let us hold one another in prayer and continue to listen for the Spirit moving in, among and around us as we probe these challenges and how best we can respond in a spirit of hope to the signs of our times.**

## **Facilitator guide for focused conversation**

### **Before getting together**

- 1. Invite participants to join in the conversation. You may also wish to invite someone to co-facilitate with you.**

- 2. Send preparation material to participants beyond the IHM Community. The two preparation articles, “Signs of the Times” and “Hoping,” are located in the PDF document “Focused Conversation Articles” on the IHM website. To find it, go to the section “Chapter Direction on Spirituality” on the private side of the IHM Website under “Our Life Together.”**
- 3. Remind participants who are in the IHM Community that they can find the articles “Signs of the Times” and “Hoping” in this Guidebook (pages 35-38).**

### **At the gathering for a focused conversation**

- 1. Welcome and have each person introduce themselves and why they choose to come.**
- 2. Lead participants in prayer using the Prayer of Unfolding. A PDF of this prayer can be found on the private side of**

**the IHM website side with the other material from this process.**

**3. Remind participants that the intent of this time is to engage in deep conversation about what the signs of our times are calling us to do individually and communally. Invite them to reflect on the challenges we face and the *hoping* we have now and into 2030.**

**4. Engage the group around the three focus questions.**

**a. As we move into the future, consider where we might be in 2030. What do you imagine the challenges we will be facing?**

**b. What are you noticing about those challenges and our collective capacity to meet those challenges? What commonalities are there in these challenges? What is distinctive about these challenges?**

**c. In reflecting on these challenges, how can you put your hope into action to address these issues? What**

**is *yours* to do? What is *ours* to do? In other words, what can you do and what can we do? You are encouraged to be specific and concrete as possible.**

**Invite the group to ask clarifying questions of one another and to be curious in order to understand what other is sharing. Encourage the group to use their imagination along with their awareness of the realities that are before us.**

**5. As you wrap up the conversation around these three questions, invite the participants to name what they feel are the three most significant challenges and insights that have surfaced and that they would like to share with the whole IHM Community and our conversation partners. Please complete the “Focused Conversation Group Learnings Form” on page 42.**



**6. Bring this time of conversation to closure by thanking the group for their engagement and contributions. Tell them these insights will be shared with the rest of the IHM Community and conversation partners and be part of the Afterglow celebration, which is the culmination of the entire Explorations into Spirituality process. It will be held during the Easter 2023 Season.**

# Focused conversation group learnings form

*Please use additional space/pages as needed.*

Facilitator(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

List of participants (Use additional page if needed)

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Age</i> | <i>Connection to IHM</i> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|
| _____       |            |                          |
| _____       |            |                          |
| _____       |            |                          |
| _____       |            |                          |
| _____       |            |                          |
| _____       |            |                          |
| _____       |            |                          |

**What are the three challenges that have surfaced for your group?**

**What is yours to do? What is ours to do?**

**Please complete the form and send it to Bee Butcher at [bbutcher@ihmsisters.org](mailto:bbutcher@ihmsisters.org) by March 15.**

### III. Expanding your experience

#### Ways to connect

So many blessings come with our transition into Fall. Dramatic changes take hold and move us into a time of deep reflection as we gather the bounty of this beautiful season. The sights, smells, sounds and tastes of Fall offer opportunities for prayer and sensory stimulation. This is an exciting and excellent space as we begin Movement 4.

#### Invitation to *“The Powers of the Universe”*

Let us explore together *The Powers of the Universe*, a series of lectures by Dr. Brian Thomas Swimme. Join others in a fascinating journey into the powers that have been active since the beginning of time and are available to you. Here are some of the powers Brian describes: centration, allurement, emergence, synergy and transformation.

**Interested? Gather with others and explore one theme at a time. Each session will last 1 and ½ hours and will include time for reflection and sharing. If interested or if you have questions, send an email to Gloria Rivera at [river1143@comcast.net](mailto:river1143@comcast.net) by Oct. 31, 2022. Gloria will facilitate logistics for those interested and help set dates, times and venues for our journey.**

## **Personal and “at home” connections**

**Here are some ideas for your own personal activity or to engage with those with whom you live:**

- **Go for a slow walk. Take in the wonders of Fall using all your senses for the experience.**
- **Find a beautiful leaf. Place it in your prayer corner and allow it to companion you through the season.**
- **Explore and consider your immediate environment – what is present there that speaks to your connection with God?**

**What needs to change? What is distracting? What could be added?**

### **Moving outward**

**These ideas are for connecting with others in the IHM Community beyond your home. Please keep in mind safe distancing as appropriate.**

- **Invite others to a prayer experience that holds the questions: How do you recognize hoping in your life? How do you express *hoping*?**
- **Continue to connect with other IHMs and Associates, particularly someone in the McGivney Way Community, as we are able.**
- **Engage in a Lectio and Visio style of prayer with your SOG group using the “Prayer of Unfolding.”**
- **Use the selections in the Art and Poetry section in your daily prayer.**

## **Ways to integrate**

**Many processes and activities have flowed out of our Chapter 2018 Direction. This exploration into spirituality – while its own process – is a way to become more aware of the connections to other congregational processes and activities.**

**Suggested ways to integrate are as follows:**

- Make elements of this process part of the Governance Circles and Coordinating Council's conversations and prayer.**
- If you are participating in Healing Racism Committee's Fall 2022 process and you are working with one of the three issues (gun violence, voting rights, or asylum seekers), how does that experience of moving toward action speak to your experience of this movement of the liberating mission of Jesus and the Sacred Universe?**

- **If you attended the Visitation event in Adrian (Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, 2022), how do these conversations interface with the ones you are having in Movement 4? Are you noticing points of integration? Does it call you to the next step?**
- **How does this process impact how you are daily living the IHM mission?**

## **Learnings**

**We invite you to reflect on your learnings and those of others throughout this Movement.**

- 1. What is the gift to us from this? In other words, what are some of the gifts that are meaningful for you? In what way are these also gifts to the IHM Community and the world?**
  - **What was new?**
  - **What built on what you already knew?**



- **What was surprising?**
- **What moved your heart?**
- **What spurs you to action?**

**2. As you reflect on the experience of Movement 4, what do you carry with you as this process concludes?**

**This process of exploration into spirituality is unfolding and evolving. We welcome your ideas, suggestions and feedback on the process. Please contact the members of the Direction on Spirituality Committee using the information on pages 10-11.**

### **Quick help**

**For help on the process, please see page 10.**

**For online resources, go to “Chapter Direction on Spirituality” on the private side of the IHM Website under “Our Life Together.”**

## Heartfelt thanks

The Direction on Spirituality Committee would like to thank the IHM Community for entrusting us with this process and for entering in with an open heart. We also thank Calley Duffey for editing; Gloria Rivera, IHM, and Angela Cerna-Plata for translation; Rosa Gouveia for translation and interpretation during meetings; Bee Butcher for coordinating the printing and distribution of the Guidebooks and all who had a hand in helping with this fourth and final movement of our Exploration into Spirituality.



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