

Zeal gives us a singleness of purpose to all that we are and to all that we do. Zeal animates the whole of our religious life—our prayer, sacrifice and the wholehearted accomplishment of the work assigned to us. It also influences the way we welcome joy, sorrow, success and failure, as well as the trials of illness and aging. This vow keeps us steadfast in our specific mission, calling us to be faithful to our charism.

Constitutions 30



APPROACH TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Desiring to live our Vow of Zeal throughout the whole of our religious life, each Sister is called to take personal responsibility to care for her health and wellness. We believe that we are responsible as individuals for the state of our health, insofar as we are each physically and mentally capable of doing so. A wellness approach emphasizes the promotion of health and the prevention of illness through faithful and proactive self-care and the use of available quality care services.

Respect for each Sister and concern for the quality of our life as individuals and in community are values that we hold. Adoption of a wellness approach implies that we promote and maximize independence and interdependence to assure quality of life for each Sister and for the community. It implies that even with progressive, functional disability the opportunity for involvement in decision making, choices in life style and self-care will remain available to us whenever possible.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WELLNESS APPROACH

A wellness approach to care emphasizes the development of programs and services that encourage independence and interdependence at all stages of life. It may be characterized as follows:

- We include the individual Sister in respectful dialogue, for as long as she is able, when making choices and decisions that affect her life.
- We adapt environments to promote and maximize independence.
- We develop care plans in the context of a wellness model for Sisters who are more fragile or ill.
- We create supportive structures within the resources of the Province for each Sister who has needs and for the Sisters living with her.

At times, the physical or emotional disabilities of a Sister will limit the dialogue. We ensure a process that assesses functional ability, medical/nursing requirements and the emotional condition of the Sister. This process includes health care professionals, the Province Leader and/or her designated representative, consideration of the Sister's prior wishes and the Sisters with whom she lives. We provide time for a process of discernment that has the potential to occur over several months.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A WELLNESS APPROACH

*Within a shared faith experience of our Good Shepherd mission
we seek the will of God in community...*

*Our search together requires detachment from self-interest
and a readiness to follow the promptings of the Spirit.*

*We strive to be open in making known our hopes and concerns
in trustful dialogue with our sisters and in accepting the decisions
of those to whom the service of authority has been entrusted.*

Constitutions 25

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

In gratitude to our Creator for the gift of health, each Sister takes time to reflect personally on the following areas of life. After individual reflection each Sister will spend quality time with another trusted person with whom she can share her current realities, future needs and desired directions.

Physical

- Do I schedule annual medical check-up, dental and eye exams?
- Do I exercise regularly and make healthy nutritional choices? How and when?
- Do I maintain a balance of prayer, work and leisure?
- Do I collaborate with health care professionals in planning for and responding to health needs?

Psychological

- How do I deepen self-awareness and self-knowledge?
- How do I reconcile hurtful experiences of the past?
- How do I find healthy ways to alleviate stress?
- How do I integrate the emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions of my life?
- How do I nurture strong, loving, interpersonal relationships?

Spiritual

- How do I enter more fully into relationship with God through personal prayer?
- How do I thoughtfully enter into the experience of daily Eucharist, communal and liturgical prayer?
- How do I incorporate essential spiritual means to nurture and deepen prayer life (e.g. spiritual reading, spiritual direction, sacrament of reconciliation, journaling, examen, faith sharing)?

Ministry

- What is my awareness of the energy I possess for ministry?
- How do I experience the challenge of not so much DOING, rather BEING, the Good News?
- How do I support others in their ministry?
- How might I companion others with limitations?

Leisure

- How often do I take a day off?
- What kind of time do I take for solitude?
- What kind of time do I take to be with friends?
- How do I accept responsibility and take initiative for my own leisure?

By our vow of chastity we give ourselves to Jesus with an undivided heart and witness to the resurrection already present through faith and charity.

Constitutions 15

Recognition of Limitations

As we begin to recognize limitations in our life, we prepare for the next stages on our journey. We are called to practice letting go and acceptance of a new reality. To make this journey with hope and joy is to witness to our trust in the Shepherd's love and presence in our life. What are my expectations for my care as I age?

For my own safety and in respect for the care/concern of community members, am I willing to:

- Wear hearing aids if needed?
- Use a cane or walker?
- Ask for help with medications, laundry, meals, transportation, etc.?
- Dialogue with community members (or a trusted community member) regarding safety and health issues?
- Accept when the present living situation can no longer be adapted to meet my functional needs?
- Enter into the discernment process to enable me to make the transitions needed to age in and with community?

Am I aware of any addictive behavior (substance abuse, media abuse, hoarding)? Am I willing to seek help?

INDIVIDUAL AND LOCAL COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Community members discern together:

- Feasibility/necessity of a chair lift for stairs.
- Installation of grab bars and/or toilet adjustment for bathrooms.
- Assessment of safety of furniture.
- Rearrangement of furniture and other safety measures for those with vision impairment.
- Available home health care or other supportive in-home services in the area.
- Safety of a community member when she will be alone for long periods of time.
- Future possibilities for another health care setting in the area.

*The gospel calls us to be poor in fact as well as in spirit.
Within our community we strive to live a simple life.*

Constitutions 22

LOCAL COMMUNITY AND PROVINCE RESPONSIBILITY

Conversations with the local community and Province Leader (and/or her representative) need to occur regarding each Sister's anticipated needs and desires when greater or full care is needed.

Care plans for the Sister who is more fragile or ill are developed within the context of a wellness approach.

- Planning for the Sister who is more fragile takes in the needs of the whole person, i.e. physical, spiritual, social, and connection with community and family.
- Planning will incorporate the principles of Person Centered Care with an emphasis on the unique needs of each Sister.
- We allow time to help a Sister make decisions that she can live with. When a Sister's safety and care require urgent or emergency decisions, we will provide assistance for adjustments that may be needed after the fact.
- Persons working with Sisters who are frail and experiencing diminishment will receive preparation and training to provide care in the spirit of the Province's Philosophy, Values and Wellness Approach.
- We will take special care to provide an environment for the Contemplative Sisters in order to assure their need for solitude, community prayer and connection with community.