

**Sister Attracta Kelly, OP**  
**Welcome Address**  
**Celebration of Leadership**  
**July 2, 2016, St. Catherine Chapel**

On behalf of Sisters Tarianne DeYonker, Corinne Sanders, Kathleen Schanz, Rosemary Abramovich, and myself, Attracta Kelly, I welcome all of you here to St. Catherine Chapel. We welcome our Sisters who assume the leadership of the Congregation today. We welcome their families and friends, all who are Sisters and Associates and Co-workers who are able to be with us here in St. Catherine and all who are watching us on television or livestreamed throughout the U.S. and who knows where else? Especially we also welcome our Dominican Brother, Father Charlie Johnson, who is our presider at this Eucharistic Liturgy, and our acolyte *par excellence*, Sister Marilyn Barnett.

Today we are here for this Celebration of Leadership, a time when we recognize our five Sisters whom we have chosen to be our newly elected leaders. For family and friends, and others who are with us who possibly do have experience with what we mean by leadership, I thought a little explanation might be of help. Leadership within this Congregation, in our Adrian Dominican Congregation, unlike leadership in secular organizations, is not a climbing the ladder. It is a call by our Sisters and it is, in fact, quite temporary – six years, non-renewable. That's what we say. It is a ministry. It's a ministry of trust and mutuality, where we expect our leaders to understand that their role is to lead the Congregation in terms of mission and not just in terms of the needs of the members. As leaders, one needs to be able to both keep, as it were, one hand on the internal needs and the other hand on helping to facilitate the mission now and into the future.

We expect our leaders to have an informed awareness of the context of life and awareness of the culture and reality of the world, of the planet, of the Church, of the Congregation, and of our individual Sisters. We expect our leaders to have the capacity to call the Congregation to be who we say we are, to have a great trust in the power of the Spirit and of the power of when all of us, each one of us as an individual, knows that our contribution is vital to the whole. We need each other, to call each other to be who we truly are called to be. We expect our leaders to be as transparent as possible by open communication and to be hospitable to new ideas, regardless of where they come from.

And to our five new leaders, we – your Sisters, Associates, and Co-workers – pray for you, that you have the power of resilience. Now, a definition of resilience that somebody

gave me for religious life said, "It's often described as a space and time between disappointment and recommitment, between sorrow and healing, and between offense and forgiveness." So we pray for resilience.

We also pray that you finished your own spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical needs so to have the energy to be generative, able to act with courage and imagination, to sustain the life of us members as we carry out the mission. To paraphrase philosopher Elizabeth O'Connor, your Sisters and Associates and Co-workers say, "The world may be fearful and anxious and weary, but we have total trust in and are following the One who has unfathomable resources and who makes it available to us." You must live in such a way that you evidence to others that you believe in a future full of hope. Sisters, as leaders, this is your mission. It is also our mission. We want you to call us to that mission.

And so, we your Sisters are so thankful to you, our five generous-hearted Sisters, for your willingness to take on this ministry of service to all of us, and we promise you our unending love and prayer. And so I say again, welcome, everyone, and let our celebration begin.