

"Do Whatever He Tells You: DEI as Mary's Way of Discipleship & Service"

Living Our Vows of Justice, Tenderness, Humility, and Contemplation

"His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever He tells you.'" — John 2:5 "In the Rule of Life, quiet contemplation is where learning transforms into consecrated action."

Section 1: Sacred Grounding & The Kingdom Glossary

In the secular sphere, **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**¹ is frequently reduced to corporate compliance or political friction. For the Community of the Mother of Jesus, our mandate is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the teachings of Vatican II, and the lived witness of Our Blessed Mother.

The Theological Foundation: Preferential Option for the Poor

Historically, the Church was often tempted to teach passive endurance—asking the marginalized to accept hardship in this life while awaiting heaven. The Second Vatican Council (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965) and Latin American Liberation Theology (Medellín 1968, Gustavo Gutiérrez) shattered this view, declaring that **systemic poverty and exclusion are sinful human structures, not divine will**.

Scripture reveals that God is **never** neutral in human suffering:

- **The Mission of Christ** (Luke 4:18–19): *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor... to proclaim liberty to the captives and let the oppressed go free."*
- **The Divine Reversal** (1 Corinthians 1:27): *"God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong."*

In CMJ, our Vow of Justice is an active, prophetic pledge to stand in the gap with our neighbors.

The Investigative Method: The Hermeneutics of Suspicion

In our readings of Scripture, one method used in Liberation Theology is the **Hermeneutics of Suspicion**. Far from cynicism, this liberative theological tool

¹ Also called various things like **IDEA**, **EDIA / EDI&A**: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (adding a distinct focus on physical and digital accessibility). **JEDI**: Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (adding justice to address foundational systemic wrongs). **DEIB / DIB**: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, or Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (elevating "belonging" as a core metric)

approaches scripture and community life with **holy curiosity** and our **Vow of Humility**, asking three vital questions:

1. *Whose voice was never recorded or heard in this story?*
2. *Who was left standing on the periphery or outside the door?*
3. *What systemic or unexamined structures created this exclusion?*

Reclaiming the Language of Belonging: A Glossary

Kingdom Principle	Scripture Anchor	Theological & Lived Meaning	Community Vow Connection
Diversity <i>(The Sacred Mosaic)</i>	1 Corinthians 12:12 <i>"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."</i>	The quantifiable presence of unique human identities, cultural heritages, religions, abilities, and life experiences, reflecting God's infinite creativity.	Contemplation Beholding the face of Christ across every background and identity.
Equity <i>(Needs Based Dignity)</i>	Acts 4:34–35 & Matthew 20:13–15 <i>"...and distribution was made to each as any had need." "Friend, I am doing you no wrong... I choose to give</i>	Providing tailored resources and meeting individual needs, removing structural obstacles, and ensuring the Full Denarius —the daily living requirements of human dignity.	Justice & Tenderness Moving beyond strict earning or merit to make sure every person prospers and thrives.

	<i>to this last as I gave to you."</i>	Note: This is NOT Equality!	
Inclusion <i>(The Radical Table)</i>	Romans 15:7 <i>"Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."</i>	Active power-sharing, mutual hospitality, and deep belonging where every voice shapes the community's life and discernment. "Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind - Lilo & Stitch"	Humility & Justice Creating intentional space where the perimeter moves to the center.

Section 2: Small-Group Participatory Discernment

Instructions: In your table clusters (or virtual breakout rooms), review your assigned scenario below. Apply the **Hermeneutics of Suspicion** to examine what is happening beneath the surface, and discern an actionable response guided by our CMJ Rule of Life. Designate one spokesperson to share during our 5-minute plenary debrief.

Scenario A: Physical, Sensory, & Hybrid Hospitality

A regional retreat and prayer vigil is planned at a historic property with uneven flagstone steps, poor acoustic treatment, and intermittent internet connectivity.

An elderly professed sibling with hearing loss sits in the back unable to follow the meditations, a novice who uses a wheelchair must enter through a service entrance near the kitchen, and remote members joining via screen report muffled audio and feeling like 'passive spectators.'

1. **The Unheard Voice:** Applying the Hermeneutic of Suspicion, who is suffering in silence or excluded from communion? What unspoken message is the physical setup communicating?
2. **The Hidden Systemic Barrier:** What default assumptions ("the way we've always gathered") produced this situation?
3. **The CMJ Vow Response:** How do our Vows of **Tenderness** and **Justice** guide concrete accommodations that restore full dignity to all attendees?

Scenario B: Spiritual Belonging, Identity, & Interpersonal Welcome

During an outreach circle, an individual carrying significant spiritual trauma—having felt condemned and ostracized by previous church communities due to their gender identity, past addiction, and neurodivergent communication style—hesitantly enters our fellowship. While no overt hostility is displayed, community members default to hushed whispers, avoid making eye contact during fellowship coffee, and speak about 'those broken people needing charity.'

1. **The Unheard Voice:** Who is being kept at arm's length? What vulnerability does this sibling carry into this space?
2. **The Hidden Systemic Barrier:** What cultural norms, deficit-based vocabularies, or fears of 'the unfamiliar' are operating between the lines?
3. **The CMJ Vow Response:** How do our Vows of **Humility** and **Contemplation** compel us to practice radical accompaniment rather than detached charity?

Section 3: Consecrated Communication – Words as Hospitality

Language is never neutral; it shapes theological reality. In Mary's Way of Discipleship, the words we choose can erect walls or fling open doors of welcome. The choice is up to you.

Outmoded / Deficit-Based Framing	A Suggested Person-First / Consecrated Framing example	Theological Rationale
<i>"The disabled member"</i> ²	<i>"A member living with a disability"</i>	Affirms that the person's identity as a beloved child of God <u>precedes</u> any diagnosis or condition.
<i>"Wheelchair-bound" / "Confined to a wheelchair"</i>	<i>"Person who uses a mobility device / aid/ wheelchair"</i>	Mobility devices provide freedom and access; they do not confine or diminish personhood.
<i>"Those broken/difficult people/addicts/etc"</i>	<i>"Our siblings carrying unseen burdens"</i>	Eliminates patronizing savior complexes and honors shared vulnerability.
<i>"Special needs accommodations"</i>	<i>"Equitable access requirements"</i>	Access is not a special favor or act of charity; it is a baseline requirement of justice.
<i>"Virtual observers"</i>	<i>"Online community members in full fellowship"</i>	Recognizes that the Body of Christ is not constrained by geography or physical walls.

² Note: We do not refer to the person belonging to the disability, rather the person has the disability.

<i>“Transgendered/ Transexual person/member/ gender stereotype”</i>	<i>Use their names and their pronouns- it is their identity, not yours; Transsexual is considered derogatory in many cases.</i>	<i>"Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?" -BCP Baptismal Vows</i>
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Section 4: Contemplation into Action – My Consecrated Commitment

"Do whatever He tells you." — John 2:5

Silent Reflection (2 Minutes): Enter into sacred contemplation. Consecrated service requires moving from intellectual agreement to tangible, measurable practice. Choose one or more CMJ Vows and formulate two practical commitments you will implement in your personal ministry, apostolate, or community cluster this year, and when you will make this change.

My Rule of Life Action Commitments

Under the Vow of ☐ Justice ☐ Tenderness ☐ Humility ☐
Contemplation:

- I will proactively remove the following barrier in my daily ministry or community gathering:*
- Measurable milestone / timeline:*

Under the Vow of ☐ Justice ☐ Tenderness ☐ Humility ☐
Contemplation:

- I will cultivate radical hospitality and intentional belonging by:*
- Measurable milestone / timeline:*

Closing Collect of Our Lady of Cana

(To be recited in unison)

Lord Jesus Christ, Shepherd of the Lost and Generous Landowner:

Grant us the Tenderness to seek out the forgotten,

*The Justice to ensure every laborer receives the denarius of dignity,
The Humility to read between the lines with holy curiosity,
And the Contemplation to abide in Your transforming grace.
Through the intercession of Our Lady of Cana, empower us to do whatever
You tell us.
Amen.*