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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

USING A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH: CAPTURING THE HISTORY AND
CULTURE OF THE CHARISM OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CARONDELET
IN SPONSORED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Technology Leadership

by

Lauren Lek

December, 2016

Jack McManus, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Lauren Lek

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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This dissertation is dedicated to the founding six fearless trailblazers who in 1650 Le Puy, France, heard a calling to reach out to the dear neighbor in their midst. From the original six, to the thousands of women who have followed, the legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet richly continues today. I am privileged to serve as a lay leader in the oldest high school founded in California. I also dedicate this work to the countless individuals in my life who have surrounded me with their love, prayers, and support to help me reach this end my husband John, my parents Connie and Joel, my children, Lucas, Willem and Emma, my friends, and my team of colleagues at both Moreau Catholic High School and the Academy of Our Lady of Peace. Also, to my Dissertation Committee who helped pull me through to the finish line! I will always be grateful for all those individuals, listed and unlisted, who have guided me along the way.

VITA

Education

- Pepperdine University
Doctor of Education in Educational Technology Leadership
Expected May 2016
- Years Attended (2007-present)
Malibu, California
- AB 430 Principal Training Program
Contra Costa County Office of Education
Tier 2, Administrative Credential
The Three modules included: Leadership and Support of Student Instructional Programs,
Leadership and Management for Instructional Improvement, Leadership in Technology
to Improve Student Performance (160 hours of Instruction and Practicum Experience)
- Years Attended (2005-2006)
Contra Costa, California
- Saint Mary's College of California
M.A. in Educational Leadership, Received in December of 2004
Administrative Credential, Tier 1, Received in May of 2004
Professional Clear Single Subject Teaching Credential, received in May of 2002
- Years Attended (2001 – 2004)
Moraga, California
- University of California, San Diego
Bachelor of Arts degree in Literatures of the world, with a Special minor in Modern European
Studies, received in June of 2001
- Years Attended (1997 - 2001)
San Diego, California

Current Employment

- Academy of Our Lady of Peace
Head of School
- Years Employed (July 2013-Present)
- I am responsible for a staff of 80 employees, 750 students, an annual budget of approximately \$12 million, and ensuring that the oldest high school in San Diego, with a rich tradition of 135 years educating young women, continues to be a vibrant presence serving our local families
 - This position directly oversees all operations including Finance, Development, Curriculum and Instruction, Facilities, Faith and Service, Marketing and Communications and Enrollment Management.
 - In 2014 I oversaw the planning and building for the school's 107 car multi-level \$4 million dollar parking structure and the renovation on the 1917 adjacent 8,000 square feet historic building
 - Launched a series of new courses to support an interdisciplinary focus on STEAM learning

Past Employment

- Moreau Catholic High School
Principal
- Years Employed (2009-June 2013)
Hayward, California
- As Principal I was responsible for supervising 11 school administrators, supporting the management of a \$12 million dollar budget, leading the Mission Integration standing Board

Committee and serving as a Trustee on the facilities and finance committees.

- As the Instructional Leader on campus, I worked with a team of 3 assistant principals, 60 faculty, 3 librarians, a technology department, lead teacher, counselors, department chairs and campus ministers to ensure students were prepared to be both outstanding scholars and faith filled individuals.
- Oversee the success of the ubiquitous laptop program, launch of electronic learning resources across all grades, curriculum mapping and the development of master maps.
- I was responsible for developing and then the implementation of the school's 5-year Strategic Plan
- Under my leadership, Moreau was named an Apple Distinguished School twice, I launched a renowned STEM program where over 25% of all curriculum was STEM based

Moreau Catholic High School

Years Employed (2007-2009)

Assistant Principal of Instruction

Hayward, California

- Coordinated the faculty's Professional Learning, re-focused the school's attention on school wide data to inform instructional decision-making, ensured a common understanding and philosophy around curriculum design and coordinated the implementation of the 1 to 1 Laptop program.
- I was also responsible for coordinating our ongoing WASC evaluation process, chairing the Academic Council comprised of all Department Chairs, supervising department chair and faculty professional growth, oversee the NCLB funding process, and also serve as a member on the Leadership Team.

Hornblower Cruises and Events

Consultant (July 2008 – July 2009)

Educational Consultant

San Francisco, California

- Working as an Educational Consultant for Hornblower Cruises and Events, I developed their proposal for providing an Educational Outreach component for a pending National Park contract. Working directly with the Special Projects Director for the CEO, I was responsible for creating the mock-ups for potential online K-12 curriculum, identify resources for developing an online interactive community, including educational webinars, virtual field trips, informational blogs, and school competitions. My consulting work has continued now to include Educational Outreach opportunities for both Alcatraz Cruises and Statue Cruises.

Pepperdine University

Years Employed (June 2008-July 2008)

Coordinator and Leader for EDET Doctoral Students Technology Camp

Malibu, California

- I was selected as one of the two Doctoral student leaders to coordinate, plan, facilitate and teach in the Orientation Tech Camp week for incoming Educational Technology Doctoral students.

Moreau Catholic High School

Years Employed (2006-2007)

Assistant Principal and Director of Admissions

Hayward, California

- As one of the four Assistant Principals I was responsible for teacher supervision and coaching, student discipline, school supervision and support, and overseeing the student admissions process.
- I also worked as an integral member of the entire school community which includes being a member on the Leadership Team, serving as a member on Academic Council, serving on the Technology Committee and helping coordinate technology training for our incoming students, parents and faculty.

Hayward High School

Years Employed (2005-2006)

Assistant Principal

Hayward, California

- Hayward High School is a diverse socioeconomic school of over 1800 students and over 75 faculty members. I was responsible for chairing the Curriculum Council, which is comprised of 16 Department Chairs. Throughout the year we were successfully able to begin the process of

- evaluating our curriculum and develop cross-curricular instructional practices.
- I also facilitated our Professional Development days and coordinated with our key lead teachers to serve as mentors to other faculty members in the areas of higher order thinking, reading across the curriculum, and cooperative learning activities. I also led several faculty workshops on data driven decision-making.

Moreau Catholic High School Years Employed (2001 – 2005)
 English Teacher and Link Crew Coordinator Hayward, California

- I helped to implement and coordinate the yearlong freshmen transition program called Link Crew. This program is a combination of a student led freshman orientation, and a yearlong corresponding leadership program. As the Link Coordinator I also focused my efforts on unifying the various student leadership groups at Moreau.
- I have been selected to facilitate professional development meetings on Content Area Literacy across the academic departments and serve on the Oakland Diocese Professional Development Committee.

Prior Work Experience

Redwood Christian School Day Camp Years Employed (1997 – 2005)
 Director Castro Valley, California

- As one of the two Directors I was responsible for hiring all camp personnel and then planning and coordinating the training of approximately 65 high school workers, scheduling for all of the day trips, dealing with discipline problems, and overall daily supervision.
- I prepared and coordinated the teaching curriculum for the counselors, managed the budget, dealt directly with all parental concerns and any conflicts that may occur with the trips, organize the student groups and the workers.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation Years Employed (Oct. 2000 - April 2001)
 Intern San Diego, California

- At the Chamber of Commerce I served under Ginger Hovenic, Ed.D., researching current Educational Legislation, and corresponding with new and current members of the *Business Roundtable for Education*.
- I also served on the six different committees; Charter Schools, School to Career, Technology, Best Practices, Legislation, and Accountability.

Professional Organizations

American Educational Research Association	Phi Delta Kappa
Athena San Diego	Rotary Club of San Diego, Downtown 33
Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development	National Catholic Educational Association
	National Coalition of Girls' Schools

Awards Received

- 2016 Athena San Diego Nominee
- 2014 SD Metro Magazine 40 under 40 Award Recipient
- 2014 Nominee for San Diego Magazine Woman of the Year
- 2013 Women Who Mean Business Recipient, San Diego Business Journal
- Nominated for the 2005 KTVU and Sylvan Learning Center Teacher of the Year
- Nominated for the 2004 Disney Hand Teacher Awards which recognizes teaching professionals that encourage exploration, imagination and help to engage students in a variety of learning experiences

ABSTRACT

This grounded theory study explored the experiences of lay faculty, administration and Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ) to capture how the spirit of the CSJ continues in the organizational culture of their sponsored secondary schools. Since 1950, CSJ in the Los Angeles Province, have experienced a very similar decline as other orders of religious across the United States. In order to preserve the culture and history of the CSJ in their sponsored secondary schools, the researcher conducted twenty semi-structured interviews to capture the lived experiences of those currently serving, and those who have served, on the four secondary school campuses.

Utilizing the literature on preserving organizational culture from Edgar Schien, and Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal, the research seemed to conclude that this charism has been preserved even through transitions to lay leadership. A series of seven distinct themes emerged indicating that a CSJ school: consistently incorporates the gospel values into all aspects of the school community; seeks out opportunities to model service to the dear neighbor in how faculty, staff and students serve one another, and in turn impact the broader community; serves a diverse population of students and intentionally creates a culture of unity and support, and a sense of belonging, to cultivate a community of acceptance, love and sisterhood; fosters an environment of excellence through the intentional actions of teachers and leaders to be capacity builders, assisting all young women to become all of “which woman is capable”; recognizes the essential role that leadership plays in fostering a gospel-driven, nurturing environment, evidenced in the faculty, staff and sisters as models; is marked by a spirit of joy and fun that is tangibly felt among the students, the faculty and staff, and

throughout the entire school community, and recognizes the challenges with living out the gospel values and being called to building a spirit of unity and love.

The results of the study suggest that the organizational school culture has been able to preserve the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, echoing their foundational spirituality dating back to 1650 Le Puy, France.

Chapter One: The Problem

Introduction

In 1650 France, six women came together to form a community, outside of the confines of a religiously cloistered convent, to grow in their own spirituality and simultaneously go about the work needed within their local area. These fearless visionaries were dedicated to “work for their salvation and to devote themselves to all the exercises of which they were capable for the service of the neighbor” (Vacher, 2010, p. 7). Their legacy continues today as the order of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

This congregation of sisters, for over 365 years has been a prominent force of change in our global world for women and men alike, and for nearly 180 years, has been providing education to hundreds of thousands in the United States. Like many orders of sisters throughout America, their work has paralleled that of the prevailing needs of the time. This effort has focused on three key areas, including education, healthcare, and social services (Coburn & Smith, 1999).

After their establishment in France, the Sisters first missionary venture was to the United States in 1836. They arrived in Carondelet, Missouri, where they were tasked with educating the children in the parish. Out of the six sisters who originally left for the United States, two of the sisters, were delayed from leaving Lyon, France, to complete the needed certification to be prepared to teach the deaf children in the St. Louis Parish community (Coburn & Smith, 1999). Over the years, the US Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph grew from their origins in Carondelet, and today there are 16 different congregations, 5 provincial chapters, and 7 founding centers (see Appendix E). This

particular dissertation focuses specifically on the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (abbreviated as CSJ), who find their origins directly from Le Puy en Velay, France.

Their work in education spanned elementary schools, secondary schools through university and beyond. Although often referred to by Father Medaille as the “little design” (Vacher, 2010, p. 8), in just ten years the Sisters saw an increase from a single house in the Diocese of Le Puy en Velay, to grow to twenty-two houses across four different Dioceses. Within the United States, their educational mission quickly grew alongside the needs of the time. According to the CSJ Chapter Report of 1920, by this time they had established 155 parochial schools in the United States with over 57,000 students enrolled. Today, there remain nine recognized Universities sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph, and approximately twenty secondary schools (see Appendix D and E).

However, as is occurring across the United States, the numbers of women choosing a vocation in a religious order is significantly declining (Berrelleza et al., 2014). Since 1965, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, at Georgetown University, has tracked the numbers of religious internationally and here in the United States. The research shows that from 1965 to current numbers in 2014, the Catholic Church has seen a 72% decline in Religious Sisters (Berrelleza et al., 2014).

Once the largest US congregation of women in the 1960's, the Sisters of St. Joseph are similarly experiencing the same overall decrease in religious vocations. They have also experienced younger sisters leaving, resulting in an increase in average age (Berrelleza et al., 2014).

For the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles Province, their average age is 78 and they have roughly 299 members (C. Bundon, personal correspondence, June 2015). Based on forecast data, by 2025 their average age will be 88, and they are anticipated to have approximately 100 members. These are similar statistics to the other congregational and provincial offices of the US Federation.

With such a steep rate of decline, it is imperative that the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet ensure their legacy for the future through the ongoing partnership with laity. This is especially critical for the sustainability of their secondary schools. In the 2008 address by Pope Benedict XVI, he stressed not only the significance of the founders of religious orders, but also the valuable contribution parochial schools have made in our world (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008).

As the congregations each look to partner with greater numbers of lay leadership, they also are struggling with the articulation of how to bequeath that particular spirit.

Following in the footsteps of other religious orders, such as the Jesuits, Christian Brothers, Holy Cross, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet are similarly needing to look toward the creation of a common vernacular to guide lay leadership to ensure the continuation of the charism (Brandao, 1993; Carey, 1987; Garanzini, 1999; Hilton, 1998; Jenkins, 2011; Rentner, 2010). As the numbers of CSJ continue to decrease, and the age of its members increase, the timing of this study is upon us.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) encouraged each of the different orders to return to the original spirit of their founders, and to embrace their historical

documents, particular to their own unique characteristics.

It redounds to the good of the Church that institutes have their own particular characteristics and work. Therefore let their founders' spirit and special aims they set before them as well as their sound traditions - all of which make up the patrimony of each institute - be faithfully held in honor. . . There are in the Church very many communities, both clerical and lay, which devote themselves to various apostolic tactics. The gifts which these communities possess differ according to the grace which is allotted to them. (Pope Paul VI, 1965)

That founding spirit, unique to each order, is considered their charism. In him writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul talks about how God has bestowed unique gifts to each Christian, to be shared with the larger body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; King James Version). These gifts of the Holy Spirit, are brought to life and narrowed in focus, by the founder/foundress of a religious order. Through the Second Vatican council, the Catholic Church further defined a religious order's charism as "the spirit and aims of each founder [which] should be faithfully accepted and retained" (Pope Paul VI, 1965).

Church documents point to not only the unique vocation of each order, but also to their distinctive charism. As each religious order's charism is unique, it is imperative that independent research be conducted within each order to capture their distinctive spirit. Research on the charism of the sponsored institutions, for example the Brothers of Holy Cross, could show a similar process by which they helped to make their unique spirituality known, but research on the charism itself would not be applicable to other orders.

In addition to the challenges of ensuring the transmission of the charism through

lay administration, there exists further focus on all catholic schools as the question of catholic identity has been increasingly brought to the forefront (Boeve, 2002; Grace, 2002; McDermott, 2006). Catholic identity is now a required area of action research and data collection in order for any Catholic school to receive its co-accreditation through the Western Catholic Educational Association.

There are many assertions for why there has been a growing focus on Catholic school identity (Grace, 2002; McDermott, 2006; Pollefyt & Bouwens, 2010), but the impact on Catholic schools today is unwavering. With a decline in vowed religious actively leading the school community, an increase in lay leadership, and a challenge to measure the catholicity of the school, the pressure on sponsored institutions is great (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009; Hansen, 1999, 2001). In order to ensure that sponsored institutions, and simultaneously lay leadership, are able to articulate the unique charism of the founding spirit of their religious order, and provide measurable evidence by which the charism is made manifest within the school culture, a framework must be put in place.

Statement of the Problem

For nearly 180 years, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet have been blessed with strong numbers throughout their provinces to ensure the sustainability of their congregational ministries under the guidance of their religious sisters. Now, in 2016, not only is the congregation seeing the impact of an aging population of religious sisters, but also the absence of religious sisters within their sponsored secondary schools. In order for the charism of the sisters to continue across their sponsored institutions, it is

necessary to provide for successive lay leadership, a framework to identify the core concepts of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Although the ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph has touched the lives of millions, very little has been written to guide the transmission of the charism within their sponsored institutions, and especially the lay leaders charged with stewarding the mission. The majority of writings on the Sisters of St. Joseph has focused on their history and piecing together historical documents. One of the most definitive historical texts on the Sisters of St. Joseph, is the work by Marguerite Vacher published in 1991 as *Des “regulieres” dans le siecle: Les soeurs de Saint Joseph du Pere Medaille aux XVII et XVIII siecles* which was then later translated into English and in 2010 published as *Nuns Without Cloister: Sisters of St. Joseph in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*. As Marguerite Vacher states in the preface that her hope was that “this work, like a return to the sources serve the Sisters of St. Joseph of Fr. Medaille as a means of renewed vitality” (Vacher, 2010, p. xiv).

In 1999, co-authors Carol K. Coburn and Martha Smith published *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920*. Their research focused on the story of the Sisters of St. Joseph as representative of the more than 300 American congregations of sisters. The doctoral research of Patricia Byrne, CSJ, *French roots of a women’s movement: The Sisters of St. Joseph, 1650-1836*, similarly looked to find the links between the historical timeline and documents of the CSJ’s. In 1996, Laura Jean Pearsall’s thesis for her Masters from Laurentian University in Ontario focused on “The Little Design: Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie.”

The thesis project was part of a practicum to provide the researcher the opportunity to become immersed in a workplace environment. This research similarly focuses on the history of the order and personal experiences of the Sisters, but only minimally touches on the spirituality and charism of the CSJ. Another important body of dissertation work is of Anne Hennesy, CSJ, in 1988 from the Graduate Theological Union on the life of Jean-Pierre Medaille. Her dissertation titled, *In search of a founder: The life and spiritual setting of Jean-Pierre Medaille, S.J., founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph*, chronicles the thirty years of life of the Jesuit priest who was instrumental in the founding of the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1650 Le Puy, France.

Each of these seminal works provides the foundation needed in helping to frame the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and their founder. As the community looks towards the future, it is then necessary to examine, how that history has informed the present. In the opening quote from Father Adrien Demoustier, SJ, in his address at the 350th anniversary celebration in Le Puy, reflected on one of the foundational documents for the community, *The Eucharistic Letter*. With the changes in the congregation, the title of his talk was “A Congregation without a Congregation”. Father Demoustier, challenge for the Sisters of St. Joseph is that “to be able to accept these ‘new ways’ requires detachment from the priority given to those we had inherited from the past, and which were a blessing” (O’Toole, 2014, pp. 11-12). Moving forward it is in partnership with lay leadership that the sisters will ensure the strength of their congregation, even in the face of declining vocations, in order to sustain their mission for the next 350 years.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions and lived experiences of the lay administration, and sisters who have worked within selected schools of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles Province, to identify the core concepts used to describe the charism as made manifest in the school culture. In order to perpetuate the unique charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, there must be relational concepts and an emerging theory to document and guide the creation of a holistic vernacular in support of the spiritual work of lay administration. In the absence of this, and the presence of members of the Sisters of St. Joseph, lay administration is left to interpret oral history and artifacts, without an intentional means of becoming part of the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The research design for this study was to utilize a grounded theory approach in order to arrive at core concepts (Creswell, 2013). As so little is written about the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph within the secondary schools, the phenomenological research design will allow the researcher to move through the scientific inquiry process, seeking to fully delve into the lived experiences of the constituents (Creswell, 2013). Research was conducted onsite through interviews of key school leaders, alumnae, and faculty/staff. Interviews were conducted with Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who formerly taught or served in administration in the secondary schools sponsored by the CSJ.

As the current Head of School at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, the

researcher is not only intrinsically part of the research gathering process, but also an invested participant in the research. Since starting as the Head of School in the Fall of 2013, the researcher has personally been in search of a deeper understanding of the CSJ spirituality in order to more intentionally incorporate it into all aspects of the school culture, academic practicum, and faith formation. The dearth of writings or scholarly research has led to the researcher's own desire to learn more, and in turn, help others as they come into this knowledge community.

As a member of this community, and a leader in one of the four schools, the researcher has a strong level of baseline knowledge to help give depth of understanding to the research process and interview narratives (Creswell, 2013). The purpose in conducting this research is to help in allowing these core concepts to emerge through the grounded theory approach. Every effort was made to ensure objectivity and that the researcher's own personal biases did not in any way shape the data collected or interpretation of the theories (Creswell, 2013).

Research Questions

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet as is manifested through the lay leadership of school administrators, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet reflected in the organizational culture of the CSJ secondary schools?
 - a. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet perceived and made manifest to others by lay leadership in the sponsored CSJ

secondary schools?

- b. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet perceived and made manifest to others by alumnae faculty and staff in the sponsored CSJ secondary schools?

Significance of the Study

Following the Second Vatican Council, and the call for orders to return to their founding ideas and writings, there became a renewed interest in the focus on charism. Although there are many religious orders, this study specifically looked at the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, within the Los Angeles Province, through selected CSJ secondary schools.

The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph all share a common lineage from Le Puy en Velay, France. There currently exist 16 different orders of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States. This research study specifically looked at the four secondary schools in the Los Angeles Province, of the congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

This study on the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in their sponsored secondary schools in the Los Angeles province, provides a better understanding of the core concepts related to the charism, as perceived by the lay administration and CSJ sisters in secondary schools, and how that is being manifested in the school culture. As the administration of these schools moves from religious to lay persons, the charism must be preserved through these new partners. Enabling the lay administrators to carry on and share the special gifts of the order requires additional

clarity. This research helped to create a framework by which other CSJ sponsored schools can begin to create a shared vernacular to describe the uniqueness of a CSJ school.

As little has been studied on this particular area of the CSJ charism within secondary schools, and as the numbers of sisters continuing to participate in the day-to-day operations of the schools has continued to dwindle, the need for this study was vital.

Conceptual Foundation

This study was framed by the conceptual foundation of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In order to address the research question, two separate frameworks were utilized.

It is essential, before diving into the larger issues of charism, to first form a baseline understanding of the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph, their founding documents, early religious life in France and then their establishment in the United States. That history shaped the evolution of the congregation and its work today. It also lends context to the current interpretation of the CSJ tradition (Boeve, 2002).

It is also important to present a short framing of the issues surrounding the decline in women religious, which has brought about the current influx of lay leadership across many of the sponsored religious institutions. Further research is then presented on the charism of a religious institution, and specifically as it impacts the school culture.

Another framework to guide this study was research on the movement to lay leadership as now those responsible for the transmission of charism (Hilton, 1998)

through the organizational culture (Schein, 2004). Schein's framework for explaining an organization's culture is quintessential to understanding how future generations will continue to preserve this culture in the absence of current leadership. This framework is also complemented by the work of Etienne Wenger (1998, 2000) on the leader's knowledge acquisition through the succession process. What once was the responsibility of the religious orders now must be passed down to the laity.

As many orders have failed to address the issue of leadership succession (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009; Grace, 2002), it has left school leaders grappling with becoming part of a community, without the necessary inbound or insider knowledge necessary to navigate these traditions (Hargreaves, 2005). These sources guided the research and spoke to the need for this study.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

This research incorporated a grounded theory approach, to fully understand sisters and lay leaders' experiences of the CSJ charism in creating and sustaining a secondary school culture. The grounded theory approach allowed the researcher to dig deep into the perceptions of the school leadership in living out the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and through interviews, examine the various ways that this is made manifest in the school culture. This helped focus the study, and identify specific trends within sponsorship.

Due to the uniqueness of each congregation, and their specific province, this study did not look to consider the integration of the charism across all sixteen congregations, but rather looked to go into depth in one particular Province in the

Congregation. The purpose of this research was to begin the discovery into how the charism is made manifest in the school culture through interviews conducted at the four high school sites.

Currently the US Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph is composed of 16 different congregations. The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet has five unique provinces and two vice-provinces. As such, each province, and every congregation, has its own governance and leadership structure. In order to establish a framework that could be used by other provinces and congregations, just one particular province was examined for this study.

The researcher is a member of the leadership of one of the four schools within the Los Angeles Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. This provided the researcher with access to each school site, data from the province, and a familiarity with secondary schools in the state of California. The very nature of exploratory research necessitates a small sampling size in order to provide the depth of lived experience from the perspective of those involved (Creswell, 2013).

While this study aimed to provide initial answers toward the questions of charism within schools in the Los Angeles Province sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, ultimately it also lead to many more questions. Within the very essence of the research is the hope that these questions will spur others on to more investigation in the ultimate desire to identify on a larger scale the characteristics that unify all CSJ/SSJ educational ministries. As still so much of the essence of the charism is held by the Sisters of St. Joseph themselves, this research looked to bring language, and a shared

vernacular to those new to the congregation but searching for understanding.

Summary

As the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet are being forced to address the issues of lay administration leading their school, it has brought to the forefront the necessity of identifying intentional characteristics of the unique CSJ charism that becomes manifest in the school culture. This research looked to answer the question: How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet reflected in the organizational culture of the CSJ secondary schools?

This study considered the societal and theological impacts, which have resulted in the decline in the numbers of women religious, and consequently the aging remaining sisters that ultimately have necessitated a shift to lay leadership within the secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. As a result of the research, this study provides a framework identifying seven core concepts of the charism, which are transmitted within the school culture, creating the uniqueness known as a CSJ school.

The second chapter of this dissertation is the Literature Review, providing a discussion of relevant literature that examines the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph through their congregation today, and organizational culture. Through the lens of preserving the organization's culture, the literature review also examines the definition of charism, its implications for schools today, and the issue of leadership succession as it currently impacts the community.

The third chapter covers the research Methodology, while the fourth chapter

goes into depth regarding the research and findings. The fifth chapter includes conclusions based on the results.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The Sisters of St. Joseph were one of the very early orders of women religious to find a way to circumvent the requirement of being within the cloister of a convent, to rather serve amongst the people and live out their gospel calling. These women were tenacious visionaries who saw the possibilities and succeeded where other congregations at this time could not. From their origins in 1650 Le Puy France, to now a presence in over 55 different countries, the Sisters of St. Joseph have left a lasting legacy on the lives of millions of people for over 365 years.

Their vocation calls them to serve others wherever the area of greatest need, ever the while, drawing closer in their love of God and love of others. While other orders rely on a very narrow vocation to focus their efforts, the Sisters of St. Joseph have sought many different disciplines in order to meet the needs of the dear neighbor. As such, their ministries have spanned countless areas, including sponsoring Catholic schools.

After the significant swell in religious vocations throughout the 1950's in the United States, there has subsequently been a steep decline from those booming numbers. In the Los Angeles province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, their numbers peaked at 894 in 1968 (Williams, 2014), but now current demographic data reflects fewer than 300 sisters with an average age of 78. Their story is unique and special, but unfortunately the challenge of the declining population of religious is not particular just to the Sisters of St. Joseph (Berrelleza et al., 2014). The question of maintaining a congregation without the vowed religious to continue to staff it, has

become an issue that many orders are grappling with (Caruso, 2012).

Throughout this review of the literature, several different frameworks will be examined in order to better understand not only the history and origins of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, but also the struggle to maintain an order's charism in the day-to-day absence of religious.

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Early religious life in France. The seventeenth century France was not only a time of great economic disparity among the socioeconomic classes, but also a time of rapid theological and religious growth. As cities were dealing with issues of poverty, illness, and a lack of access to education, very few agencies existed to offer solutions to such widespread problems. The church, therefore, grew out of these needs, as a way to support the people (Vacher, 2010).

Several religious orders of women were emerging at this time, seeking ways of living within communities to support the needed social reforms. However, religious laws of the seventeenth century banned women from living outside of a convent (Coburn & Smith, 1999). Those who began to create orders for women to live among the people, were quickly forced back into the convents (Byrne, 1985). This can be seen through the early beginnings of the Visitation and Ursuline nuns who were forced to return to life behind convent walls. Throughout the early foundational years of both the Visitation and Ursuline nuns, both congregations faced opposition from not only the church, but also the families of the young women (Byrne, 1985).

Across Europe up until the seventeenth century, convents were the home for

pious, upper class wealthy families (Vacher, 2010). As the dowry required for entry was significant, women without the necessary financial support had no option for religious life. For many of these families, the possibility of their daughters living outside of a convent among the people, was of great concern (Coburn & Smith, 1999). Despite these overwhelming concerns and constraints, many of the early founders of the orders of sisters were searching for ways to bring together both a focus on religious spirituality within a community and the space to be among the people, focused on works of charity.

With the religious leadership of this time being closely tied to St Francis de Sales and Ignatius Loyola, it is understandable that many religious orders were forming their charism around contemplative action to draw one closer to God (Byrne, 1985). This Ignatian spirituality found that “the place of service becomes the place of union with God and with every neighbor, restoring the world to God” (Vacher, 2010, p. 73). An individual’s spiritual growth in gaining a fuller understanding of Christ, was done so through their actions. These religious orders were looking to provide the most basic form of charity and aid to the poorest of society throughout France. Their work was out of a zealous desire to meet the needs of others. According to the research by Patricia Byrne, she cites that:

They, like the other congregations of the age, were the chief agents for putting into effect the great institutionalization which followed the Council of Trent. In France, the most densely populated country of Europe, this took place in the context of an agrarian society on the brink of industrialization. Sisters formed an important and integral part of the religious and socio-economic transformation of that society, but at the level of the everyday, in increments so gradual as to be unnoticed except in the totality of their results. (Byrne, 1985, p. 3)

In Le Puy en Velay, France, a group of six women came together to support the needs of the orphans and destitute women. These founding six were the trailblazers of their day. Collectively, they created the foundation for what is today an international order “consecrated to God in universal service to the neighbor” (Vacher, 2010, p.168). The network of the Sisters of St. Joseph currently spans fifty-five different countries. This early founding of the six sisters was with the direct partnership of Jesuit priest, Father Jean-Pierre Medaille (Vacher, 2010). Through his support, the following six women eventually came to be recognized as the initial order of the Sisters of St. Joseph:

- Françoise Eyraud (b. 1611), native of the place of Saint -Privat, diocese of Le Puy; eventually became head of the orphanage (Vacher, 2010).
- Clauda Chastel (b. 1612), widow of the late Guilhaume Mazaudier of the city of Langogne, diocese of Mende; only one to sign the contract of association dated December 13, 1651; brought 800 livres (Vacher, 2010).
- Marguerite Burdier (b. 1626), native of Saint Julien-en-Forez, diocese of Vienne; became Mother Superior and was responsible for starting another house in the diocese of Vienne (Vacher, 2010).
- Anna Chaleyzer (b. 1604), from the place of Saint-Genest-Malifaux, diocese of Lyon; was 46 years old at the founding of the original contract of association (Vacher, 2010).
- Anna Vey, from Saint-Jeure de Bonas, diocese of Le Puy; father spoke on her behalf, and promised 500 livres - estimated to be about fifteen years old (Vacher,

2010).

- Anna Brun, from Saint-Victor Malescours, diocese of Le Puy; based on death records, was estimated to be about fifteen years old at the time (Vacher, 2010).

These women represent a range of ages, from 15 to 46, from a variety of different socio-economic backgrounds. Françoise, Clauda and Marguerite Burdier appear to all be from a middle to upper class background, as was Anna Vey, based on the dowry offered by her father (Vacher, 2010). Although Clauda was the only one to sign her name, later writings about Marguerite and Françoise show both of them to be women capable of navigating not only the leadership necessary to oversee the congregations early ministerial institutions, but also with the capacity to move within the political and societal landscape of the time. These women were crucial pioneers for the early congregation and helped to establish the leadership within their various ministries that is a hallmark of the Sisters of St. Joseph (Byrne, 1985; Vacher, 2010).

We also see through the research in Marquerite Vacher's work, *Nuns without Cloister* (2010), and her analysis of the preface to the first printed constitutions of the Sisters of St. Joseph, that "Father Medaille's project, which he often called the 'little design,' originated first in the desire of the women he encountered. It was because these women spoke to him about 'their desire to consecrate themselves to God that he, in response, proposed to establish a congregation corresponding to their request' " (Vacher, 2010, p. 8). What becomes clear through Vacher's research, is that Father Medaille was quintessential in helping to move this growing group from the works of these six, to a recognized order of women. Through the support of Lord de Maupas,

Bishop of Le Puy, the work begun by these women, and the foundational documents provided by the guidance of Father Jean-Pierre Medaille, gave form and recognition to what they began.

In addition to the six founding sisters, there were also three additional women who worked alongside these early Sisters of St. Joseph, but were not sisters themselves: Lucrece de La Planche, Dame de Jouz, and Marguerite de Saint-Laurans (Byrne, 1985; Vacher, 2010). These three lay women were crucial partners in support of the work of these founding sisters. They represent a tradition of partnership within the congregation between laity and the Sisters of St. Joseph (Williams, 2014), that continues today across all of the CSJ ministries. In particular, Marguerite de Saint-Laurans, is the only woman of the founding group who was specifically written about through historical records. She also was the first novice director for the early congregation, even as a lay woman (Williams, 2014).

Although there is very little written about the day-to-day occurrences of the early years of the Sisters of St. Joseph in France, one story in particular speaks to the determination and vision of these women. In 1654, four years after the Sisters of St. Joseph had received their official establishment, the Le Puy city officials learned of the new congregation. Unaware of their prior presence in the community, the local politicians came to meet with the sisters (Byrne, 1985). In the reflections of one of the local merchants, Gabriel Lanthenas, a member of this group of civic leaders he recounts this particular incident on October 15, 1664 in his “*Memoyre d’un grand miracle*”, as cited by Marguerite Vacher (2010). According to his writings, these city officers had left

the group intent on ridding the city of the growing problem of convents. This delegation of men were welcomed into the Le Puy home of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and shown to the ribbon room, where the community of women and girls (approximately 39 girls at the time) were at work. After meeting with Sister Françoise Eyraud, and the superior, Marguerite de Saint-Laurans, they left with a turn of heart. Reports following the encounter cite that they showed the sisters “every kind of civility and esteem that they had towards them” and no longer spoke of their removal from the city (Vacher, 2010, pp. 61-62).

In this initial group of women, we see a distinguishing factor that illuminates the uniqueness of the original sisters forming the order of the Sisters of St. Joseph. This diverse group of fearless visionaries came together to quietly address the great needs of those around them. No matter where the need might lie, they were determined to collectively address the problem:

This little congregation could accept all levels of society, recognized in their diversity and accepted as they were, in order to contribute to the evangelization of their own milieu. . . . By working in this way toward its double end of the holiness of the sisters and of the holiness and service of every neighbor, the Little Design accepted its vocation of bringing people together and of union, in the congregation itself and in the world. (Vacher, 2010, pp. 121-122)

These Sisters of St. Joseph were responsible for opening hospitals, schools, and establishing social services all with a unified focus on God and neighbor. In turn, they welcomed all persons devoted to the works that would serve God and their neighbor. Utilizing the highest technological skill of the time for women, ribbon and lace making, these Sisters empowered the orphans, widowed, prostitutes and abandoned girls with a

skill that could transform their lives and their community. Their broad vocation, however, and the call to go wherever the need might be, also led to challenges in being spread across a multitude of philanthropic ministries (Byrne, 1985).

Mother St. John Fontbonne. Although the Sisters of St. Joseph celebrate no specific founder or foundress, there were certainly many individuals who played a pivotal role in allowing the order to flourish. One in particular was Mother St. John Fontbonne. Her leadership, vision and fortitude allowed the Sisters of St. Joseph to resurrect their legacy from the ashes of the French Revolution (Saravia, 2007).

Much like the spiritual focus of the order on the double union, the individual with God and with the dear neighbor, similarly they celebrate a double origin: their origin before the French Revolution and after (Rivaux, 1887). In the biography of Mother St. John Fontbonne, written originally by the Abbe Rivaux (1887), he writes that she was “a mother in the truest and deepest sense of the word, her maternal affection won its just response in the extraordinary and universal filial love which animated her daughters, a love surpassed only by their feelings of veneration and confidence. . . Her humility, resignation, and confidence in God rose to heights attained only by Saints” (Rivaux, 1887, pp. 42-43).

The youngest daughter of four children, Jeanne Fontbonne was raised in a devout Catholic home. Educated in both Bas and Le Puy en Velay, France, by the Sisters of St. Joseph, she and her older sister Marguerite, followed in their aunt’s footsteps and accepted formal vows in 1779 (Rivaux, 1887). At the direction of the Bishop at Monistrol, Mother St. John Fontbonne would follow in her aunt’s footsteps,

Mother St. Francis, and although the youngest of the community at 26 years old, become the next Superior on October 5th (Rivaux, 1887). In January of 1791, the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*, forced many religious to either be imprisoned at the hand of the French authorities, or disavow the Catholic faith. Five different Sisters of St. Joseph met their fate at the guillotine. Mother St. John Fontbonne, and her fellow inmates, were spared on the very day of her execution by the death of Robespierre (Saravia, 2007). On August 14, 1807, Mother St. John, responded to the call of the Cardinal, Father Cholleton, to return to Saint-Etienne, and re-establish the Sisters of St. Joseph for the second time in their history.

In the Diocese of Saint-Etienne, in 1808, Father Piron gave a homily in honor of the Sisters of Saint Joseph stating “you are not very numerous, my daughters, but as a swarm of bees you will spread everywhere. You will be as numerous as the stars. As you become more numerous, always maintain the simplicity and the humility that must characterize the Daughters of Saint Joseph” (Saravia, 2007, p. 27). The legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph, exists in their works of mercy to support those in need of charity. Comprised of women whose station in life would have excluded them from the convents of the time, these single women, widows and women without a dowry, came together focused on growing in their relationship with Christ, through their service to the dear neighbor, and ultimately to bring those they served and encountered closer to God.

Establishment in the United States. Following the Sisters re-establishment in Saint-Etienne, in 1809, Mother St. John Fontbonne moved the congregation to their first Motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyon. As Superior General, Mother St.

John founded or reorganized over 244 houses for the Sisters of St. Joseph (Saravia, 2007). Always attuned to the call of the neighbor, Mother St. John, reluctantly responded to the need in the United States, and sent out the first Missionary sisters.

The Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in the United States in 1836, in the small town of Carondelet, Missouri. They were comprised of a group of six women from Lyon, France who ventured across the ocean, to arrive in New Orleans (Williams, 2014). Prepared to come and teach the children in the small town of Carondelet, Missouri, two of the six were delayed in their journey as they completed their certificate in teaching deaf students. Their call in the United States, from the very beginning, was to provide an education for the children in the St. Louis Parish (Coburn & Smith, 1999).

They came at the fervent request of Bishop Joseph Rosati, of St. Louis. Having supported the Sisters of St. Joseph in France, Countess de la Rochejaquelin, Felicite de Duras, read of the need and agreed to sponsor the missionary work in the United States (Coburn & Smith, 1998). In the Countess' writings to Bishop Rosati, she explains that "their spirit of poverty and humility. . . . is evangelical" (Coburn & Smith, 1998, p. 38). Their arrival in Carondelet, Missouri, represented the first missionary group of sisters, under the leadership of Mother St. John Fontbonne, to head out from Lyon, France to a distant shore. Together, this small group of six, came to form the foundation of what would become by the 1950's one of the largest federations of sisters in the United States (Williams, 2014).

From the humble beginnings in St. Louis, the sisters eventually set out to meet the

emerging needs in the West. In 1870, a group of seven sisters left along the newly completed transcontinental railroad out to the Oakland, California. The Trek of the Seven then progressed from San Francisco, traveling by boat to San Diego, and eventually by both wagon and on foot to make their first convent home in Tuscon, Arizona. By 1882, they established their first ministry in California at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace in San Diego, followed by St. Mary's Academy in Los Angeles in 1889 (Williams, 2014).

Currently the Sisters of St. Joseph are represented in over fifty-five countries. The US Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph are related to the Canadian, French and Italian Federations, all through that original group of six sisters in Le Puy en Velay, France.

As with many religious congregations, the 1965 Second Vatican council text on *Perfectae Caritatis* had a profound impact on the Sisters of St. Joseph. Just six months following this release in October, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet held their 16th General Chapter in St. Louis, where over the course of a year and a half laid out the *Design for Renewal* (Williams, 2014). This document would serve as the cornerstone for the successive chapter in the CSJ history, for although deeply rooted in the foundational texts, for the first time, a sister “was being invited now to a future of decision-making and participation in a profoundly changed community of the Sisters of St. Joseph, one still securely rooted in the original charism of the founders, but adapted now to the needs of the times and the situations where the sisters lived and worked” (Williams, 2014, p. 118). Although this new vision brought about great hope for some, it also was

representative of a dramatic shift wrought with tension for others within the congregation.

Foundational documents of the little design. Following that landmark second Vatican Council, the sisters, like all religious orders, invested in unearthing, studying, learning, and considering the profound impact these original founding documents had on their charism. For some, this was more challenging than others. In the case of the Sisters of St. Joseph, many of their texts had remained saved in archives, but not a focal point of learning or discussion. Furthermore, very little has been written about the founding of the Sisters of St. Joseph, or about their founder, Father Medaille, SJ (Coburn & Smith, 1999; Vacher, 2010).

There are four separate texts that remain today, from the initial founding of the congregation and the writings of Father Jean-Pierre Medaille. Foundational documents include the *Reglements* (written in 1646), the *Eucharistic Letter* (written in 1660), the *Maxims of Perfection* (part one written in 1657, the second in 1672) and the *Primitive Constitutions* (first printed version in 1693). Historical evidence, all links these works to the authorship of Father Jean-Pierre Medaille (Byrne, 1985; Vacher, 2010). Each of these documents was revived for the community, following the second Vatican Council's call to return to the foundational documents in *Perfectae Caritatis* (Vatican Council II, 1966), and particularly through the translation of Father Marius Nepper, S.J. and the US Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph. Through the help of researchers such as Patricia Byrne, CSJ (1985), Ann Hennessey, CSJ (1989), Marius Nepper, S.J. (1975), Marguerite Vacher, CSJ (2010) and Father Adrien Demoustier, S.J., the congregation

has been able to gain a broader understanding of their history and the primary documents that were at the founding of their order.

In particular, the work of Marguerite Vacher, CSJ, in her publication *Des "regulieres" dans le siecle: Les soeurs de Saint-Joseph du P. Medaille aux XVIIIe siecles* (1991), which was then translated by Patricia Byrne and the United States Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in 2010, reveals some of the misperceptions by Marius Nepper, S. J., and the original timeline of these four published documents. In particular, Vacher determined that the Eucharistic Letter, originally believed to have come before the *Reglements*, was actually written following the original founding of the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1650 (Vacher, 2010). Vacher helps to expose that Father Medaille was writing either about what was occurring among the sisters, or possibly theorizing what could become in the future. This seminal work, as Father Adrien Demoustier points out, is a prophetic text that brings direction to the challenges today in 2015 (O'Toole, 2013).

The *Reglements*, were the first documents to be written, which were meant as a guide for the sisters. Also known as the rules for the daughters of Saint Joseph, these provided a context by which to guide the Sisters daily activities, and their spiritual practices (Vacher, 2010). These primitive rules were cited by Henry de Maupas du Tour, Bishop of Le Puy, in the 1651 letter recognizing the order of the Daughters of St. Joseph. Based on research by congregational historians, and artifacts, these continued to be shared within the community even after the constitutions were printed in 1693 (Byrne, 1985).

Within the *Primitive Constitutions* (those used prior to the printed 1693 version), we specifically see the connections to the congregation's Patron Saint, St. Joseph. In her discussion of the significance of St. Joseph, researcher Patricia Byrne, CSJ, also identifies the quintessential vocation and charism of the order:

The *Primitive Constitutions*. . . present St. Joseph as the exemplar of charity for the neighbor, a charity made visible in loving service. All the sisters' relationship were to be informed by a love which is captured in a phrase repeated throughout the documents: 'le cher prochain,' the dear neighbor. Trite and commonplace on the surface, this expression carries one of the deepest, most enduring and universal qualities of the congregation. It suggests an attitude which viewed the sisters as intimately related to those they served. Linked to the person of St. Joseph, service to the neighbor was to be done with the kind of tender and reverent love which he must have had for Jesus and Mary. . . . the awareness that to serve the neighbor was to be involved in the holiest of human activities. (Byrne, 1985, pp. 60-61)

These constitutions represent the core of the rules by which the Sisters followed for almost the entirety of their order (Byrne, 1985). Under the direction of Marguerite Burdier in Vienne, France, the sisters created the first consolidated and published constitutions in 1693 (Coburn & Smith, 1999). Prior to this, there were a number of different versions that had been handwritten and passed from one house to another.

In both the *Reglements* and the *Constitutions*, Father Medaille refers to the spiritual Maxims. The hundred *Maxims of Perfection* provides a set of spiritual guidelines, rooted in gospel teachings. In the historical work by Marius Nepper, *Origins: The Sisters of St. Joseph* (1969), he cites the original publisher, Jacquard, in saying that "even the Queen of France held this in high regard amongst her spiritual texts" (p. 34). While the first part of the Maxims was intended for all peoples, not just the Sisters of St.

Joseph, the second portion was not published until three years after his death, in 1672 (Nepper, 1969). According to Nepper, he believes that it is the hundred Maxims, which were so entwined within the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph, as is cited in both the *Reglements* and the *Constitutions*, and their focused devotion to them, that “has maintained until now the deep unity, and the family spirit of the Sisters of Saint Joseph” (p. 37).

Within both the *Reglements* and the *Eucharistic Letter*, we see the very heart of the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Throughout these documents, Father Jean-Pierre Medaille refers to this work that they had begun known as the little design. This reference correlates to the communities that were being formed by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Unlike the *Reglements* and *Constitutions*, that appear to be known and transcribed through the history of the congregation, the *Eucharistic Letter* originated as a personal letter written by Father Jean-Pierre Medaille to Sister Marguerite Burdier, the superior of the community in Vienne (Vacher, 2010). Prior to the research of Marguerite Vacher, Father Marius Nepper had believed that the *Eucharistic Letter* preceded the *Constitutions*. This research points to the *Eucharistic Letter* being both about the future, and what was potentially beginning to be created across France (Vacher, 2010).

Within the *Eucharistic Letter*, Father Medaille explains in the twenty-second paragraph, “There, my daughter, is the end of our totally selfless Congregation. It is wholly directed toward the achievement of this total double union: of ourselves and the dear neighbor with God, of ourselves with all others, whoever they may be, of all others, among themselves and with us, but all in Jesus and in God his Father” (Medaille, 1660,

p. 31). Here lies the quintessential charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph: a dual focus on the individual drawing closer to God, and bringing others to God.

The *Constitutions*, similarly point in their purpose to this idea of the double union. The purpose of their congregation is such that “It seeks first to establish and maintain in very high virtue all of its members. Second, to practice all the holy works of mercy, spiritual and corporal of which women are capable, and at the same time, by means of these works to benefit many souls of the dear neighbor” (Vacher, 2010, p. 69).

From these earliest of writings, to their *Consensus Statement* formed following the Second Vatican Council in 1969, the focus remains on the “total double union: of ourselves and the dear neighbor with God of ourselves with all others, whoever they may be, of all others, among themselves and with us, but all in Jesus and in God his Father” (O’Toole, 2012, p. 27).

Following the Second Vatican Council, and the call for all religious orders to return to the spirit of the founders (Vatican Council, II, 1966), the US Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, did just that. In 1969, following a lengthy review of the foundational documents, the *Consensus Statement* of the Sisters of St. Joseph was written by the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, inspired by the spirit set forth by Father Jean-Pierre Medaille. This *Consensus Statement* has come to encapsulate both the vocation for the sisters and the spirit of their charism. It states:

Stimulated by the Holy Spirit of Love and receptive to those inspirations, the Sister of Saint Joseph moves always towards profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction from whom she does not separate herself and for whom, in the following of Christ, she works in order to achieve unity of neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God directly in this apostolate and indirectly through works of charity in humility - the spirit

of the Incarnate Word. In sincere charity - the manner of Saint Joseph whose name she bears. In an Ignatian-Salesian climate: that is, with an orientation towards excellence tempered by gentleness , peace, joy. (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, 1976, p. 79)

Throughout the sixteen congregations in the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, that thread of love of God and love of neighbor can be seen. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in Albany, on their website on spirituality state,

We name our charism in various ways. Many call it unifying love. Others use the phrase unity and reconciliation. We recall the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper: That all may be one, Father, as You and I are one. That unity is the unity we seek and long for. It is this longing which informs all we are and all we do. (Albany Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, n.d., para. 4)

As so many of these spiritual documents were left undiscovered until after the Second Vatican Council, coupled with the lack of writings on their spirituality for so much of the congregation's history, it has left much up to individuals' interpretations. Patricia Byrne, on the back cover of *Nuns without Cloister*, cites that "Vacher's methodology, comparing the congregation's theoretical, prescriptive documents with evidence about the actual life of these communities in southern France, leads to the question of whether and to what degree succeeding generations grasped the original inspiration" (Vacher, 2010, back cover of book). A similar statement is posed in the conclusion of Patricia Byrne's own research asking, "Whether that original spirituality was understood by succeeding generations of Sisters of St. Joseph is a serious question. On this subject, however, the silence is deafening" (Byrne, 1985, p. 234).

Both ardent researchers, Byrne and Vacher, point to the need for a deeper

theoretical understanding, outside of reiterating timelines and chronological dates, to explore the spirituality of the order and how the charism is lived out.

Congregation today. Despite a history wrought with challenges and obstacles, the Sisters of St. Joseph remain a transformative force in our world today. The very history of the Sisters of St. Joseph reveal that “they emerge, in the light of historic scrutiny, as a truly evolving group, whose strength lay in their compatibility with the social needs of the age, and a flexibility which allowed for adaptation when those needs changed” (Byrne, 1985, p. 241). Current congregational gatherings, however, are ardently asking the question of what will become the state of their current order in light of dwindling numbers and few new novitiates.

Even during the 1980’s, as the numbers of religious led to the “crisis of personnel” within their congregation (Williams, 2014, p. 102), simultaneously their non-educational or healthcare ministries were expanding. Fewer Sisters were now being spread across more ministries. In reflecting on the paradigm shift occurring within the congregation, Sister Mary Williams explains that during this time of transition following the Second Vatican Council, “The Sisters of St. Joseph were trying to define for themselves how their ministry was changing. Their founders’ mission was unchanged; the charism still directed them to service of the dear neighbor. But as they listened to the cry of the poor, they were struggling to define who were the poor” (Williams, 2014, p. 147).

In August of 1983, in the Los Angeles province, a new vision statement was drafted clearly connecting the changing issues in the world, and within the internal

workings of the congregation: “It means our ministries will be flexible, always open to both the tried and new ways of organizing resources to respond to needs. Our committed presence will continually call for the adaptation of ministries to meet changing needs, and a response that will accomplish our commitment to reconcile each person with self, with others, with the world, and with God” (Williams, 2014, p. 149). That call to look with new eyes was the charge of the 2013 chapter meeting of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

The Congregation today spans four different regions, with a total of sixteen different congregations (see Appendix E):

- Baden, PA est. 1869
- Boston, MA est. 1873
- Brentwood, NY est. 1856
- Buffalo, NY est. 1854
- Chambéry—West Hartford, CT
- Concordia, KS est. 1883
- Erie, PA est. 1860
- Lyon-Winslow, ME
- Orange, CA est. 1912
- Philadelphia, PA
- Rochester, NY est. 1854
- Springfield, MA est. 1883
- St. Augustine, FL est. 1866
- Carondelet (with five Provinces)
 - Albany, NY
 - St. Louis, MO
 - St. Paul, MN
 - Los Angeles, CA
 - Vice Provinces of Hawaii, Peru
- Congregation of St. Joseph
 - Cleveland, OH [motherhouse] est. 1872
 - LaGrange Park, IL est. 1899
 - Médaille est. 1855
 - Nazareth, MI est. 1889
 - Tipton, IN est. 1888
 - Wheeling, WV est. 1853

- Watertown, NY est. 1880
- Wichita, KS est. 1888
- Kyoto, Japan est. 1950

These different congregations span all four regions of the United States:

- The Atlantic Coast (Boston, Brentwood, Philadelphia, Springfield, St. Augustine, West Hartford, and Winslow)
- The Lakes (Albany, Baden, Buffalo, Erie, Rochester, and Watertown)
- Heartland (Carondelet Center, Concordia, Congregation of St. Joseph, St. Louis and St. Paul)
- The Pacific Rim (Hawaii, Los Angeles, and Orange)

The congregation today is one that has faced a multitude of challenges and changes over the years. Here in the United States, since 1836, they have seen the emergence of schools, hospitals, instituted programs to address social justice issues, and worked to ease the struggles of the poor and disadvantaged. Their ministries have shifted, but their charism has remained. As new partners are emerging to take on the vacated roles of aging sisters, we must ensure that they are prepared for the responsibility as leaders in preserving the charism.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet look to carry on through their mission, “We recall the prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper: that all may be one, Father, as you and I are one” (Albany Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., para. 4). Based on their *Constitutions*, and as is published in the *Designs* magazine of the Los Angeles Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, their mission is that the members of the congregation minister in a way that:

- Heals and reconciles
- Serves all persons without distinction
- Makes known through their lives the gospel they proclaim
- Enables others to assume a more active responsibility for continuing the mission of Jesus
- Recognizes and defends the human dignity of all persons
- Promotes justice with a particular concern for the poor (Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Los Angeles Province, n.d.)

In all aspects of their service to others, the Sisters strive to bring about the spirit and charism of unifying love.

Preserving Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a complex concept that has in recent business literature become a focal point for an organization's relative success. The ability of leadership to decipher an organization's culture and henceforth sustain it, amongst a changing environment, is what has led to the espoused success of companies (Chowdhury, 2003). Although most research literature focuses on organizational culture as a formula for creating and sustaining success, very little literature focuses on preserving an organization's culture.

An organization's culture, is most notably defined by Edgar Schien (1992) as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved problems of external adaption and integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and

feel in relation to those problems” (p. 12). Goffee and Jones further assert that the questions around “how” an organization does something, all have to do with their culture: “those habitual, taken-for-granted assumptions about how things get done around the place” (Chowdhury, 2003, p. 273).

Experts on organizations and culture, authors Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal (2013) provide leaders with a framework for examining organizations through the lens of culture and symbols. Their research helps to establish that both organizations have culture and are cultures. This nuance points to the significant role that symbols play in establishing and preserving an organizations structures, alongside other areas such as myths, vision, values, stories and fairy tales, rituals and metaphors. In considering the culture within in Catholic schools, stories play a particularly poignant role in “perpetuating values” (p. 257), and sustaining the organization. As Bolman and Deal (2013) cite, “effective organizations are full of good stories” (p. 258).

In looking specifically at organizational culture from the angle of schools, an entirely different body of research exists. The literature and research around school culture, is particularly focused on the role educational theory, research methods and political trends play in influencing our academic institutions (Prosser, 1999). In Prosser’s work on School Culture, he asserts that it was not until the 1980’s, as organizational culture became a focal point for mainstream researchers, that it began to influence studies on school culture (Prosser, 1999). These studies, often were looking at issues related to change, and improvement, but too frequently misappropriated terms (Prosser, 1999).

Charism within Catholic schools. Following the Second Vatican Council, there became an intentionality to clearly articulate for each religious order, their role in a modern society. Each was called to return to a focus on the gospels and the writings of their founder, and to bring stronger clarity to the spirit of their specific vocation (Vatican II, 1966). This Vatican call necessitated that orders begin to bring words to the very spirit of their uniqueness within the larger Catholic church. From this research, sprung the resurgence of the term charism. Although this term is virtually unknown outside of the catholic community, it is widely used within the Catholic church to describe the characteristics and values upheld by a religious community. Charism is defined as “an extraordinary power given a Christian by the Holy Spirit for the good of the Church” (Charism, n.d., para. 1).

Within the context of a religious order, the charism, is the gift that a particular community brings to the people of God. In the historical text on the *Origins of the Sisters of St. Joseph*, by Marius Nepper (1969), he explains the unique spirituality of an order as follows:

All spiritualities must be based on the Gospel, but no one of them can express the totality of the richness of the person of Christ and His message. The gospel is like a meadow in spring filled with various flowers; each founder, under the action of the Holy Spirit and his own temperament, gathers there the flowers of his choice and forms his bouquet. This is his spirituality. (p. 69)

Each of the orders, takes on particular areas of the Gospel to focus on. Henceforth, their specific gospel focus becomes shared through their charism.

As congregations moved back to their founding documents and the spirituality of their origins, there became a renewal of efforts to go about the work they began with.

For some congregations, they saw a renewed call to focus on issues of social justice, or ministries to the poor (Caruso, 2012). In some instances, specifically looking at religious sisters in the United States, there had been such an ardent call to take on management of schools, that they had neglected other forms of ministry as quintessential to their charism. Vatican II helped call them to “minister as a particular lifeform in the ecclesial Body of Christ to the Church as the People of God” (Schneiders, 2011, p. 17). Their charism calls them to their work within the larger congregation of the church.

Within catholic education, the charism of a religious order became communicated through the religious that served in them. In his book, *When the Sisters Said Farewell: The Transition of Leadership in Catholic Elementary Schools*, Father Michael Caruso explains, the “distinct and distinguished character of their schools flowed from their community’s culture and charisms” (Caruso, 2012, p. 42). As new novitiates moved from the convents into their work in schools, there was a tradition and set of patterns that easily transferred from their learning and structure, into the academic setting. Those characteristics that helped to define their charism within the convent, was then seen through their work in the schools (Caruso, 2012). As such, the charism in schools became a manifestation of their spirituality.

In one of the interviews conducted by Father Caruso, the Sister of Charity of Leavenworth noted that their spirituality was rooted in the teachings of St. Vincent de Paul. Their charism of service to the poor informed the type of students they ensured were offered an education in the schools that they staffed, and would even apply to offering support to the families of the students within their schools (Caruso, 2012). This

example of a Sister of Charity is just one of many such included throughout his research, pointing to the distinctive characteristics of the charism that flowed through the religious into the very fabric of the school culture.

Identifying the shared Charism within the Lasallian Schools: an example of intentional inclusion of lay partnership. Although minimal research exists on the transfer of charism from the religious to lay partners, one poignant example is that of the Christian Brothers (or the Brothers of the Christian Schools). The research by Kevin M. Tidd, helps show the transition of one community to ensure that their distinctive characteristics and mission continued even without the physical presence of the brothers within the school.

The Christian Brothers, believed so strongly that the charism of the order could only be communicated within the school culture through the presence of the Brothers, that they struggled throughout the majority of their educational history in the United States to accept the presence of laity within their schools (Tidd, 2009a). It was not until the 39th General Chapter of 1966-1967 that the Christian Brothers, began to turn the tide in their acceptance of laity, and the identified need to support them in the spiritual training of vocation.

According to the research of Kevin Tidd (2009b), a true turning point was not until the 41st general chapter of 1986 where for the first time in their history, they collectively articulated the partnership between the brothers and their lay colleagues as "a shared mission" (p. 440). It represented a dramatic shift from what was, to a new realization that collectively they were working to help the charism become manifest. In these

documents of 1987, there was a distinct call to not only include the laity, as was the call in the 1966 Declarations, but to ensure that there was a sharing of the heritage and spirit of their founder, along with an inclusion in their spirituality. As this new vernacular around a shared mission was taking root within the religious order, so too emerged a new label for their schools, ensuring the collective mission. According to Kevin Tidd (2009b), after 1988 the schools would now be known as “Lasallian Schools”, and no longer the “Brother’s School” (p. 442).

Once the Christian Brothers had embarked upon a shared mission, they proceeded to clearly identify the types of association, and the means of engaging in a shared mission.

In April 2008, at the Catholic University of America, Pope Benedict XVI shared the quintessential nature of Catholic education, a ministry crucial to the evangelization of our world. He went on to share that the founders and foundresses of religious orders “with great tenacity and foresight, laid the foundations of what is today a remarkable network of parochial schools contributing to the spiritual well-being of the Church and the nation” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008, para. 4). This network of Catholic schools is quintessential to the stability of the church and its continued growth within our nation. Preserving that culture is essential. Simultaneously, with the continued decline in religious, there must be an intentionality and focus placed on systematically ensuring the ongoing education of the next generation of catholic school leaders.

Decline in women religious. In the United States, women religious have played a dominant role in supporting the matriculation of immigrant communities, providing

necessary medical and health care to the poor, and ensuring educational access (Coburn & Smith, 1999). These women helped to form the backbone of a growing country, unable to otherwise care for their poor and most needy. From the first twelve sisters that arrived in 1720, to now the 49,000 who currently remain (Berrelleza et al., 2014), their work has been transformative within the communities of which they have served.

Within the United States, the Catholic community saw its most significant increase in women religious from 1940-1965, representing more than 180,000 (Schneiders, 2011). This twenty-five year period marks a greater increase than the Catholic church had seen in the previous two-hundred years.

Although these current numbers represent an increase from those early years, the peak of women religious was in the 1960's, also during the time that just preceded the second Vatican Council, the Civil Rights movement, another focal time on women's rights, the sexual revolution, etc. This was a pivotal and turbulent time in the American political, religious and cultural landscape (Caruso, 2012). As Richard Jacobs (2013) argues, many believe the decline to be directly correlated with the decrees of the Vatican II, however, the decline began prior to this in the 1950's as on the opposite end of the pendulum, the number of lay partners increased in relation to the growing number of Catholic schools.

On October 11, 1962, over 3,000 religious and theologians gathered to discuss the future of the Church: "Simply put, Vatican II represents the most significant example of institutionalized religious change since the Reformation" (Wilde, 2007, p. 2). The

Second Vatican council resulted in the shift in access for lay religious, that previously such roles were only made available to vowed religious. Simultaneously, for the first time in Church History, women could access education, family and spiritual growth through the laity.

In a speech to both Saint Mary's College and the University of Notre Dame, Professor Sandra M. Schneiders (2011) shares that "These three sociological factors, namely, declining number of girls in Catholic families, less contact with Sisters during their formative years, and expanded vocational options for young women, significantly decreased the numbers of young women entering the convent" (p. 5). During the nineteenth-century, access for many women of either the middle or lower classes was exceedingly limited. As researcher, Mary Ewens (1981) argues that sisters during this time, "enjoyed opportunities open to few other women of their time: involvement in meaningful work, access to administrative positions, freedom from the responsibilities of marriage and motherhood, opportunities to live in sisterhood, and egalitarian friendships" (p. 110). As the shackles inhibiting women began to crumble, within both the church and society, lay women could now choose a different alternative from religious life.

For the Sisters of St. Joseph, these societal and institutional impacts can similarly be seen in their changing numbers. Data from the CARA report on the "Population trends among religious institutes of women" shows the rapid decline in numbers since 1970 (Berelleza et al., 2014, p. 2). Due to some of the merging of smaller congregations with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield Holyoke, MA, it

momentarily resulted in a relative spike in numbers. Unfortunately, this increase was only due to the merging of sisters from one congregation to the other, and there was no substantial increase in novices during that time.

Historical documents within the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet show that following the 1960's the young women entering the novitiate were steadily beginning to decrease (Williams, 2014). Simultaneous, many congregations and provinces were also seeing a shortage of personnel to staff their religious institutions. In the book by Sister Mary Williams (2014) , she notes the joint meeting of the Apostolic Board and the Provincial Council in December 1970, where the minutes reflect "a crisis situation - a major personnel shortage" (p. 128). Historical records point to an average of two to six school closures each year, and from 1971-2000, the CSJ community withdrew from a total of 58 schools just in the Los Angeles province alone (Williams, 2014).

Many communities have had to face this similar phenomenon of decline of membership, simultaneous with the inclusion of more laity as partners in mission. One congregation in particular that has experienced a radical change in perception of the partnership with laity has been the Christian Brothers (Tidd, 2009a). In his research on the inclusion of the laity within the schools sponsored by the Christian Brothers, Kevin Tidd illuminates that their history up until the 39th General Chapter meeting of 1966-1967, was one filled with tension and ambiguity regarding the role of the laity to work alongside the Brothers in the schools. However, as a result of the Vatican II document *Perfectae Caritatis* (1966), and the call to examine the modern role of the order within

society, a shift began to take place.

Movement to lay leadership. The Christian Brothers are just one example of many religious orders that have begun the intentional transition from religious leadership to lay leadership within their sponsored institutions. Although their transition was marked with struggle, their current framework for supporting lay leadership allows for the needed spiritual formation to ensure the transmission of charism.

Across any religious order moving from religious leadership to lay leadership, the community will become engaged in a dramatic paradigm shift. This transition is the moving away from the internal membership passing on the legacy, to accepting newcomers as partners in charism. This reacculturation of the transmission of charism and mission, creates an issue of dissonance. Belmonte and Cranston (2009) discovered in their research on the move to lay leadership, that school Principals were gaining an understanding of a school's charism from the members of the religious communities, however, these new lay leaders had "no affiliation with living out the norms of religious orders" (p. 303).

Prior to the influx of laity, the charism was first experienced by the religious within their formal formation, and then further reinforced by the models of other religious within the ministry in which they were serving (Caruso, 2012). The knowledge of the charism was experienced in the novitiate and then immediately employed in their ministry in schools, as the need for teachers insisted that the newest religiously vowed were placed in ministry. For the lay leader no such experiential training existed (Caruso, 2012; McDermott, 2006).

If lay leadership are truly meant to become part of the larger community of practice of that congregation, then there must be a mechanism for them to experience situated learning through legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Unfortunately, much of the research on lay leadership, and its struggle to communicate the charism points to a lack of faith development and implicit training (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009; Grace, 2002; McDermott 2006).

Many orders that have been successful in passing down the charism, and ensuring with intentionality a lived vernacular amongst both the religious and lay leadership, have found ways of bringing these new comers into the community of practice. Some have found this in a structured instructional formation experience, such as the Lasallian Leadership Institute (Tidd, 2009b). Opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation within the community of practice, are quintessential for new lay leadership to experience the transmission of knowledge, customs, and beliefs. By virtue of the drastically different roles of vowed religious and laity, this challenge presents a multitude of barriers to entry.

Hansen's review of the Church literature on the role of the lay Catholic school principal, challenges the Congregation for Catholic Education to provide a new evaluation on this quintessential role within the context of the twenty-first century. "It must be disheartening for contemporary Catholic school lay principals, when encouraged by their employing authorities to become familiar with the content of these key documents to better inform their teaching and administrative practice in Catholic schools, to find their own leadership roles largely invisible in these seminal documents

on Catholic education” (Hansen, 2001, p. 37).

Leadership succession. In 2014, for the first time in the history of the US Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the 20 secondary school leadership came together in Chicago, IL, to discuss the issues of charism and succession. Although many of the schools have been under the leadership of lay administration, and only a handful of schools still have religious sisters part of the day-to-day campus experience, this gathering was slow to come.

Research on organizational culture all points to the essential role of the leader to preserve the culture amidst a changing environment (Chowdhury, 2003). Chowdhury (2003) asserts, that the “role of the leaders is as the embodiment of culture. Their behaviors will be closely observed to see if they merely mouth the key values of the culture or whether they practice them” (p. 274). The transmission of the charism of the order, must not only be passed on to the subsequent leader, but there must be a deep understanding of this culture in order for the leader to preserve it.

As is echoed in the research by Andy Hargreaves, leadership succession is one of the quintessential areas for an organization's success, but it is often the one seldom focused on. His research on leadership succession calls for organizations to focus on this, “not just a temporary episodic problem in individual schools, but a pervasive crisis in the system” (Hargreaves, 2005, p. 164).

Summary

The review on the literature shows that the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet have been fearless visionaries, collectively committed to meeting the needs of the dear

neighbor. Since their origins in Le Puy, France in 1650, they have spread out around the world. Their commitment to service is unwavering, but the decline in the numbers, has forced a change in leadership from vowed sisters, to lay administrators. This issue of succession has brought about the need for an intentional transmission of knowledge in order to sustain and preserve the organizational culture. The subsequent chapter discusses the proposed methodology to arrive at a set of core concepts, ultimately to create a theory of how the CSJ charism is lived out on the sponsored secondary school campuses.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, are a religious order whose vocation is focused on service to God and to the neighbor. These are women who from their founding in Le Puy, France in 1650 have gone about the work. Their dedication to serving God and the dear neighbor has allowed for their works of mercy to be far reaching. However, their focus on hard work and serving the needs of others has resulted in a dearth of writing about how their spirituality is passed on, especially in current times with the dwindling numbers of religious in their various ministries. It appears that there is just no time to capture the culture and charism of this religious order, and yet, this work must be done.

This study explored the characteristics of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet as perceived and modeled by the lay faculty, administration and Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, in order to capture and promulgate core concepts that can then guide future generations of lay leaders. As a result of the decreasing numbers of religious sisters in the congregation, the CSJ order moved toward lay administration across their academic institutions, and most recently their secondary schools. In order to ensure that the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph continues through the lay leadership in the absence of sisters, it is imperative that a set of core concepts be identified in order to support the transmission and modeling of the charism to the larger school community.

There have been other research studies done on religious congregations, specifically the Brothers of Holy Cross, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

Immaculata, and Salesians, but very little research exists on the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. To date, the predominant body of research on the Sisters of St. Joseph encompasses historical perspectives with no writings focused on the transmittal of charism for secondary schools.

As the nature of catholic tradition is inextricably linked with the changing evolution of context and culture (Boeve, 2007), it is therefore necessary that the research methodology used is similarly fluid. An evolutionary system of qualitative scientific inquiry, allows the researcher to “gradually build a structure of understanding their findings” (Suter, 2012, p. 362). As little has been studied on this particular area of the CSJ charism within secondary schools, a qualitative study utilizing grounded theory was chosen to provide a rich set of data in which to analyze the subject (Creswell, 2013; Suter, 2012). This approach allowed for the school culture and lay administration to be observed in an authentic environment, and provided the space for the researcher to triangulate the data, and identify themes as they emerged. Data were analyzed, coded and sorted to reach a set of core concepts and ultimately propose a theory (Charmaz, 2006).

A grounded theory approach was used, integrating multiple interviews from each of the four school sites. This process allowed the researcher to make comparisons, draw corollaries and to find the quintessential relationships among and between the data in order to arrive at core concepts (Creswell, 2013; Suter, 2012). Select individuals from each of the four CSJ secondary schools in the Los Angeles province were chosen as data sources.

Restatement of the Research Questions

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet reflected in the organizational culture of the CSJ secondary schools?
 - a. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet perceived and made manifest to others by lay leadership in the sponsored CSJ secondary schools?
 - b. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet perceived and made manifest to others by alumnae faculty and staff in the sponsored CSJ secondary schools?

Grounded Theory Methodology

Grounded theory was first developed in the late 1960's by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Charmaz, 2006). Both Glaser and Strauss were studying the impact of dying in hospitals. Their research journey in 1965, eventually led to the formal methodology now known as grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2012). This qualitative methodology allows for a rich data set based on participants' perceptions, when relatively no theory or other phenomenological research exists (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory focuses on a positivist, inquiry-driven approach to research Focusing on the data to then derive theories, this particular qualitative data analysis utilizes an "iterative, or recursive" approach (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 220). Glaser's background in quantitative coding is reflected in the rigorous analytical coding applied to the qualitative

research collected in grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006). Throughout the years, the process for coding the qualitative research has been reframed, but what remains is the fundamental focus on a reflexive process of analysis, coding and categorizing relationships.

Qualitative methodology using grounded theory focuses on deciphering participants perceptions in a natural setting, resulting in an approach of conceptual thinking and theory building (Cho & Lee, 2014). This research does not look to test a hypothesis, but rather to decipher a perceived reality or phenomenon, and arrive at a theory. With a focus on recursive data analysis, it is through these data sets that core concepts and eventually a theory arise. According to Creswell (2013), “the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports details of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 16). The use of grounded theory is particularly relevant when the current theories regarding a phenomenon are nonexistent (Creswell, 2013).

This particular type of methodology is helpful in ultimately creating a theory around the individual participant’s experiences (Creswell, 2013).

The Role of the Researcher

As the current Head of School at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, the researcher is not only intrinsically part of the research gathering process, but also an invested participant in the research. Since starting in a position of leadership in the Fall of 2013, the researcher has personally been in search of a deeper understanding of the CSJ spirituality in order to more intentionally incorporate it into all aspects of the school

culture, academic practicum, and faith formation. As the Head of School, the researcher is responsible for preserving the mission and charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The dearth of writings or scholarly research has led to the researcher's desire to learn more, and, in turn, help others as they come into this knowledge community.

As a member of this community, and a leader in one of the four schools, the researcher has a strong level of baseline knowledge to help give depth of understanding to the research process and interview narratives (Creswell, 2013). As still a new member of this community, the researcher has not formed preconceived notions of what core concepts should emerge. Currently, no hypothesis or theoretical body of research exists to explain and implement the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The purpose in conducting this research is to help in allowing these core concepts to emerge through the grounded theory approach. Every effort was made to ensure objectivity and that the researcher's own personal biases did not in any way shape the data collected or the interpretation of the theories (Creswell, 2013).

Utilizing a grounded theory approach, research was conducted on all four high school campuses to ensure maximum variance. The interviews were with members of the leadership, faculty, staff, alumnae faculty including Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. In order to avoid any concerns regarding conducting research in the researcher's own organization (Creswell, 2013), interviews at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace were only conducted with retired faculty members. The researcher also employed multiple strategies of validity, to allow for confidence in findings.

The researcher's preexisting relationship with each of these institutions also

allowed for ease of entry and access to faculty and staff members, the natural setting and documents for review (Cho & Lee, 2014). It also allowed for a level of trust among the participants.

Data Sources

The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph all share a common lineage from Le Puy en Velay, France (see appendix E). Upon their arrival to the United States in 1836, at Carondelet, Missouri, these sisters then moved across the United States. Today, there are sixteen distinct congregations of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, from that initial gathering of sisters, now has five separate Provincial Offices - St. Louis (est. 1836), St. Paul (est. 1851), Albany (est. 1858), and Los Angeles (est. 1870) - and Vice Provinces in Hawaii (est. 1938) and Peru (est. 1962). This research study will specifically be looking at the four secondary schools in the Los Angeles Province, of the congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

The table below provides a snapshot of each of the four high schools currently sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province. Each of the four high schools actively participate in the CSJ, Los Angeles Province and collectively meet quarterly to discuss issues of leadership, curriculum, and charism.

Table 1

Schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Schools	Academy of Our Lady of Peace	Carondelet High School	St. Mary's Academy	St. Joseph's High School
Year Established	1882	1965	1889	1964
Lay Administration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Location	San Diego	Concord	Los Angeles	Los Angeles
CSJ on Staff	No	Yes	Yes	No
Single-Gender	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Diversity of Student Body	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Sponsored by CSJ	Independent, CSJ Sponsored	Independent, CSJ Sponsored	Independent, CSJ Sponsored	Diocesan, Philosophically CSJ Sponsored
Students on Tuition Assistance	40%	24%	92%	30%
Number of Students (approximate)	750	800	260	580

Within each school, purposeful sampling was utilized to identify individuals whose experiences helped the researcher explore in more depth the organizational

culture. Informal, semi-structured interviews were the primary tool for data gathering including both individual interviews and small group interviews (see Appendix A). The researcher also incorporated applicable observations, and reviewed historical documents or archives as was made available while on site.

As both Glaser and Strauss (2012), and Strauss and Corbin (2015) discuss, the theoretical sampling of interviewees during grounded theory research emerges alongside the research process. Rather than being a predetermined set of data collections, the identification of future participants emerged from the analysis of data sets, code analysis and specified concepts. As often as possible, when converging data was presented, additional interviewees were selected to help build upon possible conceptual corollaries. In theoretical sampling, “you choose the next people to talk to or the next cases to find based upon the analysis and you don’t waste your time with all sorts of things that have nothing to do with your developing theory” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 101).

The researcher utilized purposeful sampling to identify individuals with experiences that would give depth to the research. At each site, initial informal semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted with members of the faculty and staff, and when possible, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Group interviews were conducted as often as possible to allow for rich conversations. Only two of the twenty interviews with lay faculty or staff were conducted separately. Retired Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet were also interviewed to understand their experiences. Those Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, who were retired and no longer serving in any of

the schools, were each interviewed individually at Carondelet Center in Los Angeles. Specifically at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, the researcher only interviewed retired employees to eliminate any potential bias with her position of authority as the Head of School. That particular interview occurred off campus at a location requested by the interviewee.

Methods of Data Collection

Data were collected through face-to-face, semi-structured individual and group interviews on the high school campuses. Interviews with retired Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet occurred at Carondelet Center in Los Angeles. Interviews took place on the high school campuses, to allow the researcher to seek to understand the core concepts while simultaneously observing the individuals on the school grounds (Khan, 2014). The face-to-face, also allowed the researcher to examine body language, inflection, passion, and welcome divergent thinking on the subject as it appeared (Creswell, 2013). These semi-structured interviews all started with a common set of questions, but then moved to other topics as the interview emerged (see Appendix A).

Interview questions were grouped into three different categories: (a) background/ demographic information; (b) personal learning and experiences with the Sisters of St. Joseph; (c) personal perceptions on the spirit of the sisters and the overall school culture.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher utilized the first interview conducted as a pilot test to ensure the validity of the interview questions. All interview questions were used in the initial first

interview. During this initial interview, the researcher assessed the question validity and the participants understanding of the questions. No changes were be made to questions based on this initial interview. The questions provided a framework for the remainder of the semi-structured interviews. In each of the interviews additional questions were utilized based on the flow of the conversation and do provide clarity to topics discussed.

All interviews were in person, and as much as possible, conducted on the school site itself. One of the interviews with a retired lay faculty member was conducted off school grounds at the request of the individual. These interviews were conducted in participant's offices, conference room, or a classroom, to allow for privacy and confidentiality. Twenty different interviews were conducted, with each interview lasting on average around an hour. Some of the interviews were closer to two hours, and other interviews were only around thirty minutes. Interviews were all either individually or in small groups. This was dependent upon the individual preferences of the interviewee. A follow-up interview did take place with two individuals to affirm what the researcher had heard them say and recorded.

All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder, GarageBand, on the researcher's personal computer, or using voice recorder on the researcher's iphone. Each interview was then transcribed using qualitative research tool, HyperTranscribe. Each recording was protected on the researcher's computer or iphone using passwords to ensure confidentiality.

Due to the length and number of the interviews, the researcher did utilize a transcriber for three of the interviews. The transcriber was trained in ensuring

confidentiality of all audio recordings. All documents were password protected to ensure the security of the audio recordings. Transcription was done under the supervision of the researcher.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

As originally proposed by Glaser and Strauss (2012), data gathering and data analysis are both parallel actions in grounded theory. Throughout the data gathering process, data was then coded and concepts categorized (Cho & Lee, 2014). It is through the coding of the data that the theories begin to emerge. In 1990, researchers Corbin and Strauss developed a three-tiered system of coding: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Then in 2006, Charmaz similarly proposed three systems of coding: initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding. For this research, the researcher utilized Charmaz's (2006) approach to grounded theory research analysis.

Open coding is the first step in the analysis process. It is "the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically" (Strauss & Corbin, 2015, p. 12). This initial phase focused on comparative elements of the data collected, searching for similarities and differences, and beginning to identify groupings of data pieces (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Both Strauss and Corbin (2015), and Charmaz (2006), have a similar initial step. Throughout this first step, data was also analyzed using the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 2012). This analytical process required the researcher to compare sections of the interview to elements within the same interview, and one interview to another. The recursive process of analysis allowed

for concepts to be revealed early on in the research.

Charmaz (2006), on the other hand, believes that the second step of focused coding, re-examines the initial data sets to then begin to further focus categorization. Moving beyond the open coding step of analyzing “word-by-word, line-by-line and incident-by-incident”, the second level of analysis moved the researcher to systematic and synthesized coding to categorize data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). The focus on categorization through the analytical process allowed the researcher to ensure their deep understanding of the data. Through categorization, the researcher was able to “explicate ideas, events, or process in your data...a category may subsume common themes and patterns in several codes” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 91).

It is then in the final step of theoretical coding that Charmaz believes the theories emerge through the relationships in the categories. To document the analysis process, qualitative analysis software was used. *HyperResearch* allowed for documentation of the process and examination of the analysis. The researcher also utilized a member check (Creswell, 2013), through the role of Sister Jill Napier, also a member of the dissertation committee, to confirm the researcher’s interpretation throughout the research.

Study Validity

In qualitative research, study validity occurs through the rigorous process employed by the researcher to analyze the data (Creswell, 2013). Utilizing the specific procedures, as documented above in the data analysis, the researcher ensured that they employed appropriate processes to handle, code and ultimately analyze the data.

Creswell further asserts that validity in qualitative research is achieved through the researcher's abilities to create trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility (Creswell, 2013).

Further study validity was achieved through the triangulation of data throughout the three step coding process, rich and thick descriptions in the data sets, clarifying bias, exposing discrepant information or contradictory information, and peer debriefing (Creswell, 2013). The detailed data collection narratives collected by the researcher, and stored in a qualitative analysis tool, *HyperResearch*, allowed for the utmost transparency in the data gathering process (Creswell, 2013).

As a member of the dissertation committee is also a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet, her personal expertise in the field was leveraged to help ensure that the interview data and subsequent coding process resonated with the CSJ charism. Her involvement with the interpretation process served as another form of study validity as described by Creswell (2013). Sr. Jill Napier was brought in following the initial interviews and preliminary coding, throughout the analysis process, and to review the final seven themes that emerged.

Human Subjects Considerations

Research met all requirements by the Human Subject Protections and Institutional Review Board (IRB) by Pepperdine University. The study qualified as exempt as it involved adult subjects and posed minimal risks to the individuals.

Although the schools are specifically named as part of the study, no individual, or the school they are from, was disclosed in the study. Generic terms are used for all

individuals to ensure privacy and the employee's confidentiality in their job environment. No interviewee is linked with site location or years of experience. All notes, transcripts, and recordings were protected and secured throughout the research process, and destroyed after publication.

Each participant was provided with an informed consent information sheet prior to inclusion within the study. All participation was voluntary and kept confidential. The participants were informed that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any fear of consequence, although none did.

Summary

Using a grounded theory approach, this study explored the characteristics of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet present in the school's culture, in order to capture and promulgate core concepts that can then guide future generations of lay leaders.

Chapter Four: Study Results

For over 365 years, the Sisters of St. Joseph have devoted their lives to work in ministry to God and the dear neighbor. Their commitment to serving the dear neighbor without distinction has led them into acts of mercy across a spectrum of social service areas. In the area of education, they have sponsored thousands of schools across our nation and touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of students. One would be willing to say that these tenacious pioneers have been responsible for growing a community of faith far beyond their intimate religious community.

As the numbers of Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province continue to see the similar decline as the broader orders across the United States, there is an imminent cry among the congregation, and those involved in the ministries, to preserve the history and culture of the CSJ charism. There is equally a desire to go deeper in the spiritual learning rather than just the ascertaining of historical facts and timelines. This in no way diminishes the powerful role the stories play in understanding these fearless leaders, but rather there is an ardent thirst for a knowing of how they draw closer to the gospel teachings and in turn, uniquely live that out.

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to explore the experiences of lay administration, faculty and Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who have worked within the four sponsored secondary schools, to identify core concepts used to describe how the charism is lived out through the culture.

Over the course of three months, the researcher engaged in fieldwork on each of the four high school campuses sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet,

and interviewed Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet at the motherhouse, Carondelet Center, in Los Angeles. The scope of the fieldwork enabled the researcher to engage in one-on-one and group interviews with 20 individuals, to grasp a thorough understanding of how the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet is lived out across the school campuses. Creswell, Charmaz and other methodologists speak to a culminating point of saturation, which indicates that the researcher has found the essence of the study (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2013). Following countless hours of a recursive process of interviews, transcription, coding, and analysis, that feeling of saturation was attained.

The following chapter presents the data collected throughout the study, the analysis, and core concepts that emerged. Utilizing a grounded theory approach to research, each of the interviews was recorded, transcribed and carefully coded utilizing the words from the interviewees themselves. Through the original set of five interviews, 134 codes emerged. Those initial codes were then analyzed in a secondary process called focus coding (Charmaz, 2006), to then arrive at the theoretical coding. Those theories are presented throughout the remainder of the chapter.

Restatement of the Research Questions

In order to gain an understanding of how the spirit of the sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet continues in the secondary schools today, the following research questions were utilized:

1. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet reflected in the organizational culture of the CSJ secondary schools?

- a. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet perceived and made manifest to others by lay leadership in the sponsored CSJ secondary schools?
- b. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet perceived and made manifest to others by alumnae faculty and staff in the sponsored CSJ secondary schools?

The core concepts and themes that emerge relate directly to the research questions noted above and are further supported by the literature review.

Description of the Data Gathering Process

Interview data gathering process. There are currently four schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Representatives from each of the four schools were interviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the spirit of the sisters was being lived out in the school culture. There were additional interviews conducted with retired Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who had previously taught in elementary, high school or University level schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

An email was sent to the secondary school liaison from the Provincial Leadership Team to request permission to conduct research on the four campuses sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (see Appendix B). Upon approval, the researcher called each of the Principals at the three secondary schools to coordinate an appropriate time to interview members of the faculty and administration. In partnership with the school site Principal, several members of the current faculty and administration

were identified based on years of experience and interest in participation in the study. Additionally, these individuals had sufficient knowledge of experience with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet to add to the research.

The researcher spent six weeks conducting in person interviews and site visits. All of the interviews were recorded using a recording device application, GarageBand, on the researcher's computer, or voice recorder on the researcher's cell phone. The researcher took notes during each of the interviews to identify key words or phrases that emerged from the interviewee's experiences (Creswell, 2013). Following the individual and group interviews, each was transcribed, and then coded. The field notes were then used during the coding and analysis process to aid the researcher in recalling important components of the interview.

Description of the interview sites. The Academy of Our Lady of Peace is located in San Diego, California, and was the first school in California founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in 1882. For the past three years, the school has been completely run by a team of lay administration and no longer has any CSJ on staff. From its inception until today, it remains a single-gender all girls school with 750 students across 9-12 grades. It is a diverse student body with 40% of families being Hispanic/Latina, 40% European American/Caucasian, 12% Multi-Racial, 7% Asian, and less than 1% indicating African American or Native American. Approximately 42% of the student body receives tuition assistance and 95% self-identify as Catholic.

St. Mary's Academy in Inglewood, California, is the oldest Catholic high school in Los Angeles County, and has been educating young women for over 125 years.

Founded in 1889, the school is now located in its third school site, and has continuously had a presence of CSJ sisters in leadership, faculty and staff positions. There are currently three CSJ sisters on staff, and several more who volunteer to help serve the school in a variety of capacities. With approximately 300 students, St. Mary's Academy celebrates a diverse population of students with 46% of the school's families being African American, 33% are Hispanic and 18% are Multicultural. Like the other CSJ High Schools, 100% of SMA graduates consistently go on to college following graduation. Currently, 51% of the students report being Catholic and over 92% receive tuition assistance.

St. Joseph High School in Lakewood, California, was founded in 1964 and has had a lay leader as Principal for more than twenty years. Currently there is one CSJ sister who serves on staff. The school has approximately 580 students across 9 – 12 grades with 30% receiving tuition assistance, and 90% reporting that they are Catholic. The school boasts a diverse student body with 49% indicating Hispanic/Latino, 18% White/Caucasian, 16% Multiracial, 9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 7% Filipino, and 1% Native American. Distinct of St. Joseph High School, versus the other three, is its Archdiocesan Affiliation. From its inception, St. Joseph High School has always been an Archdiocesan School. The school, since opening in 1964, was staffed by Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, who were in positions of leadership and on the faculty. In the 1990's, the school requested a philosophical sponsorship by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, which they were successfully granted. This allows the school to remain an Archdiocesan campus, philosophically sponsored with the charism of the Sisters of St.

Joseph of Carondelet. There is a passion shared among all of the schools' leadership to preserve the charism.

Celebrating its 50th Anniversary, Carondelet High School is located in Concord and was founded in 1965. It has a student body of approximately 810 young women across grades 9 – 12. The student body is composed of 59% Caucasian, 14% Hispanic/Latina, 12% Multi-Racial, 6% Filipina, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander and 4% African American. Until three years ago, the school was led by a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet and employed at least two more as part of the full-time faculty and staff. Currently there are two CSJ sisters on staff serving in support positions. Two more remain living on campus as retired sisters. Approximately 25% of the students receive financial assistance from the school in order to attend, and 89% of the students report being Catholic.

Interviewee overview. Over the course of six weeks, twenty different interviews were conducted with members of the faculty, administration, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and retired faculty. Each interview was conducted face-to-face in either an individual setting, or a group interview. Participants were provided information on informed consent, and all expressed excitement at participating in the study. The chart below shows the breakdown of years of service and role of each interviewee:

Table 2

Characteristics of Interviewees

Participants	1-5 years	6-10 years	20+ years
CSJ Sisters Active in Schools	1	1	4
CSJ Sisters, Retired			4
Lay Administration	3		2
Lay Teacher		2	2
Lay Teacher, Retired			1
Percentage per Category	20%	15%	65%

In considering purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013), there was an emphasis placed on interviewing those with an extensive number of years within the school across a variety of different positions. Sixty-five percent of the twenty interviewed have twenty or more years of experience within education. The remaining thirty-five percent of the interviewees represent between 1 – 10 years of experience. As each of these four schools are single-gender all girls', only two of the individuals surveyed, or 10 percent were male. The remaining 90% of the interviewees were female.

Data Analysis Process – A Grounded Theory Approach

Grounded theory was first developed in the late 1960's by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Charmaz, 2006). This qualitative methodology allows for a rich data set based on participants' experiences, when relatively no theory or other phenomenological research exists. Grounded theory, focuses on a positivist, inquiry

driven approach to research. Focusing on the data to then derive at theories, this particular qualitative data analysis utilizes an “iterative, or recursive” approach (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 220). Qualitative methodology using grounded theory focuses on deciphering participants’ perceptions in a natural setting, resulting in an approach of conceptual thinking and theory building (Cho & Lee, 2014). As originally proposed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, data gathering and data analysis are both parallel actions in grounded theory. Throughout the data gathering process, data are then coded and concepts are then categorized (Cho & Lee, 2014). It is through the coding of the data that the theories begin to emerge. For this research, the researcher utilized Charmaz’s proposed three systems of coding: initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding.

The initial phase focuses on comparative elements of the data collected, searching for similarities and differences, and beginning to identify groupings of data pieces (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). The second step of focused coding, re-examines the initial data sets and then begins to further focus categorization. Moving beyond the open coding step of analyzing “word-by-word, line-by-line and incident-by-incident”, the second level of analysis moves the researcher to systematic and synthesized coding to categorize data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). In the final step of theoretical coding the theories emerge through the relationships in the categories.

To document the analysis process, qualitative analysis software, *HyperResearch*, was used to allow for documentation and examination of the analysis. In order to ensure study validity, the researcher also conferred with a member of her dissertation committee, Sister Jill Napier CSJ, to confirm her interpretation throughout the research.

(Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the researcher also utilized a member check, sharing emerging themes with several of the interviewees to affirm their experiences had been accurately captured.

Emergence of Core Concepts

The main research question for this study was: How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet reflected in the organizational culture of the CSJ secondary schools? The answers to this question are reflected in the seven core concepts that emerged. These themes directly speak to the inherent values and unique gospel message by which the Sisters of St. Joseph look to share their gifts with the world.

The secondary research questions looked to see the perceived experiences of lay leadership, alumnae faculty and staff. In conducting the interviews of twenty individuals, each echoed these seven themes that supported the overarching research question. Among the interviewees themselves, there was clear reinforcement of these seven themes.

Regardless of the campus on which the researcher interviewed, the individuals spoken to, or their years of service, there was a resounding chant of these seven areas:

1. A CSJ school consistently incorporates the gospel values into all aspects of the school community.
2. A CSJ school seeks out opportunities to model service to the dear neighbor in how faculty, staff and students serve one another, and in turn impact the broader community.
3. A CSJ school serves a diverse population of students and intentionally

creates a culture of unity and support, and a sense of belonging, to cultivate a community of acceptance, love and sisterhood.

4. A CSJ school's culture fosters an environment of excellence through the intentional actions of teachers and leaders to be capacity builders, assisting all young women to become all of "which woman is capable".
5. A CSJ school recognizes the essential role that leadership plays in fostering a gospel-driven, nurturing environment, evidenced in the faculty, staff and sisters as models.
6. A CSJ school is marked by a spirit of joy and fun that is tangibly felt among the students, the faculty and staff, and throughout the entire school community.
7. A CSJ school recognizes the challenges with living out the gospel values and being called to building a spirit of unity and love.

Each individual's experiences and background informed the words they used to illuminate their unique perspective. Therefore, the recursive analytical process became imperative in deciphering individuals' nuanced word choice, but similar meanings.

Entering this process, the researcher was challenged to consider her own personal assumptions that would influence that which she anticipated to hear or not hear. Prior to beginning the fieldwork, the researcher spent time journaling about those in her field notebook. The researcher's personal three-year journey as a leader at one of the four secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet allowed her to experience many of the aspects of the CJS charism. Furthermore, having

served as a leader at another school with a strong sponsored charism and intentionality in using a vernacular to describe the charism, the researcher felt comfortable in looking at and hearing signs of how the charism is lived out. Although the following themes represent familiar core concepts, others emerged from the data in new and compelling ways.

Gospel values. A CSJ school consistently incorporates the gospel values into all aspects of the school community (reference to the first theme).

As Catholic schools, sponsored in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, each and every interview drew upon the element of faith as an integral part of the school culture. In the *Eucharistic Letter* (1660), Father Medaille writes of the total double union that is the “end of our totally selfless Congregation” (O’Toole, 2014, p. 27). He goes on to explain that “It is wholly directed toward the achievement of this total double union: of ourselves and the dear neighbor with God, of ourselves with all others, whoever they may be, of all others, among themselves and with us, but all in Jesus and in God his Father” (O’Toole, 2012, p.27). Father Medaille wished of all Sisters of St. Joseph that in their works of mercy and service, that they would grow in their relationship with the Lord.

This particular core concept saw many unique words emerge to clarify how individuals experienced this as part of the school culture. Although the most prominent were in living out the legacy or carrying on the mission, other individuals described it as the spirit that existed within the school culture. A number of interviewees all expressed difficulty in putting words to that element of faith that is seamlessly woven into

everything that they do, and all that defines a CSJ school.

Many wrestled with using the words that have become part of the defined charism in more recent years. Things such as Mother St. John Fontbonne’s words, women of heart, women of faith, women of courage, were also referenced, as well as the sense of shared ownership to ensure that the gospel message is lived out.

The table below provides an overview of the ways in which interviewees described how they saw the school’s culture infused with the gospel values. One particular interviewee shared the work that they collectively devote their lives to can be boiled down to the following: “It’s just us living the Gospel message every single day . . . And I think we’re trying the best we possibly can to really communicate that” (Participant A).

Table 3

Codes Used to Describe Gospel Values

Gospel Values

Legacy (10)	Contemplatives in action (2)	Prayerfulness (2)
Carrying on the Mission (7)	Conscientious about the	Mother St. John Fontbonne
Spirit (7)	Charism(2)	(1)
Reconciliation and	Faith (2)	Faith Trust Believing (1)
Forgiveness (5)	Shared Ownership (2)	Responsibility for it (1)
Charism (4)	Women of Heart Faith	Live the story (1)
Alive here (3)	Courage (2)	Touches their heart (1)

God (3)	Intentionality in Continuing	School is the bridge (1)
Vernacular (3)	the Spirit (2)	Hope (1)
Living the Gospel Message	Ministry (2)	Fell in love with the Charism
(3)	Intentional Training	(1)
	Vernacular (2)	

Each Catholic school finds its own mechanisms for living out the gospel message. Within each of the four CSJ schools, there was a commitment to actively being love and compassion to others. Words such as “intentionality”, and “conscientious” were utilized in describing this legacy. Another interviewee described the experiences of seeing the gospel values lived as follows:

Besides saying that we make the invisible God visible; the whole mystery of the incarnation is about how God makes himself and herself visible in the world. So there’s nothing outside of that. It could happen in the classroom, it could happen in the chapel, it could happen in the gym, it could happen during your correction, during a negative experience, because every moment is sacramental! (Participant C)

That experience resulted in the entire group nodding their heads in agreement, with others tearing up. When asked why that statement moved them, they shared that it had triggered a memory of their own experience with seeing God in their work at the school and with the girls.

At the end of another group interview, one of the interviewee’s returned to this question of the tangible ways that the spirit of the sisters continues in the culture of the school. Throughout the interview I could tell that she wanted to put words to it, but had struggled to do so. By the end, she couldn’t leave without saying the following:

And I'm thinking of an idea that basically based upon what we do here, we try to build right relationship, we try to respect each other. And living out the gospel value, you're talking about the idea of what does it look like. And, you know, that is so hard to do because if a place is really, truly living the Gospel values ... people are going to be happy, respected, loved. All of the things that we're talking about. (Participant B)

Each experience shared validated that this is how the legacy, the spirit, the mission of these tremendous CSJ women live on in our secondary schools. For many it is felt, experienced, in the halls, in the walls, and the very fiber of the campus. As one remarked, "I don't know what I think it is, it's that intangible that you just can't label. It's a spirit. How do you capture a spirit, a feeling? It's hard to do" (Participant F). It is what brings alumnae back, and keeps women connected well into the latter stages of life. It is also what breathes life into the next core concept of how each and every individual expressed this intentional desire, on each campus, to care for the other.

Service to the dear neighbor. A CSJ schools seeks out opportunities to model service to the dear neighbor in how faculty, staff and students serve one another, and in turn impact the broader community (reference to the second theme).

Dating back to the primary documents of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Le Puy, France, we see the clear articulation by Father Jean-Pierre Medaille that the second most ardent goal of a Sisters of St. Joseph was to be that example of St. Joseph for the world. In the Primitive Constitutions, in the opening section, Father Medaille writes, "This group will be called the Congregation of St. Joseph, a cherished name which will remind the Sisters to assist and serve their dear neighbor with the same care, loving attention, charity and cordiality that the glorious Saint Joseph had in serving the Holy Virgin, his most pure spouse, and the Savior, Jesus, his foster-son" (Medaille, 1650, p.

2). Further in the constitutions, as Father Medaille (1650) references the means for guiding this congregation he explains, “the Congregation aspires to provide for all spiritual and temporal needs of the beloved neighbor” (p. 5). He goes on just a bit further to reinforce again that after its primary goal to unite others with God and themselves with God, is to “practice all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy of which woman is capable and which will most benefit the souls of our dear neighbor” (Medaille, 1650, p. 5).

Following the lengthy research commissioned by the United States Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Consensus Statement of the Founder’s Central Ideas was then written in the summer of 1969. The Consensus Statement (originally written in 1969) reinforces the principles addressed in the constitutions: “Stimulated by the Holy Spirit of love and receptive to his inspirations, the Sister of St. Joseph moves always towards profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction . . .” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 79).

Undeniably, all interviewees corroborated that this is a core concept of what is alive and thriving in all of the secondary school campuses of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. In the report commissioned in 1995 by Kathryn Miller entitled “Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium: Mission and Image”, this particular theme resonated with their fifth ranked category of “Making a difference in the local and world community” (p.8).

This particular core concept was described as both alive among the students, in their relationships with one another, and with the students and the broader community.

In one of the group interviews, a discussion ensued how each interviewee collectively saw the spirit of the Sisters lived out amongst the girls through their service to one another. The conversation began with a discussion about the CSJ, in having an “orientation to service in serving others, thinking outside of oneself” (Participant Q). Upon further reflection, the individual went on to share,

I think that is where the charism is ever present. Because I’ve been in other schools that had strong community service components that were mission oriented but that underlying service ...not I’m going to go work in the soup kitchens, but just how the components of thinking of others is important. (Participant Q)

There was a collective sense among all interviewees that this manifestation of the charism went deeper than just a requirement to serve.

One interviewee shared a story of how they see authentically the students cultivating a sense of service to others in a club that they started called “Sisters helping Sisters” (Participant P). Members of this club provide care from one girl to another when they are experiencing a challenging situation, a sick parent, a divorce, etc. The interviewee shared that “It’s not coming from the administration; it’s not coming from the parents. It’s the girls saying ‘hey we see a need, how can we fill it’” (Participant O). This individual, both an alumnae and a CSJ associate, shared that she personally sees this aspect of the spirit of the sisters lived out “in so many different places, which is really what the Sisters were doing when they first started. Is looking at the community, identifying the need and being the best servant for that” (Participant O).

This theme also came up in relationship between colleagues. At one point in an interview, one of the administrators pointed to her colleague saying, “there is an example of humility and charity” (Participant A). She went on to describe how this

colleague had been there to support and care for her through some very challenging periods. “We’re just trying to help other people be good,” she shared, “treat all people with respect and along the way we will also become better for it” (Participant A). Others described it further as this humanness, of one caring for the other: “teachers become acquainted with the human person. Not just the content but the humanity of the person becomes essential” (Participant C).

This theme was also particularly strong for interviewees in reflecting upon the alumnae of CSJ schools. In considering these graduates, there was a clear sense that these are women who have been molded by the spirit of the sisters and carried that into their lives well beyond their time in school. One shared,

When you go to reunions and you talk to them or follow them on Facebook you see just how much they’re doing in their own communities, working with people who are needy . . . Corporate attorneys who are doing pro bono work in immigration. . . We want them to go out and make a difference, and they are in their own little community. (Participant F)

Another individual put in more plainly that in considering the students whom they had taught, that when you look at them “having done something good with their lives because of what we taught them” (Participant G), that is the spirit of the CSJ alive in them.

Similar to each of the other core themes, many different words were used to help describe how individuals saw this alive on the campus. The graphic below was created using a wordle software tool to help leverage the frequency of words by taking up more visual space. This is considered a supplemental qualitative research tool to demonstrate visually the words (McNaught & Lam, 2010).



Figure 1. Wordle showing words used to describe service to the dear neighbor

As Figure one depicts, service (13), humanness (6), help others (5) and the dear neighbor (5) were words most frequently used to describe how interviewees saw this aspect of the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph alive in the school culture. Charity and humility were also used, but only once.

In addition to the interviewees, my time on each campus also pointed to visual indicators of this charism. In one school they framed it as the “DNA of SMA”: the DNA standing for the “Dear Neighbor in Action” (Participant E). The board was filled with pictures of how students were caring for the dear neighbor in their community. At another school a wall was filled with the pictures of students reflecting on how they have personally been touched by a particular service project. At yet another school, a small group of senior students were gathered in a room with an adult leader participating in a theological reflection on their four years of service.

Ultimately, compassion for others and a desire to care and serve those in the

community, internally and externally, is equally a part of living out the gospel message, being a catholic school, and being inspired by the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Being intentional about service to others is a quintessential way that the charism is made manifest on each of the school campuses. There certainly is, as one interviewee shared, “a rich history of service to the dear neighbor” (Participant G). And as another explained, the dear neighbor “is someone who is valued . . . That’s how we serve one another, out of respect for that person” (Participant B).

Unity. A CSJ school serves a diverse population of students and intentionally creates a culture of unity and support, and a sense of belonging, to cultivate a community of acceptance, love and sisterhood (reference to the third theme).

There are a plethora of references throughout the primary source documents of the Sisters of St. Joseph, to more current writings following the Second Vatican Council, on the importance of building unity. That unity is always within the context of drawing individually closer to God, and to others, and others with God. In looking at the *Maxims of Perfection* part two, chapter 3, Father Medaille writes “I desire to unite my life to your life, my thoughts to your thoughts, my affections to your affections, my heart to your heart, my works to your works, my whole self to yourself” (O’Toole, 2012, p. 51). This text directly mirrors the Gospel text where Jesus prays for all believers “that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:21 NKVJ Bible). The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet state that their mission is “to continue the mission of Jesus,” citing alongside the verse from John 17:21 (Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Los Angeles

Province, n.d., para. 1).

From the *Primitive Constitutions*, Father Medaille writes “In honor of God the Holy Spirit who is all love, they should so live that their Congregation may bear the name of the Congregation of the great love of God; and that in all things and everywhere they make profession of the greatest love in daily practice” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 12). Many congregations of the Sisters of St. Joseph state that their charism is simply put, unifying love.

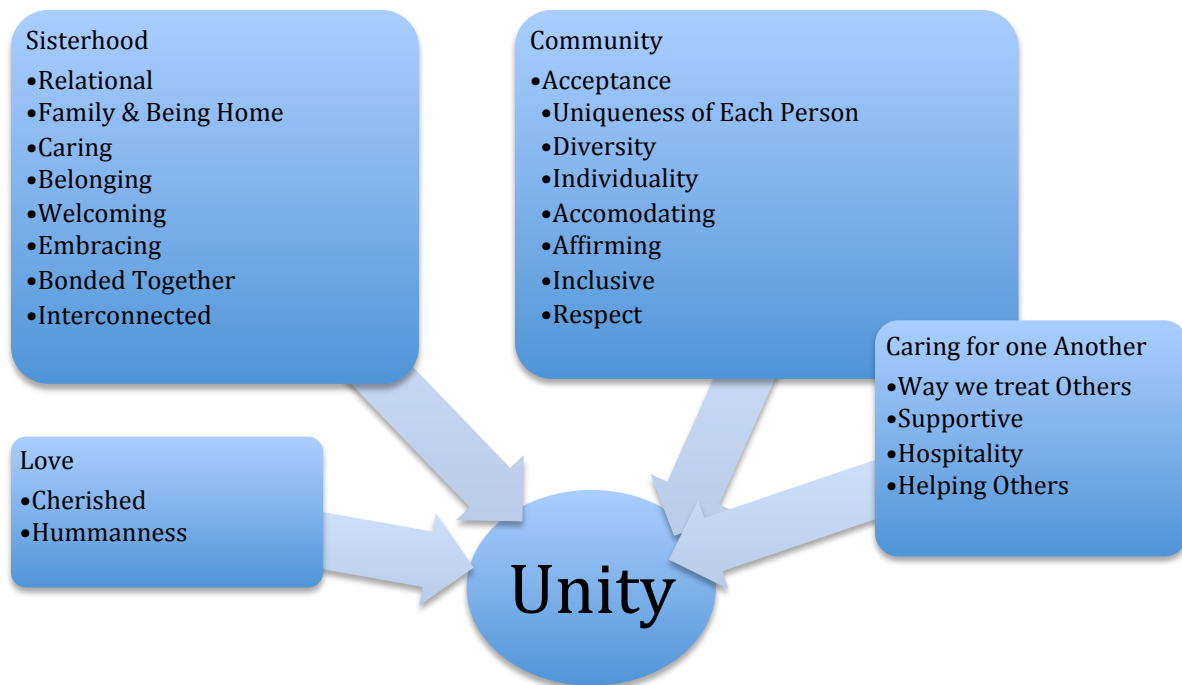


Figure 2. Sub-groupings within the broader theme of unity

This particular core concept emerged early on in the process. Participants described the spirit amongst the girls and their colleagues as relational, with students supporting each other creating a sense of community and unity. Each shared their personal journeys of how they became connected with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and their experiences with the CSJ legacy and spirit.

The words used were many, but there was no denying the feeling of community, unity, acceptance and ultimately the sisterhood. In the chart above, four different groupings emerged within the broader category of unity. The two most prominent of the four were this sense of community alongside the feeling of sisterhood, or being home.

As one interviewee attempted to put words to the feelings she had experienced, she shared “I guess that’s the word, you felt welcome, you felt like they wanted you here” (Participant T). In expressing this sense of belonging, another described it as “you come in, you’re part of the family, you’re hungry, here sit down, have lunch, have a drink, have whatever, and that was that sense of just embracing us always” (Participant F).

That sense of belonging, being home, being welcomed embraced or cared for, all describes how the interviewees expressed this manifestation of the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In discussing this further with another sister, she shared that the “charism is in our DNA. When we feel at home, this sense of belonging, it is because we recognize something in someone else that we already acknowledge in ourselves” (Participant R). Unequivocally, that sense of belonging is what attracts many to the spirit they feel on the school campus.

In three of the four schools, students receive class ties or colors to unify them with their class members and in turn the broader campus community: “becoming part of the ...greater community” (Participant E). Stories from interviewees indicated that those bonds formed among classmates, and the broader school community, also extends when girls come across alumnae from their alma mater. One shared how when they

were on a field trip with students, “the gal that came to the door to greet us . . . she looked at them and she said ‘I was a green tie!’ and immediately there was that bonding, you know. Yeah, they recognize each other” (Participant B).

Another clear area that emerged was the inclusiveness in each of the schools. There was an acknowledgement that students on each campus embrace diversity. This sense of inclusion runs deeper than the ethnic or religious diversity which is clearly prominent in the schoolwide statistics. That diversity of individuals, diversity of thought, background, ethnicity, identity, or even religious differences, are embraced and accepted. This was echoed consistently throughout the interviews.

In one particular interview, a retired CSJ, who is now over 90 years old, shared her story of how she saw even in the 1960’s the students’ acceptance of others, regardless of their differences. She shared,

Part of my teaching was during the terrible black uprising. A large university, Washington University, was right across the street from Fontbonne. It had a large black enrollment. Our kids used to you know, engage with them . . . they dated them, played with them, and so on. As things got rougher, the blacks sort of became obstreperous. When I look back on it now and see our charism. I saw it in the residents. I was dean of residents too. I saw in our resident students their ability to work with the black students. I saw their loyalty and faithfulness. (Participant I)

This story for me was juxtaposed with a contemporary example of how a current administrator at one of our secondary schools sees this day by day on her campus. She shared a particular story of when

A girl came in and said ‘I think God is here do you know that?’ I said, ‘I do, but tell me why you know it and how you know it.’ It had to do with how the girls treat each other. I go that’s what Jesus said, ‘you’ll know that I’m here if you love one another’ . . . I do think there’s a sense of it. (Participant C)

Others in the group interview went on to say that they have seen through the girls that “they feel like they belong to a community, a community that cares for them. And also a community that has hopes for them” (Participant A). For some of the exceedingly low income students, that feeling of being cared for was unique in their educational experience, but one that was experienced as soon as they came on the campus.

There was also an acknowledgement that the populations of students that are being served today in 2016 are a reflection of the climate of the day: “the girls are different, culture, I mean it’s a different civilization now. But there was the same spirit” (Participant G). Regardless of the passing of time and the shifts in demographics there was an emphatic stance that the charism has clearly influenced “this generation of students, so tolerant of anything that’s different . . . it’s part of who they are” (Participant F). Another explained that they see “wonderful relationships” between students, and a sense of safety and security, which emerges. The “girls really do care about each other” (Participant M).

In describing one of the recent assemblies on the campus, the interviewees explained that it was so clear from the students’ support of one another that “it didn’t matter who you were, what color you were, sex didn’t matter” (Participant F), each and every student felt connected to the larger, broader community. Even more so, they felt accepted, even in their uniqueness. Just walking on the campus, there was a palpable sense that you were entering “centers of hospitality” (Participant M), that were “caring” (Participant N).

Many explained that when students visit the school for the first time they

immediately feel this sense of unity. One individual explained it as “there’s something that they see that we probably take for granted, but there’s something that they see in terms of the sisterhood, the unity or whatever, that makes them decide that’s the school I want to go to” (Participant R).

One of the CSJ sisters still working in one of the secondary schools shared how she saw the corollary with the New Testament writings in Acts. She explained,

It makes me think of the Acts of the Apostles and in the Acts of the Apostles they shared everything, they loved one another, there was a sense of community . . . That’s what I think this is. You know, we don’t say, nowhere in the Acts of the Apostles was it perfect. It was they shared and they had and they loved one another and it was obvious . . . I think that’s what the girls say to me about why they like it. . . There’s something here that connects that touches their heart. (Participant C)

In this particular core concept, interviewees explained that this sense of unity is the pull that keeps the leaders remaining in CSJ sponsored schools. It is also the feeling that attracted young women to join the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Regardless of the words one uses, that sense of community, belonging, acceptance, of sisterhood is strongly felt.

Capacity building. A CSJ school’s culture fosters an environment of excellence through the intentional actions of teachers and leaders to be capacity builders, assisting all young women to become all of which woman is capable (reference to the fourth theme).

Each of the secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet create a culture in which their graduates are helped to reach extraordinary levels of academic success to prepare them for the next chapter in their lives. All of the campuses herald their commitment to preparing students for collegiate and life success.

This next theme that arose, capacity building, finds similar connections back to the original foundational documents of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Father Medaille, in the Primitive Constitutions writes that the Sisters of St. Joseph would be committed to “the practice of all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy of which woman is capable and which will most benefit the dear neighbor” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 5). The italicized portion in the quote above has become synonymous with a pursuit of excellence, and is reflected in school’s mission statements, philosophy statements, Integral Student Outcome’s or Expected Schoolwide Learning Results. Excellence is also recognized in the final section of the Consensus Statement: “... in an Ignatian-Salesian climate: that is, with an orientation toward excellence, tempered by gentleness, peace, joy” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 79).

This core concept is also echoed in the research of Kathryn Miller on the “Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium: Mission and Image”, in the fourth characteristic of colleges sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph “Striving for excellence in all endeavors” (Miller, 1995, p. 8).

For the interviewee’s the words they used to describe this were varied as many a story was marked with their own experiences of how the CSJ sisters helped them achieve so much. One interviewee just said simply, “I would say that CSJ schools are capacity builders” (Participant G).

The wordle chart in figure three shows the different words used by interviewees relating to this particular core concept. As was cited earlier, the use of a wordle is

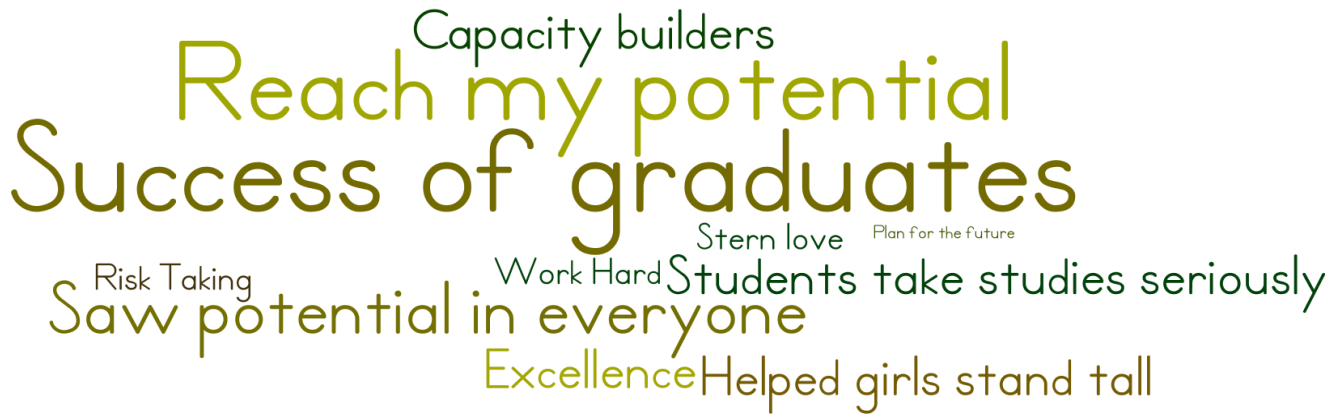


Figure 3: Wordle showing words used to describe the theme of capacity builders

considered a supplemental qualitative research tool to demonstrate visually the words most frequently used (McNaught & Lam, 2010). As the graphic depicts, reach my potential (7), success of graduates (7), saw potential in everyone (4) and capacity builders and excellence (3) were words most often used by interviewees to describe how they experiences this aspect of the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph alive in the school culture. Additional descriptors such as helped girls stand tall, a stern love, risk taking, working hard, students taking studies seriously were also consistently used.

One particular administrator reflected on her own high school experiences in a CSJ school. In recalling the Sister’s leadership, she remarked that “It was always with this, I don’t know, this sense of they saw the potential in me and they saw the potential in everyone that they taught. . . .” (Participant F). Further in the interview, another administrator echoed what was said reinforcing this idea that “the teachers really do challenge them because they know that they’re capable of more” (Participant G).

One of the alumnae and current administrators was reflecting on what about the influence of the sisters has impacted her. She remarked that in addition to the students, she too was a product of the influence of the CSJ: “I think the Sisters of St. Joseph have

also helped me reach my potential . . . I don't think I ever expected to accomplish what I've accomplished . . . it's helped me reach my potential" (Participant G). In that particular group interview, they all shared that "here we let the girls know that we will all support you whichever path you go" (Participant H).

This sense of an attitude of "go for it!" certainly appears to contribute to a willingness to take risks, to reach for their potential, for girls to stand tall, plan for the future, and ultimately even exceed their own sense of capacity.

Regardless of whether it is preparing students today for college, or careers, or back into 1650 Le Puy, France, the CSJ sisters were committed to making a difference in the lives of girls and women. One Sister, in reflecting on the past and her own experiences shared, "and that's what the early Sisters did with the women who were illiterate. Taught them lace making, helped them to stand tall, that they were precious and they had something to give to the world" (Participant K).

For those Sisters of St. Joseph who had worked in several of the secondary schools sponsored by the CSJ, I frequently asked them what they saw similar in any of the four schools. At the beginning of an interview, one of the Sisters firmly stated that each was too unique to come up on the spot with the similarities. She remarked that hopefully this research would do that. However, by the end of the interview she came back to this idea of helping girls reach their potential, and shared "maybe that's an underlying theme that all schools work to educate to have young women stand tall. Because when you look at the alums from Carondelet or St. Joseph or SMA, and all the wonderful things that they're doing... that's the overall impression that I get" (Participant

B).

Teachers and sisters as models. A CSJ school recognizes the essential role that leadership plays in fostering a gospel-driven, nurturing environment, evidenced in the faculty, staff and sisters as models (reference to the fifth theme).

This relational aspect also emerged as an intentional element of leadership among the teachers and Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet that was fostered through the relationships formed within the broader student community.

Some of the CSJ sisters reflected on how the vernacular has shifted prior to the Second Vatican Council and then afterwards. One interview shared that “the culture mirrors what good leadership promotes. So, while the leadership did not talk in terms of Charism, the good neighbor, and all of those phrases that we use now, those were the kinds of things I saw” (Participant J). Table four shows the varied words and phrases used by interviewees to show how they experienced the leadership of the teachers and sisters across each of the secondary school campuses.

Table 4

Codes Used to Describe Teachers and Sisters as Models of the Charism

Teachers and Sisters as Models

Sisters care about them (6)	Models of Christ (2)
Teachers care about them (6)	Charism is present in the faculty and staff (1)
Teachers model it (4)	Faculty carries on the legacy (1)
Good listeners (4)	Leadership as Models (2)

When reflecting on the school culture, one interviewee remarked that “there’s a spirit of dearness about many of our girls and I think it comes from our faculty and staff” (Participant C). It was affirmed by many in their interviewees that the students, “they really feel strongly how much the faculty care about them and are willing to go the extra mile for them. That says volumes to them and maybe some of them have never had anybody go an extra foot for them never mind a mile” (Participant E). The role the teachers and sisters’ play strongly correlate with the sense of unity and community fostered in the school culture.

In many instances, much like the feelings of sisterhood, or how the charism moves amongst and within them, there were expressions of emotions, but hard to put clear words to. As one interviewee stated, “sometimes it’s the simplest thing, just listening, understanding and giving the right words God gives you to say” (Participant D). And, as was mentioned in the above category on helping the students reach their potential, often the sisters and teachers were plainly put, “supportive of my behavior [laughter]!” (Participant F).

Another interviewee explained that in her experiences, when kids share about their experience in school, many explain that they are happier here than they have ever been, and a huge piece of that is “how supportive the staff was” (Participant O).

For those new to a catholic school sponsored by sisters, often their first year is one filled with new experiences. One of the interviewee shared a faculty’s response during their mid-year meeting together. The individual remarked, “having a Sister be a sister, be your teacher, it’s so different but what I learned is respect for all. I feel like

there's a special light from them. It is a sweetness and gentleness and they have open arms for people...I thought about Sister Kathleen Mary when I taught about the three wise men, because she always has open hands. Always welcoming. She's always smiling. She made me feel welcome right away. . . She is a model and a mentor to girls" (Written response of a faculty member shared by Participant A).

In one interview with a current teacher, alumna and CSJ associate remarked "I'm modeling the charism for my students" (Participant O). This was similarly echoed by one of the retired faculty who shared that she learned the charism of concern for the other through the modeling of the sisters:

I remember we would have faculty meetings and sometimes we'd have coffee and who was the person who always got up with the trash can and collected the cups? Sister. And you know that always stuck with me . . . here's my Principal, she's the one getting up and coming around and picking up trash, just like Christ would. (Participant T)

She proceeded to share other stories about these leaders who stepped in to support during problems, took on the hard challenges, and ultimately, gave their life as models of the charism.

The retired sisters, who had spent many years across the various CSJ sponsored institutions, were the most articulate about the role of leadership in initiating the school culture. I noticed that among many of the school leaders actively serving in a position of authority, they reflected on others but not always on how they personally had influenced the spirit of the sisters in the school culture. One CSJ sister remarked that her own experience of being taught in a CSJ school was filled with "excellent teachers who loved us and were caring" (Participant L). Others remarked that a CSJ sister's "strong leadership inspired all of us" (Participant I).

Joy and fun. A CSJ school is marked by a spirit of joy and fun that is tangibly felt among the students, the faculty and staff, and throughout the entire school community (reference to the sixth theme).

This core concept and the subsequent came as a surprise during the research process. Although joy emerges in the Consensus Statement written by the Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph, this expression of fun and boundless joy was clearly attributed by many as a defining experience within a CSJ school and community of sisters. In the final sentence of the Consensus statement, it states that the Sisters of St. Joseph moves always “in an Ignatian-Salesian climate: that is, with an orientation toward excellence, tempered by gentleness, peace, joy” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 79).

Throughout the Primitive Constitutions, there is a resounding call toward humility, gentleness and peace. In describing Sisters’ actions during the day, Father Medaille



Figure 4: Wordle showing words used to describe the theme of joy and fun

writes that a Sister of St. Joseph should “do all in your power to preserve both interior and exterior joy” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 50). Later in Constitutions (n.d.) considering weekly practices, Father Medaille writes that one should always “have great regard for the gentleness and joy of spirit which marvelously wins hearts” (p. 50).

Figure four visually depicts the frequency of words and phrases used to create this next core concept. In several occasions, the words were used following, or to describe a particular memory or experience characterized by these emotions. Based on the frequencies of these words used by interviewees, there was no questioning the significance of this particular theme. As is depicted in the visual graphic above, fun was referenced 15 times, along with joy (11), humor (5), happy (4) and having a good time (2).

In the words of another of the interviewees, she shared that she became a Sister because “I fell in love with the Sisters! They were fun. They had a sense of humor. They were excellent teachers. They were inclusive. You could have fun with them!” (Participant K). In reflecting in the faculty and administration’s experiences with the students, they echo many of those same sentiments. They told stories of how even among their colleagues they would “have fun together” (Participant I), find opportunities to “tease each other” (Participant K), or just engage in “good old fun mischief!” (Participant M).

In one of the group interviews, when asked what they saw as unique about the school culture in a CSJ school, they unanimously and emphatically stated, “Oh, joy!”

(Participant B, C). In each interview, there were vibrant examples of how the students enjoy one another, will randomly break into dancing, singing, or other similar expressions of having a good time. They talked about this “sense of joy” and happiness (Participants F, G, H).

This sense of joy extends through the girls’ experiences, to also the parent community. One interviewee recalled a group of students who recently had returned from an experience abroad: “the parents that were there to take pictures of their daughters and just the joy on their faces when they saw their daughters and how happy they were” (Participant N).

Although the stories were plentiful, one in particular was from a retired Sister. As I probed for why she decided to join the Sisters of St. Joseph over 70 years ago. She explained that she had been at a school where there were seven different orders of Sisters teaching. Even all these years later, her eyes twinkled as she shared that she knew there was something special about the CSJ sisters. She described it as a “tangible excitement” (Participant K). As she saw them coming to work each morning and meeting up together before heading out at the end of the day, she said that you could see they “enjoy having fun together” (Participant K).

This theme was one that individuals had no struggles in putting words to it! Their physical expressions matched the enthusiasm in their voices as they described the joy each and every one had experienced while serving in, or working at, a CSJ school. There was a tangible excitement as each related those moments that they felt the spirit of the CSJ sisters alive through those feelings of joy.

Challenges. A CSJ school recognizes the challenges with living out the gospel values and being called to building a spirit of unity and love (reference to the seventh theme).

Alongside the fun, exuberance and joy that comes out of the richness of the school community touched by the CSJ charism, there was also a juxtaposition of the challenges that can also come with it. There is no greater place that this can be seen than in the very story of Mother St. John Fontbonne and the resurgence of the Sisters of St. Joseph following the French Revolution. Her story, as captured in the Literature Review in Chapter 2, is a powerful reminder of the challenges that are often faced by those choosing a life devoted to living out the gospel and “profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 79).

Although this theme only represents 3% of the total grouping of codes, it was a poignant enough core concept to be recognized. It was in the initial group interview that this concept emerged. One of the sisters had just talked about how she fell in love with the charism all over again following the Second Vatican Council. She was re-invigorated by the vernacular describing the life she had chosen. It had given her a new enthusiasm. Following that story, she jumped into describing the Consensus Statement and simultaneously the challenges she had experienced:

I love our consensus statement, I just love it... stimulated by the Holy Spirit of Love the Sisters of St. Josephs moves always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction. I love it! So that was new, and even our senior Sisters when we came back from a chapter and said guess what this is what we're about... I remember some senior Sister, I've been a Sister 50 years and I never even know what they're talking

about [laughter] so how hard it was, how hard that was, but for us, the Sister said it's a tedious charism. Because if you're supposed to serve the poor, you serve the poor and then the new group of poor come and it's over. But the charism of reconciliation is a tedious one because you keep on working at it. Because forgiveness and reconciliation isn't cheap. (Participant C)

In the group interview, following this statement, there was a resounding sigh, a recognition of the challenges associated with living and working toward this gospel mission. One of the administrators quickly shifted into her own story:

We talked and we reflect about this tedious charism. . . . there were times where I said I can't do this anymore, and he let me know, he said, it's not supposed to be easy. . . . I thought I've had all of these experiences and I can do this but I had never been so challenged. And then the miracle is, we do do it, but not by ourselves and God is the one who makes us fruitful. (Participant A)

Another interviewee added that "when we use the words family or community or just everyone's . . . it's not always good, it's a stern love. . . there's good and bad. Everything doesn't have to be positive, it's real. . . In family there's discipline and that's hard but that's also love. To there are those hard things but they bond us" (Participant B).

In another interview one of the teachers affirmed "the population and the school and just the community we serve, this is not an easy thing to do" (Participant H).

Another administrator shared the challenges of just being in a position of leadership in education today. She explained that between the demands of the Diocese, and the requirements to remain competitive, it becomes challenging to balance it all (Participant G). Other administrators also shared the struggles with the transition from religious leadership to lay leadership. And, in the words of one sisters, she thoughtfully

added toward the end of her interview, “this is not a perfection story, but an imperfection story” (Participant M).

Regardless of what the challenges might have been, or continue to be, there is an overwhelming expression of hope. In the acknowledging of the challenges and the obstacles that arise, there is also the vision of tomorrow, the knowing that the work will be transformative, and that the spirit of the sisters will continue: “It’s an incredible way of life, the charism, if everybody would do it, what a beautiful world this would be. But it’s hard to do, it’s just hard. We’re supposed to be Christ like, that’s hard, but you try every day” (Participant F).

Summary

In closing this section it seemed appropriate to reference a quote from one of the early interviews that seemed to form a foundation for the remaining:

This thread of lace that runs between and among our different institutions; it's a mixture of history and charism and service and a lot of blood, sweat and tears from the first Sisters, starting with Mother St. John Fontbonne...We're standing on the shoulders of giants and I think it would be, I think all of our campuses, are Holy Ground, because of the work of these women. And for us to let that charism kind of fall away or dim in intensity would be dishonorable. We have an obligation to keep that legacy alive, that charism alive. So we need to do all we can to make sure everybody who enters the doors of our institution feel it and carry it in their hearts when they leave. (Participant F)

What the Sisters of St. Joseph began in 1650 was remarkable. They were leaders and visionaries, pioneers and caretakers. Women who lifted others up, empowering them to more than even they saw they could. The CSJ were individuals who collectively were willing to take on a myriad of social problems in order to care for “the neighbor without distinction” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p.

79). Regardless of how that challenge has shifted over the centuries, their work continues.

This particular study looks at the secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province. From the CSJ arrival in Carondelet Missouri in 1836, to the four secondary schools remaining, they continue to be a vibrant force of change through the lives of faculty, staff, students, and parents that they touch. In 2016, although their numbers are fewer and the day-to-day presence of the Sisters has diminished, based on the research of this study, the data would seem to say that their legacy continues through those who serve in their ministries and the men and women who are heirs to their story.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This research journey began because of an interview with a journalist. The journalist wanted to know facts and information about the origin of particular quotes utilized by the sponsoring schools of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. As a newbie to the community, the interview left the researcher wanting to know more, and wanting to speak with greater authority on the remarkable story of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. After over a year and a half of research, interviews and data analysis, the researcher hopes that this dissertation will serve as an impetus for others to continue to explore the unique and special charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

This research utilized a grounded theory approach to exploring the experiences of the CSJ sisters and lay faculty and staff in the sponsored secondary schools. The following chapter provides a summary of the data gathered and the overarching themes as a result of the research.

Purpose of the Research and Restatement of the Research Questions

As the age of the CSJ sisters continues to increase, and the numbers are decreasing, there is a fear among some that their story will be lost. There is trepidation that all of which they have worked for in their lives might be forgotten. This research came at a time in which the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province are wrestling with how they will sustain their sponsored ministries long after, as one CSJ sister said, “the last sister turns off the lights.” It is a bittersweet time for so many of them as they see their stories coming to life in new ways through the

experiences and perspectives of their new lay partners, but also hard to imagine themselves not being there for the journey ahead.

Others look with new eyes on the lay leadership carrying on for them and say, “How interesting!” As Father Adrien Demoustier, SJ, shared with the Sisters at the 350th anniversary celebration in Le Puy, France, “To be able to accept these ‘new ways’ requires detachment from the priority given to those we had inherited from the past, and which were a blessing” (O’Toole, 2012, p. 14). Focusing on the prophetic text from Father Medaille, the *Eucharistic Letter*, on becoming a “congregation without a congregation”, Father Demoustier challenges the Sisters of St. Joseph to “collaborate actively at finding ways to let go, to move aside, to make way for others to invent new, unimaginable things (O’Toole, 2012, p. 13).

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of the lay faculty, administration and sisters who work, or have worked, within the four schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles Province, to identify the core concepts used to describe how the spirit of the CSJ has impacted the school culture. There was one overarching research question with two sub-questions to guide this study:

1. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet reflected in the organizational culture of the CSJ secondary schools?
 - a. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet perceived and made manifest to others by lay leadership in the sponsored CSJ secondary schools?

- b. How is the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet perceived and made manifest to others by alumnae faculty and staff in the sponsored CSJ secondary schools?

The core concepts and themes that emerge relate directly to the research questions noted above and are further supported by the primary source documents of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and the body of research on preserving organizational culture.

Despite the unknown that lies ahead with Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and lay leadership, this research seems to indicate that the charism of the CSJ lives on in the culture of each of the secondary schools they sponsor. That spirit appears to continue to live on in the faculty, administration, and in the students. That inner circle exponentially carries it forth as they in turn touch others, serve others, and become part of new communities.

Looking at what Father Medaille saw occurring in those original six women in 1650 France, their determination and courage allowed the congregation to continue through to the French Revolution. After the loss of five Sisters of St. Joseph at the hands of the French Revolution, it was the courageous leadership of Mother St. John Fontbonne rising from what many saw as the ashes of the French Revolution to reconstitute the order and then send out the first missionary group to Carondelet, Missouri in 1836. That rich legacy has been passed on and continues in yet another iteration here in the United States, Los Angeles Province in 2016.

In considering the literature on preserving organizational culture, the research

seems to indicate that as Edgar Schien, Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal suggest, that the culture within these schools has been able to be sustain as a result of the oral tradition and shared experiences that have been passed down in some cases over 130 years. As the grounded theory research suggests, these organizations were successful in sustaining the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph through their use of symbols, stories, vision and values (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Summary

This grounded theory research study, investigated the perceptions and lived experiences of lay faculty and CSJ sisters who have worked within each of the four secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province. The study identified seven emerging themes used to describe the charism as made manifest in the school culture. Each of the seven themes directly connects to the primary source documents of the founding of the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Le Puy, France in 1650. For over 365 years, the congregation has been able to preserve these characteristics of their spirit within the organizational culture.

Connections to the literature. The Sisters of St. Joseph were originally founded in Le Puy en Velay, France, during a time in which women religious were not allowed to live outside of a convent. Six fearless and visionary women came together to form what now, 365 years later, we celebrate as the Sisters of St. Joseph (Byrne, 1985). Where other religious congregations of women at this time sought to follow a similar path to live and serve among the people, outside of convent walls, they unlike the Sisters of St.

Joseph, were unsuccessful. The Sisters of St. Joseph sought opportunities to serve the needs of the people, and in turn, help those individuals draw closer to God. The congregation is focused on a vocation that calls each woman, as is cited in the *Reglements* (originally written in 1646) to “undertake all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy of which women is capable,” (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 5) in service to the dear neighbor.

These early Sisters of St. Joseph, in partnership with their spiritual advisor and Jesuit priest Father Jean-Pierre Medaille (Vacher, 2010), formed the early foundation of the congregation. Although certain texts were passed down within a congregation, much of the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph was sustained through an oral tradition. Initial documents of the Sisters of St. Joseph, written by Father Medaille, include the *Reglements (1646)*, the *Eucharistic Letter (1660)*, the *Maxims of Perfection (1657)*, and the *Primitive Constitutions (1693)*. Following the Second Vatican Council, the Sisters of St. Joseph returned to the origins of their founding, began publishing each of these four primary source documents, and simultaneously initiated a research study to revitalize these documents and the spirit of their vocation. This resulted in the *Consensus Statement of the Sisters of St. Joseph* published in 1969.

So much of the culture of the Sisters of St. Joseph, is based on rich traditions, and shared stories that have been passed down from one generation to the other. The structure of life for the sisters – praying, living and working together in community – allowed for this culture to be perpetuated over the past 350 years and across 55 different countries. In considering how culture is preserved within an organization

(Bolman & Deal, 2013; Schien, 2004), the Sisters have been able to sustain this spirit within their ministries, even as the numbers of the sisters working daily within their sponsored ministries has dwindled.

As Bolman and Deal (2013) suggest in their research, symbols play a significant role in establishing and preserving an organizations structures, alongside other areas such as myths, vision, values, stories and fairy tales, rituals and metaphors. In considering the culture within in Catholic schools, stories play a particularly poignant role in “perpetuating values” (p. 257), and sustaining the organization. This was vibrantly seen throughout the research conducted. In each of the twenty interviews, their experiences within the organization, and their sense of culture, was tied to a body of stories and rituals that helped to define the spirit of the organization.

For many of the interviewees throughout my research, these stories of the heroines of the past, the Sisters of St. Joseph, form the core of what they are looking to perpetuate in their work (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Especially in the group interviews, the individuals became very emotional when retelling their own story and experience within the school and how deeply rooted this spirit has become in their own life. Often times, the tissue box became ransacked, as people recalled those moments they became part of the story, and in turn, an active participant in sustaining and shaping the culture.

As Bolman and Deal (2013) cite, “effective organizations are full of good stories” (p. 258). This was certainly the case across each and every one of the twenty interviews conducted. These men and women proudly shared how they had experienced the spirit of the sisters in their distinct secondary school campus.

In addition to the literature on preserving an organization's culture, there also exists a body of literature specifically in perpetuating the charism, or spirit, of a particular religious order. In looking at the Lasallian Schools, and the work of Kevin Tidd, he provides an example of how one religious order has partnered with lay leaders to perpetuate their order's spirit even in the decline of religious leadership in their sponsored ministries.

Although the statistics from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University point to a rapid decline since 1970 in the numbers of religious sisters across the united states (Berrelleza et al., 2014), this body of research seems to point to the sustainability of that charism of the sisters through their sponsored ministry as a result of the organizational culture that is being preserved. There is a sense of hope that can be seen in the strength of the culture that is being preserved and sustained, despite the changing landscape of the participants and leaders.

Research design and methodology. This research study utilized a grounded theory approach to explore the lived experiences of each of the twenty interviewees connected with the four secondary schools currently sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in the Los Angeles Province. The third chapter referenced the work of Glaser and Strauss (2012), who were the initial methodologists to develop grounded theory. This particular type of research is as an inquiry-driven approach to developing a set of conceptual theories. The process is "iterative, or recursive" (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 220), allowing the researcher to build a complex holistic picture (Creswell, 2013) based on the data collected.

The researcher incorporated purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013) in identifying the twenty individuals to be involved in the interviews. Utilizing the work of qualitative methodologist, Charmaz, the researcher went through a structured set of coding to analytically derive at the seven core concepts or themes.

Brief Restatement of the Findings

Throughout the research process, seven core concepts emerged. These themes directly speak to the inherent values and unique gospel message by which the Sisters of St. Joseph look to share their gifts with the world. Regardless of the campus on which the researcher interviewed, the individuals spoken to, or their years of service, these seven areas were consistently echoed:

1. A CSJ school consistently incorporates the gospel values into all aspects of the school community.
2. A CSJ school seeks out opportunities to model service to the dear neighbor in how faculty, staff and students serve one another, and in turn impact the broader community.
3. A CSJ school serves a diverse population of students and intentionally creates a culture of unity and support, and a sense of belonging, to cultivate a community of acceptance, love and sisterhood.
4. A CSJ school's culture fosters an environment of excellence through the intentional actions of teachers and leaders to be capacity builders, assisting all young women to become all of "which woman is capable" (Constitutions for the Little Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, n.d., p. 5).

5. A CSJ school recognizes the essential role that leadership plays in fostering a gospel-driven, nurturing environment, evidenced in the faculty, staff and sisters as models.
6. A CSJ school is marked by a spirit of joy and fun that is tangibly felt among the students, the faculty and staff, and throughout the entire school community.
7. A CSJ school recognizes the challenges with living out the gospel values and being called to building a spirit of unity and love.

Each individual's experiences and background informed the words they used to illuminate their unique perspective. Therefore, the recursive analytical process became imperative in deciphering individuals' nuanced word choice, but similar meanings.

The researcher, as an active member of this community and a leader in one of the four sponsored secondary schools of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, had established a set of assumptions in their field journal prior to beginning this research process. Some of these early assumptions regarding the spirit of the CSJ present within the culture were identified early on in the research process. These anticipated themes, for example, were manifested in the core themes of gospel values, and service to the dear neighbor, and even this sense of unity and sisterhood. Although each held particular nuances, these concepts have become the backbone of each of the school campuses, and are integral elements to sustaining the charism of the CSJ.

On the other hand, other core concepts emerged that came as a surprise to the researcher. The researcher even utilized several member checks to affirm some of these emerging themes to ensure that they were accurately being reflected. The most

surprising of all was this idea of joy and fun. There is certainly a publically held belief in popular literature that the culture of a catholic school is strict and stern. This can even be echoed in the symbols and imagery used to define our idea of a catholic school in popular literature. For example, in a google image search for “catholic school”, the most prominent imagery that will immediately be called are images of kids in uniforms perfectly lined up, others with students silently praying in their uniforms with bowed heads.

Within each of the twenty interviews, this concept of joy and fun vibrantly emerged. Juxtaposed with the emotional stories of individuals’ connections with the Sisters of St. Joseph, or how they live out the charism, interviewees would light up when they would talk about how much fun they had being part of the CSJ culture in their particular school. This passion and emotionality reverberated the loudest in their discussion of this core concept. In most cases, this was then followed by the acknowledgement of how hard that can be to sustain these feelings of joy, happiness, friendship, love and unity, while simultaneously serving others.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The literature on organizational culture from Schien, and Bolman and Deal, along with the data analysis, reveal that the core concepts and espoused spirit reflected in the primary documents of the Sisters of St. Joseph appear to continue today in the culture of the sponsored secondary school ministries in the Los Angeles Province of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. The research seems to indicate that the very ideals which the original sisters espoused to, continue on in the

school culture through the work of the faculty, staff, administration and students.

As one of the interviewees shared, in the past, the Sisters of St. Joseph lived together in community and worked alongside each other. They came from “the same training, the same background, same religion, same focus, same mission” (Participant J). As the CSJ ministries have required an increase in lay partnership at all levels of the organization, it emerged from the research a necessity to develop new and varied ways to ensure the spirit lives on. The research further seems to indicate that currently, the spirit of the CSJ is alive. In looking to preserve the charism, the CSJ are encouraged to consider a multifaceted approach, building an infrastructure to sustain formative learning experiences, to ensure that regardless of who follows in their footsteps, they are equipped with the knowledge of the charism to ensure it continues.

Father Caruso, in his book *When the Sisters Said Farewell: The transition of leadership in Catholic elementary Schools* (2012), asserts that as new novitiates moved from the convents into their work in schools, there was a tradition and set of patterns that easily transferred from their learning, and structure, into the academic setting. Those characteristics that helped to define their charism within the convent were then seen through their work in the schools (Caruso, 2012). Although the lay leaders currently employed in each of the secondary schools sponsored by the CSJ, and the majority of the staff on each school site is no longer religious sisters, the spirit of the sisters is preserved within the culture of each school.

With new populations of lay leadership, transitions in personnel, and an influx of individuals never having worked within a CSJ school or experienced a CSJ education,

the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet are encouraged to continue to find new ways to preserve the rich spirit that exists in their secondary school ministries. This research provides a starting point to explore best practices around how school leadership intentionally cultivates the spirit of the CSJ.

Conferences like the 2nd Annual CSSJ Meeting of all secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, which is currently being spearheaded by the secondary schools executive leadership staff, must be invested in, supported, and encouraged. As one interviewee referenced, “it was at that meeting that the charism came alive for me. Not at the orientation, or reading the novels, but in talking with other educators about what they do. The charism was real to me in that meeting” (Participant Q). The individual went on to explain that at that meeting, of all the 20 schools across the United States, along with the sponsored schools in Japan, France, and Puerto Rico, they saw that what was going on in their community “is what’s going on in Cleveland, Philadelphia and New York, is the exact same thing that’s going on here. And if you took a trip and you met those girls you would say those are Carondelet girls or Academy of Our Lady of Peace girls. We found that out down there. I think that it is a game changer because it creates the understanding that, wait a minute, I am part of a bigger whole than I had realized and that is a powerful, powerful thing” (Participant Q).

Minimal research exists on how the transmission of charism occurs from the religious to the lay partners. Some orders, like the Lasallian’s discussed in the Literature Review (Tidd, 2009a), have found intentional, multi-faceted ways of personally including

lay partners in their spirituality. Their journey took twenty years and is still growing and evolving today.

For the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, in 10 years they will have an average age of 88, and are estimated to be fewer than 100 sisters. Lay partners must be enlisted to walk alongside the sisters, to curate their stories, and develop the leadership training necessary to preserve this legacy.

The seven themes that emerged from this research study directly correlate with the foundational documents and writings sacred to the Sisters of St. Joseph. Each of the themes presented in chapter four, corroborate the lived experiences of the twenty individuals and how they actively see the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet lived out in their secondary school ministries.

Significance to Leadership

The conclusion of Patricia Byrne's, dissertation on French Roots of a Women's Movement points to a poignant need in the future work of the CSJ. She states,

Whether that original spirituality was understood by succeeding generations of Sisters of St. Joseph is a serious question. On this subject, however, the silence is deafening. Although the sisters' daily lives were based on some type of self-understanding, over the entire period before the Revolution, and love after that, there were no theoreticians who articulated it. (Byrne, 1985, p. 234)

Since the Second Vatican Council and the return to the founders, there has been a resurgence of primary source documents now accessible within the religious community. There has also been intentionality around defining within the religious community the charism.

However, as this research study illuminated, there is a cry among the lay leaders for more guidance, more direction, more partnership, particularly around the spirituality. What has allowed this charism to continue to blossom and remain inextricably linked with the foundation of the CSJ, is the tangible passion of each of the four leaders of the secondary schools to carry on the work. They are the voice of tomorrow, the partners to sustain the legacy.

Suggestions for Future Research

As the review of literature indicates, there is minimal research on how the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet is continued and lived on in the work of their sponsored ministries. A great deal of the research in the past, and up until 2016, continues to focus on the historical actions of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. At the time this dissertation was being completed, a new book was recently published on the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles Province, on the history of Carondelet High School. The book entitled, *Valiant Women: Carondelet High School the first fifty years* by Sister Eleanor Eagan, CSJ (2015). The book, like many of the other historical texts of the CSJ, shares the stories of the founding of the school, the sisters and the community.

This study points to the need for additional research to discover the best practices in ensuring that the charism is being made manifest within the school culture. Additionally, there is a need for more research specifically on how the spirituality of the sisters can be translated and lived out in each of their sponsored ministries. Furthermore, research is needed on the existing training in place to prepare lay faculty,

staff and administration to continue the CSJ charism.

Final Summary

The researcher, as a member of the community, along with every lay administrator interviewed, is humbled to follow in the footsteps of the tenacious Sisters of St. Joseph that came before. The CSJ women that remain in the community today are the fearless visionaries that will help to imagine the third birth of the congregation. Seventy-five years from now, others will look back at this pivotal time in history, as yet another chapter in the long lifespan of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Theirs' is a ministry of hope for what the world can become when women are educated to ever grow closer to God, and to the dear neighbor, with God. That spirit of unifying love is a powerful force to change our communities and our world. There is energy in the presence of the Sisters of St. Joseph in over 55 different countries. The congregation and its partners, now look to the future, to leverage this research as a first step in guiding the formation of structures and infrastructure to strengthen whatever God, "in his infinite mercy is pleased to make of his Institute" (O'Toole, 2013, p. 24).

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APPENDIX A

Preliminary Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interview questions are grouped into three different categories: (1) background/ demographic information; (2) personal learning and experiences with the Sisters of St. Joseph; (3) personal perceptions on the spirit of the sisters and the overall school culture.

1. Demographic Information: [background]
 - a. Length of time at the school?
 - b. Positions held?
 - c. Alumnae?
 - d. Any prior connections to the CSJ community before coming here?
2. What brought you to this particular school? And what keeps you here?
[background]
3. How have you experienced the sisters or the stories of the sisters? [personal learning]
4. Have you or your colleagues been touched by the sisters? If so, how? [personal learning]
5. How would you describe the general feel of this school's? [school culture]
6. Is the culture at this school different from that of other schools? If so, how?
[school culture]

APPENDIX B

Permission to Conduct Research

From: Sandra Williams
Subject: permission to conduct research
Date: December 10, 2015 at 1:45 PM
To: Lauren Lek

SW

To Whom it May Concern:

As a member of the Province Leadership Team for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, I am authorized to grant approval to Lauren Lek, Head of School at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, and a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University, to conduct her research. I am aware of her project and have granted her approval to interview members of the faculty and staff at St. Mary's Academy, St. Joseph High School, Carondelet High School and the Academy of Our Lady of Peace.

Sincerely yours,
Sister Sandra Williams , CSJ

APPENDIX C:

Letter of Informed Consent for Interview Participants

Letter of Informed Consent for Participation in Interview Research

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Lauren Lek, toward completion of her Dissertation at Pepperdine University. The project is designed to gather information about the CSJ spirit and culture on the high school campus. There will be approximately twelve faculty and staff across four high schools being interviewed for this research. Data from this research will help to develop a set of core concepts on how the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet is being lived out on the high school campuses sponsored by the CSJ.

1. Participation in this project is voluntary. You will not be paid for participation. You may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one on the campus will be told.
2. Most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, you feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, you have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. Participation involves being interviewed by Lauren Lek. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio recording will be made of the interview to allow the researcher to ensure accuracy of notes during the interview.
4. The researcher will not identify you by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies, which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Studies Involving Human Subjects: Behavioral Sciences Committee at Pepperdine University. For research problems or questions regarding subjects, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through the Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education & Psychology (310) 568-5753 or at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

For further information, please contact:

Lauren Lek
Doctoral Student
Pepperdine University

APPENDIX D:

Founding Dates of Schools from the US Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph

Carondelet Sisters of St. Joseph

Saint Joseph's Academy in St. Louis, Missouri founded in 1840
Saint Teresa's Academy in Kansas City Missouri founded in 1866
Academy of Holy Angels in Richfield, Minnesota founded in 1877
Academy of Our Lady of Peace in San Diego, California founded in 1882
Saint Mary' Academy in Inglewood, California founded in 1889
Saint Joseph Joshi Gakuen in Japan founded in 1959
Saint Joseph's High School in Lakewood, California founded in 1964
Carondelet High School in Concord, California founded in 1965
Saint Margaret's Academy in Minneapolis, Minnesota founded in 1907
and became Benilde-Saint Margaret's School in 1974.
Cretin-Derham Hall in St. Paul, Minnesota founded in 1987

Congregation of St. Joseph

Saint Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge, Louisiana founded in 1868
Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland, Ohio founded in 1890
Nazareth Academy in LaGrange Park, Illinois founded in 1900

Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood, New York

Saint Joseph High School in Brooklyn, New York founded in 1904
The Mary Louis Academy in Jamaica, New York founded in 1936
Fontbonne Hall Academy in Brooklyn, New York founded in 1937
Sacred Heart Academy founded in Hempstead, New York founded in 1949
Bishop Kearney High School in Brooklyn New York founded in 1961
Academia Maria Reina in San Juan, Puerto Rico founded in 1966

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston

Saint Joseph Preparatory High School in Brighton, Massachusetts founded in 1885
Fontbonne Academy in Milton, Massachusetts founded in 1954

Sisters of St. Joseph

Mount Saint Joseph Academy in Flourtown, Pennsylvania founded in 1858
Immaculate Heart Central High School in Watertown, New York founded in 1881
Holyoke Catholic High School in Chicopee, Massachusetts founded in 1963
Villa Maria Academy in Erie, Pennsylvania founded in 1862
Founding schools and dates provided by Sister Pat Dunphy, CSJ, 2014

APPENDIX F:
IRB Approval Letter



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: January 15, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Lauren Lek

Protocol #: 16-01-159

Project Title: Using a grounded theory approach: Capturing the history and culture of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in sponsored secondary schools

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Lauren Lek:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chairperson

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

Mr. Brett Leach, Regulatory Affairs Specialist

APPENDIX G:

CITI Human Subjects Training Certification of Completion

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM) COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Lauren Lek
- **Email:**
- **Institution Affiliation:** Pepperdine University (
- **Institution Unit:** GSEP
- **Phone:**

- **Curriculum Group:** GSEP Education Division
- **Course Learner Group:** GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 17906278
- **Completion Date:** 11/13/2015
- **Expiration Date:** 11/11/2020
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 85

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	11/13/15	3/3 (100%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	11/13/15	4/5 (80%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	11/13/15	5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	11/13/15	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	11/13/15	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	11/13/15	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	11/13/15	3/5 (60%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
Email: citisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

Collaborative Institutional
Training Initiative
at the University of Miami

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Lauren Lek ()
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