The Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary: Our Spiritual Eldering Lineage
HEART-PRESENCE as “sisters of the two hearts”.

Heart-presence is the “work” of a Spiritual Elder.
According to Robert Sardello, our world is deeply in need of spiritual eldering. In a culture without elders “adolescence” is glorified and Truth disappears.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is a “spiritual elder”?</th>
<th>A “spiritual elder” is:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Not determined by age in years</td>
<td>✓ Heart-intelligent</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Not determined by knowledge/information</td>
<td>✓ Heart-present</td>
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<td>✓ Not determined by role, ordination, vows</td>
<td>✓ Heart-transfiguring</td>
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Heart-Presence:
✓ Lineage/Ancestor grounded
✓ Fully embodied, sensing, and Body-coherent (comfortable with “yes” and “no”)
✓ Ego-transcendent and outcome neutral (Now, and now... and now...)
✓ Unconditionally present and hospitable (non-judgement zone)

What do heart-present spiritual elders do? They mediate between Heaven and Earth. This means:
✓ You know that what you “see” is NOT all there is.
✓ The longed-for good you think is not yet, is already here, now.
✓ What is ordinary is simultaneously extraordinary.
✓ What is spiritually high and far above is simultaneously an earthy incarnation: tangible, huggable, suffering, fragile flesh and blood.

We know this in our lineage, in our families, in our communities.
We pray to them; we will hear it in the Eucharistic prayer later this morning... Jesus and Mary; the apostles and martyrs; Saints Francis and Clare; Clara Pfaender and Mary Ward...

Yesterday we named so many more... They are here with us now:
Sense them around us, sitting with us, over us, under us, in us...
They are GROUNDING us. The ancestors are not dead. They live in our alive heart-presence - spirit once more earth incarnate. Not “my” presence, or yours... but Christ-presence...

In the landscape of Christic heart-presence our beautiful thoughts cannot help us find our way. Our splendid brains (while we still have them) can amplify in amazing ways the wisdom of our hearts. Frontal lobes are not the well-spring of spiritual depth. We cannot “Think” into heart-presence. We “fall” into it, “sense” into it, “awaken” to it. In Heart-presence:
the willing courage of our resounding, resonant heart-intelligence to enter spirit-elder-territory.
✓ What we think we know cannot help us any longer.
✓ All isstrangely new; fresh; nothing is familiar, and everything is an experiment and a risk.
The initiation or the way into Spiritual Elderhood Sufis call “dying before you die”. Franciscans call it the “Sacrum Commercium” (The Holy Exchange). The Gospels call it “the pearl of great price.” I experience it as a monumental “dis-illusion-ing” – as all illusion disappearing:

✓ as all that we know of ourselves falling away
✓ to meet the “me” I do not yet know ...to live into the “we” that we are not yet...

Every “dis-illusionment” is an invitation into Heart-ful Elder Presence.

✓ I cannot do what I once did so easily...
✓ What I hoped for is now no longer possible...
✓ What I thought would never happen actually did...

All of us have some experience in this territory already. When I was “present” as a child, I never could have imagined how I am “present” today. Clara Pfaender never could have imagined WFSI or Canticle Place. In the tumultuous birthing of our corporate ministries, the Ministry Fund was yet unthought. Then there is the mystery of illness and frailty that come unbidden, the unimaginable personal physical losses to bear, the renovation of buildings and adapting of bedrooms, the closing of beloved places and the loss of loved ones. There are joys too, that reconfigure presence: grandchildren, great-nieces and nephews, volunteer opportunities, new staff, new friends.

Each turning of our lives invites a fresh heart-presence practice. Now, what? Now, how? Now, who?

Spiritual elders hold steady; watch and pray; listen, receive in deep openness...

Their pearl of great price is Truth and its Freedom:

✓ Everything begins and ends: “me” as I know it... religious life as I know it... “we” as we know it...
✓ Heaven keeps coming to Earth: the “more” of God cannot be stopped...

   Endings / beginnings are ONE thing: In Franciscan shorthand it is “Transitus” (To experience the emptying into Death is to come into the fullness of Everlasting Life).

It is a holy synchronicity that after Communion we will be inspired by the now elders of our Sacred Heart Orphanage in Pueblo, Colorado. They are remembering and incarnating the loving presence of the sisters that were so heart-present to them. The blessing of that original heart-presence is being returned to us today. Our hearts fill. A full arc of Love, Present.

Life is like this: always expanding and contracting and expanding again. The heart incarnates the rhythm. It beats in contractions and expansions. It starts and stops. And starts again.

And even when the physical heart comes to its last beat, today the Sacred Heart Orphans remind us that Heart Presence does not ever stop.

We “fall” again into profoundly humbling vulnerability... heart-breaking grief... heart-quickening joy...

It is the price and rhythm of Holy Love. Lucky us in the lineage of the Two Hearts! Happy Feast of the Sacred Hearts!