



Historic National Chapter

Secular Franciscans from around the USA and even the world were transported to the virtual realm for the first-ever national chapter held via video conferencing. With the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping the globe, it wasn't a matter of whether to hold the annual chapter, but how... and how to make it a fruitful experience full of Franciscan joy and spirituality.

Mass launched the four-day virtual event on Oct. 21 and then brought it to a fitting spiritual close on Oct. 24. In between was a family fest with heartfelt sharing, conduct of administrative and business matters, inspirational formation sessions, presentation of the JPIC award, and even a virtual tour of Assisi (with a focus on St. Clare).
-- Robert Stronach, OFS

**THEME FOR 2021:
Live a Life Worthy
of Your Call**

SPECIAL SECTION BY
Robert & Mary Stronach, OFS,
and Sharon Winzeler, OFS



HIGHLIGHTS OF NATIONAL CHAPTER



Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, celebrated the opening and closing masses for the virtual national chapter from his friary.

A Franciscan Approach to Today's Times

By SHARON WINZELER, OFS

Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, helped set the tone for a pandemic-caused virtual chapter by reminding attendees to take a Franciscan approach and see opportunity.

In the opening mass streamed from St. Joseph Friary in Hollidaysburg, PA, Father Christopher noted that many were experiencing anxiety in the midst of a pandemic as well as civil unrest.

"I cannot stop all of the issues from swirling around in my mind -- racial discrimination, fear and uncertainty with every breath we take, divisiveness in society, in our institutions, in our church, bigotry, lack of civility in public discourse, injustices against human dignity, preventive health and safety measures misinterpreted as restrictions on personal freedom, disinformation," he said.

Disruptions Can Be Opportunities

Father Christopher called on chapter participants to "see the disruptions" as "an opportunity to be alone with Jesus and go deeper and deeper."

Approach these unsettling times with a Franciscan heart, he advised, by maintaining a joyful attitude like St. Francis

of Assisi while being penitent and seeking conversion.

"The call to conversion is a change of mentality," he said. "It predisposes us to believe in the gift of the Kingdom of God proclaimed and inaugurated by Jesus. Being penitent introduces us to the extraordinary and intimate relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Fr. Christopher, who is past president-in-turn of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, urged Franciscans to listen to the Holy Spirit during these trying times. "Act in ways that bear witness to our vocation. This hidden treasure has not lost its value in the current conditions of the world and of the Church. To the contrary, it is even more valuable as a Gospel alternative to the lacerations that oppress and distress today's men and women."

Unwavering faith in the face of uncertainty helps us to accept and understand Jesus' words to be prepared against the unexpected, he said.

Fraterlli Tutti

In the chapter's closing mass on Oct. 24, Father Christopher pointed to the

encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, as a way to spread harmony in these trying times.

"Pope Francis is surely right to think that a confused world urgently needs some Catholic common sense." That is what he provides us in his latest encyclical, "universal fraternity put into dialogue with the Gospel. It points in the direction of the brotherhood and sisterhood of every human being."

He referred to the Gospel in which Jesus told his disciples, "A new commandment I give you: Love one another as I have loved you."

"Not just 'love one another.' Not simply 'love one another as you love yourselves.' No. 'Love one another as I have loved you.'"

A Good Model

Franciscans have a good model for this type of love, he noted. "St. Francis lived and taught this reciprocal love as Gospel living. He showed us how to love the Father by being in harmony with all creation. How to love the Son by imitating his life. And how to love the Spirit to be Advocate of the Order."

The encyclical is an expansion of

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HIGHLIGHTS OF NATIONAL CHAPTER

Chapter Becomes Historic First in OFS History

By MARY STRONACH, OFS

As the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States planned for the 2020 National Chapter, they accepted the fact that COVID pandemic would require a measure of flexibility and creativity, an understanding of the new technology... and the ability to imagine the possibilities.

Forty-seven regional ministers, spiritual assistants and guests from around the country and world embraced this historic step in building and maintaining a sense of fraternity virtually.

The event provided some special benefits for those who would have faced travel challenges – no heavy baggage to pack and carry, no expensive, long, tiring trips, no fear of COVID-contagious.

On the downside, there were no early morning coffee gatherings where brothers and sisters could laugh and share, no late-night entertainment or long discussions about the future of the Church or the Order, and no Eucharist to receive and share.

However, the virtual model of Franciscan gatherings, including the National Chapter, has proven to be an uplifting, engaging, productive, welcoming way to bring the members of the Order together. With the exception of technological or serious health



Some participants brought beautiful background scenes to the National Chapter's video conferencing.

issues, there was no reason why a regional minister or delegate could not participate. We were all in the comfort of our homes, with a cup of coffee or tea in hand, the occasional grandchild or pet who would cross the screen. We had the best of both worlds – interactions with Fraternity brothers and sisters from around the country and a safe, non-COVID home environment. (Some had virtual backgrounds of beautiful landscapes and even outer space.)

Materials were submitted to everyone in advance, the program was planned to include opening and closing Masses

– with readers, music and inspirational homilies; presenters were prepared with shared Power Points that could easily be seen by all participants; spirited and upbeat leaders who provided guidance and updates on every aspect of the Order in the United States; spiritual assistants who offered perspectives and tips on how to handle the new reality.

With this historic, virtual Annual Chapter, the National Secular Franciscan Order has taken a leap in faith into a new reality – one which can connect Secular Franciscans, next door and around the world.

Continued from previous page. Catholic Social Teaching, he said, and a reiteration of the essentials of the Gospel, urging us to get back to the basics.

“Pope Francis stresses the importance of meeting others, of creating a culture of encounter, to really get to know one another. Covid-19 should not diminish

our desire to connect with one another. Computers and smartphones and video communications are at the ready.”

Pope Francis's example of ordinary human goodness working for the common good is exemplified in the life of St. Francis of Assisi as noted in **Fratelli Tutti**: “In the world of that time, bristling with watchtowers and

defensive walls, cities were a theater of brutal wars between powerful families, even as poverty was spreading throughout the countryside. Yet there Francis was able to welcome true peace into his heart and free himself of the desire to wield power over others. He became one of the poor and sought to live in harmony with all.” (#34)

HIGHLIGHTS OF NATIONAL CHAPTER

'Where There Is a Need, There Is a Franciscan'



JPIC Animator Carolyn Townes, right, introduced JPIC Award Recipient Monica Olivera, left, during a chapter session.

JPIC HONOREE MONICA OLIVERA FOUNDED 'FIRST NATIONS OUTREACH'

By SHARON WINZELER, OFS

Monica Olivera, OFS, is the 2020 recipient of the *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Award*. Olivera founded *First Nations Outreach* that serves remote Native American communities (as far as a 24-hour drive from the home of her Brother Jacoba Fraternity in Lawrence, KS).

Carolyn Townes, OFS, National JPIC animator, presented the annual award at the National Chapter on Oct. 22. **"It has been said, where there is a need, there is a Franciscan,"** Townes said, calling Olivera's service "love in action."

Reaching the Isolated

"I always had a vision to serve the poorest of the poor... I always assumed it was going to be in my country of origin, Peru," Olivera said. "I never imagined that my journey of faith would lead me to poor, remote communities in America."

She said the reservations are so remote that many of them do not appear on maps. Yet the need for help is great.

"I was moved when I saw the lack of appropriate clothing in the middle of winter and the lack of accessibility to basic needs," Olivera said.

After a visit to a Sioux community in South Dakota, she asked for donations from friends and filled a truck with toys and clothing. As *First Nations* continued its service, members found more isolated reservations in Arizona, Nebraska and Montana. "Our goal is to be led by the Holy Spirit to where we need to go."

Many of the communities have no stores, restaurants or banks, no access to running water, little medical service and limited job opportunities, Olivera said. Depending on the location, 50-85 percent of adults are unemployed. Life expectancy is low and there is a high rate of diabetes, addiction, suicide and crime.

Building Trust

"Yet they are people with undisputed strength and profound spirituality," Olivera said. "They have survived and lived this way for centuries to protect their culture and do not welcome outsiders. It took years to earn their trust to be invited to their communities." She said access to the reservation was the first miracle she experienced.

"The second miracle is how, with so little money available, we have been able

to bring Christmas to so many."

What We Do, Not What We Say

"We do not talk about our faith. People understand the Gospel message through what we do rather than what we say," Olivera said.

"We don't just collect toys and deliver them. We ask each child what they want for Christmas. We gather them and wrap them with Christmas paper and ribbon," she said. "We know the gift we bring to them is the only gift they will receive for Christmas."

Many miraculous interventions have graced the program, according to Olivera. One included fulfilling the expectations of a principal at St. Charles Mission School in Montana. "He made it clear that we could not bring gifts for just one classroom. If we were going to do it, we had to provide them for the entire school of 240 children."

She returned to Kansas and visited the principal of a local school about sponsorship.

"I asked, 'how many children would you be willing to sponsor?' With a big smile on her face, she said, 'all of them.'"



'You Cannot Quarantine the Holy Spirit'

NATIONAL MINISTER ADDRESSES STATE OF THE ORDER

By MARY STRONACH, OFS

National Minister **Jan Parker**, OFS provided historical perspective as she inspired and challenged the 47 regional ministers, delegates and guests during her State of the Order message.

Responding to Signs of Times

"You cannot quarantine the Holy Spirit" she said.

"In spite of the pandemic and all the upheaval, the work of prayer, peacemaking and building up of the Kingdom has continued in a thousand beautiful ways... We are moving forward in new ways, responding in faith to the signs of the times."

She quoted the General Constitutions (26.1): "...Secular Franciscans affirm their hope and their joy in living. They make a contribution to counter widespread distress and pessimism, preparing a better future." Then she added, "The pandemic is not squelching our desire for fraternity - it is strengthening it."

A Course of Renewal

She then took the attendees on an historical perspective of the Order in the United States from the development of the Pauline Rule of 1978 to the recent "season of visioning" when youth, formation and JPIC leaders, and spiritual assistants came together to help take the Order "on a course to renewal." She exhorted the brothers and sisters: "we must continue to look for the unexpected joy and open our hearts to this holy newness. We cannot stop now, and we won't. The Holy Spirit impels us."

"We are beginning to see the fruit from of our 'season of visioning'."

- In **Formation**, new initial formation texts are in the process of being written and "wonderful" resources such as "Formation Friday" have been assisting Regional Formation Directors.

- In the area of **Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation**, there has

been a "real awakening." JPIC focus groups have formed, and there is more involvement by members at large. A "Franciscan-looking JPIC vision" is being developed, one that we need LIVE and SPEAK "justly, courteously, in peace and with charity."

- In the area of **Franciscan Youth and Young Adults**, "there is new energy and momentum for outreach to youth and young adults." An animator training on Zoom has provided new tools for outreach to support and establish YouFra fraternities.

She recognized the work of all committees, saying that "we have made great strides, but we have farther to go."

Future Plans

She said there were projects that she and the council would like to "make a reality." These included: a Communications Summit to "explore new ways for Public Relations, Website,

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The Birth Home of St. Clare

In the area next to the cathedral of Assisi, San Rufino.



Virtual Tour Offers a Close and Personal Visit to the Home of Clare

Bret Thoman, OFS, owner and operator of St. Francis Pilgrimages, gave attendees a unique and personal perspective of Assisi by following the footsteps of St. Clare from her paternal home, the flight from her home on the night she joined Francis and ultimately to San Damiano where she lived the rest of her life.

The presentation covered Clare’s cultural and religious journey, her personality and daily challenges. Included on this tour was a very revealing explanation of her canonization process with reports from some of the people who knew her. This virtual experience provided a front row seat of the countryside where she lived,

and the “door of the dead” from which she escaped to join Francis. In short, it was comprehensive tour with history, visuals, and anecdotes, but eliminated sore feet from the walking and climbing of the hills. For some of us, you might say that this was a perfect way to visit the home of our beloved St. Clare.

-- Mary Stronach, OFS

STATE OF THE ORDER

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Social Media, Database and TAU-USA folks to work together”; continued work on the database; “widening our embrace of culture”; updating the National Statutes, National Guidelines and the Spiritual Assistant Handbook; support of the newly formed “Franciscan Family Forum.”

At the international level, the working document for the next General Chapter, called the **Instrumentum Laboris**, shines a “bright light on the path ahead.”

Announcing the theme: “**Animate and Guide with Servant Leadership**,” she emphasized that “servant leadership and co-responsibility truly is the way to move our Order forward.” She explained that the **Instrumentum Laboris** is organized “according to the challenges of leadership.”

She challenged the ministers to take the **Instrumentum Laboris**, review it and respond, considering what it means to animate and guide, to be co-responsible,

to be a minister or council member, to lead collegially, to listen, to collaborate. She said that each region would be receiving the complete document with instructions on how to respond.

In closing, she urged, “live a life worthy of your call,” and quoted Francis’ Psalm 7 from the *Office of the Passion*: “Cast off the weight of sin, and take up the Lord’s holy cross, and follow the Lord’s most holy commands to the very end. So be it. Amen.”

HIGHLIGHTS OF NATIONAL CHAPTER

'Now is the time to be physically apart but spiritually connected, appreciative of the deepest bonds we have, in touch with the integral peace we have with God, with creation, and with one another. It is time to become ever more aware that Jesus is the God of all nearness and He is the Lord of every distance and in Him we live, move, and have our being.'

- Fr. Chris Shorrock, OFM Conv

National Spiritual Assistants Focus on Impact of Pandemic

By MARY STRONACH, OFS

Not surprisingly, the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, understanding the impact that the pandemic has had on the brothers and sisters, took the opportunity to address the issues of this new reality.

"In these isolating moments, where can God be found?" asked President-in-turn Fr. **Christopher Panogoplos**, TOR. "What has isolation meant to you in these areas -- social, spiritual, emotional and political?"

Spiritual Impact of Pandemic

Br. **Alexander Escaleras**, OFM Cap, pointed to our responsibility to others. "We must consider the welfare of others who surround us even if our own life is not going the way we want it."

He shared a personal story about his brother, Deacon Steven, who died from liver disease complications in October 2019. A few days before his death, a cleaning lady shared with him, and family members present, her own suffering having just discovered that her daughter had diabetes and other problems. His brother, who had a tracheotomy and could not speak, raised his hands in the form of prayer. "Translation: 'I'm going to pray for

you.' Even as he lay there dying, my brother was given the grace by God to think of others in their need."

"Be safe and healthy," he closed, "and may God give you His grace to think of and help the other."

Social Effects of Pandemic

Fr. **Chris Shorrock**, OFM Conv, noted that social distancing goes against our psyche and our human tendencies. It can "easily lead to a sense of isolation and unrest, especially if we are in what has been described as being vulnerable due to age or any pre-existing medical conditions."

Quoting David Couturier OFM Cap, he said, "the challenge we face in this time of pandemic is how to deal creatively, contemplatively, and constructively with distance."

Individuals and fraternities are discovering new ways to meet virtually on plenty of online video platforms, he said. Prayer searches on the internet have skyrocketed. We've been attending Eucharist on-line; virtual groups have formed, some spiritual and others strictly social.

"Religious and spiritual practices

deliver something special when they are done socially -- a deep sense of community and connection with something larger than us," he continued.

"While these technological changes have shown promise in meeting people's more immediate spiritual concerns, months of self-isolation, rising unemployment and mounting death tolls will surely present fresh challenges."

Fr. Chris suggested that as we go forward, these on-line communities "will likely not be enough." And "what about our members who are not so technically minded?" he asked. "...and not being able to honor loved ones in funeral rites? The lack of these rituals, which bring people together, will surely affect the process of grieving."

"It is difficult to replace in-person human connection when we are at our most vulnerable," he added.

While we may someday return to our in-person celebrations and rituals, "some things will be forever changed by the crisis. And the new skills and online practices learned at this time

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SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

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will impact the ways Franciscans engage with the religious and spiritual into the future,” he said.

He concluded: “Now is the time to be physically apart but spiritually connected, appreciative of the deepest bonds we have, in touch with the integral peace we have with God, with creation, and with one another. It is time to become ever more aware that Jesus is the God of all nearness and He is the Lord of every distance and in Him we live, move, and have our being.”

Emotional Impact of Pandemic

Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM, who became president-in-turn at the end of the chapter, took the conversation further by noting:

“God created us with emotions, and he saw that it was very good.”

Emotions such as anger, sorrow, confusion, anxiety or distress “play a role for us,” he said. “They can help us

to develop a greater connection and to deepen our love. Conflict, in fact, can actually help us grow in love.”

Depression is a kind of anger; anxiety can lead to anger. We have to consider the blessings of anger, he said. The question is, “how do we express it?”

“Emotions are a gift. We have to learn to unwrap them,” he added.

As an example, he identified the work of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, who, in an “incredibly courageous act” found a way to address their anger in a positive pro-active way. We must search for “creative solutions.” He reminded attendees that while emotions such as anger are natural responses, sometimes our reactions need to be adjusted.

Political Impact of Pandemic

We develop a well-formed conscience through prayer, Fr. Christopher noted. “Don’t jump to

conclusions. Listen to what God wants. Test what we feel. Listen to what the Church has to say historically.” He added that we need quiet to listen to one another – to experience the beauty of dialogue.

He said: “Franciscans are called to take seriously the demands of the Gospel, to be agents of reconciliation and peace. (We are called to) alleviate suffering; extend hope; provide for the well-being of others. There can be no two sides of this divide. All of us need to do better at encountering and accompanying one another on the journey of life.”

“Politics is something nobler than posturing, marketing, and media spin,” he said. These sow nothing but division, conflict, and a bleak cynicism incapable of mobilizing people to pursue a common goal...In thinking of the future, we do well to ask political leaders: ‘Why are you doing this? What is your real aim?’

National Budget Overwhelmingly Approved

While OFS membership was down by 339 members in 2020, NAFRA treasurer, **Claudia Kauzlarich**, OFS, reported that the National Fraternity was under budget because meetings during the pandemic had been canceled or had gone on-line. The ending balance for 2020 was \$485,932.

The proposed budget for 2021 totaled \$317,900. Expected income from fair share would be \$217,000, assuming membership at 12,275 and fair share at \$17 remain the same. If the National Fraternity were to use all the budgeted funds, the net loss would be \$100,900. This sum would be covered by money in savings, she said, adding that “we always project high and spend less.”

Because of the pandemic, some regional fraternities may have difficulty in paying their fair share, she said. In



Treasurer Claudia Kauzlarich, OFS

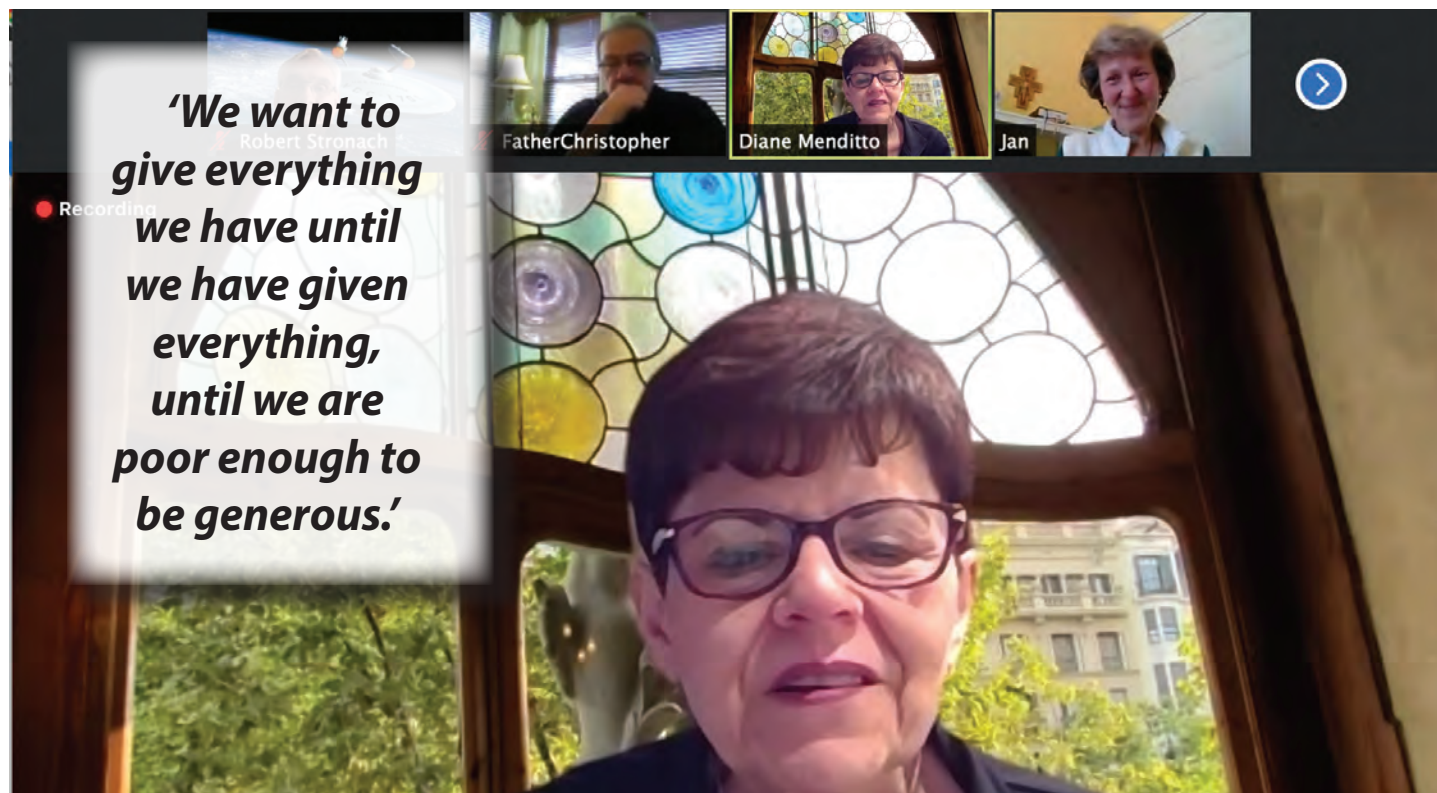
this case, the fraternity in difficulty should contact the National Executive Council. She said the hope is that other regional fraternities would consider helping by making a special donation. In 2020, she reported, this fund received donations from regional fraternities totaling \$2,490.

She also reported that negotiations

to reduce penalties were continuing with the Sheraton in Arizona where the Quinquennial had to be postponed due to the pandemic. The intention is to reschedule for 2022 at the same location, reducing the penalty.

The budget was overwhelmingly approved with 97% in favor and 3% abstaining.

HIGHLIGHTS OF NATIONAL CHAPTER



Diane Menditto, OFS, National Formation Commission chair..

Local Fraternity Is the Heart of the Order

By SHARON WINZELER, OFS

Calling the local fraternity the “heart-beat of the order,” National Formation Commission Chair **Diane Menditto**, OFS, pointed to the commitment Secular Franciscans make at profession “to accompany and take care of one another on our journey to the Father.”

In her presentation titled “*Fraternity: Our Way of Life*,” Menditto elaborated on five key elements to living in communion with one another — collaboration, community, communication, commitment, and conversion.

While explaining the art of Franciscan collaboration, she cited a report by former Minister General Emanuela DeNunzio, OFS, that represents the identity of Secular Franciscans in a triple dimension: Personal (inner life); Fraternal (co-responsibility); and Universal (the mission).

“The mission itself needs to be reflected not only in Gospel values, but in order to work for the fraternity, it also needs to be based on the gifts of its members,” Menditto said.

By championing the lives of our brothers and sisters in fraternity, we strengthen each other, she said, citing the *General Constitutions*, Article 30.2 on how fraternity should be lived.

“The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer and active collaboration in accordance with each one’s situation and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity,” Menditto said.

The challenge of the community element means the “acceptance of and empathy for our brothers and sisters,” she said.

“We can go out and support others because we know we are loved and supported,” she said.

“We are not looking for others to serve us, but we are looking for ways to serve one another. We want to give everything we have until we have given everything, until we are poor enough to be generous.”

The communication element means listening with patience and humility, even when one doesn’t agree. Menditto encouraged regional ministers and councilors to communicate directly with the local fraternities they represent.

“This is one of the ways the local fraternities will know that we are listening to them,” she said. Listening as a method of communication applies to every level of fraternity.

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FRATERNITY: SPECIAL INGREDIENTS



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“If we truly want to serve one another and others in fraternity, listening to the needs of others should, no must, be the basis for whatever we do for one another,” Menditto said.

The fourth challenge of a Secular Franciscan is commitment to what one promised at profession.

“By profession we are committed to God, to one another and to all creation. This is called universal kinship.”

Living the Gospel life as a Secular Franciscan is a full-time experience, she said.

Finally, the biggest challenge of all is daily conversion.

“It is the only way we will accomplish the rest,” Menditto said, citing Article 7 of the Rule: “United by their vocation as brothers and sisters of penance, and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the Gospel itself calls conversion.”

Daily conversion helps us to strengthen our mission outlined in the Gospel.

“This requires constant self-examination to be sure we reach out to others because we are not attached to ourselves.”

Using extensive quotes from “*Belonging to the SFO*” by Emanuela DeNunzio, OFS, (General Chapter 2008), Menditto recommended that fraternities:

- create a **School of sanctity** -- “Fraternity can promote in its members full development of the interior life: an intense liturgical life, sacramental and charitable life through practices such as fraternity prayer, Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, retreats and days of recollection.”

- create a **School of formation** -- “The spirit of belonging is nurtured when the Rule becomes the life of the brothers and sisters. It will assure a kind of assimilation of the spirit of the Rule in the life and in the history of each person. Those who are assiduous readers of the writings of Francis and of Clare and of the ancient biographies will be strengthened in their Franciscan identity. Therefore, Secular Franciscans should regularly read spiritual readings from the sources. We are agents of our own formation. We form ourselves so that we can form others.”

- be a **Witness of ecclesial communion** -- “It is essential that everyone make the decision to make himself/herself present in the lives of the brothers and sisters: rejoicing with those who participate, being mindful of those that

do not come, trying to find the reasons for which someone has lost the motivation. In order to promote the desire to gather in fraternity, the Council should plan meetings that are pleasant, productive and enriching.”

- **participate in the apostolic purpose of the Church** -- “The Rule recommends being creative in our apostolic activity -- examine our ministries. Society has changed, and the Church has renewed itself and is renewing itself again. The Gospel is always the same, but new approaches and new encounters with the Gospel and history are necessary.”

- be a **Presence in society** -- “In light of the social doctrine of the church, every fraternity should question its priorities in its own missionary commitment.”

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

“*The Secular Franciscan Order for an Evangelizing Mission Together with all the Franciscan Family.*” (Benedetto Lino, OFS, at the First International Congress for Missions and Evangelization-OFS-2014)

“*How Should An Order Like the OFS Be Managed at All Its Levels?*” (Benedetto Lino, OFS, XIV General Chapter, November 2014)

“*Belonging to the SFO*” (Emanuela DeNunzio, OFS, General Chapter 2008)

HIGHLIGHTS OF NATIONAL CHAPTER

Surprise Visit by Minister General

During the second day of the National Chapter, the attendees received a surprise visit from Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS, of Hungary.

He brought a message of hope and appreciation, praying “that God will help us get out of this virtual world... but still happy to have the technology for us to meet across incredible distances so that we can see and listen to each other.” He invited all to pray for all those who do not have the equipment – in Africa, Asia, Latin America.

“Let us discover the power of prayer in interceding for others,” he said.

He asked the chapter to pray for the



Presidency as it prepares for a hybrid meeting in Rome where some members will be on-line and others will be

present.

He closed his message by simply saying, “I hope we meet in person.”

Committee and Commission Reports

As is the yearly practice, all committees and commissions submitted written reports to the National Fraternity. Below are highlights:

- **1-800-FRANCIS:** received 125 calls requesting vocation information.

- **A draft of a new book** on the history of the Order in the US should be ready for review by spring 2021.

- **The Regional Guidelines** for Archives will soon be available on the national website.

- **A new listing** of the documents of establishment available in the national archives at St. Bonaventure University was sent to the regional archivists.

- **The CNSA** welcomed Fr. Christopher Shorrock, O.F.M., Conv., who was appointed in November of 2019. Fr. Chris hails from Australia, and is currently living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is the former National Spiritual Assistant to the OFS National Fraternity in Australia, holds a doctorate in Theology, and taught at the Catholic Theological College in Melbourne, Australia, and the Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury, UK.

- **Three emerging** fraternities in Missouri, California and Maryland requested documents of Canonical Establishment from the CNSA.

- **A working group** has been commissioned to draft a charter, vision and mission for the newly formed Franciscan Family Forum.

- **A document** on the Canonical Establishment of a Fraternity is in review stage and should be available soon.

- **The CNSA** published a document on “Clarification on Same Sex Attraction and Sexual Identity Issues.”

- **The Computer Committee** updated existing programs and revised login procedures.

- **The Ecumenical Interfaith** Committee held its first Ecumenical Interfaith Conference in July 2020.

- **Franciscan Youth** and Young Adult (FY/YA) presented an 11-week FY/YA animator training series on Zoom.

- **FY/YA created** a Formation Program Outline that clarifies the goals, methods and topics (in human, Christian, and Franciscan life) that accompany the stages young people

experience in YouFra.

- **Justice, Peace** and Integrity of Creation Commission Visioning II Gathering in May 2020 via Zoom provided the opportunity for 36 national leaders to discuss what Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation needs to look like in the United States – in the current times. Because of this event, JPIC Focus Groups on Care for Creation, Immigration, Mindful Dialogues and Spirituality were established.

- **The Formation** Commission co-hosted Zoom calls for Spanish speakers, provided weekly “Formation Friday” articles to regional formation directors; presented a national regional formation workshop in August 2020 where they unveiled the first draft and design of a chapter and its companion from the new formation program.

- **Public Relations** updated the Quinquennial Website and provided media coverage for national chapter as well as a special section in Tau-USA.

- **20th Quinquennial** Congress Committee continues its planning and will include both Korean and Spanish breakout sessions.