



FRANCISCAN YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT COMMISSION REPORT

by Kathleen Molars, OFS, FYYA Commission Chair

Fostering Communion with Our Youth and Young Adults

As Pope Francis said in *Laudato Si'*, "The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore from the very heart of things something new can always emerge." In this case, the "something new" is fostering communion with our youth (Rule, Art. 24), inspiring them to live Gospel lives and supporting them in their journey toward holiness.

The National Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Commission hopes to motivate and support your efforts. God counts on our cooperation, and we are aware of the difficult choices and roadblocks that might inhibit you. But as Franciscans, we have truly precious advantages to help us bring about this renewal we're all so desperate for.

First, we have the examples of our dear Francis and Clare, who exemplified so beautifully a life driven by the Gospel. At a recent retreat with Larry Grosselin, OFM, he shared that what drew him to the Franciscan Order was Francis himself. Fr. Grosselin spoke of qualities he admired in our beloved Francis—his authenticity, humility, joy, and love of the Gospel. His humanness, and faithfulness to the Catholic Church and his love of all brothers and sisters, including creation.

Qualities that we, as Secular Franciscans strive to emulate, are observed as we enter into the realm of youth, no matter how insignificant our role may appear. We can inspire them with the Franciscan charism just by being in their presence as they journey in their faith.

We also have our Rule. This year's NAFRA theme, "Renewed and Confirmed: Live the Treasure," was chosen in commemoration of the Rule's 40th year as our inspiration. We're invited to remember and celebrate what Saint John Paul II said in 1982 at the OFS General Assembly of the International Council, that our Rule "is an authentic treasure in your hands."

An excerpt from the Four Ministers General is found in the beginning of the Rule. "The hope of renewal hinges upon returning to the origins and to the

spiritual experience of Francis of Assisi and the brothers and sisters of penance who received from him their inspiration and guidance." Again, we bear of renewal.

In order to fully re-energize our efforts, it's going to take three things. We need to unite, ignite, then invite.

Unite: The FY/YA commission is determined to seek ways to unite us as a nation. We are all called to reach out to our younger generations in some way. It's imperative that we communicate with one another, share ideas, and support each other's efforts.

Ignite: Francis reached way down into his soul to find the courage to embrace a leper, which turned "what once was bitter into sweet!" The Holy Spirit has enkindled in us a fire that we cannot ignore. Each of us must take that first step, then spread our flame to others.

Invite: When our youth experience us as simple folk who live the treasure of our Franciscan charism, they will desire more. Our very lives become the invitation. What will draw them? Francis himself.

Let's carry this "treasure" with us wherever we go, especially when working with youth and young adults. Renewed and confirmed, allow this splendid gift to become our way to unite, ignite, and invite.

New National Secular Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Commission



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