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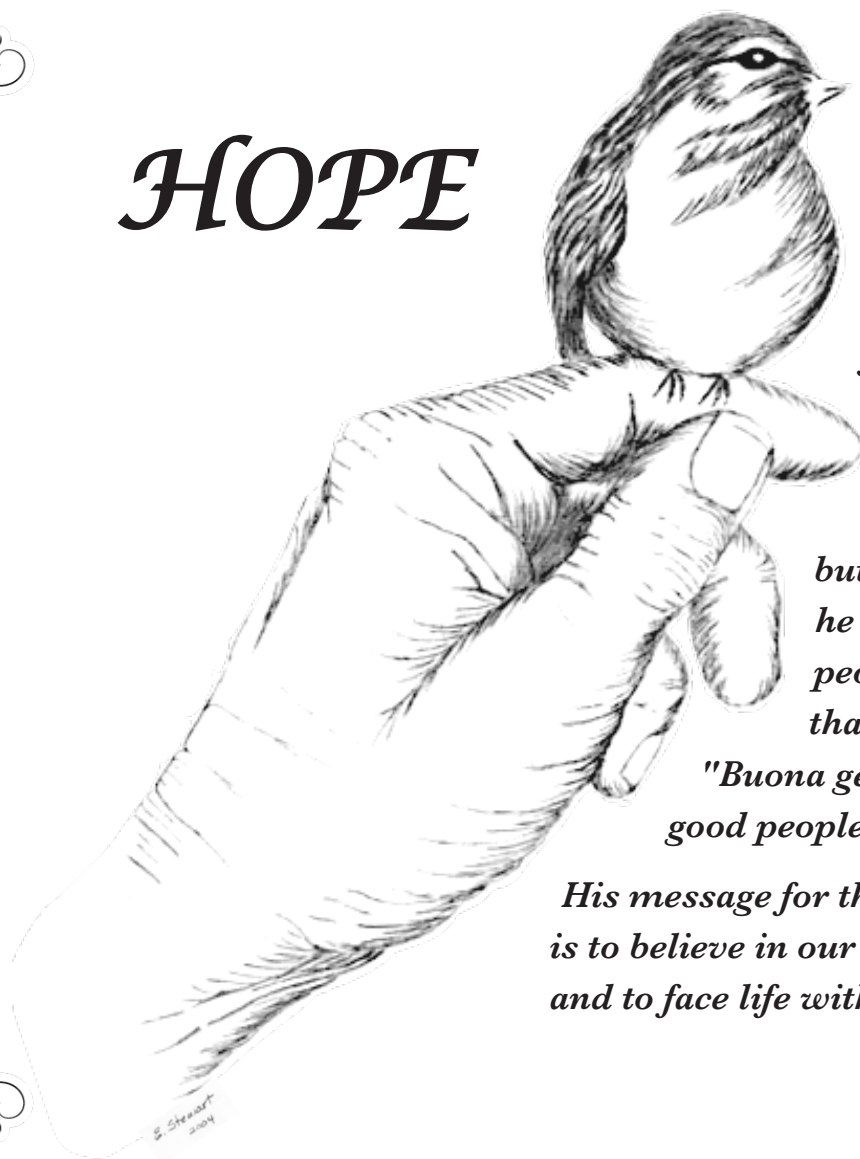
AU-USA

A PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN
ORDER

Spring/Summer 2021 Issue 103



HOPE



Flocks of birds, in medieval times, symbolized crowds of common people, St. Francis did preach to the birds, but more importantly, he gave the common people the message that they were

"Buona gente," good people loved by God.

His message for them and for us is to believe in our own self-worth and to face life with courage and hope.



Mission to Share the Vision

The TAU-USA, a publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of the United States, is a vital communication link between the OFS-USA leadership and all candidates and all professed Secular Franciscans throughout the United States. The articles within the publication, while sharing the Secular Franciscan charism and vision, are intended to inform, inspire, and challenge.



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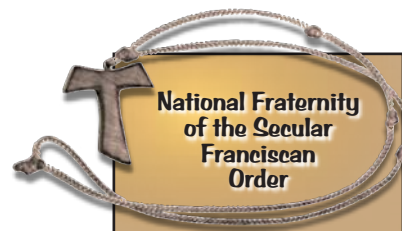
Contents

Minister's Message	1
<i>by Jan Parker, OFS</i>	
Sharing the Vision	3
<i>by Jan Parker, OFS</i>	
Fraternity Life	5
<i>by Mary Bittner, OFS</i>	
Franciscan Family Forum	7
<i>by Sr. Agnes Marie Regan, OSF</i>	
CNSA Message	8
<i>by Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR</i>	
JPIC - Becoming Prayer for Peace & Justice	9
<i>by Carolyn Townes, OFS</i>	
Formation Commission	11
<i>by Justin Carisio, OFS</i>	
Ecumenical Interfaith Committee	13
<i>by Donna Hollis, OFS</i>	
Youth and Young Adults Commission	15
<i>by Kathleen Molaro, OFS</i>	
Multicultural/Diversity	16
<i>by Willie Guadalupe, OFS</i>	
Diversity Team	17
<i>by Cherryle Fruge, OFS</i>	
Holiness Behind Bars	19
<i>Mary Esther Stewart, OFS</i>	
Transcendence or Immanence?	21
<i>by Bret Thoman, OFS</i>	
Franciscan Living	22
<i>by Francine Gikow, OFS</i>	
Instrumentum Laboris Report	23
Annual Financial Report	25
Quinquennial Ad	27
Smoky Valley Publications	29

TAU-USA is published quarterly. All candidates and professed Secular Franciscans receive the newsletter without charge. For subscription or change of address information, write to:

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Subscriptions per year cost \$4.00 for U. S., \$6.00 for Canadian, \$15.00 for Overseas.



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A Spanish version of the TAU-USA is now available and being mailed to Spanish speaking members upon request. If you wish to receive the TAU USA in Spanish and not English, please send your name, address, fraternity name and region name to: Cindy Wesley OFS, cw93444@gmail.com or 846 Calimex Place, Nipomo, CA 93444.



OFS-USA

NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER-USA



NATIONAL MINISTER'S MESSAGE

by Jan Parker OFS

CHOSEN FOR EACH OTHER

When Mike and Michelle moved in across the street two years ago, I welcomed them to the neighborhood. Since then, we take time to chat when we see each other outside. Last fall, when I was diagnosed with cancer, I let my neighbors know that I would be away a few weeks, as I would be recovering from surgery at my son's house. Mike and Michelle immediately wanted to know what they could do to help me. I asked if they could keep an eye on the house and water my plants. Michelle quickly replied, "We'd be happy to do that. Please let us know if there's anything else, ok?"

Shortly after I returned home, Mike and Michelle walked over to say hello and see how I was doing. I shared that things were going well, but I had started chemotherapy and was tired much of the time. They again assured me that if I needed anything, they were there for me. Michelle said, "Jan, even if you just need a drink of water and you are too tired to get up, just call me, ok?" Then Mike, who has always struck me as more reserved, warmly added, "We're supposed to love our neighbor, so let us do that." To this day, their words remain in my heart. Those Gospel words spoke to me.

A book that has accompanied me during this past year poses this question: "Has it ever occurred to you that the people that surround you have, in some way, been sent to you by God?" It goes on to say, "They have been chosen, and you have been chosen to circle through one another's lives as a welcoming presence, a constant blessing."¹ I believe God chose Mike and Michelle to be in my life at this time, not simply because of my need for help, but for their witness of living and sharing the Gospel message. There is now a wonderful bridge of caring between their home and mine, a bridge built upon the words of Jesus.

Being *chosen for each other* has great significance for us as Franciscans, both in our fraternities and in our everyday lives. When we focus on others as "a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ" we will approach them with a certain reverence. Our encounters and interactions will be marked by holiness, conversion, and transformation. Without this perspective we miss the blessing of others whom God has chosen to be part of our lives. We close ourselves off to grace-filled possibilities.



Enjoying some homemade chicken soup at Jake and Megan's after surgery

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

OFS Rule, Art. 13

I found a good example of this in the film series *The Chosen*.² The early episodes unfold the call of the apostles, and we clearly see how these first followers of Jesus were real people, with distinct personalities and quite different backgrounds. We see how the apostles question why Jesus chose this person, or that person. In particular, we see Simon struggling when Matthew, the tax collector, is invited to follow. While the apostles realize they have been chosen to follow Jesus, they do not yet see how they have also been chosen for each other. It would take Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit to unite them.

We can experience a similar situation in fraternity life as we struggle with the faults and shortcomings we see

¹ Macrina Wiederkehr in *The Flowing Grace of Now*, p. 98

² *The Chosen* is a television drama based on the life of Jesus Christ, created, directed, and co-written by American filmmaker Dallas Jenkins. It is the first multi-season series about the life of Christ, and season one was the highest crowd-funded TV series or film project of all time. The series portrays Jesus through the eyes of those who met him. (Wikipedia)

in our sisters or brothers. The temptation is to shake our heads, look up to heaven and say, "Lord, you are certainly giving me many opportunities to practice patience!" But is this really what God desires, that we put up with each other?

If we genuinely believe that *we are chosen for each other*, we will look at our sisters and brothers much

differently. We will no longer see their faults and shortcomings, but we will connect at a deeper level. Spiritual growth does not come from putting up with each other, but from our openness to the presence of the Spirit among us, conforming us to the way of love. It is for this we were chosen.

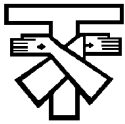
"The Lord, therefore, cries aloud to us to come and drink, if we are thirsty within; and he says that when we have drunk, rivers of living water will flow from our heart...What is the river that flows from the heart of the inner man? The love of his neighbor. For if he thinks that what he drinks ought to only satisfy himself, there is no living water flowing from his heart. But if he does good to his neighbor, the stream is not dried up but flows."

St. Augustine, Tractates on the Gospel of John

May the fraternal bonds of community always be our help, so that we may reach the goal of perfect Christian love."

from the Secular Franciscan Rite of Profession to the Gospel Life





SHARING THE VISION

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



Instrumentum Laboris: Animate & Guide with Servant Leadership

In preparation for the General Chapter to be held this November, the CIOFS Presidency issued the *Instrumentum Laboris: Animate & Guide with Servant Leadership* (IL). They have requested that each national fraternity review this important preparatory document and respond to the questions that were included. To solicit this input, the National Executive Council (NEC) organized several area-wide meetings, including a meeting with the full National Fraternity Council on April 10, 2021. Based on these conversations, the NEC compiled the OFS-USA response. **We wish to share this collective response with you and have included it in this issue of TAU-USA. (See pages 23-24.)**

Secular Franciscan leaders from across the United States overwhelmingly endorsed the IL. All those who were interviewed wholeheartedly agreed that:

- we cannot underestimate the importance of good leadership for the Secular Franciscan Order;
- there must be a deepening of our sense of co-responsibility within fraternities;
- we need to pay more attention to the spiritual aspects of servant leadership, particularly as described in the *OFS General Constitutions*.

We encourage local and regional fraternities to utilize “Animate and Guide with Servant Leadership” for ongoing formation. The complete document can be downloaded from our OFS-USA website www.secularfranciscansusa.org. At the home page, click on Search and type in “Animate and Guide.”

Guide to Canonical Establishment of a Secular Franciscan Fraternity

We are excited to announce the publication of revised guidelines for those wishing to start a new OFS fraternity. The *Guide to Canonical Establishment of a Secular Franciscan Fraternity* gives a clear explanation of each phase of this process from newly forming group to emerging fraternity to canonical establishment. The *Guide* lists requirements for each phase, outlines the responsibilities of the sponsoring fraternity and Regional Executive Council, and describes the mandatory involvement of First Order and Third Order Regular (TOR) Provincial Ministers. The *Guide* explains such terms as *altius moderamen*, and provides helpful instructions for everything from formation to record keeping. A great effort was made to ensure that this

guide was practical, while also capturing the spiritual aspects of the process.

The Guide begins with an introductory section entitled, “So you want to start a fraternity...” outlining the significance of this undertaking. It beautifully describes what is needed to form a fraternity into a *genuine ecclesial community*. The information in this first section will be helpful not only to those OFS forming new fraternities but can inspire all of us as we continue to focus on our national priority of Fraternity Life. **For this reason, we have included this section of the Guide in this issue of TAU-USA. (See pages 5-6.)**

The complete 23-page Guide can be downloaded from our website www.secularfranciscansusa.org. At the home page, click on Search, and type in “Guide to Canonical Establishment.”

National Council Elections – Last Call for Nominations

Tentatively, the 2021 NAFRA Elective Chapter will be held October 26-31 at Montserrat Retreat in Lake Dallas, Texas. While we will not know for several months yet whether we will be able to meet in person, we still need to prepare for the elections. If we can meet safely, and if a presider from the International Council is able to attend, we will elect a new National Executive Council. We continue to seek nominations for each position of Minister, Vice-Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Councilor, and International Councilor. *The call for nominations has been extended to July 31, 2021.* Nominations should be sent to the Nomination Committee Co-Chairs: Kate Kleinert OFS at kkleinert@msn.com and Emma Lowzowski OFS at ofs.minister.prairie@gmail.com

Invitation to Explore the CIOFS Website

Did you know

- ...there will soon be an outdoor sanctuary erected near Cannara, Italy, to commemorate the site where St. Francis preached to the birds?
- ...there is a series of videos commemorating the 800th anniversary of *Memoriale Propositi*, highlighting the similarities between the 1221 document and the current OFS Rule?
- ...there is a newsletter called *Koinonia* written by the General Spiritual Assistants? The current issue focuses on Servant Leadership.

This is just a tiny peek at what you might find on the International OFS website www.ciofs.info. **We invite you to explore this beautiful, updated, and easy-to-navigate website.** Where to start? Once on the

home page simply scroll down to see all the latest news and videos. Also, under the “NEWS” tab you can click on *Vox Franciscana* (*Franciscan Voice*), CIOFS’s newsletter, edited by our own Bob Stronach, OFS, and published

twice a year. Each issue has wonderful articles on OFS events from around the world. Touring “ciofs.org” is inspiring! It will connect you with our worldwide OFS family and broaden your view of OFS life.



OFS-USA 20th Quinquennial Congress JUBILEE!

It is hard to describe the joy of being at a Quinquennial Congress—it is something you need experience yourself. The good news is that your opportunity to do just that is coming in 2022. The OFS-USA 20th Quinquennial Congress (“Q”) will be held August 3-7, 2022, in Phoenix, Arizona at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel. More good news! Due to a grant from the Duns Scotus Formation Fund, the registration cost has been cut

in half – just \$175 for those registering early. It is our hope that this will make it possible for many more of our brothers and sisters to attend this “twice in a decade” event.

Our Quinquennial theme, **JUBILEE**, was chosen to commemorate the 800th anniversary of *Memoriale Propositi*, as well as to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first Quinquennial Congress held in the United States. Given these two anniversaries, there will be much JUBILEE joy! It will also be a time to join with hundreds of fellow OFS members to celebrate and renew our Franciscan calling in the spirit of conversion. You will not want to miss it!



Registration opens August 1, 2021,
and will be entirely online.

To register, go to our OFS-USA website <https://secularfranciscansusa.org>. Click on the “Quinquennial” button, easily found on the main menu at the top of the homepage. From the dropdown menu be sure to choose “Read Me First,” which will guide you through the registration process.



For any additional help you may email the Q Committee directly at ofsusa.qcongress@gmail.com.

Be ready to take advantage of the \$175 Early Bird registration, available until Dec. 31, 2021.



2018-2021 NATIONAL PRIORITY
FRATERNITY LIFE

FRATERNITY AND ITS BEGINNING

by Mary Bittner, OFS

*The following article was adapted from the new **Guide to the Canonical Establishment of a Secular Franciscan Fraternity** approved ad experimentum on April 16, 2021. The complete guide is posted on the national website secularfranciscansusa.org/resources/guidelines, under the “National Guidelines” link.*

Welcome! Beginning a new fraternity is a great and rewarding task. Before you begin, however, you should be aware of the significance of what you intend to do. If you’re already a professed Secular Franciscan, the ideas that follow should not be new to you. Consider this a helpful reminder of some basics that might otherwise get lost in the procedural details. It is important to have these basics firmly in mind. If you are not a Secular Franciscan, much of what is said will probably be unfamiliar to you. Some of the terms used will be explained as we go along. As for the rest, you’re not going to be doing this alone. Don’t be afraid to ask other Secular Franciscans for clarification.

To be more specific, the “other Secular Franciscans” who will assist you are;

- the Regional Executive Council (REC), one of whose responsibilities is the oversight of newly-forming Secular Franciscan groups in your geographic area, and
- the sponsoring fraternity, a local fraternity that will be assigned to mentor you through the process.

Let’s begin by clarifying what a Secular Franciscan fraternity is not.

- It is not a prayer group, although members do pray when they gather.
- It is not a support group, although members do support each other.
- It is not a study group, although formation in the Franciscan way of life is an ongoing part of every gathering.
- It is not a Bible study group, although the Gospels form the basis of OFS life and are frequently discussed.
- It is not a social ministry group, although members participate in a variety of social ministries.
- It is not a parish organization, although many fraternities do meet in parish facilities.

So what is a fraternity, then? **The local fraternity is the basic unit of the Secular Franciscan Order** (the OFS). It has **a special purpose** that is defined by the OFS legislation and **a unique identity** (called a “juridical personality”) **in the Church**.

Let’s unpack these statements.

A Secular Franciscan fraternity is **part of an established Order in the Church**, which has certain implications.

- The fraternity itself must be **officially “established” by one of the Franciscan Friar Provinces** that have ecclesiastical responsibility for the OFS. Thus by definition it is not a parish or diocesan organization.
- Individual members are **bound more intimately to the Church**, which is why full membership is open only to Catholics in full communion with the Church.

That describes the fraternity’s identity as it relates to the Church. What about its **purpose**?

- First and foremost, **the purpose of the Order** (and thus the purpose of the fraternity, all OFS members, and others who belong to the Franciscan Family) is to **make present the Franciscan charism in the life and mission of the Church** (OFS Rule, Art. 1).
- In and of itself, the fraternity is **a service to the Church**. “Fidelity to their own charism, Franciscan and secular, and the witness of building fraternity, sincerely and openly, are their principal services to the Church, which is the community of love (General Constitutions [GC] 100.3).”
- “The Fraternity of the OFS finds its origin in the inspiration of Francis of Assisi, to whom the Most High revealed the essential gospel quality of life in fraternal communion.” (GC 28.1) As an integral part of OFS life, it is marked by fraternal communion and is **a means of holiness**.

With these considerations firmly in mind, this Guide sets forth a clear pathway to canonical establishment of a new Secular Franciscan fraternity. It describes:

- the stages of development of the group;
- the requirements for documentation;
- when and how to obtain the approval of the local bishop and the Provincial Minister; and
- the respective roles of the sponsoring fraternity and the REC throughout the process.

Establishing a fraternity is more than the end result of checking off items on a To-Do list. There is another aspect of a fraternity's identity, a spiritual dimension that was hinted at in the description of its purpose. The fraternity is to become *a genuine ecclesial community*. Canonical establishment is *an acknowledgement by the Church that a fraternity, an ecclesial community, is present.*

The requirements for developing a genuine ecclesial community are more difficult to define than listing those for documentation and approval, but they are obviously key. In some ways, you can think of the process as analogous to the way you'd go about acquiring any new skill: you'd watch someone, you'd try it out, you'd get some coaching, and you'd practice what you learned. So to assist you, a sponsoring fraternity will be assigned to mentor you, answer your questions, and serve as a model of fraternity life. In addition, we list here some general attitudes that are helpful to keep in mind.

❖ ***Make building community your priority.*** A fraternity doesn't just happen automatically, without significant effort on the part of its members. It needs to be worked at for it to become a reality. Resolve that your commitment to your Secular Franciscan vocation and to the fraternity will take precedence over your involvement in other organizations, including those of the parish.

❖ ***Cultivate a sense of co-responsibility within the fraternity.*** Unlike other organizations where responsibility for the well-being of the group is held by a small number of members, in a fraternity all members share responsibility for the life of the fraternity. "The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer and active collaboration, in accordance with each one's means and possible obligations for the animation of the Fraternity." (GC 30.2)

❖ ***Acknowledge that community takes time to develop.*** Look for opportunities to work together, visit together, pray together, study together and have fun together. Don't limit yourselves to the monthly fraternity gathering, but find ways to interact with fellow Franciscans throughout the month.

❖ ***Appreciate differences.*** Fraternal unity does not imply uniformity. Our differences add to the richness of life and bring a wide variety of gifts and talents to the fraternity. They are a positive advantage and should not be allowed to become

the cause of dissension. Which of us can be complete without his brothers and sisters?

❖ ***Beware of being judgmental.*** Being judgmental is one of the easiest ways to poison the spirit of the fraternity. "Blessed is the person that puts up with the frailty of his neighbor to the extent he would like his neighbor to put up with him if he were in a similar plight." (Admonition XVIII*)

❖ ***Practice forgiveness.*** "...I wish to know in this way if you love the Lord and me, His servant and yours: that there is not any brother in the world who has sinned—however much he could have sinned—who, after he has looked into your eyes, would ever depart without your mercy, if he is looking for mercy. And if he were not looking for mercy, you would ask him if he wants mercy. And if he would sin a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him to the Lord..." (Letter to a Minister*). Even in our fraternities, we will have many opportunities to apply this advice.

And finally, and most important:

❖ ***Follow St. Francis' advice*** to his brothers. "Pursue what you should desire above all else, namely, to have the Spirit of God and God's grace working in you..." (cf. Earlier Rule XVII*). When you come right down to it, all the attitudes and techniques in the world are insufficient to form a genuine ecclesial community. The Holy Spirit is the one who breathes life into your fraternity, who molds you and brings you together as one.

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you know about the history of your local fraternity? When was it established? By whom?
2. If a non-Catholic friend asked you what a fraternity is, what would you tell them? How would you explain "ecclesial community"?
3. What is the significance of having a "juridical personality"?
4. The "general attitudes" for fraternity building do not apply exclusively to the early stages of fraternity life. How do you see them being applied in your own fraternity? Which one(s) do you consider most important?
5. What are several ways you personally can exercise co-responsibility?

**Francis of Assisi, Early Documents, Vol. I, The Saint*, New City Press, 1999.



From “Life Giving Union” to the Franciscan Family Forum

by Sr. Agnes Marie Regan, OSF

Since that special weekend in St. Louis in August of 2019 entitled “Life-Giving Union,” Franciscans from all three branches of the Order have been astounded at what has developed from that Spirit-filled assembly. The 56 national Franciscan leaders, consisting of members of the Order of Friars Minor, the Poor Clares, and members of the Third Order, Secular, Regular, and TOR, opened themselves to a dream that, despite and perhaps because of the restrictions of the pandemic, would become the “Franciscan Family Forum.”

A post “Life-Giving Union” questionnaire, based on the 18 recommendations of the assembly, produced an exciting eight-page listing of concrete suggestions to keep the momentum of the St. Louis gathering going forward. Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, elicited 18 volunteers to sift through and organize those marvelous ideas, which were passed on to an eight-member Core Team. That team’s task was to work on the nitty gritty of forming a Vision Statement, Mission Statement, structure, and process for moving forward to embody the “dream” of being a “Life-Giving Union.” The original 18 volunteers became known as the *Gathering Place*, which has continued to grow in so many beautiful ways!

The Forum has become a welcoming place to offer a life-giving heartbeat of encouragement, support, and information to the whole Franciscan Family in the United States, through a model of fraternal unity and collaboration. Its mission is “to sustain the life-giving union of the Franciscan family by building relationships and offering assistance through dialogue to address the contemporary challenges that we face in living the Gospel life.” The Forum does not wish to supplant or duplicate the works of already-existing Franciscan efforts such as Franciscans International, the Franciscan Federation, Franciscan Action Network, or other such entities. Collaboration and support are to be the Forum’s hallmark qualities, while continuing to develop its own spirit of BEING (cf. Encarnacion del Pazo, OFS), the heartbeat enlivening the Family.

In addition to *Gathering Place* meetings, the Franciscan Family Forum has created two important initiatives that seek to strengthen Franciscan Family bonds. The first initiative is the Formation/Vocation Panel videos being coordinated by Fr. Jack Clark Robinson, OFM, and

Diane Menditto, OFS, and their team of dedicated Formation colleagues from all three branches of the Order. The team is working on the creation of three visual presentations: (1) **MY STORY:** personal remarks by individuals presently in formation describing what attracted them to their chosen expression of Franciscan life; (2) **OUR STORY:** the “nuts and bolts” of the formation process in our various branches of the Order’ and (3) **YOUR STORY:** offering aids to vocational discernment in the different expressions of the call to Franciscan life. This talented group is being assisted by the computer gifts of Andy Tretow, the Communications Director of Assumption Province of the OFMs.

DonnaMarie Kaminsky, OFS, and Miriam Kennedy, OFS, are working on the “Franciscan Yellow Pages,” which has become known as “Wisdom Treasures.” When completed, “Wisdom Treasures” will be a handy reference of all US Franciscans and the gifts and talents they are willing to share with other members of the family such as (1) directing retreats, presentations, and or workshops on Franciscan topics, (2) spiritual direction, (3) communication skills, (4) Franciscan formation, (5) leadership, (6) peace and justice, (7) various forms of ecclesial ministry in the Franciscan spirit . . . and the myriad other ways we’ve all been called to serve the Church and the Order.

The Franciscan Family Forum strives to maintain the balance between being welcoming to all professed Franciscans, the need to provide continuity in focusing in on critical topics, maintaining representation from each branch of the Franciscan Family, and facilitating life-giving connections.

The *Gathering Place* meets every other month as a group on the 3rd Wednesday at 12 PM Eastern and is focused on news, updates, and sharing for the whole group. In the intervening months, on the same day and time, smaller breakout groups are invited to engage in dialogue on current events, communication, and the progress of Franciscan Family Forum initiatives. If you would like to participate in the *Gathering Place*, or are interested in offering your talents and experience to the rest of the Franciscan Family, please send an email with a little bit about yourself to:

franciscanfamilyforum@gmail.com.



“Who Goes There?”

Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, CNSA

In the Winter Issue of TAU-USA, Jan, our National Minister, spoke of *“prophetic creativity,”* that necessary gift to achieve total renewal of the Order. She is inviting us all to reach back and retrieve from down deep the many gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. We embark on this journey of transformation, in wonder, humility, and possibility—the interior movement of the Spirit—Who accompanies us upward and outward. St Francis grew into the understanding *“Go, rebuild...”* as an *action call to rebuild and reinvigorate*, himself first, then for others, who will see in him a model pointing towards making the Kingdom of God a reality on earth.

With the advent of the Second Vatican Council (more than a half century ago!), the *“holy People of God are viewed as sharing in Christ’s prophetic office.”* They are *“...a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity.”* As a prophetic people, the People of God are expected to lead the way, to become prophets and leaders in the rebuilding process. And as Secular Franciscans, with the world as our cloister, there have never been any boundaries between the dimensions of Franciscan charism and any other aspect of our life. *“What we have to be is what we already are”* (Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*).

I believe prophetic creativity began for St Francis as he knelt in silence before the Christ of the Cross of San Damiano. As a response to God’s self-communication, a personal relationship was borne in a steady conversion of heart as his life’s direction. It would flourish with communal concerns. Did he not ask a prayed-for gift of *“insight”*? Is not the gift of insight forged in the flame of Franciscan formation that we strive for and cherish?

Franciscans, seculars and religious, are immersed in social, economic, and political reality. We cannot sit by and remain passive to the needs, aspirations, movements, and accomplishments of society. It is here that God is revealed and where prophetic creativity is fashioned—giving us a spirit enlivened to be genuinely involved in the affairs of the world.

I believe prophetic creativity can be the solution to time and change in human relationships—respecting the *“I-Thou”* relationship—a communion-as-encounter, as Pope Francis teaches. If we are in communion with the other, and are present to the other—with trust, respect, attentiveness, patience, and humility—we become more present toward ourselves. Communion with others can give new meaning to experiences that otherwise would have been closed.

Prophetic insight. Prophetic creativity. Sisters and brothers, strive to let these be pathways for the sake of the Gospel. The Reign of God will always be challenged. The common good must deserve our attention and be a priority. The gift of loving concern will be for others.

Familiar as we are with the need for ongoing conversion, let it open us up anew to a variety of encounters and relationships. We will be capable to engage in dialogue with others who think and act differently than we. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis voices a clear calling for the recognition that all people are our brothers and sisters. Seeking forms of social friendship that include everyone, the Holy Father is inspiring us to move from the level of words to the realm of action—by accompanying, caring for, supporting, and developing a culture of belonging.

Let us, then, embark on this transformative journey of prophetic creativity. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, may we see the world as God sees it, and love the world as God does.

“What we have to be is what we already are.”

Thomas Merton



JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



BECOMING PRAYER FOR PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE — PART 1

by Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, National Animator

So often over the past few years, when there is a national tragedy like a mass shooting, the default reaction is for prayer. Then the response comes back that prayer is not enough, we need to do something to halt the violence: we need to work for tighter gun control; we need to take action to stop the violence. And yes, this is very true. We do need to work and take action against the violence that permeates our nation and our world. But do we do away with prayer altogether, as if it is not enough to end the violence? Do we march forth into battle with no preparatory crying out to God for guidance and strength? Are we to fight the good fight on our own accord, in our own power?

Our Holy Rule states fervently, “As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do” (Art. 8a). Just as the great prophets of old fell on their faces crying out to God for deliverance from their enemies and their oppression, we too must cry out to God with the same passion and conviction. One such example was the prophet Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was a cupbearer to the King of Susa during the exile. He received word that the Israelites who had returned to Jerusalem were in great need. Their city needed a wall of protection. Nehemiah prayed to God, and God sent him to help build this wall. All throughout the book of Nehemiah, we see that he prays to God every step of the way. By the end of the book, the wall is built, and Nehemiah continues to pray for the repentance of the people and their return to God and God’s covenant.

Through the tragedies of life, the storms of life, the violence and hatred, God must be our first line of defense and not our last resort when all else fails. And how do we get God’s attention? Through fervent prayer.

At the beginning of this year, I wanted our Secular brothers and sisters to fall on our faces, repent and cry out to God to restore our troubled land. I hosted two separate prayer services for lamentations and hope on Zoom. Both sessions, attended by about 150 Franciscans from across the United States and Guam, reminded us all that we can do nothing in our own power; but it is the power of God who will forgive our sins and heal our land. The passage from the Book of Chronicles came to me as I moved forward with the prayer service:

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

The call to pursue peace and social justice can seem quite overwhelming. And in that situation, all we know to do is to cry out to God in prayer, as did the prophets of old. This is the best place to begin when you are feeling helpless from being overwhelmed. Then God, who hears our prayer, will animate and guide us in what is ours to do. Perhaps all we are to do is pray. Or we are to write letters to our legislators. Or we are to gather our fraternity members to pray and then feed the hungry. God will not show us what is ours to do if we do not pray and ask. “*Lord, show me what is mine to do today for your Kingdom and your glory!*”

I will leave you with the words I received from the Holy Spirit when I fell on my face and cried out to God asking what was mine to do in this time of strife and violence. These words were downloaded into my heart. I shared this poem on the virtual prayer service and I share it here:

IMAGINE A WORLD: A POEM OF LAMENT

Imagine a world where there is no violence
where there is only compassion and care.

Imagine a world where there is no despair
where we thrive on hope, for ourselves and one another.

Imagine a world where there is no division
where we know that our neighbor is for us and we are always
about the business of unity.

Imagine a world where there are no wars, no injustice, no oppression, and no
divisions.

Imagine a world where children can flourish and grow and are not thrown away
before they have seen the light of day.

Imagine a world where compassion and empathy and care are the norm, and we rise
up and reach out to any who are not under the mantle of mercy and peace.

Can you imagine this world? Can you take just one moment, the time it takes to
breathe a breath, to imagine this world?

Breathe it; feel it; see it; be it – just because you truly need it.

We all need this world. We all need to be reminded that this is not our world, that
this world belongs to God our Creator, God our Redeemer, God our Comforter.

God gave us this world to keep and care and love and honor. God gave us this world
to love our neighbors and have no enemies. God gave us this world to cultivate and
till and sow and reap.

And what have we done in return?
Oh, look what we have done in return?

Oh God, please forgive us! God, please hear us!
As we cry out to You with our heads bowed low in mourning and grief.

But You are a God of second chances.
You are a God of sweet forgiveness.
You are a God who does not give up on His children –
especially when we have not heeded Your will.

Oh Lord, help us do better. Help us be better. Help us to see what You see in us and
for us.

Oh Lord, we are the people who are called by Your name, we do humble ourselves,
and we do pray and seek Your face, Oh Lord, please hear us, please forgive us and
please heal our land.



MAY THE LORD CONTINUE TO GIVE YOU HIS PEACE.



FORMATION COMMISSION

Francis of Assisi: Saint and Writer

Justin Carisio, OFS
National Formation Commission

Thomas of Celano tells us that two years before St. Francis's death:

While the saint was secluded in a cell on Mount La Verna, one of his companions was yearning with great desire to have something encouraging from the words of our Lord, commented on briefly by Saint Francis and written with his own hand.... One day Saint Francis called this brother and said: "Bring me paper and ink, because I want to write down the words of the Lord and his praises upon which I have meditated in my heart." What he had asked for was quickly brought to him. He then wrote down with his own hand the Praises of God and the words he wanted and, at the end, a blessing for that brother, saying: "Take this paper for yourself and keep it carefully to your dying day."¹

That small parchment from 1224 is now in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. Francis wrote "The Praises of God" on one side and "A Blessing for Brother Leo" on the other. It is one of only two surviving documents actually written in Francis's own hand. The other is "A Letter to Brother Leo" preserved in the Cathedral of Spoleto. They are among the 30 or so writings composed by Francis. They range from prayers and letters to longer documents. They include Francis's great poem, *The Canticle of the Creatures*,

the value of which extends beyond the Franciscan family and which has an important place in the canon of Italian literature.

The number of Francis's writings may, at first glance, appear limited. However, consider the era in which he lived, the radical poverty of the life he chose, and the uncertain conditions under which anything he wrote would have been preserved. It quickly becomes apparent that we are blessed to have as much as we do in the voice of our founder. By comparison, only four writings by Francis's contemporary, St. Dominic, who founded the Order of Preachers, survive.²

Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap., suggests that Francis's writings reflect his deep humility, his "determination to hide the gifts the Lord has bestowed on him."³ Even so the gifts of a writer's temperament and a poet's impulse invariably shine through. Francis had a natural inclination to use words to communicate his beliefs, to record his thoughts, to create beauty, and to offer praise. Murray Bodo, OFM writes, "Although St. Francis's whole being was that of a poet, he was not a poet in the modern sense of someone whose vocation or avocation is the writing of poetry." Rather, "he walked and praised as a poet would as he followed Jesus."⁴

Familiarity with Francis's writings should be part of the initial and ongoing formation of every

¹ *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul by Thomas of Celano*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol 2, *The Founder*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap, J. A. Wayne Hellman, OFM Conv., and William J. Short, OFM (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2000), 282.

² "Dominican Documents: Letters of St. Dominic," www.domcentral.org/trad/domdocs/0002.htm, accessed May 3, 2021

³ Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., *St. Francis of Assisi Writings for a Gospel Life*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), 25

⁴ Murray Bodo, OFM, *Poetry as Prayer St. Francis of Assisi*, (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2003), 56.

Secular Franciscan, especially considering that one of his writings, *The Earlier Exhortation*, forms the “Prologue” to the Secular Franciscan Rule. His writings let the saint speak for himself. They permit us to encounter him on his own terms.

What are some ways to enhance this encounter?

First, fundamental to understanding Francis as a writer is to understand that Scripture always informs his documents. His writings are replete with quotations from the Gospels and Psalms as well as other scriptural references and allusions.⁵ Our encounter with Francis’s writings is a reminder that even for us, Scripture comes before the documents. Knowing and following Jesus and what the gospel life entails is our life’s work just as it was Francis’s.

Another consideration to keep in mind is that biographies over the centuries, as well as film and video over the past hundred years or so, have filled our imaginations with convincing representations of Francis’s life and times. It becomes difficult to see through these cultural, religious, and media filters and confront Francis as he was: a medieval, urban, Italian man.⁶ The time in which we live separates us in profound ways from the world in which Francis’s ideas and experiences were shaped, defined, and expressed. The Francis we meet in his writings is fascinating, ardent, and devout, but also frank, determined, and assertive. The places where he lived and travelled appear intriguing and exotic, but also remote and dangerous. The reader of Francis’s writings who takes time to learn about late 12th and early 13th century history or to study the art and objects from that era will find it time well-spent.

Also, for most of us, our encounter with what Francis wrote will be through translations. All but two of his writings were in Latin. (*The Canticle of the Creatures* and *The Canticle of Exhortation for the Ladies of San Damiano* were written in his Umbrian dialect of Italian.⁷) Fortunately for English readers, there are outstanding modern translations in printed book form (*Francis of Assisi, Early Documents*, vol 1, New City Press) or on the web at the Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual-Spiritual Tradition (CFIT).⁸ We may not hear Francis’s voice in the most immediate way, but the translators’ scholarship and skill help to reveal for us the saint’s spirit and personality. These translations are also accompanied by valuable introductions and footnotes that aid in opening up the documents by providing context and explanations.

Finally, although Francis was not a writer by profession or avocation, he was yet a serious writer. He considered what he wrote to be important. He insisted when his words were being copied for sharing with others that they be reproduced exactly as he had written—nothing added or subtracted.⁹ Thaddée Matura, OFM, underscores this: “He was able and loved to write or have others write for him. He insisted on the preservation of what he wrote.... He was convinced of the power of the Word of God, which he had received in faith and to which he had oriented his life. The necessity of transmitting this belief into writing for everyone of every generation was a mission for him.”¹⁰ We are the most recent generation to receive what Francis wrote. Let us take the time to read, measure, and heed his words.

⁵ Thaddée Matura, OFM, *Francis Of Assisi The Message in His Writings* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1996, 2004), 16

⁶ Augustine Thompson, O.P., *Francis of Assisi, A New Biography*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 3

⁷ Matura, 9.

⁸ See: <https://franciscantradition.org/early-sources>

⁹ Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap. and Ignatius C. Brady, OFM, *Francis and Clare The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 7.

¹⁰Thaddée Matura, OFM, *Francis Of Assisi Writer and Spiritual Master* (Cincinnati: Franciscan Media, 2005), 1.

Ecumenical Interfaith Committee Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity

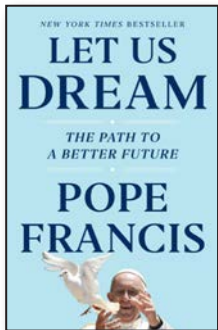


NEW BEGINNINGS WITH A HOPEFUL VISION OF UNITY AMONG ALL PEOPLE

by Donna Hollis, OFS, National Councilor

We are called to rebuild. We must dare to dream! We must dare to Hope!

(Reflection from the book "Let us Dream" by Pope Francis)



Pope Francis has been transforming the tone and approach of the Catholic Church towards Ecumenism by reaching out to non-Catholic denominations to reconcile past differences, opening the doors to dialogue and understanding, focusing on what we have in common and not differences, celebrating and reconciling "That they may all be one."

Pope Francis inspires us to dream of a future that seeks to restore the dignity of every person and creation in order to foster healthy relationships. As Franciscans we ask, "How do we work to heal the Body of Christ, to speak as Franciscans to the world based on 'one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism?'" Certainly, our vocation is meant to be one of healing and witness to the urging of the Spirit. Doesn't our vocation to "live the gospel in fraternal communion" call us to create a sisterhood and brotherhood beyond borders of our beliefs? Fraternity itself is our challenging new frontier.

How might these ideals look in practice? Scripture asks us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and give hope to those in most need. Doing these works of mercy tears down the walls of differences, and we find ourselves working together for the common good for all people.

Members of a number of Christian denominations are working together to assist refugees coming across our

Southwest Borders seeking asylum due to threats, and a way out of violence and poverty. They have their own stories to tell. One family arrived with their oldest son, having left the younger behind, only to find out that he was killed while they were on their journey. They faced a difficult choice. Going back would mean not being able to return; moving forward in search of a better life would require leaving the heartache to heal in time.

We listen to their stories and our hearts are broken; compassion is released as we serve together in helping those whose hearts are already broken. We recognize that we are all children of God, men and women of every race, of every faith. If we really see someone in their fullness, recognizing the Divine seed in everyone, we cannot help but treat treating them with kindness and compassion.

Where do we go from here? Working with the refugees reminds us that God Himself chooses to go to the margins; they are places full of possibilities. We need to become those "saints" who have an awakened heart to seek those in the marginal places where possibilities are waiting. We let those stories told of the journey of desperation change our hearts. We need to rethink our priorities and dare to take risks. Enkindle the fire of the Spirit that we experienced when we were first Professed, and that in itself will be a witness to others and catch on like wildfire! So keep living it out!

"Live a life worthy of your calling"

Prayer for Franciscan Unity

O gracious and loving God,
Having brought us into the body Of
Christ
And Called to follow Francis and Clare:
Let your Holy Spirit inspire all
In the Franciscan Family to be of
One heart and mind in love with
You and one another.

Grant, we pray, that our common
Charism and Vocation,
Shared by Franciscan Orders, from every
Christian tradition, help build up
The Body of Christ
And heal the Franciscan Family,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Refugees Seeking Asylum - Juarez, Mexico



CHRIST HAS NO BODY BUT YOURS, NO HANDS BUT YOURS, NO FEET BUT YOURS.

* In the spirit of celebration of our 2022 Franciscan JUBILEE *

We invite you to share your business or personal message in the 2022 Quinquennial program booklet!



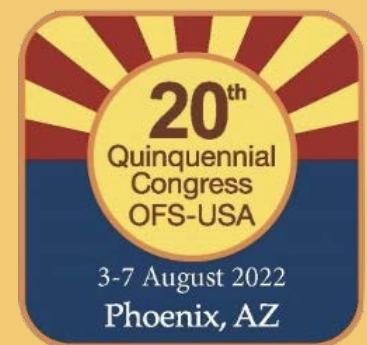
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A LITTLE BIT OF LOVE GOES A LONG WAY

By Kathleen Molaro, OFS

National Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Commission Chair

When I served as a youth director, each summer we participated in a week-long service program called “Young Neighbors in Action.” One year, our week was spent in an orphanage in Mexico. Among other chores, we were each asked to choose one child and befriend them, rather than spread ourselves among the large group. We were told it would be better for that one child to benefit from extra love and attention, even if only for a week. “A little bit of love goes a long way. The love settles in their hearts and can be drawn on later,” the director explained.

I believe the same philosophy applies when reaching out to youth and young adults. Young people are often in flux at this point in their lives, so we may only have them for a short time. Every moment counts in building a loving relationship that might “settle in their hearts.” Are we genuine? Do we truly live what we preach about gospel life? Are we willing to hear their story and share their successes, fears, and struggles?

Many fraternities have shared that a young adult will call or drop into a gathering to check out the Secular Franciscans. They often have but a few months to join us, considering they may be on a break from school, looking for a job elsewhere, moving away from family to start their own, or any number of reasons. They may or may not stay, depending on their need and intention—but also on what they find when they arrive. The FY/YA Commission has encouraged all fraternities to be ready for the possibility of younger members by taking a close look at their fraternity dynamics.

I found myself reflecting on the *Instrumentum Laboris* in light of this challenge. On pages 5 and 6 there is a list of ways to animate and guide our fraternities. Simply rephrasing them a bit helps us see why they are important to consider if you are serious about offering the gift of fraternity and Franciscan spirituality to young people.

- ◆ Do we understand the importance of a Christ-centered life, and are we able to inspire young people to adopt that goal?
- ◆ Do we encourage one another to accept and respect the young person simply because they are a brother or sister of Christ?
- ◆ Do we witness a life of prayer and intimacy with the Lord, both as individuals and as fraternity?
- ◆ Do we work for justice and invite young people to join us, and do we join young people in their work toward a more just world?
- ◆ Do we share concrete experiences and truthful stories of our own spiritual journey and allow young people to do the same, without judgment?
- ◆ Do they see us in fidelity with the Church, our Order, and each other? Are we obviously growing in our faith and in our charism?
- ◆ Do we model lives of vital and reciprocal communion, and are we an active presence in the world?
- ◆ Do our young people see us as a family, working together and sharing responsibilities?

Jan Parker wrote in the Winter 2021 *TAU-USA* about the term “prophetic creativity” used in the *Instrumentum Laboris*. She describes prophetic creativity, saying “It is innovative action we take in response to the Holy Spirit working within us.” The Holy Spirit is moving across our country, inspiring us to journey together with our younger Catholic brothers and sisters. The apostle Paul says, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Gal. 5:22-23) Practicing these virtues and modelling a way of life led by the Holy Spirit and our beloved Saints Francis and Clare is what we are called to do as Secular Franciscans. A **little** love goes a long way. Just think what a **lot** of love can do!



The commission gathers via Zoom monthly with FY/YA Regional Animators for ongoing training, prayer, networking, and formation. Our meeting right before Pentecost included a “Prayer for Perfect Charity,” and ritual for strengthening the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The prayer can be found on the National Website on the FY/YA page, in the young adult faith development document, *Living a Gospel Life: Walking in the Steps of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi—Session 10*.



MULTICULTURALISM AND DIVERSITY



Did You Know?

by Willie Guadalupe, OFS

I had been toying with the idea of writing an article focusing on multiculturalism and diversity so that, as a Franciscan family, we can better understand the differences and commonalities of these two concepts. As I was searching the Internet, I found a June 2016 article on the DifferenceBetween.com website that helped define and explain these two terms. My ultimate goal is to help others better understand and embrace the different ethnic cultures within our fraternities. The following definitions are taken from that website article (see footnote).

Diversity: Diversity refers to the differences that exist among individuals, such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and ethnicity.

Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism is when multiple cultural traditions are not only accepted in the society but also promoted.

Multiculturalism is the key to achieving a high degree of cultural diversity. Diversity occurs when people of different races, nationalities, religions, ethnicities, and philosophies come together to form a community. A truly diverse society is one that recognizes and values the cultural differences in its people.¹

Both diversity and multiculturalism have great relevance to our lives today. Diversity is a fact, a growing reality, in the United States and in our Order. Social media, immigration, and an increasingly global economy are bringing together people with different languages, races, and cultures. This encounter of diversity brings us challenges, but also great opportunities. The Secular Franciscan Order is being blessed with diverse multicultural fraternities and members. This means we need to overcome our fears, anxiety, and insecurities when dealing with those who are different from ourselves. Not only do we need to be the bridge, but we also

need to break down the barriers that create walls.

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ. OFS Rule Art. 13

Francis faced some of these same issues head on. Two Franciscan stories that resonate with me are the encounters of Francis and the Sultan and Francis and the Leper. Both were encounters with "the other." Both experiences resulted in conversion of heart, due to Francis's trust in the Lord. As Franciscans, we are called to be the face of God to others as Francis was.

Within our fraternities we have done a lot, but there is still much more to be done. Recently, as I was preparing to conduct a workshop for our Spanish speaking fraternities, I decided to check their entries in the database for any updates or changes. I was disappointed to find many discrepancies, which indicated to me that these fraternities are not being supported enough by their Regions. I have heard from several ministers of Spanish-speaking fraternities that they feel abandoned and isolated. My dear brothers and sisters, this should not be. I encourage each Region, if you have not done so already, to appoint a Multicultural and Diversity Commission Team so that any issues with these fraternities are brought to the attention of the Regional Council. The Council can then contact the fraternity to ensure that their needs are being met. As Secular Franciscans we have committed ourselves to accompany and take care of one another on our journey to the Father.

*The Heart of our vocation
is Jesus Christ
and around that heart
is Fraternity!*



Making sandwiches for the Homeless
*St Francis of Assisi- Espejo de Cristo Fraternidad
Five Franciscan Martyrs Region*

¹ <https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-diversity-and-multiculturalism/>

DIVERSITY — IS A GIFT TO US FROM GOD!

Cherryle Fruge, OFS
St. Joan of Arc Regional Minister

There were so many good titles to choose for this article, but I felt compelled to choose this one. It came from Tom Ha, OFS, our Korean brother from Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity in Houston, Texas. This message has resonated with me so many times this past year. It is so true that **Diversity is a Gift** to us from God, and what we do with that Gift is especially important.

Our Region was inspired to start a Diversity Team in response to the many violent incidents that occurred in 2020. And so it began on Friday, July 24, 2020, with the purpose of getting to know each other and working on developing a vision/mission statement. Early on in our sessions, it was evident that our mission statement should be **“Go and Rebuild My Church.”** We agreed that the purpose of the team is based on Article 19 of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: *“Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.”*

We came together not only to discuss racist violence, but all types of violence, and to ask the questions: “Why is there violence?” and “As a Secular Franciscan, what does God want me to do?”

As the Holy Spirit developed the Diversity Team, one word describes what we are called to do, and that word is **dialogue**. For our purpose, the role of dialogue cannot be overemphasized. It is crucial. The Team is learning how to conduct a dialogue to keep relationships alive and to build a community of love according to the teachings of the Rule and the Catholic Church.

We agreed that we could learn to dialogue by participating in dialogue. And so we did. We shared from our hearts and really tried to listen to each other. It was helpful to have the support of each other in our efforts, especially when strong feelings on difficult topics arose. We all understood that we were learning together, and we were determined to be a supportive community to each other. Now, when someone shares from their heart, the others listen. We do not judge, or jump to conclusions; we ask questions first and go from there.



Cherryle Fruge
Kinder, LA



Cloteial Umoja
Shreveport LA

St. Joan of Arc Regional Fraternity **DIVERSITY TEAM**



Anna Geumsoon Carter
Houston, TX



Tom Ha
Houston, TX



Elizabeth Killeen
Lacombe LA



Edith Spells
Greenwood MS



Ernesto Boudet
New Orleans, LA



Susan Schreiter
Houston, TX



Michael Freeman
Houston, TX



Nadine Bonds
Houston, TX



Christobalina Rojas
Houston TX

We feel we have experienced much growth in our ability to dialogue. As Franciscans, we are now motivated to take the initiative and encourage dialogue in every situation. With a clear view of our identity as bridge builders, we are now making persistent efforts to build fraternal relationship with others in our communities, in our fraternities, in our parishes, in our nation, and in our world. We are called every day to rebuild our Church; we are doing this by reconciling with each other.

St. Joan of Arc Region's Diversity team participants are from Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi and from various ethnic backgrounds including Asian, African, Filipino, Cuban, and European. As we come together as representatives from throughout the Region, we reflect the diversity of our Order. We will continue to work toward ways of strengthening the call of our Franciscan vocation by "seeking out ways of unity and fraternal dialogue."

Some of the resources we use include the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Church documents on Social Justice, the example of Servant of God, Julia Greeley, OFS, *Fratelli Tutti*, the Region's Resource Kit, and *What It Takes* by Fr. Lester Bach, OFM.

Some of the thoughts shared by the Diversity Team members include:

- ◆ It is important to share our personal experiences of racism.
- ◆ We must have respect for the human person, recognizing our equality while appreciating our differences. Human solidarity should be acknowledged and understood.
- ◆ Actions for social justice should be taken according to the Rule.
- ◆ *Fratelli Tutti* teaches us to understand the concept of fraternity, to build bridges, and to make efforts for peacemaking and reconciliation.
- ◆ To build a community of love in the world, as well as in our fraternity, relationships need to be formed and kept alive.
- ◆ *Why is there violence?* There is violence because I do not yet understand the other part of me – the other "self" of me.
- ◆ Bias happens among all social backgrounds and social status. We must recognize this.

- ◆ Being comfortable with our own identity is important. If we are not comfortable with our own identity, then it can cause problems when we deal with people around us.
- ◆ As Franciscans, we need patience as we try to establish relationships and connect with each other.
- ◆ It is okay for us to be ourselves. If people do not accept us as we are, we still respect them, but we do not take their judgment personally.

As I assessed this journey with the Diversity Team, I must share that it has been an eye-opening experience. We were challenged to get out of our comfort zone, but find we are now much more grounded in our relationships with each other. I see such beauty and the fruits of an authentic love. This process has also shown me how the building of relationships is a powerful way to discover and mentor new servant leaders.

We have learned so much, and we highly recommend that other regional fraternities give this a try. We would be happy to help you to start a Diversity Team in your Region. Feel free to contact me about this. You might consider the topic of diversity for a retreat with newly elected councils, or during an ongoing formation session. Exploring this topic will result in developing a rich and vibrant fraternity.

Through our diversity team efforts, we see how the Holy Spirit has led us to discover the value of our own identity while also valuing the identity of our neighbor. Our identity is tied to theirs. We see our neighbors as *a part of ourselves* - brothers and sisters "*within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore 'those who are a part of me'.*" (Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 43.) As we seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony let us contemplate our identity as well as *our other self -- this other part of me that I don't yet understand.*

Truly, the diversity within the body of humanity is God's gift to the world. What we do with it and how we treat others is our gift back to God. Please pray for us to continue to be open to the direction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. May Holy God Bless you abundantly and give you Peace.

HOLINESS BEHIND BARS

by Mary Esther Stewart, OFS

“In the field of the world, in human hearts, lies hid the treasure of eternal love.”

St. Clare’s 3rd letter to St. Agnes of Prague



Esther: The phone rang. “Would you be willing to mentor a young man in prison who wants to be a Franciscan?” What a question! What a surprise! I’m always eager to share my life with anyone who is interested, but I never imagined being asked to share our Franciscan life with a prisoner on the other side of the United States.

I readily agreed. Then what I had agreed to hit me! Who is this fellow? What risk might I be taking? What am I getting into? My thoughts and doubts went on, but I didn’t back out. I asked that the young man write to me telling me about himself and what it was that he really wanted. I had to believe, “If the Spirit is in this, it will work out.”

In Joe’s first letter to me, he was open about himself, his past, and his sentence. He sounded very sincere in wanting to get involved in the Franciscan family. I decided to give him a chance.

Joe: I’m a convicted felon in a state prison. Getting me off the streets saved my life and maybe the lives of others. As I sit here “doing time,” I realize that my past is behind me. All I have is the present moment and what the future may bring. I want to be a Franciscan.

I made some big mistakes in my life. I was looking for the family that I never had, but I was looking in all the wrong places. Then one day we were

visited by a prison minister who introduced me to a new family, the Franciscans. Whatever this guy had, I knew I wanted. He introduced me to the writings of St. Francis, and it was all uphill from there. I knew that in Francis I had found a brother, a model, and a soulmate.

I took a risk, a leap of faith, and connected with this lady who I may never meet. Will she judge me? Will I be a threat to her? Will she accept me with the love that I know I need? I put the stamp on the letter and put the letter on the mail cart. Then I waited patiently.

Esther: I figured that Joe probably didn’t know much about Francis and Franciscan life. My ego told me that I could certainly keep him busy with much more than he could ever give me. But the teacher in me said that first I had to test his willingness to take on our way of life.

I explained to Joe a process of using the Gospel of the day as a basis for contemplation paired with journaling and the personal value of such a prayer practice. If he didn’t want to do this, then there was no need for us to go any further. Joe had not had any experience of contemplative prayer using the Gospels, but he agreed to give it a try following the directions I gave him.

As we began sharing our reactions to the Gospels, I discovered a real depth to Joe. He would drop little remarks that stopped me in my tracks; he had wisdom and insights that really spoke to me. Several times Joe brought me to my knees with his comments and observations. I might be Joe’s mentor in Franciscan things, but Joe was quickly becoming my mentor, too.

Joe: There isn’t a lot for me to do in here. I pray a lot. But Esther introduced me to a new way of praying by getting directly into the Gospels every day. I wasn’t too sure about the writing part, but she encouraged me, and I gave it a try. It didn’t take long for me to discover a treasure that I didn’t want to give up. I began to teach the guys in here

how to pray with the Gospels. Some seem to be taking to it.

My life in here can be pretty grim at times, but I was open with Esther when she asked, and she didn't "scare off." Instead of treating me like a curiosity that needed "fixing," she joked about my fancy hotel, room service, and my five-star dining. We both got a good laugh.

Trust is hard in here. Any trust I had on the streets went out the window when the handcuffs went on. In here, we're trapped and we're alone. Esther was an answer to my prayers by introducing me to some super Franciscans like St. Bonaventure. As we work through our Franciscan sources, I'm more convinced that Franciscan life is for me. She now has phone privileges, and we have wonderful conversations including praying together. Nothing has scared her away. I'm beginning to trust, and I feel accepted.

Esther: I recently told Joe that I am his outside and he is my inside. I hope I'm taking him beyond the razor wire. We talk about ordinary things on the "inside" and on the "outside." We laugh a lot. Other times Joe has questions about our Franciscan theology and spirituality, which I love to discuss with him. But we both feel that, most importantly, our interaction has allowed us to build trust in each other.

I have come to see my world through Joe's eyes. The more I got to know Joe, the more I realized that he can't do all that I do. When he's on the road, he's in handcuffs and shackles and no stops at McDonald's. My walk with Joe is rough; just knowing about his life shakes me out of my comfort zone. I can no longer take my privileges and freedoms for granted. My prison friend is total gift.

Yes, Joe is surrounded by razor wire. I hope to take him beyond it. My relationship with him has made me realize that I, too, am surrounded by razor wire. I've put up a lot of razor wire that keeps God out of my self-sufficient, independent lifestyle. Lord, give me the courage to be humble,

to admit my need for You. Joe is my mentor, Your gift to me.

Joe: Nobody comes to prison to get a dose of love, acceptance, or encouragement. Maybe there was trust when I first got involved in criminal activity, but even that can disappear really fast. In our correspondence, Esther gives me hope that love and friendship are really alive and not just a fantasy. I did not imagine that I would discover love and trust while in here, especially from someone on the outside who's free to interact with people of her own choosing. Who would choose to love and trust a convict?

Esther keeps reassuring me that I am loved more abundantly by God than my little heart or mind could possibly understand. If I'm loved by Him and by those who love Him, then I, too, need to love and trust because I am loved. It is a cycle of unending love. I cannot hoard that love, not only because I'm Franciscan at heart and we truly embrace poverty and love, but because being loved is a call to love others.

Esther's family can be my family, her Franciscan fraternity family can be mine, too. And my family grows with each prayer I offer for the people she has told me about. What I've received from our friendship has given me strength to share with the men I live with, to build them up and give them hope, to let them know that each day can begin with love because they are loved.

Conclusion: Joe and Esther keep right on going with their communications day-by-day, little by little. We share our lives and what's going on with each of us. We share our love and our trust for each other. All we have is NOW. We have hope and new purpose to our lives. We believe that together we are an inside-outside team that can accomplish a much greater purpose than what we ever could have imagined.

Guidelines for Prison Ministry for Secular Franciscans can be found on the National website: <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/guidelines-forms-other-resources/> Select *National Guidelines*.

MaryEsther Stewart, ofc, is a Secular Franciscan living in northern Arizona and formation director for St. Thomas More Region. Joseph M. is an inmate in a Florida correctional institution. Together they walk in love, trust, and friendship. They attempt to be instruments of God's love to those with whom they come in contact. MaryEsther can be contacted at maryestherstewart@gmail for information about writing to prison inmates.

TRANSCENDENCE OR IMMANENCE?

By Bret Thoman, OFS

Anyone who has spent much time visiting different Franciscan fraternities is aware that there are different ways of understanding how to live out our Franciscan life.

On the one hand, there are those whose focus is “other-worldly.” They value correct liturgy and worship, morality, virtue, and doctrine. In prayer, they tend to be highly reverent, they value traditional rites, they are partial to mystery and wonder. They are deferential to religious authorities to whom they look to clarify Church teachings and quell disputes.

On the other hand, there are those whose focus is on this life and this world. They dedicate their time, resources, and energy to social issues and injustices. They are concerned with peace, racism, the marginalized, and ecology. In issues of faith and morals, they believe in the primacy of the conscience. Their liturgies tend to be more casual, oriented toward the community, with a high amount of lay participation.

On the surface, it would appear that these groups could be labeled as either conservative or liberal, traditionalists or progressives.

Instead, there are better words to describe them: “transcendent” and “immanent.”

Transcendence focuses on the *otherness* of God. It emphasizes God’s existence outside of the world, before creation and beyond humanity. It is the belief that God surpasses the physical world and is independent of it. God *transcends* the material world, indeed the entire universe and is, therefore, beyond the grasp of the human mind.

On the other hand, immanence focuses on the incarnate Christ who revealed himself “down here” – in the world with humanity. In this seemingly contrasting view of God, God reaches down – stoops down – from heaven to be with mankind. God does not remain aloof up in the heavens, he is down here with us.

The question is whether Christ came to save humanity and bring man up to heaven

(transcendent)? Or did Christ lower himself to be with humanity where man is (immanent)?

Which side is right? In fact, both reflect the nature of God.

As Catholic Christians, and as Franciscans, we accept by faith that God is almighty, holy, and cannot be approached or seen. The God in whom we believe existed before the creation of the world and is distinct and fully independent of the material world.

Yet that same God – the Word, Second Person of the Holy Trinity who existed before all creation and through which all creation was created – came down and became man. He became incarnate as the God-man, Jesus the Christ. “For your sake he became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).

So transcendence and immanence are really one and the same: the transcendent and immanent nature of God meet in the mysterious revelation that Christ is both God and man. It is paradoxically Christ himself, both fully divine and fully human, who unites transcendent divinity and the immanent humanity. God is both transcendent and immanent. “Love and truth will meet; justice and peace will kiss” (Psalm 85:10).

In this, we can draw on the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who bridged the seemingly insurmountable divide of transcendence and immanence through his rightful worship of God and his dedication to love of neighbor.

St. Bonaventure wrote:

It was a custom for the angelic man Francis never to rest from the good, rather, like the heavenly spirits on Jacob's ladder, he either ascended into God or descended to his neighbor. For he had so prudently learned to divide the time given to him for merit, that he spent some of it working for his neighbor's benefit and dedicated the rest to the tranquil excesses of contemplation. (St. Bonaventure, Major Legend, Chapter XIII, 1)

FRANCISCAN LIVING

GOD ALONE

By Francine Gikow, OFS

Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (Deut: 6:4-5)

So begins the “Shema,” commonly known as the most important prayer in the Jewish faith. It identifies that God alone is the only God, and we should love Him with all that we are and do—but so many of our prayers seem to be meditating *about* God rather than praying *to* Him.

*For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods,
In His hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his...*

*O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For He is our God.... (Psalm 95:)*

The emphasis of our God being worthy of the highest praise, adoration, and love reiterates the first and greatest Commandment: “*I am the Lord your God...and you shall have no other gods before me.*” (Ex: 20: 2-3)

This commandment warns us that we should guard ourselves against making anything else a “god” in our life, such as money, power, status, wealth, material goods, self image, job, reputation, “toys” or even our time. Any “thing” can take the place of God if we allow it to do so, by limiting our attention, time, and love for God. We can make any “thing” an idol—a false god.

It’s easy to deny that we worship idols, yet on closer examination, we may find an idol taking root in our lives. Review what topics/things/issues occupy your mind during the day. What do you worry about? What are your preoccupations? What are you constantly thinking about? If these are inordinate desires—something that preoccupies us, then they have become an idol. They take up that special “space” in our lives that

correctly belongs to God. By those thoughts/ idols, we push God out of our lives.

It is so easy to shift our focus away from God when the evil one entices us, little by little, to where we may not want to be. Nonetheless, constantly refocusing on God alone takes persistence and discipline—with a constant review of our priorities and efforts in putting God first.

Unfortunately, even in our spiritual life, we must be on guard. Sometimes we can mistake God’s works and gifts for God Himself. We may initially be attracted to the spiritual life with God’s gifts of beauty, creation, and even His consolations, but eventually, God doesn’t just want us to love Him only for his gifts or the works he performs. He wants us to love Him, desire Him, and spend time with Him alone. He hungers for our love in relationship. He wants pure love, not conditional love.

St. Francis emphasizes the priority to love God purely and unconditionally when he writes in his early Rule: “*let us desire nothing else, let us want nothing else, let nothing else please us and cause us delight except our Creator, Redeemer and Savior, the only true God...Let nothing else hinder us, nothing else separate us, nothing come between us. (ER:9-10)*

To love God alone is our goal: to praise Him and to love Him.

All powerful, most holy, most high and supreme God, all good, supreme good, total good, you who alone are good: we give you all praise, all glory, all thanks, all honor, all blessing and every good. So be it! So be it! Amen. (OfP: Praises to Be Said at All Hours:11)

Instrumentum Laboris 2021: Animate & Guide with Servant Leadership

OFS – USA Response to questions from the CIOFS Presidency¹

1. What kinds of general and fundamental problems are we experiencing in our Fraternities today?

- a. **What are the major problems?** Most of the major problems are addressed in the document. Unwillingness to serve on council. Members do not prioritize their vocation to the OFS, leading to apathy, lack of participation, and diminishment of our potential as an Order. Ignorance of the principle of co-responsibility (GC Art. 30.1-2). Neglect of the spiritual aspects of OFS life. Lack of prophetic creativity on the part of leaders in guiding the brothers and sisters toward the full realization of OFS life as “a plan of life centered on the person and on the following of Christ” (GC 9.1).

- b. **Have we addressed any of these problems in this document?** Yes.

Are there other kinds of basic problems that need to be addressed?

The busyness that characterizes our culture is a distraction that acts as a drawback to people’s willingness to serve, particularly on council.

The issue of older vocations. Many of our new vocations in the OFS-USA come to the OFS later in life. They have much life experience, but little experience in the OFS. They may be willing to serve as leaders, but their previous experiences of leadership do not always reflect servant leadership values. Furthermore, their lack of experience in fraternity life may blind them to possible pitfalls.

Polarization. Polarization – the tendency to see issues in an all-or-none way – has become endemic in our culture and affects leadership in fraternity in a number of ways.

- Tense political *debate* does not belong in our fraternities, but *dialogue* concerning the common good is necessary. The fraternity should be a place of civil discourse. Leaders and informal leaders can play a big part here by setting a good example and using their authority to check a discussion if it gets too heated.
- Conversely, leaders can contribute to the problem by allowing polarization to affect how they lead, letting it overshadow their ability to be collegial. They see sides instead of seeing brothers and sisters.
- Polarization directly works against the respect for the “plurality of expressions of the Franciscan ideal” called for by GC 33.1. We see a tendency for members who have certain preconceived ideas to gravitate to a likeminded fraternity. They may stress their point of view to such an extent that it eventually makes members who see things differently feel unwelcome. If local fraternities become polarized, they may propagate division at the Regional level as well.

- c. **What is your response or suggestion on how these problems might be addressed in your cultural context?** Formation for all. It is important that all candidates and members be well-formed with respect to Servant Leadership. See below Q. 2, 4 & 8.

2. What is the experience of our National Councils about how we are addressing the issue of good servant leadership? A. Does the formation plan include this topic? Yes. It is essential to achieving our goals as an Order. By the end of 2021 we will have new initial formation texts which address Servant Leadership.

B. Is there a specific formation on servant leadership for those on the Councils? Our National Fraternity has a wealth of resources on the topic of Servant Leadership. These include a *Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership* (Table of Contents attached), a brochure *Care and Feeding of Councils*, and other materials developed by individual Regions and shared with the National Fraternity (see our national website secularfranciscansusa.org under resources/formation & spirituality/ongoing formation). **How can we address this concern?** See Q. 8.

3. According to you, which are the fundamental points on which to evaluate the service of a Council?

The document has listed several reasonable ones on p. 15. In our experience, visitations have a key role in evaluating the service of councils and addressing particular leadership issues. Local fraternity members often find it difficult to offer constructive feedback to the council members for fear of hurt feelings, conflict, or possible retaliation. Such feedback might better come privately from the Spiritual Assistant.

4. **Which items (or points) are important to develop in a course aimed at preparing leaders who are capable of answering the needs of the times so that they can present and propose Franciscans values lived as Seculars?**

In addition to the topics touched on in the document, we suggest the following.

Recognition of the specific challenges at each level of fraternity – and all need to be addressed.

Delineate between the duties appropriate to each level.

Sense of belonging. Knowledge of the Rule and Constitutions, and what we belong to – our Order and its Charism – is necessary to encourage the development of the sense of co-responsibility in each member.

Informal Leadership. Members can exercise leadership “informally” – that is, without being elected to the council. Some years ago, Fr. Felice Cangelosi, OFM Cap., wrote an article about Fraternal Service that listed ways in which all members can exercise leadership by serving their brothers and sisters, including carrying another’s burdens, good example, dialogue, and commitment. Members can also take the initiative in offering hospitality, volunteering to assist on existing programs (the formation team, the fraternity newsletter), or starting new ones with the agreement of the council (a book club or a new ministry).

Describe the positive role of the Spiritual Assistant. We agree that the SA should not run the fraternity. Nonetheless, as a member of the council, the SA is part of the leadership of the fraternity. There should be recognition that the SA’s leadership can be expressed in a very positive and fruitful way. Their objectivity is vital when it comes to constructive feedback for those in leadership.

Effective ways to encourage someone to become a servant leader:

- 1- Build Relationship – Listen to them, learn about their “being,” share experiences
- 2- Mentor leadership / let them walk alongside you / model service
- 3- Point out their talents/gifts. Nurture their love of their vocation, and the desire to serve follows.

The course or manual should have a balance of spiritual / practical / intellectual points. It would be particularly helpful if CIOFS were to address fully the spiritual and intellectual points. These are fundamental, and basically the same throughout the Order. As on pp. 5-6 in this document, CIOFS should break open the GC for us. Practical points can be developed by national fraternities to address local or cultural particularities.

5. **Based on your experience, is it appropriate for us to get involved with civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to work together to support and promote our values?** For individual Seculars and local fraternities, activities in the areas of social justice should flow from a Franciscan heart and give witness to our charism. It’s not just what we say or do, but how we say or do it. The question becomes more complicated at the higher levels of fraternity. There are some who feel strongly that we *as an organization* should not support groups that are not under the direct control of the Church, or which accept support from individuals or groups who may not share all our Catholic values.
6. **How do you feel about the rotation of offices and leadership so that our leaders do not serve more than two or three terms in any office?** This makes sense at the higher levels as long as continuity of service is maintained, and there is a good transfer of information as described on p. 14. At the local level it is an ideal that may not be practical or pastorally right for small local fraternities.
7. **What should YouFra expect from the OFS delegate or the Fraternal animator? Which kind of formation can YouFra propose for them?** What our young people are asking for is guidance, the example we can set in living our charism, and a willingness to walk with them on their journey to holiness.
8. **What tools, programs or actions do you suggest that CIOFS consider to help you in addressing the above problems?** We recommend that CIOFS provide a manual (such as was done with *Forming the Formators*) and direct the national fraternities to develop their own courses based on that material. Testimonial videos on servant leadership from members of the Presidency could supplement the manual. A repository of servant leadership resources in other languages, or links where people can go to find such resources, would also be extremely helpful.

¹*Animate and Guide with Servant Leadership* is the *Instrumentum Laboris*, or working document, of the XVI General Chapter of the OFS. A pdf of the *Instrumentum* is on the national website <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/ongoing-formation-resources/> See *Share the Vision*, p. 3 for additional information.

NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER - USA
Statement of Revenue and Expenses - Actual vs Budget - General Fund
For the Year Ended December 31, 2020

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	\$ Over/Under
	Jan - Dec 2020	Jan - Dec 2020	Budget
Income			
4000 · Fair Share	\$ 208,559.00	\$ 214,000.00	\$ (5,441.00)
4100 · Formation Sales	15,625.35	35,000.00	(19,374.65)
4210 · Interest Income-Certificates of Deposit	3,080.27	2,200.00	880.27
4220 · Interest Income-Money Market	-	1,600.00	(1,600.00)
4400 · Miscellaneous Income	139.00	500.00	(361.00)
Total Income	<u>\$ 227,403.62</u>	<u>\$ 253,300.00</u>	<u>\$ (25,896.38)</u>
Expense			
5100 · CIOFS Fair Share	\$ 26,206.41	\$ 25,500.00	\$ 706.41
5120 · TAU-USA Newsletter	43,920.97	55,700.00	(11,779.03)
5130 · CNSA -Conf Nat'l Spiritual Asst	8,000.00	8,000.00	-
5200 · Annual Chapter	250.00	58,000.00	(57,750.00)
5300 · National Executive Council	1,352.44	30,000.00	(28,647.56)
5505 · Communications Committee	2,771.98	2,000.00	771.98
5510 · Website Committee	-	370.00	(370.00)
5512 · Database Committee	-	6,700.00	(6,700.00)
5515 · Ecumenical Interfaith Committee	2,125.24	7,000.00	(4,874.76)
5520 · Formation Commission	250.00	21,300.00	(21,050.00)
5530 · Historian	-	2,500.00	(2,500.00)
5535 · Justice, Peace, Integrity Creation Commission	3,149.37	14,500.00	(11,350.63)
5545 · Multi-Cultural Committee	300.00	2,000.00	(1,700.00)
5555 · National Archives	-	4,000.00	(4,000.00)
5560 · Public Relations	-	2,000.00	(2,000.00)
5570 · Vocations Committee	394.38	2,000.00	(1,605.62)
5675 · Youth & Young Adult (FYA) Commission	1,062.31	17,000.00	(15,937.69)
5598 · Quinquennial Planning	4,711.62	10,000.00	(5,288.38)
6155 · Formation Printing	12,411.25	17,000.00	(4,588.75)
6158 · Formation Printing - Languages	-	12,000.00	(12,000.00)
6160 · Royalties Paid	428.77	2,600.00	(2,171.23)
6300 · JPIC Outreach - FAN	12,000.00	12,000.00	-
6310 · JPIC Outreach - Franciscan Intl	1,000.00	1,000.00	-
6320 · JPIC Award	3,000.00	3,000.00	-
6400 · Liability Insurance	4,499.00	3,800.00	699.00
5550 · MOTO Implementation CIOFS	10,000.00	10,000.00	-
5590 · Quinquennial Event Rebooking Fee	30,962.81	-	30,962.81
7200 · Other Expenses	1,428.89	3,500.00	(2,071.11)
7300 · Covid Losses	4,310.39	-	4,310.39
Total Expense	<u>\$ 174,535.83</u>	<u>\$ 333,470.00</u>	<u>\$ (158,934.17)</u>
Net Income (Loss) General Fund	<u>\$ 52,867.79</u>	<u>(80,170.00)</u>	<u>\$ 133,037.79</u>
Projected loss to be covered by money in savings		80,170.00	
		<u>\$ -</u>	

Note 1: Variance explanation

Expenses for the year were less than budgeted as expected due to the COVID pandemic.

General Fund Assets			
December 31, 2020			
	12/31/2019	General Fund Income	12/31/2020
Checking Accounts	\$ 218,845.80		\$ 198,151.55
Savings - Money Market	140,940.80		121,840.97
Savings - Certificates of Deposit	139,842.04		142,722.38
Deposits on Future Events	-		99,603.68
	<u>499,628.64</u>		<u>562,318.58</u>
Less Restricted Funds	(106,341.98)		(116,164.13)
Total Funds Available	<u>\$ 393,286.66</u>	<u>\$ 52,867.79</u>	<u>\$ 446,154.45</u>

NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER - USA

Restricted Funds Report

For the Year Ended December 31, 2020

RESTRICTED FUND ACCOUNTS	Beginning Balance 12/31/2019	2020 Contributions	2020 Disbursements	Ending Balance 12/31/2020
2105 Charitable Donations	\$ 1,135.00	\$ 280.00	\$ (165.00)	\$ 1,250.00
(1) 2110 CIOFS Solidarity Fund	-	1,038.11	(1,038.11)	-
(2) 2120 Emergency Aid	6,370.00	15,390.00	(17,025.00)	4,735.00
2125 Ecumenical - Interfaith	1,138.20	-	-	1,138.20
2130 Formation	200.00	-	-	200.00
(3) 2140 H2O Lenten Project	2,026.53	7,141.50	(7,300.00)	1,868.03
(4) 2147 MOTO	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	20,000.00
2150 National Events	1,225.84	-	-	1,225.84
2155 Quinquennial Congress	50,420.35	100.00	-	50,520.35
(5) 2160 Regional Needs	-	1,000.00	(131.39)	868.61
(6) 2162 Regions Helping Regions	-	2,490.00	-	2,490.00
(7) 2165 Undesignated Contributions	6,973.29	6,736.15	(1,668.11)	12,041.33
2170 Youth Scholarships	443.05	10.00	-	453.05
Total General Fund Restricted	79,932.26	44,185.76	(27,327.61)	96,790.41
DUNS SCOTUS FORMATION FUNDS				
(8) 2260 Grants Funds	26,409.72	-	(7,036.00)	19,373.72
Total Restricted Funds	106,341.98	44,185.76	(34,363.61)	116,164.13

NOTES:

- (1) CIOFS Solidarity contributions from a local fraternity.
- (2) Emergency Aid for Hurricane Laura, Lebanon, Venezuela, Border OTC Meds. Disbursements were for same.
- (3) Donations from members, local fraternities & regional fraternities. Donations were made to purchase water and water barrels for Arizona Native American reservations.
- (4) Funds restricted for CIOFS for the Management of the Order Initiative.
- (5) Member donation for Guam establishment.
- (6) Donations by regions for struggling regions made with the annual fair share report.
- (7) \$5,000 received from the Frank Halper Estate. Donations from Network For The Good, members & regional fraternities for the Good of the Order
- (9) In 2020 the Duns Scotus Board granted awards to the Capuchin Province of Ethiopia and Lady Poverty Region.

DUNS SCOTUS SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION FUND

Cash and Investments

December 31, 2020

	Cash	Market Value	Total
12/31/2019 Investment Accounts, beginning balance		\$ 1,091,721.41	
Interest, Dividends, Capital Gains Distributions Reinvested		44,079.47	
Change in Market Value of Investments		94,941.88	
12/31/2020 Cash and Investment Accounts, ending balance	\$ 19,373.72	\$ 1,230,742.76	\$ 1,250,116.48

NOTE 1: The funds designated as the Duns Scotus Trust Fund are held in two investment accounts. Dividends and realized capital gains are reinvested back into the investments held. The NEC reviews the investments with the fund advisers and an impartial investment adviser as necessary. The Change in Market Value of Investments is subject to the daily fluctuations of the stock market and can decrease in value more rapidly than increase.

NOTE 2: The original endowment from the Friars was \$500,000.00

Respectfully submitted by Claudia Kauzlarich, OFS, National Treasurer - April 5, 2021

20th Quinquennial Congress
OFS-USA



COME JOIN US for a **JUBILEE CELEBRATION** of **FRANCISCAN JOY!** **3-7 August 2022**

The Quinquennial planning committee
warmly invites you to register soon.

Registration starts August 1, 2021

We look forward to seeing you in Phoenix, AZ



For more information and to register go to our national website at:

secularfranciscansusa.org

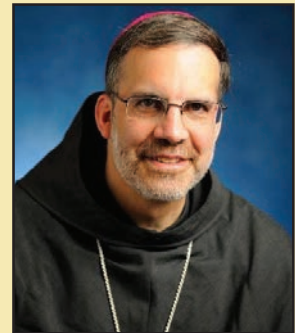
SPOT OUR HOTEL

Sheraton Phoenix Downtown is located across the street from St. Mary's Basilica, a Franciscan parish fully staffed by our beloved Friars!



David B. Couturier, O.F.M. Cap.

MEET OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Bishop John Stowe, O.F.M. Conv.



Tim and Kathy Taormina, OFS and their daughter Lori Hinker, OFS



Doug and Marion Clorey, OFS

CELEBRATE WITH OUR FRANCISCAN FAMILY:

- Come together for Eucharist Celebration every day
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Study the Cross of Jesus

As I gaze on the cross of Jesus,
I think of the pain our Lord must have felt.
The nails hammered through the flesh,
through his hands and feet.
Every time I get a shot or sit in the dentist chair,
I think to myself,
it was our Lord that suffered on the cross.
How much more can I endure.
During the pandemic, it has been rough for a lot of us.
Our lives have changed.
I miss going to Mass and receiving the sacraments.
As Franciscans, we are in this together,
and we will pull through this.
Remember, when we look at the cross,
we can find our strength.
My brothers and sisters, please be safe, be well.

Anthony M. D'Angelico OFS
Saint Elizabeth of Hungry Fraternity
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