

## ORGANIZING A COMMISSION

Often questions arise about getting started, or what's required of a Regional or Local Commissioner. Below is a limited outline. Apart from the guidance provided below, remember the words of St. Francis, "No one showed me what I ought to do, but the Lord Himself, revealed to me." Get involved. Initiate activities from within the Region. Answer to inspiration. Follow through with your own ideas. The sky is the limit!

It is leadership's responsibility to set a tone of interest and activity within a fraternity. If a Regional or Local Commission tends to be idle, the Franciscan brothers and sisters are likely to be idle as well. Do not accept a position unless seriously intent on and committed to make a difference. Pray about it remembering St. Francis' words at his Transitus: "I have done what was mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours to do." (Celano, Second Life, 214) We should be able to feel, to some degree, as St. Francis did upon hearing the Gospel reading in the Portiuncola in 1208 at the beginning of his journey into God: "This is what I've wanted, this is what I've been longing for with all my heart." (St. Bonaventure, Major Life, 3:1)

1. Before applying or accepting a Regional or Local Work Commission position read the National Work Commission Mission Statement and any Regional job description that may exist.
2. Be willing to be open to going through a process of "on-going conversion" with regard to your attitudes and appreciation of the place and importance of work. Believe us – you will not look at work the same way ever again. Are you prepared to change (in a good way)? Without knowledge, there can be no credibility. Without a credible voice, justice cannot prevail. Without just action, change is not likely. Be willing to never stop your on-going formation in a Franciscan, Catholic understanding of work.
3. Seek out resourceful and active people both within and outside the Order. Don't go it alone and be "the Work Commission". There is not only strength but wisdom in numbers. Your "team" may formally be part of a Regional Commission or serve as an informal advisory group.
4. Once appointed to a Commission, collect names, addresses, phone and e-mail addresses of local fraternity members with interests in the Work Commission. Create a mailing list. Obtain names through the outgoing Regional Commissioner or by contacting local fraternity ministers.
5. Regional Commissioners are obligated to copy and distribute National Commission mailing to local fraternities within their Regions. The National Work Commission uses the national newsletter, TAU-USA, as its primary communications vehicle. Subscribe yourself and encourage members to subscribe

but feel free to make copies of articles from TAU-USA for distribution to the Regional or local fraternity.

6. Send reports of local and regional Work Commission-related events, accomplishments, etc. to the National Commission.
7. Regional and local Commissions are free to develop their apostolates. Organize a committee or team. Invite local experts to speak. Take it one step at a time. Don't underestimate your impact. Follow inspiration but keep everyone informed.
8. Contribute something on a regular basis to your Regional newsletter. Feel free to use the material in this manual; that's what it's for. Highlight current work-related issues that those in the Region would be familiar with and ask questions about the issue from a Franciscan perspective.
9. Encourage fraternities in your region to dedicate at least one meeting a year to a discussion of the place of Work in the Secular Franciscan way of life. September, the month of Labor Day, is one possibility.
10. Prepare and present an annual budget to the Council, including projected expenses for phone calls, travel, postage, copies, resources, supplies, etc. Don't hesitate to call the National Work Commission Chairs. If you don't want to be billed much for the call, just make it quick and give your phone number and they will call you back. E-mail works really well to but sometimes the reassurance of a human voice and the give and take inherent in a conversation is called for.