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National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA (OFS-USA)

2017 State of the Order Report from the National Executive Council Jan Parker, National Minister September 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the National Fraternity,
Grace and peace to you in Christ Jesus!

Ten months ago we gathered to experience the bright Light of Christ in the land of Brother Sun at our Nov. 1-6, 2016 NAFRA Chapter in Florida, an important time for our National Fraternity made even more so by the presence of María Consuelo “Chelito” Núñez, Vice Minister General, and Fr. Francis Bongajum Dor, OFM Cap, General Assistant - our Visitors from the Presidency (CIOFS). We stepped into that 2016 Chapter as a young Executive Council, having completed our first year of service, and we greatly benefited by the purifying light that our Visitors shone upon us. Together with you, our brothers and sisters of the National Fraternity Council, we celebrated a wonderful Chapter, rejoicing in God’s great providence. At the end we were energized and inspired by the light of faith shining forth from each one present. Together we sang “Be happy in the Lord!” for the happy light of Christ’s love filled and surrounded us all.

It is right that we begin this report with the memory of our past Chapter, and the feeling of *encandilada*¹, as the brightness we experienced helped us to see clearly the state of our National Fraternity while illuminating the path ahead of us. Enlightened by all we learned, we moved forward into 2017 motivated by our new theme, “O Breath of God, unite us in action!” Now, having completed two years of our three year term, we share with you this Annual Report.

Part I: Our Sense of Belonging to an International Order

There is an increasing awareness throughout our National Fraternity that we belong to an international Order. There is more communication between OFS in the USA and OFS members around the world, and relationships are forming. There is an eagerness to accompany emerging national fraternities. We appreciate the relationship that we have with the brothers and sisters of the International Council. We are encouraged and inspired by their dedication to the hard work of managing our world-wide Secular Franciscan Order.

An important recent communication from CIOFS was the June 4, 2017 Pentecost Letter from Minister General Tibor Kauser, addressed “to all my sisters and brothers in the Secular Franciscan Order, all over the world.” Tibor’s inspiring letter calls us to live our vocation fully and share our gifts within the Order. It also calls our attention to the XV General Chapter to be held in Rome, Nov. 4-12, 2017 and on the projects outlined in the *Instrumentum Laboris*.² It is the hope of the

¹ A word shared with us by Chelito Nunez, Vice Minister General; roughly translated “dazzled by the light.”

² The full text of the *Instrumentum Laboris* can be found on our NAFRA website.

NEC that our National Fraternity will fully support the project(s) that will be chosen, with enthusiasm, the investment of time, and financial support.

The November 2016 CIOFS Visitation was a beautiful encounter with two members of the Presidency who helped us see ourselves in light of the wider Order. It reinforced the fact that Fraternal and Pastoral Visitations are not a legalistic evaluation, but a time of grace, and a beautiful experience of love, concern and guidance. We are grateful for the wisdom that Chelito and Fr. Francis shared with us. Their Visitation Report was sent to all NAFRA members. The NEC has already taken some initial actions in response to their observations. (See the July 2017 NEC Report to NAFRA.) A formal response to the Visitors is in progress.

Some excerpts from the Visitation Report:

In general, the whole Chapter showed the excellent organization NAFRA has in place which gives very little space for improvement, though suggestions are herein included mainly to assist the National Executive Council to optimize their service.

During the course of the meeting, emphasis was made on the real communion (CCGG 94.1) these Visits should procure (CCGG 94.1), opening ourselves to love with a pure heart, which is the source of the true fraternity. (CCGG 15.4).

A very good initiative, was the questionnaire NEC sent out to all regions asking “How can the NEC assist you”. Responses to this questionnaire were duly received, containing remarks and suggestions on all areas NEC service is supposed to cover during its three year term. This was a magnificent tool to learn what NAFRA brothers and sisters expected from the NEC.

Considering that the OFS in the USA is a large organization composed of 12,244 professed and 1,076 candidates, it is essential that brothers and sisters be co-responsible for the life of the fraternity (CCGG 30). Visitors were very pleased to see different Commissions and Committee chairs supporting the NEC in its service to NAFRA.

Part II: The National Executive Council

It might be helpful for you to know that, on our own part, the NEC has discussed our effectiveness, asking ourselves: What is it that we are supposed to be accomplishing? Are we accomplishing that? This conversation, and a meditation on Isaiah 55, has nourished and inspired us, helping us to focus and prioritize. Given our current priorities – wide reaching as they are – we have been led to undertake a great variety of tasks. Progress has been reported on a regular basis by reports and various emails.

Equal to the time devoted to administration and programming is the time that we have given to communication with OFS members, and to interventions and mediations. When problems arise we are often disheartened, and can relate to the thoughts shared by Minister General Encarnación del Pozo in her 2014 Report to the General Chapter:

Too often, it seemed to us that actions or problems could and should be resolved within the scope of the national fraternity itself, respecting the principle of subsidiarity, but this does not satisfy those who want intervention at the highest level of Order.

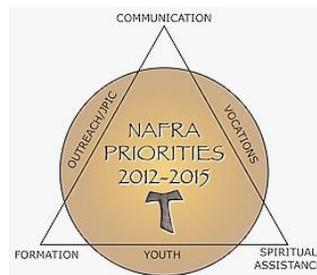
The vast majority of the problems stem from an attitude of authoritarianism, or are caused by very grave gossip and slanderous accusations toward brothers and sisters, which can destroy the right to their good name and reputation. It bothers me to see a desire to destroy a person at the time of exercising their responsibility.

Ignorance of our legislation itself leads many of our brothers and sisters as well as Councils at different levels to knock at the door of the Presidency to solve a problem that could be managed perfectly within the scope of the national fraternity.

Our own experiences are similar to those she describes, but we, like servant leaders at every level, are there to assist and guide. Where there are questions, we provide answers. Where there are problems or concerns our approach is always to help find resolution in a spirit of reconciliation through dialogue and prayer.

The joys of servant leadership far surpass the struggles. We are so grateful for all that we have been privileged to see and experience. We are grateful for the bonds of fraternity among us, and for our own personal growth. We witness the dedication, fraternal joy and hard work of countless brothers and sisters in every Region as we travel across this beautiful country to share and experience many wonderful Franciscan moments. We are blessed!

Part III: Our National Priorities



With appreciation to those Regions completing their Annual Report to NAFRA, we call your attention to the recently released 2017 Annual Report Summary. This Summary is a tool that serves OFS leadership at all levels. It provides demographics, as well as detailed descriptions of OFS activities throughout the country.

An examination of the Annual Report Summary, along with the 2015 Management of the Order Survey results and Regional Visitation Reports, confirms the challenges that exist in our National Fraternity: (1) a shortage of experienced leaders to serve on Councils and as Formators; (2) a shortage of First Order/TOR Spiritual Assistants; (3) lack of knowledge of the essential documents

and the Franciscan charism; (4) distance; (5) communication; (6) aging membership and lack of vocations and (7) youth and young adult outreach. These challenges are not new. Most have been mentioned in Annual Reports to NAFRA from 2010-2015. They continue to give us direction, and consequently very clear priorities.³

Formation

We celebrate the success of the August 2017 gathering of Regional Formation Directors (RFD's), and the fact that we have now established a plan for Annual RFD Gatherings that will include Regional Spiritual Assistants. In 2018 the Duns Scotus OFS Formation Trust Fund (DSTF) will cover the cost of room and board for this annual formation gathering. It is our hope that DSTF funding of this event can and will continue on an annual basis. We are happy to see the building of relationships among formation teams at all levels. We encourage Regional Formation Directors to communicate via the NAFRA-FORM listserv and provide peer support in their vital role of serving the local formation directors. We also note the excellent formation resources and programs that various Regions have developed.

Our CIOFS Visitors also commented on formation in their report: *"All throughout the years that General Chapters have taken place, Formation has always been considered the uppermost priority, playing an essential and fundamental role on the life of the Order. For this it is important National Fraternities all over the world, commit themselves in looking for the best ways to implement a unified formation tool for initial and ongoing formation process."*

We have a mandate, from both the International Council and our own National Council, to give proper attention to the foundational topics covered in the For Up to Now manual. Despite that mandate, full implementation has not been realized. Our challenge is to continue to form the formators at the local level.

- Regional Formation Directors must include all the agents of formation⁴ to help them meet their responsibilities.
- Regional or area-wide gatherings of local Formators are important.
- Time devoted to relationship building is vital. Frequent communication is a must.
- Ideas – such as geographic gatherings, webinars, use of workshop videos or live-streaming of events – abound. The impetus to implement these ideas is lacking.
- Lack of financial support should not hinder efforts. There are ways the National Fraternity can assist.

³ Six national priorities were named at the 2012 NAFRA Chapter: Communication, Formation, Spiritual Assistance, Outreach / JPIC, Youth and Vocations

⁴ The agents of formation are: The Holy Spirit, the Candidate, the Local Fraternity, the Fraternity Council, the Formation Director and Team, the Spiritual Assistant, the Sponsor, and Higher Levels of Fraternity. See Guidelines for Initial Formation, by the National Formation Commission, published by NAFRA in 1985

Regions vary widely in how well they are assisting local fraternities with formation. Some Regions are excelling, while others are challenged by a shortage of servant leaders or by great distances between fraternities. The NEC and the National Formation Commission stand ready to assist. We also encourage our national Geo Groups to develop ways of sharing resources and personnel, to organize geographic gatherings, and to offer assistance to their neighbors in addressing needs.

Another concern in the area of formation is the need for better discernment of an individual's vocation, both by the individual and by the local fraternity. There must be a deeper exploration of the meaning of a Secular Franciscan vocation. Do we make it clear that this is a major commitment to a complete re-structuring of one's life? Fr. Michael Higgins, former General Spiritual Assistant, in his Visitation Report to CIOFS in 2013, sees this as absolutely vital.

"An important aspect is the sense of 'belonging' to the Order, to see it as a major life commitment. Another aspect of the vocational call is that it provides a structure to life. In this respect, 'belonging' can be understood as closely linked to the vocation. In a sense, you could say that our vocation choice is like a lens through which we see the world and make our decisions accordingly. If this is not instilled in the lives and attitudes of the brothers and sisters of the Order, we run the risk that members will see their Order only as a social center or a place to meet with people who think similarly. When this occurs, the tissue of the Order as a whole is weakened. For this reason I would therefore suggest that there be greater attention given during the initial stages of the formation of the new members, informing them more about what it truly means to have a vocation to the Order."

Spiritual Assistance

Spiritual Assistants have a unique position in the fraternity, serving both as a beloved member and an objective voice. The Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order outline the vital role of an SA, and beautifully describe the SA/OFS relationship.⁵ Currently several Regions and 161 of 587 of local fraternities have no Spiritual Assistant (SA).⁶ Adding to this grim reality, but not reflected in statistics, is the number of appointed SA's who are not able to be present on a regular basis or actively engaged in the life of the fraternity, due to various difficulties or conflicts of responsibilities.

Our CIOFS Visitors have asked the CNSA to do all it can to ensure that every local fraternity has a spiritual assistant in conformity with the Rule and General Constitutions. Visitors also warn against too quickly appointing a lay spiritual assistant when a religious might still afford time to be with the OFS stating, "this is for the simple reason that the religious Spiritual Assistant is first of all, a witness of the Franciscan charism and a sign of communion of the OFS with the rest of the Franciscan family." The CNSA has responded to CIOFS, and agrees, however they have also stated the reality of the situation – there are not enough friars and religious to supply the need.

⁵ The Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order can be found in [Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order](#), or on our NAFRA website.

⁶ This does not include statistics on Holy Trinity and Solanus Casey Regions as a 2016 report was not received prior to this writing.

In recent years there have been many discussions about how to address this issue, and considerations of the pros and cons of OFS members serving as SA's. An important question and one often asked is, "How will we maintain the bond?" This is a question we need to continue to explore. It is edifying to see the care that is taken to not blur lines of responsibility. We (OFS) are the ones who most immediately see the need and observe how the lack of suitable and prepared SA's is hurting the OFS, but we know we cannot act alone in enacting solutions. There needs to be active cooperation with the Provincials and Provincial Spiritual Assistants. We value the OFS/Friar SA relationship; it is gratifying to know that the Friars value this as well.

The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) has been actively involved in the training of Spiritual Assistants since 1998. Franciscan Family Connections, which was revised in 2011, is the basic text for the Spiritual Assistant Training Program regardless of which class format is used. The CNSA also publishes the Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the OFS. In 2013 NAFRA established a task force on spiritual assistance, and in 2015 an important document – Spiritual Assistance Training Program Guidelines for Regions, developed jointly by the CNSA and the Spiritual Assistant Development Task Force – was presented to NAFRA.⁷

About half of our Regions, working in conjunction with their Provincial and Regional Spiritual Assistants, have established SA Training Programs. These programs are not exclusively for OFS members, but in most Regions the majority of attendees are OFS. At Visitations we examine the quality of SA Training Programs, and can report that good progress is being made. It is of note that OFS members, once appointed as SA's, make a major commitment – that of serving and being active in two different local fraternities.⁸

It is still too early to tell how effective these programs will be; and too early to determine if adherence to the 2015 Training Program Guidelines will produce suitable and well-prepared Spiritual Assistants. Discernment is important; not all OFS members are called to this ministry, and it is indeed a calling. One thing is clear – given that there are currently only 53 persons in 11 Regions enrolled in SA Training and that not all of these may be certified or appointed, and given that a number of current SA's may soon be retiring – we will not have enough SA's in the coming years to close the current gap.

One idea to help fraternities being served by an SA other than a Friar, or by no SA at all, is assigning a Friar to a small group of local fraternities. He would be present to these fraternities as his

⁷ A question that arose this past year in regards to these guidelines is the existence of any OFS policy for abuse prevention training for OFS Spiritual Assistants. The CNSA members shared that an abuse prevention course commensurate with a program required on the diocesan level is required for all SA training programs. This is mentioned in Franciscan Family Connections on p. ii. The NEC and CNSA agreed that certification must be in effect before placement of a new SA, and certification must be maintained. The Training Program Guidelines state that there must be referral, vetting and screening procedures for those applying to be SA's.

⁸ The NEC and CNSA agree that it is not in the best interest of the fraternity for an OFS member to be appointed to serve in their own fraternity; at times this may be the only solution and a pastoral decision must be made.

schedule allowed, being available for retreats, formation sessions, special events, etc. Although his availability to work directly with them would be limited, this relationship would maintain a bond with the First Order/TOR.

The NEC is working with the CNSA to organize a national workshop on Spiritual Assistance for Regional and Provincial SA's sometime in the late summer or fall of 2018. Invitations to this event will be extended to Provincial Ministers and all interested First Order and TOR Friars. Topics for this workshop might include: value, role and responsibilities of an SA; formation on the Franciscan Family Connection course topics; clarification of CNSA Handbook Guidelines; formulating a process to address the concern of how OFS SA's maintain the bond with the First Order/TOR Friars, and equipping OFS SA's to represent the Friar Provinces. It is expected that the Duns Scotus Formation Trust Fund will underwrite this event.

The NEC is working to engage the help of the CNSA and their Secretary to continue the work begun in 2012 by the Task Force on Spiritual Assistant Development. This included the study and subsequent recommendations for SA Training, and several additional projects to enhance OFS communication with Friar Provinces and provide resources for them to use. The NEC also endorses, and is happy to assist in organizing, the following:

- Training for local fraternity SAs during Regional Chapters
- SA Workshops wherever CNSA holds meetings
- SA Workshops a day prior to Regional Visitations, Regional Elections, or NAFRA Chapters
- Geographic area workshops for SA's

Further NEC assistance to SA's, especially those at the Regional level, includes the maintenance of a listserv for Regional Spiritual Assistants. There are currently two SA listservs: (1) a "CNSA-members" listserv (to join contact CNSA Secretary Frank Miller) and (2) NAFRA-RSA for Regional Spiritual Assistants (Administrator is Jane DeRose-Bamman.) The NEC also gave Regional and Provincial Spiritual Assistants read-only access to the NAFRA Database.

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) / Outreach

When this priority was first developed all agreed that incorporating the word "outreach" within the priority would help define it. JPIC is a priority outward – the living out of our Rule. One of our JPIC Commission's gifts to us is ongoing awareness of this call to be active and engaged in our society and in the world. The JPIC Commission also provides us with many resources for the manner and way in which we as Franciscans "live JPIC".

It is amazing to see the many activities listed in the JPIC section of the [2017 Annual Report Summary](#), the vignettes in the 2017 Summer TAU-USA of fraternities "united in action," and the many stories in Regional newsletters related to JPIC. Our National Fraternity is generous by way of donations, distributing \$13,500 to various charities at last year's Chapter alone, in addition to the amounts given to our H2O Project, disaster relief etc. We support international outreach through OFS involvement in Franciscan Family Apostolate, Amazon Relief, Villa La Paz, To the Nations and Franciscan Mission Service, to name a few, as well as numerous charitable agencies on the home front such as Franciscan Ministries in Detroit. As a National Fraternity we are members of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN), and many fraternities and Regions donate in addition to NAFRA

support. A good number of individual OFS members work directly with FAN in their efforts to transform United States public policy related to peace making, care for creation, poverty, and human rights. Overall our JPIC outreach is tremendous, much of it likely unseen.

A NAFRA survey to compile a list of those OFS members involved in various kinds of ministries, including international outreach, has been developed, and should be ready shortly. Contact information for those involved in these activities will be listed on the NAFRA website. This list will be a resource for those interested in joining an existing effort or initiating a similar one.

There are several areas where we need to grow in the area of JPIC. We need a greater appreciation of the diversity of our efforts; not all are called to the same ministry. We also see a great need for OFS members to recognize and address social sin. Fr. Dan Horan, OFM called our attention to this at our 2016 Q, and some found it a difficult challenge. Lastly, when we look at the USCCB's "Two Feet of Love in Action"⁹ it is clear that we do much better with the "foot of charitable works" than we do with the "foot of social justice." We need to consider our Franciscan responsibility in this area.

Ongoing formation in the area of JPIC, as outlined in our Rule, will help us grow. We need to continue to educate ourselves in order to gain new perspectives and a Gospel attitude. Good examples of this type of formation would be the 2017 Summer Seminar on Multiculturalism and the 2017 JPIC Animate Peace Gathering on Mindful Communication. These events were wonderful, and more such opportunities need to be made available.

Communication

All agree that we must communicate in order to bring greater awareness of the Secular Franciscan Order to the world. To meet this need the NEC set the following goals: (1) a new structure to help us be more productive and unified, and provide coordination to the work of the great number of persons involved; (2) expansion of public relations; (3) greater social media presence; (4) a new NAFRA website with the domain "SecularFranciscansUSA.org. In the past months we have added new committee members to existing committees to make progress on these goals, the most progress being the development of our new website.

We have also focused on better communication *within* our national fraternity. We have improved on the timeliness of sending reports and other material for Chapter, as well as providing regular reports to the National Fraternity throughout the year. We have added listservs for Regional Vice-Ministers and Regional Spiritual Assistants in order to communicate more widely. The "OFS-USA ListServ" is still in the development stage; the idea of communicating directly by email with individual members was approved by NAFRA and has merit, but remains a future goal.

⁹ The USCCB promotes "Two Feet of Love in Action", stating, "There are two distinct, but complementary, ways we can put the Gospel in action in response to God's love: social justice (addressing systemic, root causes of problems that affect many people) and charitable works (short-term, emergency assistance for individuals)."

There is a need to balance how much is too much communication, especially when it comes to sending emails, but growth in the area of communications *also* needs to happen on the receiving end. Attention needs to be given to communications that are sent out; time needs to be devoted to reading them. One member recently confessed, “Sadly, I must admit that I often do more scanning of the articles in the TAU than I probably should.” The TAU-USA is considered our best means of reaching each OFS member in the National Fraternity – to even hear a hint that it is not read is disheartening, given all that is put into it, not to mention the cost.

Communication extends to the work of translations. Even prior to the recent appointment of a Multicultural Councilor, translations have been a priority for this Council. Our teams of translators enable us to produce a Spanish TAU-USA and online issues of the TAU-USA in both Spanish and Korean. Translation of the Essential Documents and the red Rule book into Spanish is close to completion. Translation of the St. Anthony Messenger Press edition of the OFS Ritual by Benet Fonck, OFM has been slowed by the need for copyright permissions. Addressing the need for translators at all OFS events is an ongoing challenge, but one that all of us must keep as a priority.

Vocations

There has been great progress made by the Vocations Committee this past year as seen in their report. Regular articles on Vocations in each issue of the TAU-USA, the increased visibility on social media and the posting of many OFS testimonies on the Secular Franciscan YouTube Channel have been wonderful steps forward. The committee has encouraged the NEC to look into a new National OFS logo, and a Vocations Tool Kit will soon be unveiled. 1-800-FRANCIS (via both phone and email) has wide use to the extent that a second facilitator is needed.

When Jane DeRose-Bamman was appointed National Secretary she agreed to continue as Vocation Committee Chair to bring some projects to a close, but she has now resigned her role on that committee. We will now begin a search for a new Vocations Chair to continue this great work. We must remember, however, the role that each one of us plays when it comes to vocations. Personal invitation is the most important vocations building tool. The high importance of our living witness was summed up in the CIOFS Visitation Report:

“It is good to emphasize that the best promotion comes from the testimony Secular Franciscans give while living their Catholic faith and commitment. If it is strengthened the fact that Secular Franciscans are within the same heart of the Catholic Church which demands a renewal, making a reality that call to Saint Francis, “GO REPAIR”, Catholics in general may attend the call, and Secular Franciscans will be there to lead the way. As an example, it should not be put aside that Secular Franciscans must not shy away from getting involved in politics, always in conformity with the teachings of the Church.”

Youth

The NEC year of discernment on the topic of youth was tremendously fruitful, and led to the July National Gathering on the Topic of Youth. The NEC facilitators and the ten attendees, representing ten different OFS Regions, prepared for this gathering by studying YouFra history and documents, along with the resources developed by former NAFRA Youth Commissions. They then spent three

intense days of brainstorming sessions resulting in a draft vision statement, short and long term goals for a future Youth Commission, a detailed job description, and an ambitious action plan. One of the wonderful outcomes of this gathering was the appointment of a new Youth Commission Chair.

Part V: Administration

Website and Database

Two of the most pressing administrative tasks for the NEC have been the updating of the NAFRA website and database. Our new web designer has worked for several months on the functionality, features and overall look of our new OFS-USA website, which will be previewed at our 2017 Chapter. Early in 2017 the NEC and Computer Committee launched a plan to update the Database. The NEC and Computer Committee first worked together to establish database requirements - one of our goals being that the database become a repository for permanent records. The newly tasked Computer/Database Committee took it from there. The Committee met last spring to work on how to transition to a new database. Their work will continue at a second meeting this fall. By early 2018 the Computer Committee will complete the necessary in-house work that must be done prior to transitioning to a new framework. The NEC is in agreement with the Computer Committee that the new framework will be outsourced. The cost is estimated to be \$20,000, but all agree it will be a good investment.

Question on Newly Forming Groups (NFG) in the Database

During this past year some good questions were being asked as Regions struggled with where to put Newly Forming Group (NFG) members in the Database. These questions included: In what local fraternity are newly professed members in a NFG registered? Should members of a NFG be registered in the database as part of the NFG, or as members of the sponsoring fraternity? What if the sponsoring fraternity is the Region? What about those in remote formation – in what fraternity do they profess? Does a fraternity need to be canonically established to register professions? All of these are excellent questions, but they are actually more about our OFS legislation than about the database. To determine the answers, we placed this item on the agenda of the June 2017 NEC/CNSA joint meeting.

At that time, the NEC and CNSA reviewed the SA Handbook, pp. 37-41, line by line. We spent several hours reviewing and discussing the detailed process of going from a newly forming group to the canonical establishment of a fraternity. We agreed on the following: (1) pages 37-41 of the SA Handbook need to be rewritten for greater clarity and completeness, (2) we need to consult a canon lawyer to clarify some procedures, and (3) guidelines for newly forming groups and emerging fraternities should to be part of our OFS legislation, rather than just addressed in the SA Handbook. This entire topic will be discussed briefly at our 2017 NAFRA Chapter.

2016-2017 NEC Projects:

- Revision of Election and Visitation Forms – work in progress 75% complete
- Draft “Readiness for Canonical Establishment Guideline” - 85% complete
- Management of the Order (MOTO) Survey – part 2

- Preparations for 2017 + 2018 NAFRA Chapters
- National Guidelines Project
- Revision of NAFRA Financial Reports, Chart of Accounts and related forms for clarity, giving attention to accuracy, detail and usefulness
- Collation of Annual Reports from Regions
- Major revision of Annual Reports from Regions to NAFRA – on hold until database work is completed, but minor changes will be made to comply with CIOFS requirements
- Charitable Giving Committee Project
- Preparations for 2021 Quinquennial Congress

2016-2017 NEC Calendar

In addition to a number of conference calls throughout 2016-2017, the NEC facilitated and/or participated in the following:

- December 9-10, 2016 – NEC Meeting in St. Louis, MO
- March 23-26, 2017 - NEC Meeting in Albany, NY
- May 13 - Meeting with Franciscan Action Network Board and Staff, Washington DC
- June 16-20 - NEC Meeting in Chicago, IL, followed by NEC meeting with CNSA
- July 6-9 - Summer Seminar, St. Francis University, Loretto, PA
- July 21 - Meeting with Sr. Margaret Magee, President of FAN Board of Directors
- July 21-23 - Secular Franciscan Conference, St. Bonaventure University, NY and Visit to National Archives
- July 27-30 - JPIC Animate Peace Gathering on Mindful Communication, St. Louis, MO
- July 27-30 - National Gathering on Topic of Youth, St. Louis, MO
- August 17-20 –Regional Formation Directors Gathering, St. Louis, MO
- August 28-31 – Q Committee Meeting, Phoenix, AZ
- September 22-25 at Mount St. Francis, IN

NAFRA Election and Visitation Schedule 2017

Elections

Holy Trinity Region (November 2016) – Willie Guadalupe and Br. Bryan Maloney

St. Junipero Serra Region (February 2017) – Mary Frances Charsky and Br. Alexander Escalera

Five Franciscan Martyrs Region (April 2017) - Awilda Guadalupe and Fr. Christopher Panagoplos

Queen of Peace Region (June 2017) – Joan Geiger and Kathy Taormina

Troubadours of Peace Region (June 2017) – Jan Parker and Br. Alexander Escalera

St. Clare Region (June 2017) – Deacon David Ream and Therese Ream

La Verna Region (June 2017) – Mary Bittner and Lee Ann Niebuhr

Santa Maria de las Montañas Region (August 2017) – Awilda Guadalupe and Br. Alexander Escalera

Our Lady of the Angels Region (scheduled for November 2017) – Joan Geiger and Frank McHugh

Visitations

St. Margaret of Cortona Region (November 2016) - Mary Stronach and Fr. Christopher Panagoplos

Our Lady of the Angels Region (November 2016) – Mary Stronach and Fr. Christopher Panagoplos
St. Francis Region (January 2017) – Joan Geiger and Br. Alexander Escalera
St. Thomas More Region (February 2017) – Mary Bittner and Br. Alexander Escalera
Fr. Solanus Casey Region (April 2017) – Joan Geiger and Br. Bob Brady
St. Elizabeth of Hungary Region (April 2017) – Mary Frances Charsky and Fr. Christopher Panagoplos
Mother Cabrini Region (May 2017) – Jan Parker and Br. Bob Brady
Divine Mercy (August 2017) – Mary Stronach and Fr. Christopher Panagoplos

Looking to the Year Ahead

We return to where we began this report - marveling as we stand within the dazzling light of Christ's love. We are ever grateful for God's invitation - his stooping low - to welcome us into relationship, and into our Franciscan vocation. We give praise to God, and thank Him for each of you, our companions on this journey, and for the joy and peace found in this life of communion, conversion and humble service.

As we look forward to next year we keep in mind that 2018 will be the 40th anniversary of the Pauline Rule of 1978. Our 1978 Rule is certainly a gift to celebrate. Let this Rule, this call to live the gospel life, guide us in the year ahead.

Peace and Good,

The Sisters and Brothers of National Executive Council

National Executive Council

Jan Parker, Minister

Mary Bittner, Vice Minister

Jerry Rousseau, Treasurer

Jane DeRose-Bamman, Secretary

Mary Frances Charsky, Councilor

Willie Guadalupe, Councilor

Joan Geiger, Councilor

Mary Stronach, International Councilor

Br. Alexander Escalera OFM Cap., CNSA President-in-Turn

For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of [Jesus] Christ. 2 Cor 4:6

International Councilor Report
Submitted by Mary Stronach, OFS
Summary Report from Nov. 2016 - Sept. 2017

Participated in NEC meetings and conference calls

Conducted visitations to: Our Lady of Angels, St Margaret of Cortona and Divine Mercy Regions

Traveled to Washington DC with Jan and Carolyn to meet with FAN. Helped draft letter to ministers on FAN

Traveled to CIOFS Presidency meetings in Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 to interpret and to assist with International Formation and Family Commissions. Working with Formation team on booklet and translating it and other formation projects; reviewing MOODLE website to develop an on-line Formation Training Program for CIOFS

Co-presented with Carolyn at St. Francis University Summer Seminar on Multiculturalism & Diversity

Helped plan and worked at Youth Workshop

Coordinated with Lee Potts on website

Worked with logo designer

Coordinated several communication efforts to help establish fraternal accompaniment programs with Nigerian clinic and Nigerian fraternity

Worked on MOTO CIOFS committee to finalize a report to National fraternities and continued MOTO work with national committee; coordinated translation of Korean survey and translated Spanish version

Developed a NAFRA survey to compile a list of those OFS members involved in various kinds of ministries, including international outreach.

Edited prayer for General Chapter

Translated several documents for CIOFS for Family and Formation committee and other CIOFS committees.

Wrote articles for TAU and Vox Franciscana (Formation)

Translated articles/special sections for TAU into Spanish

Requested more information from CIOFS on Financial Situation and sent out e-mail to Regional Ministers on it.

Wrote writing, translation and interpreting guidelines for CIOFS

Participated on some Conference Calls with Vocation Committee, updating brochure with new logo, once finalized

Assisted several OFS members to make connections with OFS in other parts of the world

Communicated with CIOFS/Tibor on US Virgin Islands where he says that if they join USA, it would be the responsibility of USA to care for them.

Invited PJ Chalmers to Chapter to meet him and to work with Bob and me on national communications effort for the chapter. This would be an opportunity to determine how he might work with National in the future.

Addressed copyright issue with Tibor

Presented formation sessions at local fraternity

Helped coordinate mailing of meds to Venezuela

National Formation Commission Annual Report – Year 2017
Respectfully submitted by: Mary Anne Lenzi, OFS
Chair, National Formation Commission

Major Accomplishment 2017

- Regional Formation Commission Workshop – August, St. Louis, MO
 - Presentation: The Relationship between the Secular Franciscan Formator and the Spiritual Assistant through the eyes Spiritual Assistant
 - Presentation and Interactive Segment: Learning Who We Are – Implementing the FUN Manual
 - Presentation: Living Who We Are – Ongoing Formation focusing on St. Clare’s meditation to gaze, consider, contemplate and imitate.
 - Morning, Evening and Night Prayer in community; Celebration of the Eucharist with Msgr. Gregory Mikesch
 - Open Forum discussions.
 - The workshop was well received with positive reactions on both on surveys and via email.
- NAFRA-FORM – up with 99% of Regions participating including Guam.

Ongoing Responsibilities

- Submission of quarterly formation articles for TAU USA
- Attendance and participation at two National Executive Council meetings
- Communication with Regional Formation Directors, handling various communications and requests for assistance

2017 National Formation Commission meetings and telephone conferences

- One meeting held in Denver: June 2017
- Multiple telephone conferences

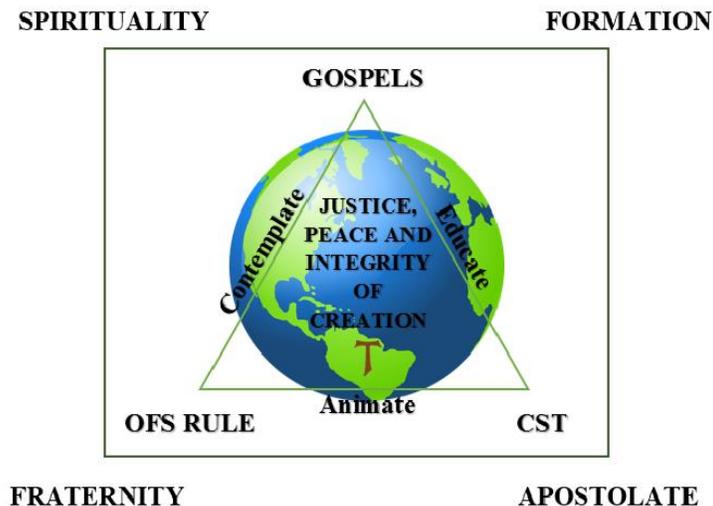
Upcoming for 2017 and 2018

- Ongoing formation for National Fraternity Chapter
- Begin planning Workshop for Regional Formation Directors and Regional Spiritual Assistants to be held in late August, early September 2018

Primary Goals for year 2018

- Encourage Regional Formation Directors to exchange ideas through the NAFRA-Form and with their geographic groups.
- To develop materials to address the expressed needs of Regional Formation Directors; (to collectively review and update Guidelines for Remote Formation)
- To provide opportunities for growth and awareness of giftedness and understanding of different persons and ways of interaction
- 2018 Workshop for Regional Formation Directors and Regional Spiritual Assistants
- To be available as needed

National Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission
U.S. Secular Franciscan Order
2016 – 2017 Happenings
Submitted by Carolyn D. Townes, OFS



Updated the JPIC Commission diagram (Jan 11)
Monthly National JPIC Commission Conference calls (Jan 24, Feb 28, Mar 28, Apr 25, May 23, Jun 27; Sep 19)
National Executive Council Conference Call (Mar 5)
Emails with CIOFS Councilor Jenny Harrington, OFS re: 12 Weeks of Franciscan Peace (Mar)
Attended Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, DC (April 21-23)
National Executive Council Meeting & Joint Meeting with CNSA in Libertyville, IL (June 16-19)
Presenter: Summer Seminar @ St. Francis University in Loreto, PA (July 6-9)
National Animate Peace Gathering in St. Louis, MO (July 27-30)
National Chapter @ Mt. St. Francis in Indiana (Sept 26-Sep29)

National Emails:

- ✓ 100 Days of Prayer (Feb 1)
- ✓ Executive Order on Refugees (Feb 3)
- ✓ Lenten Letter w/resources (Feb 28)
- ✓ JPIC Gathering Registration Packet (Mar 5)
- ✓ Regional JPIC Animators updates (Mar 29)
- ✓ 1st Call for Nominations for 2017 JPIC Award (Apr 24)
- ✓ 2nd Call for Nominations for 2017 JPIC Award (May 15)
- ✓ 3rd Call for Nominations for 2017 JPIC Award (June 26)
- ✓ Calls for JPIC Award Voting (July 15 – Jul 30)
- ✓ Announce 2017 JPIC Award Recipient (Aug 1) – Lisa Kremer, OFS
- ✓ Season of Care for Creation (Aug 28)

Franciscan Action Network:

- ✓ Monthly Zoom Calls
- ✓ Communication Committee Conference Call (Mar 14)
- ✓ Contribute Newsletter reflections (Jan 15, Feb 26, Apr 23)
- ✓ Correspondence and calls re: OFS/FAN Meeting
- ✓ Board Conference Calls (Mar 28; Sep 13)
- ✓ In Person Board Meeting in Washington, DC (May 12)

- ✓ Joint Gathering of Representatives of FAN Board and NEC (May 13)

Ongoing JPIC Activities

- ✓ Correspond with Regional and Local JPIC Animators, Regional Ministers and National Minister
- ✓ Began National JPIC Commission Liaison Project
- ✓ Update JPIC Commission Member Contact List
- ✓ Update National JPIC Animators Roster
- ✓ Working on updates to the JPIC Animators Handbook
- ✓ Correspond with National JPIC Webmaster, Mike DePue, OFS on updates
- ✓ Correspond with National JPIC Spiritual Assistant, Br. David Buer, OFM on updates and future plans
- ✓ Update Animate Peace Facebook Page
- ✓ Contribute quarterly articles to TAU-USA



National JPIC Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/jpic4ofs/home>

NAFRA Computer/Database Committee Annual Report – Fiscal Year 2017

Summary

The Computer/Database Committee continues to make information available to the OFS in the United States through the website, List Servers, and the NAFRA database (which supports the work of sharing TAU-USA with all active professed members). The role of the committee is shifting to focus more exclusively on the database, as a new website is under development. We were tasked in 2017 to invest in modernizing the database and moving to something more maintainable and usable. We support the work of the NEC, NAFRA, and CNSA in general as requests come in. The Computer Committee members are: Vickie Klick, Bob Herbelin, Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, Dan Mulholland, Bill Mussatto, Patsy Philipps, Roger Raupp, and Neal Verzwylvelt.

Accomplishments since November 2016:

1. New members Neal Verzwylvelt, Bill Mussatto, and Patsy Philipps are well integrated into the committee and making excellent contributions!
2. Generated mailing lists for Winter 2016, Spring 2017, and Summer 2017 issues of TAU-USA
3. Winter 2016 and Spring 2017 issues of TAU-USA were added to the website in both English and Spanish, along with articles from Winter 2016 in Korean
4. Made updates to and provided support for regional ministers' annual reports.
5. Ongoing work to fix urgent problems with database access as required
6. Routine database maintenance/user support is ongoing
7. Routine listserv maintenance is ongoing; transitioned some listserv support to Jane DeRose-Bamman, as it fits with the role of NEC Secretary
8. Helped Jane DeRose-Bamman with creation of NAFRA directory from database
9. Routine website maintenance is ongoing, pending development of the new website
10. Planned and held working meeting to determine the best way to proceed on modernizing the NAFRA database. Concluded that in order to transition the existing data (which we need) and make the best use of resources, we would first modernize the way the existing database is accessed (the "back end" communication to a standard database program) and make a few much-needed improvements. We would like to then contract out development of a modern web interface to the database which provides access to both the "regular" and administrative functions.
11. In support of the database work, we are developing user-oriented requirements (based on requirements provided by the NEC). The requirements must include not only the functionality provided by the existing web interface, but also the large set of administrative functions provided by the programs that Bob Herbelin has running directly on the server. Some of this work will be useful to regional ministers and others to understand how the "business rules" of the Order are intended to work (e.g., who needs to be involved in transfers, withdrawals, etc.) We are also documenting procedures for various database tasks
12. Since our spring meeting, Neal has been working to complete the first phase of the restructuring, with support from the rest of the database team. We plan a second meeting at the end of October when we will have some training for the rest of the team on the new database access methods and continue work on the requirements, along with creating a job description for the web interface development work.

OFS-USA-EIC Report

July 30, 2017

1. Committee Members

- a. Imam Bashar Arafat – Committee Companion
- b. Mike Carsten OFS
- c. Rabbi Dorit Edit – Committee Companion
- d. Donna Hollis OFS

2. Committee Goal

- a. Create an "**opportunity of encounter**" for the National Fraternity.

3. Method of approach

- a. Adding a person from the Islamic and Jewish faith tradition to the committee.
- b. Holding our annual Committee meeting to coincide with and at the annual NAFRA meeting.
- c. Utilizing the TAU-USA articles, our new web site, our NAFRA gatherings and the Committee meeting itself to create opportunities of encounter for each other, the National Fraternity Council and the OFS in the USA. Easing the OFS at all levels into relationship.
- d. Create a network within the OFS-USA for the sharing of ideas, experiences, pictures, formation modules, prayer services.....
- e. Invite each Region to create their own committees reflecting the Regions personality.
- f. Inviting each Region to appoint a representative that will participate with the National Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee as part of an integrated Network.
- g. Searching for and developing a leadership foundation (bringing forth the talents and gifts within the OFS) that can carry us forward into the future.
- h. Being a concrete, visible, lived example within the Committee of "pilgrims journeying alongside one another".

4. Accomplishments

- a. Added a person from the Islamic and Jewish faith tradition to the committee.
- b. Holding our annual Committee meeting to coincide with and at the annual NAFRA meeting.
- c. Utilized the TAU-USA with several articles.
- d. Created and maintaining a new web site
www.ofsusaecumenicalinterfaith.org
- e. Created and maintaining a new Facebook page.
- f. Created and maintaining new twitter account.
- g. Created and maintaining a new quarterly e-newsletter.

- h. We are using the TAU-USA and the new quarterly newsletter to invite each Region (and Local Fraternity) to create their own Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee (EIC) reflecting the local Fraternal personality.
- i. We are asking each Region to appoint a representative that will participate with the National Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee as part of an integrated OFS-EIC Network for the sharing of ideas, experiences, pictures, formation modules, prayer services.
- j. We are searching for and working to develop a leadership foundation (bringing forth the talents and gifts within the OFS) that can carry us forward into the future.
- k. Planning is in place for a Tri-Faith conference to be held in 2018 “The People of God a Sacred Prism”. Combining the Abrahamic faith traditions. This conference will be a study and experience of prayer. `

Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity

5. Attended (at the National Ministers request) in June the TSSF and OEF Annual Chapters.
6. Attended “The Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity’s” annual gathering in New York.
7. Plans for the year.
8. Making of a video about the history, vision, and mission of the Joint Committee that would be used as part of the formation program of our respective Orders to educate members about the Committee and encourage participation in its programs.
9. We are encouraging the use of The Sultan and the Saint docu-drama to encourage Local and Regional Fraternities to become active, working towards positive interfaith relationships with Muslims in their local communities in the spirit of St. Francis.
10. Planning activities for 2018:
 - Conference in May 2018 – Agents of Peace in a Time of fear. Locations for this conference are currently being explored.

Respectfully Submitted

Mike Carsten OFS
Ecumenical & Interfaith Committee Chair
313-309-1277
mikecars10@gmail.com
www.ofsusaecumenicalinterfaith.org

2021 Quinquennial (Q) Congress Committee Report to NAFRA

September 2017

The core committee members are confirmed: Kathy Taormina, ofs (Queen of Peace Region), Donna Hollis, ofs (Our Lady of Guadalupe- Empress of the Americas Region), Br. Bob Brady, ofm (CNSA, Santa Barbara Province and St. Thomas More Region), Mary Bittner (NEC Vice Minister), Jan Parker (NEC Minister), Susan Simeone, ofs (St Thomas More Region) and Jerry Rousseau, (NEC Treasurer). Other members will be added throughout the planning and development phases.

Our first planning gathering for the 2021 Quinquennial (Q) Congress occurred at the Franciscan Renewal Center, Phoenix, Arizona. At this first planning meeting we did much brainstorming, discussing, praying and discerning. In future months, we will be reviewing and deciding more definitely on many of these first round of topics.

- Goals, vision, and theme for the 2021 Q Congress: We brainstormed these three areas simultaneously. A written draft of the vision has been completed for the committee to review, and we unanimously agreed on a theme. These will be shared soon with all.
- Budgets: Drafts were presented to explain possible line items that appear to be needed. Budget will be refined and approved once venue is secured.
- Presenters: We brainstormed a list of approximately 20 possible speakers. Further research and discussion will narrow this list in the next few months.
- Program: We brainstormed some items we want to capture in the program. Examples include but not limited to: Daily Mass, Little Fraternities, reflective time, meals, presenters, panels, social, etc....
- Venues: We discussed many possible locations to have the Q 2021. Research and discussion will continue.
- Next steps: We brainstormed what tasks need to be completed in the next few months.
- Our next Q Committee meeting is scheduled for January 4, 5, 6, 2018 at the Franciscan Renewal Center.

Submitted by Susan Simeone, ofs

2021 Quinquennial Congress Committee

Vocations Committee and Social Media Subcommittee Report August 2017

The Vocations Committee and Social Media Subcommittee conferred seven times between December and August have accomplished the following:

- Articles for TAU-USA newsletter - two articles were written on the importance of promoting vocations to the Order. A few responses have been received since the last report including one testimonial from Gabe Harkey, OFS (California).
- Testimonials – an additional 15 testimonials were posted to the Secular Franciscans YouTube channel. It is a goal to continue to collect and post recorded testimonials.
- Tool Kit – additional progress has been made. The documents will be finalized once the logo has been updated:
 - National Vocations Prayer – Maria Pimentel, prepared the cards with beautiful graphics in English, Spanish and Korean.
 - Vocation petitions for morning and evening prayer. This document will be translated into Spanish and Korean.
 - Promotional brochures – The national promotional brochure is being updated and will be translated.
 - Come & See Event – A guide to planning a Come & See event, based on the information in the FUN Manual, was created including talking points. This document was translated into Korean (thanks to members of the Our Lady of the Angels Region) and will be translated into Spanish.
- Bumper magnets – All of the 1-800-Francis Secular Franciscan Order bumper magnets were sold. Waiting for the logo to be updated before an additional order is placed.
- Logo – the Subcommittee members encourage the NEC to approve an updated logo for use in various promotional materials. Maria Pimentel (working with an artist from Italy) and James Wesley provided options for consideration.
- Facebook page – Regular contributors (people who post) included: Maria Pimentel, Dan Mulholland and Steven/Lillian White. There are currently 3400 likes. Most of the posts have thousands of hits. We need one or two more people to moderate the site. There is some discussion about merging with the Secular Franciscan Order Public Group.
- Twitter account - In February 2017, Barb Szyszkiewicz, OFS, joined the Social Media subcommittee. She is tweeting regularly on Franciscan feast days and shares links to relevant articles. She plans to use the new logo to brand all graphics for Twitter. The account now has more than 400 followers.

A summary of activity for the 1-800-Francis coordinator is provided in a separate report.

It has been a pleasure to serve the National Fraternity as Vocations Committee Chair. With the new responsibilities as National Secretary, I will not be able to continue as Vocations Committee Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane

Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS
Vocations Committee Chair (outgoing)

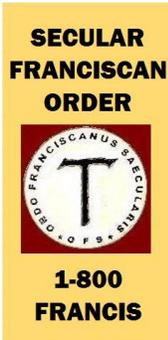
National Prayer for Vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order

O good and gracious God, God of mercy, compassion, generosity, and love,
as we live our lives today in the model of St. Francis, choosing daily to live the Gospel life,
help us to help others hear your call.

Help us to help others recognize their vocation as a Secular Franciscan
that You have already planted in their heart.

Help us, so that together we all may work to bring the Gospel to life. Amen!

(Composed by Marian R. Crosby, OFS, at the 2010 NAFRA Chapter, Scottsdale, AZ)



1-800-FRANCIS VOCATION REPORT TO NAFRA September 1, 2016 – August 15, 2017

The 1-800-Francis contact is answered by emails, regular mail, and phone calls.

I received 353 emails and 270 phone calls. There were several requests for the Red Rule Book and I sent them the Smokey Valley order page from TAU-USA.

All requests for fraternity information are referred to the Regional Formation Director, who then contacts the local Minister &/or Formation Director to make contact with the person inquiring about the Order and direct them to a viable fraternity.

By state (not Regional Fraternity) the most inquiries come from:

1) California; 2) Florida; 3) New York & New Jersey (tied); 4) Ohio

We are charged \$10.00/month by Comcast for the land line that becomes the 1-800-Francis. I am reimbursed for this expense. There is a \$360/year fee to retain ownership of 1-800-Francis, which is sent directly to the NaFra Treasurer.

Thank you for the privilege of serving the Secular Franciscan Order and the National Fraternity through this ministry.

Peace and all good,

Kathleen White OFS

NaFra Vocations Ministry

1-800-Francis

National Prayer for Vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order

O good and gracious God, God of mercy, compassion, generosity, and love, as we live our lives today in the model of St. Francis, choosing daily to live the Gospel life, help us to help others hear your call.

Help us to help others recognize their vocation as a Secular Franciscan that You have already planted in their heart.

Help us, so that together we all may work to bring the Gospel to life. Amen!

(Composed by Marian R. Crosby, OFS, at the 2010 NAFRA Chapter, Scottsdale, AZ)

ARCHIVES

August 14, 2017

To: National Executive Council

Fr: Sharon Deveaux ofs Archivist

Greetings,

My last visit to the Archives was June 12-16 and our new Historian Dianne Ambrose met me there and we had 3 days of working together and one long walk.

We received 2 boxes of miscellaneous records and I continued with cataloging the boxes. A few weeks later (thee) Jan Parker ofs visited the Archives room which is the first time a current National Minister has done so...thank you Jan and Dianne for the picture.

There are now 236 boxes in our Archives.

Peace,

Sharon Deveaux ofs

Archivist

National Historian Report
Dianne Ambrose, OFS
National Historian
BSSF Regional Formation Director

I was appointed in June 2017. In June 2017 I went to National Archives at St Bonaventure University with Sharon Devaux, National Archivist. I was introduced to the system to access our archives. I was able to pull the TAUS from 2007 from CDs and some of the NEC minutes. Im in the process of pulling articles and obtaining important information especially about the Formation Commission and JPIC. I could not find information on the last two Qs. I did attend the 2016 Q so have information about that event. I plan to go to Jan Parkers house and pull the NEC minutes and Q information from her files.

In July 2017 I attended the Secular Franciscan Conference at St Bonaventure University and was able to open more time in the archives. Also I had the privilege of showing the archives to Jan Parke.

We have obtained all of Benet Foncks writings concerning Secular Franciscans. I hope at some time I will be allowed to go back and spend time going through those papers and write a more extensive history on his interactions with secular Franciscans. My plan is to write the history from 2007 to present. What we want to do with that I need some guidance. One thing would be to write articles for the TAU about historical facts. Another idea would be to print a small booklet with the history. I look forward to hearing your ideas.

Also I was wondering what happened to Tom Bellos papers? Also are there certain people I need to contact for pictures of NAFRA chapters, Q's, workshops etc. It would be helpful to me if each commission wrote a write up of their current purpose and activities.

In addition I need to know which meetings and workshops I need to attend. I will be attending the Regional Formation Workshop in ST Louis in August. So will be able to take pictures and obtain information to write about that workshop.

In my budget for 2018 I have asked for monies to attend Chapter and to go spend another week at St Bonaventure University in the National Archives.

I did not attend this chapter due to instead of attending Chapter I am going to Jsn Parkers house to work with her on the files she has stored at her her home.

Than you for the opportunity to serve the Franciscans in this function. I look forward to your guidance and comments.

Peace
Dianne



Annual Report 2017

The following information is from the mailing statistics for the summer issue of the TAU-USA

English TAU-USA	# Records	# Copies	Note
TAU_USA_Intl.TAB	20 Intl	20	International
TAU_USA_Multiple.TAB	4 Mult.	54	6 or more copies
TAU_USA_Single.TAB	13,389 Single	13,472	5 or less copies

Total English Copies = 13,546

Spanish TAU-USA	# Records	# Copies	Note
TAU_USA_SP_Multiple.TAB	5 Mult.	73	6 or more copies
TAU_USA_SP_Single.TAB	378 Single	378	5 or less copies

Total Spanish Copies = 451

Grand Total = 13,997 (This is approximately the same number as the spring issue)

Approximate cost per issue (layout, printing prep, color printing and mailing) = \$0.95/copy

Printing and Mailing is handled by Valley Offset Printing in Valley Center Kansas.

Candidates are now included in the TAU-USA mailings and it is very important that their data be added to the national database as soon as they enter candidacy. Keeping the mailing list updated is a constant challenge because the list comes directly from the national database. Any problems with individuals not receiving their issue is usually the result of missing or incorrect database information. Updating the database is a regional responsibility.

The TAU USA is now entirely translated into Spanish thanks to the dedicated work of fifteen Spanish translators from around the country. In addition to the Spanish translation, selected article are translated into Korean by a team of thirteen translators and published on the NAFRA website.

During the past year we have continued to translate the TAU USA into Spanish and Korean. There are 14 active translators for the Spanish edition, which is mailed out in hard copy like the English, in addition to being online. For the Spring 2017 edition we mailed out 451 copies in Spanish.

We only have 10 translators in Korean, having lost 3 Korean translators this past year. The Korean version of the TAU USA is online only.

Jim Wesley OFS, TAU-USA Editor
Cindy Wesley OFS, Coordinator of TAU-USA translations

DUNS SCOTUS SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION TRUST FUND
Board of Trustees Report to the National Fraternity, OFS-USA
August 15, 2017

Current Board Members

Jan Parker OFS, National Minister
Jerry Rousseau OFS, National Treasurer
Mary Anne Lenzi OFS, National Formation Chair
Anne Mulqueen OFS, DSTF Secretary
Br. Alexander Escalera OFM, Cap., CNSA President in Turn
Br. Juniper Crouch, OFM –St. John the Baptist Provincial Spiritual Assistant

Review of Duns Scotus Trust Fund Portfolio

As directed by the National Fraternity, meeting in Chapter in November 2016, the Board undertook a review of our Duns Scotus Trust Fund portfolio. The process, findings and results are included at the bottom of this report.

Meetings of the Board and Consideration of Requests

The Duns Scotus Secular Franciscan Formation Trust Fund (DSTF) met by conference call on March 12 and July 10. Requests for each cycle were discussed and those requesting grants were notified in a very timely manner.

A Note from the Board on Discernment of Requests

In all of our discernment the Board considers each request on an individual basis. We consider BOTH financial need and quality of program. Many requests are extremely worthwhile, but those submitting the request do not have the real financial need that other applicants might have.

We work hard to be as fair as humanly possible with all requests. Take the example of Formation Workshops. All Regions should have these. Some Regions need financial assistance in order to make Formation Workshops happen and they ask for this assistance. Some regions do not request assistance. Everyone is free to ask for assistance.

The Board is happy to answer any question at any time, and welcomes dialogue when questions arise regarding the grant requests.

Summary of 2017 Cycle 1 Requests and Grants

- 1.1 Our Lady of the Rockies – \$3120 for Regional Formation Workshop. Granted \$2440
 - 1.2 La Verna - asked them to re-submit application
 - 1.3 Troubadours of Peace - \$3500- 3800 for Regional Formation Workshop – Granted \$3800
 - 1.4 Juan de Padilla - \$4000 for Formation Activities in Region – Granted \$3000
 - 1.5 National Formation Gathering 2018 - on hold
- TOTAL - \$ 9240.00**

Summary of 2017 Cycle 2 Requests and Grants

2.1 St. Frances X. Cabrini fraternity, St. Maximilian Kolbe Region –\$1500 for Local Fraternity Retreat - declined

2.2 Ohana O’ Ke Anuenue Region - \$750 for continuing formation of Emerging Fraternity St. Damien of Molokai – Granted \$750

2.3 La Verna Region - \$2250 for Regional Formation Director gathering. Granted \$1350

2.4 Divine Mercy Region - \$3000 for Spiritual Assistant Training Program. Granted \$2200

2.5 St. Francis Region - declined

2.6 Los Tres Companeros Region - \$3500 for Regional Formation Director Workshop. Granted \$3000

2.7 Tau Cross Region - declined

2.8 Annual National Formation Director Gathering - \$24,200.00 granted. The proposal for this gathering also presumed that \$10,000 would be budgeted by NAFRA.

TOTAL - \$31,500

Additional Information

The Duns Scotus Secular Franciscan Formation Trust Fund (DSTF) Board kindly requests that Regional Fraternities note the following:

- The DSTF exists to provide assistance where there is a need, but not to fund normal expenses when these can be covered by the Region.
- There is a trend toward requests asking that the DSTF subsidize what is normally a region’s responsibility. A region needs to budget funds for ongoing and regular formation expenses. Spiritual Assistant Training programs should also be considered an anticipated expense for Regional Fraternities, and a region should budget for this program.
- Grants are given one year at a time.
- The Board requests that a report be sent to the Board following the event that is funded.
- When submitting a request note the following regarding Spiritual Assistants: Fraternities are responsible to cover the cost of Spiritual Assistants (SA’s). All SA’s should be treated the same - OFS SA’s included. All SA’s should receive reimbursement for travel costs for each meeting and for other legitimate expenses incurred as they fulfil their duties. Funding to cover *costs* incurred can be covered by the DSTF, however, stipends *over and above legitimate costs incurred*, are not funded by the DSTF. Stipends over and above legitimate expenses are not encouraged for OFS members, however OFS SA’s are a separate case.
- The DSTF Board references the database when making determinations on grant requests. This is one of many reasons that the National Fraternity Database needs to be kept updated.

Current Roles on the Board

The Duns Scotus Secular Franciscan Formation Trust Fund Board of Trustees is chaired by the Minister of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) of the United States. Board members are the National OFS Treasurer, National OFS Formation Director, President-in-turn of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, a representative of St. John the Baptist Province, an appointed OFS Secretary and an OFS member-at-large. The Board is currently seeking a new “member-at-large” and a new Secretary. In the absence of a DSTF Secretary, Jan Parker is taking minutes, and Anne Mulqueen is handling all correspondence.

Goals for the DSTF

It is our hope that we can continue to underwrite an annual National Formation gathering to which Regional Formation Directors, Regional Spiritual Assistants and other team members would be invited.

One of the initial ideas for the DSTF was to fund novel and creative efforts toward enhancing formation. We are looking for programs that reach beyond what we normally require in the formation process. We strongly encourage creative thinking which may lead to unique formation programs to stretch our understanding of our charism and stimulate Franciscan spiritual fervor in our local fraternities—ideas and programs that can be shared with all the regions.

Information on the DSTF and the Application Process

Information on the DSTF application process can be found on the National Fraternity website or by emailing the Board. The DSTF Board's email address is: dunsscotustrustfund@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,

Jan

Jan Parker, Interim Secretary for Minutes and Reports

Note: Anne Mulqueen serves the Board as Secretary for Correspondence

Report on Review of Investment Portfolio follows.

Report on Review of DSTF Investment Portfolio
September 2017

From Jerry Rousseau, on behalf of the Duns Scotus OFS Formation Trust Fund (DSTF) Board of Trustees

As directed by the National Fraternity, meeting in Chapter in November 2016, we undertook a review of our Duns Scotus Trust Fund portfolio. In June 2017 I sent Jan Parker a package of information regarding our investments to be shared with a parish friend of hers, Tom Gilliam, who is a CPA and investment broker with the Carillon Group. He had volunteered to review our portfolio and give us an overview of what he discovered.

On June 26, Tom, Jan and I had a conference call to determine his findings. Basically, he felt that we had good investments and that we had achieved similar/average results as the rest of the Market during our tenure of these investments (20 years). He advised us regarding some questions that we might want to ask our broker and that it was time for a review of our investment strategies and our holdings.

Subsequent to this conversation, I contacted our broker, HSBC Securities, USA, Inc. with some requested changes to our methodology of selling shares and receiving the proceeds. I also entered into a prolonged conversation with Gerry Marra, our registered account representative, regarding our portfolio. This was followed up via a letter to Gerry dated August 23, 2017. (See letter below.)

In response to my letter, Gerry called and we had another long conversation. The crux of this conversation was that, although our holdings had performed well, we might want to consider less volatile investments in anticipation of a future pullback (similar to 2008) when we suffered slightly over 35% loss in our portfolio. Another part of my request was a consideration for diversification to generate dividends and interest in the 3%-6% range to secure a constant cash flow for use in Duns Scotus grants without touching principal (approx. \$870,000) while, again, reducing our volatility in the event of a market downturn.

Following this conversation, Gerry was asked to provide three proposals using "Morningstar" performance tools. The three proposals along with the prospectus and fact sheets were considered by the Board. We noted that the ratio of fees in all of these funds is less than ¾ %. PIMCO will cost us around \$4,500 on the front end that will be absorbed in the transfer of assets and based on PIMCO's return should be made up by year's end. The Lord Abbet family of funds will not cost us anything to switch as we are meeting their \$500,000 threshold.

The Board made a decision based on the fact that the BETA number for this proposal is .28 (low volatility) compared to our current .74 BETA – this would reduce our potential losses in a pullback from 35-40% to 5-15%. Also with the diversification of funds we could switch around investments based on what the market might be doing as a result of unforeseen events. Using current profit margins we should be able to generate between \$30,000 - \$45,000 income per year for use (if needed) to award grants from the Duns Scotus Trust.

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Rousseau

Jerry Rousseau OFS
National Treasurer OFS-USA

August 23, 2017

Gerald J. Marra, HSBC Securities (USA) Inc.
452 Fifth Avenue

New York, NY 10018

Dear Gerry,

As discussed briefly during our last phone conversation, I have settled into my role as National Treasurer for the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order – USA, and, at the request of our National Fraternity Council, have undertaken the task of becoming more proactive in reviewing our investment portfolio. The first change initiated was establishing standard instructions for use of wire transfers when selling of shares and the subsequent transfer of funds to our National Checking account.

The recent letter from HSBC, dated August 14, 2017, indicating our liquidity needs and investment time horizon prompted me to write to you requesting the latest “confirmation of account information” sheet from HSBC. Also, is this “account information” considered our formal investment policy statement?

The main purpose of this letter is to request a portfolio review in order to re-establish investment objectives to match up our portfolio with current goals. We anticipate income needs of \$ 30,000 to \$ 50,000 a year to support programs for which this fund was initially established.

After review, should we decide to reposition investments, can this be accomplished without incurring charges? Is there any advantage to setting up our investments as an “endowment” type fund?

Other questions that have come up are “do we pay a management fee?” and, “if so, what is it?”

Finally, is it possible to obtain a “Morningstar” report on our investments and other “socially responsive” and/or “Catholic based” funds?

Thank you for your assistance as our registered representative over these many years. If you need any clarification on our request please call me on my cell at 706-994-7264 or contact me via e-mail at jrsfo2004@windstream.net . Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jerry Rousseau

Jerry Rousseau
National Treasurer