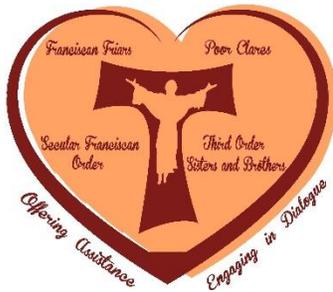


## *Franciscan Family Forum*



To Franciscans in the United States of the First, Second, and Third Order Regular and Secular, and to those inspired to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit of Francis of Assisi –

***Pax et Bonum!***

### The **FRANCISCAN FAMILY FORUM**

In August, 2019, the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants of the Secular Franciscan Order organized a meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, “Life Giving Union – Discernment and Discussion”, which was attended by national leaders of the Secular Franciscans, Regional Spiritual Assistants of the Secular Franciscans, Provincial Ministers and Provincial Spiritual Assistants/Delegates. The meeting proved the catalyst for forming an on-going means of communication and assistance across the lines that usually separate those inspired by Francis of Assisi into membership in a fraternity, Order, or congregation. Questionnaires, gatherings, small group planning, and lots of follow-up work resulted in formation of the **Franciscan Family Forum** as a means to accomplish closer cooperation in pursuit of the following:

**VISION** – *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.*

**MISSION** – *The Franciscan Family Forum seeks 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 GATHERING PLACE** – *Structurally, the Franciscan Family forum is a gathering place seeking to link members of the Family to build relationships between and among the brothers and sisters; to identify needs of any part of the Family; to develop initiative/projects in response to those needs/concerns; and to implement those initiatives in accordance with the Vision and Mission of the Franciscan Family Forum. The Forum seeks to be purposefully and intentionally inclusive of all members of the Franciscan family and to pursue that intentional inclusivity in all its initiatives.*

**CORE GROUP** – *The Franciscan Family Forum’s Core group, in the spirit of servant leadership, has the responsibility to coordinate the implementation of initiatives and projects identified by the Forum. While specific number of brothers and sisters will remain constant to provide continuity, additional volunteers may assist in the implementation of a specific initiative according to their expertise or interest.*

**GRAND CHAPTER OF MATS** – *In keeping with the Franciscan tradition of “Chapters of Mats”, from time to time the Franciscan Family Forum may discern a call to extend an open invitation for a general gathering. Reaching beyond its usual participants, the Forum would initiate dialogue around a particular need or initiative, as consistent with its vision and mission and informed by contemporary Gospel values. These gatherings may be either particular, regional, or national.*

At this point, as the Franciscan Family Forum, we want to make ourselves known as broadly as possible in the Franciscan family in the United States. We ask your help. We wish to speak WITH Franciscans far and wide, though not FOR them. We want to grow by the voluntary participation of those who see the value in what we are doing in our present and future initiatives.

Presently, these are the two initiatives in process.

- 1) *God calls Franciscans, but other Franciscans help the Holy Spirit form them.* We are called, with His guidance, to assist in the formation of those who will come after us. We are gathering a panel of vocation and formation personnel to help us all (and those interested in some form of Franciscan life) understand the process by which members of the different parts of the Franciscan Family are formed. We hope to make videos of their discussions as broadly available as possible using social media and community websites.
- 2) *God gives gifts to be shared.* We are putting together a Directory of Franciscans in the United States which will include "Yellow Pages," not only who we are, but the talents, gifts, knowledge, wisdom, and experiences, which we have and are ready to share with *others*. This Directory may be of interest to Franciscans and those interested in coming to know more about how Francis of Assisi along with his followers, have in the past, continue now, and will in the future continue to inspire us and the world.

Can you help us spread the word of what we are doing? We would deeply appreciate all that you can do to let members of your Franciscan community know what we are doing and encouraging participation from among them along with their ideas for initiatives!

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Contact for information on attending the next *Gathering Place* (conducted by ZOOM conferencing) of the *Franciscan Family Forum*:

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