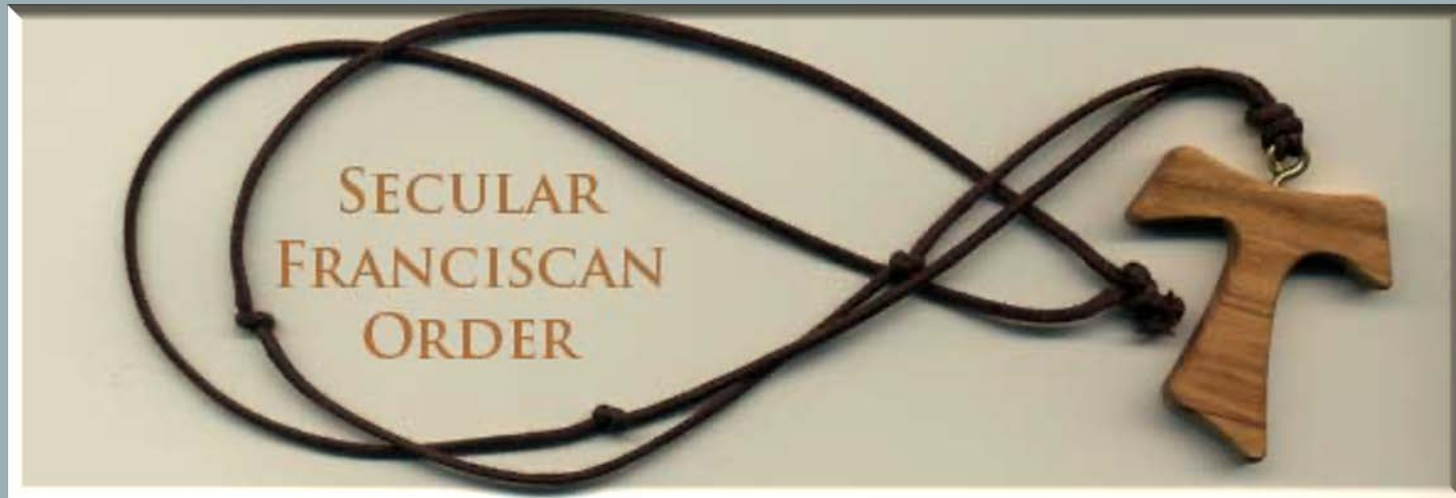




# How to Talk Like a Franciscan

*Mediation Techniques Can Be Used to  
Help Improve Communication  
Within the Fraternity, With our Family  
and With our Neighbors*



National Regional  
Formation  
Workshop  
August 22, 2020

Mary Stronach, OFS  
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LIKE A FRANCISCAN

PART I – THE FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE

PART II – THE PRACTICAL REALITIES &  
HOW TO ADDRESS THEM A LA FRANCIS



- We all know what it is like to be misunderstood.
- Being understanding is a powerful way of showing love. Let us pray for that ability to understand.



## PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

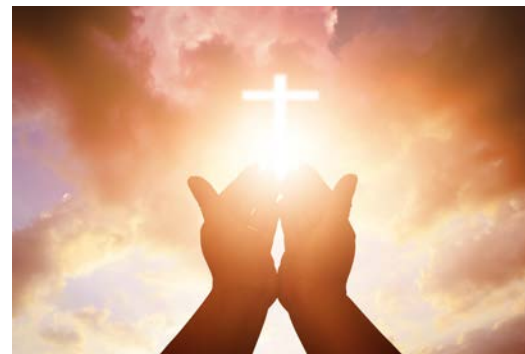


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- Lord Jesus Christ, grant me the gift of understanding. Help me to understand the feelings of others, the desires of others, the goals of others.
- At the same time, help me to understand myself in my actions and reactions. Widen my vision beyond my own small world to embrace with knowledge and love the worlds of others.
- Help me, Lord, to always see you at work in my own life and in the lives of others. Bless me with insight, acceptance and love that is tempered by you who are all things to all men.
- Amen.

[elev8.hellobeautiful.com](http://elev8.hellobeautiful.com)

## PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING



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# OFS RULE & CONSTITUTIONS

Building strong  
relationships

- With God
- With the Church
- With our Fraternity
- With our Family
- With our Neighbor
- With our Environment





## WHY IS BUILDING OF RELATIONSHIPS SO IMPORTANT?

- As OFS, we have a specific directive given to us in our rule and constitutions.
- More importantly, it's Christ's directive: "Love our neighbors as ourselves." We are called by Christ to build the Kingdom of God on earth – to spread love, to open our hearts, to engage in honest dialogue which breaks down barriers and builds trust.







#### Article 14 of the Rule:

With all people of good will, they are called to **build a more fraternal and evangelical world** in order to be effective in realising the Kingdom of God, conscious that ‘whoever follows Christ, the perfect human being, becomes themselves more human’.

#### Article 19 of the Rule:

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....



#### Article 17 of the Constitutions:

Secular Franciscans **proclaim Christ by their life and words.** Their preferred apostolate is personal witness in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the situations of this world.

#### Article 18 of the Constitutions:

They should deepen the true foundations of universal kinship and **create a spirit of welcome and an atmosphere of fraternity everywhere.**

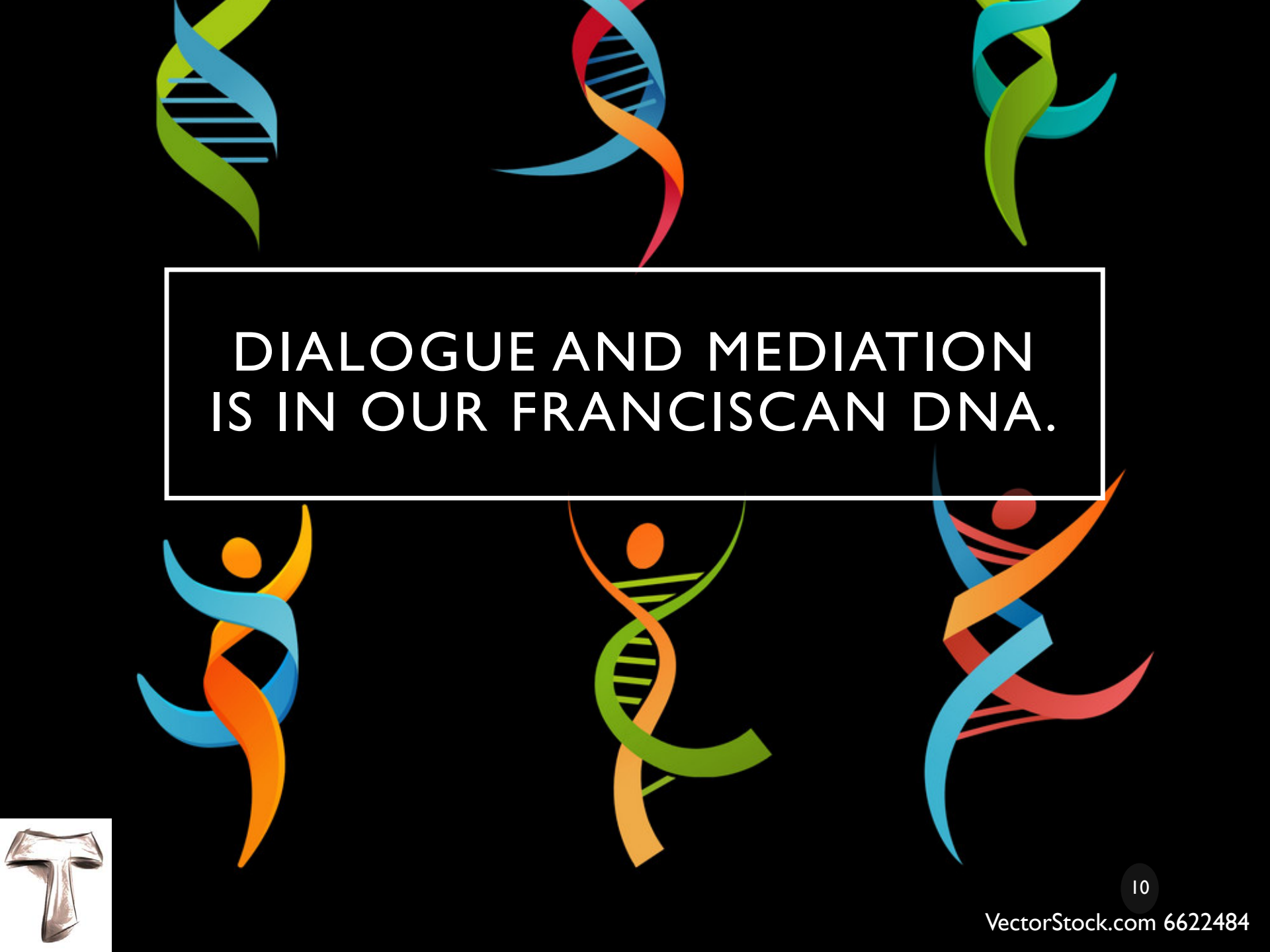
#### Article 19 Constitutions:

Secular Franciscans should always **act as a leaven** in the environment in which they live **through the witness of their fraternal love and clear Christian motivations.**



Throughout the Rule and Constitutions, there are hundreds of words and phrases which keep reminding us of this responsibility ... this commitment that we made at profession.



The background of the slide is black and features several stylized, colorful elements. At the top and bottom, there are three DNA double helix structures. Each helix is composed of two intertwined ribbons in blue, orange, and green, with horizontal rungs representing the base pairs. In the center of the slide, a white rectangular box contains the text "DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION IS IN OUR FRANCISCAN DNA." in a bold, white, sans-serif font. In the bottom left corner, there is a small, metallic-looking icon of a T-shaped cross.

DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION  
IS IN OUR FRANCISCAN DNA.



Ofm.org

## Francis and the Sultan

A courageous Francis greeted the Sultan with “May the Lord give you peace.” In a situation where there seemed to be no common ground, they explored their religious roots and found mutual understanding, acceptance and respect.







## Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio

With a little patience, courage to confront the wolf, and a desire to understand the situation – they all lived happily ever after.

## Francis, the Mayor and the Bishop of Assisi

A long-time feud between the Mayor and  
the Bishop of Assisi

- Bishop had excommunicated Mayor
- Mayor forbade the townspeople to  
sell/buy/make contracts with the Bishop

Francis reply: He added these verses to his  
Canticle and instructed the friars to sing  
them before the mayor and bishop, and  
then leave without saying anything else.

***All praise be yours, my Lord, through those  
who grant pardon***

***For love of you, through those who endure  
Sickness and trials.***

***Happy those who endure in peace,  
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.***

(Canticle of Brother Sun)



THE PEACEMAKER

<http://www.slr-ofs.org/canticle-of-the-creatures.html>



## Francis, the Mayor and the Bishop of Assisi

The mayor and bishop immediately asked one another's forgiveness and began working to improve the lives of all of Assisi's citizens.

St. Francis presented a model of generosity, virtue and peace that helped the Bishop and Mayor settle their dispute.

With peace properly identified, reconciliation is accomplished. Through song, Francis reframed the the dispute and created an atmosphere where the parties could settle their differences.



<http://www.slr-ofs.org/canticle-of-the-creatures.html>





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TODAY, BUILDING SUCH RELATIONSHIPS IS  
AS CRITICAL AS EVER IF WE ARE TO MAKE A  
FRANCISCAN IMPACT IN OUR WORLD

Consider today's realities...





## TODAY'S REALITIES

- Families in stress – spiritual, physical, emotional, financial, psychological – even political discord
- Decisions that may counter church teaching – or the way we personally perceive and act on social teachings
- Generational gaps of understanding -- Cultural gaps – Racial gaps – Class gaps

Our lives during the pandemic – with that feeling of being isolated, financial challenges, inability to receive the Eucharist







## TODAY'S REALITIES

- Aging and physical limitations, illness, loneliness, medications which affect mood
- Fears for survival – cost-of-living, climate change, moral choices which impact our children
- Crises of faith
- Daily stresses and responsibilities – that virtual “having a bad day”



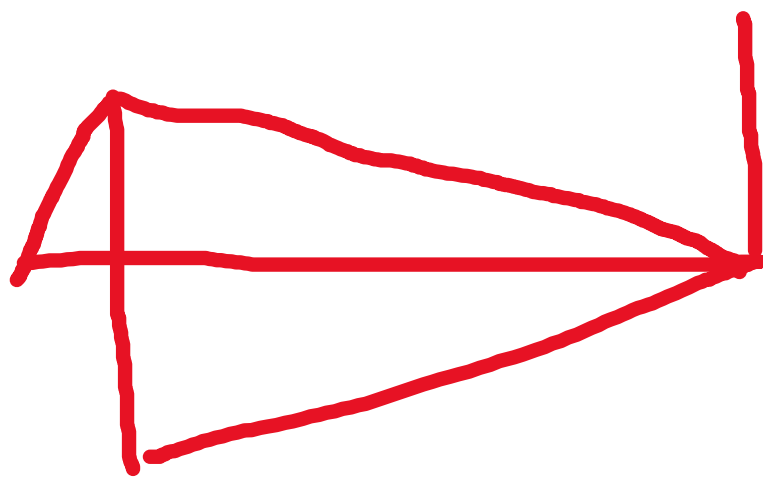


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WITH ALL THESE CHALLENGES, IT'S SO  
EASY FOR MISUNDERSTANDING TO  
HAPPEN.

Line activity







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AS WE CAN SEE, COMMUNICATION NEEDS TO  
BE A DIALOGUE -- WHERE WE LISTEN INTENTLY  
WITH OUR HEARTS AND MINDS, WHERE WE  
SPEAK CLEARLY, WHERE WE ASK QUESTIONS  
SINCERELY AND ANSWER THEM JUST AS  
SINCERELY.



# CONVERSATION IS A MINISTRY IT IMPLIES AN EXCHANGE

- A “ministry of conversation” should come naturally to Secular Franciscans. Anyone who has ever entered a Secular Franciscan gathering would immediately note that sharing, talking, and listening—conversations—are regular and expected expressions of life in fraternity. In this way we make manifest our Rule, which urges us “to seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue.” ... Every conversation over the course of a day, whether an ardent exchange or a passing smile, is an opportunity for ministry.





# THE MINISTRY OF CONVERSATION



Fr. Michael Blastic, OFM: Franciscan conversation is more “than a mere speaking of words. Conversation implies exchange, a sharing of thought and feeling, a familiarity and close association with another, and even a style of life.”

For our conversations to represent authentic Franciscan ministry they cannot be empty words, idle chatter, or gossip.

Justin Carisio, Katharine Drexel Region Formation Monthly, June 2020



# THE MINISTRY OF CONVERSATION



Nor can they be so focused on an agenda or on winning an argument that the person engaged—the concrete individual—is disregarded or seen as interchangeable.

A true conversation must involve our entire self—mind and heart, life and words—brought to focus on addressing another “to whom we attend with attention and respect.”

Justin Carisio, Katharine Drexel Region Formation Monthly, June 2020



# SO, HOW DO WE TALK LIKE A FRANCISCAN?

## THE BASICS

- Limit the “I” statements. The conversation will never really get started.
- Make it a practice to start with “YOU”
  - How are you? What’s happening in your life? How is your family? What are you doing? --
  - Or, better yet, do some reflective observations –
    - You seem so happy today!
    - You’re walking slower than usual.
    - You seem pre-occupied.
- Such comments welcome dialogue and can sometimes avert a conflict. They can help the fraternity member in addressing a problem or simply in sharing important news.



## TALK LIKE A FRANCISCAN

The words we use are important. They can either build a bridge or shatter a trust.

Labels and name-calling, for example, are hurtful. They are easily misunderstood or misinterpreted. These are loaded words which always get a reaction. They carry baggage with them, and the person stops listening, or worse, gets angry.

Let's consider an alternative ... *describe* rather than label. This allows for clarification... reduces hard feelings and helps create an opportunity to affect positive change... especially that transformation that we hope we can all have as Secular Franciscans.





## TALK LIKE A FRANCISCAN

- **Jerk** *Better:* You angered me when you (identify behavior)
- **Stupid** *Better:* You don't listen to (agree with) what I say
- **Racist** *Better:* You treat me or others disrespectfully when you (identify behavior)
- **White supremacist** *Better:* When you (identify behavior), you cause me to think that you consider yourself better than others (me)
- **Left/right-wing radical** *Better:* You take a position which is different from mine on (identify the issue – climate change, racism, immigration, economy, women's issues) (explain how is it different?)

*When we explain and provide clarification, we may find that we actually have similar goals – our approaches may be different.*



## GOING FURTHER INTO FRANCISCAN DIALOGUE

Formation Friday, June 2020

### ***Building a Just Society***

Worth repeating here.:

- Build relationships
- Listen without prejudice (do not judge, do not say "you should/shouldn't")
- Do not accuse or blame others
- Think before we speak
- Do not assume
- Do NOTHING to compromise religion or morality
- Search for points of agreement for effective, suitable action

**Act out of love, respect,  
empathy, compassion**



## GOING FURTHER INTO FRANCISCAN DIALOGUE *THE ART OF LISTENING*

- Reflective listening is a simple technique that anyone can use to help another person work through a difficult situation.
- Let's remember: God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason. Let's use them in that proportion.





## Reflective Listening ("Interpretive" Listening)



Sometimes, you have to  
interpret the situation.

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Accuracy and completeness – add nothing, change nothing, omit nothing – get to the heart and substance of the message.  
Not long ago, my husband asked, "Are you hungry?" Did he really want to know the state of my hunger? Was he saying "I'm planning on making breakfast, would you like something too?" No, that wasn't the message he was giving me. At the heart of his message: "I'd really like to know if we could have breakfast now because I'm hungry."  
The result: I made breakfast!





Another example – the other morning, my six year-old grandson was having a temper tantrum. I gave him time out. His response in a loud angry voice: “I’m never coming here again. You’re killing me!” – What exactly did he mean? I took a stab at it: “You’re upset that Nonna is keeping you from what you want to do. You feel like Nonna is picking on you. You want to be left alone so you can play on the iPad.” After five minutes of “interpretive” listening and serious time out, he began to calm down, and we could have the real conversation. “So, tell me what happened to make you so upset? Why did you yell at Nonna when I asked you to sit with me so we could talk?”



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## HOW TO BE A GOOD REFLECTIVE LISTENER

Paraphrase what the speaker is saying, repeat the statement in question form. For example, if the speaker says, "This fraternity never listens to me!" you might say "So, you feel like we're not really hearing what you're saying? Can you give me an example?"

Listen for the underlying emotion. If the speaker says: "Sometimes you're just so selfish!" you might say "You're angry and frustrated, can you explain what I am doing to cause you to react this way?"



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## HOW TO BE A GOOD REFLECTIVE LISTENER

Ask clarifying questions in order to make sure you understand what the speaker is saying. For example if the speaker says: "Julie just made me feel so stupid at the meeting!" you might say "It sounds like you're pretty upset. What happened?"

Encourage the speaker to keep talking by letting him/her know you are listening. Make direct eye contact. Use open, receptive body language. Nod your head and make comments that encourage further communication such as "Ok, go on."

It does not help the process to begin sharing your experiences. It's not about you. It may be enough to say, "I think I understand. I've had similar experiences." If you do feel that sharing an experience may help, keep it short and simple. And then go back to focusing on the problem/situation at hand.

# HOW TO BE A GOOD REFLECTIVE LISTENER

Approach the conversation with the belief that the speaker has the ability to solve the problem. Resist the temptation to offer advice or give opinions about what the speaker is saying. Instead ask questions such as "What do you think should be done about this situation?"

If the brother or sister asks "What would you do?" Explain that what may work for one person, may not work for another. "I can make some suggestions, but you're the one who has to determine what's right for you."

"What do you think Francis or Jesus would do?"



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# HOW TO CLARIFY THE MESSAGE

As the person is sharing the story/information, you will want to ensure your understanding of the situation by rephrasing or asking clarification questions:

Eg. So you're saying that the man was standing right in front of you when he "pushed" the boy? How did he "push" him – was it forceful? Explain. Where was the boy? What was the boy doing just before the man pushed him? What was the man doing? Did the boy say anything? What were you doing? Did you say anything?



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## LET'S PRACTICE

- Judy says: *I'm not coming back to this Fraternity ever again!*
- John says: *I'm sick and tired of your complaining!*

In your team, select a facilitator and reporter. Discuss how you might reach out to these individuals, possibly using reflective listening and clarification techniques to help draw them out to find out what is really bothering them. How might they react? What might have happened to have caused them to make such statements?

You'll have 15 minutes. One minute to identify the facilitator and reporter. Seven minutes for each comment. You'll have a two-minute warning. When you return, the reporter from the group will summarize in two or three sentences what happened in the chat mode.



REPORTER SHARES  
WHAT HAPPENED  
(CHAT MODE)

- What happened in your discussion?
- What did you do/say to help build the relationship? To help them express their situation?
- Would your discussion have helped build the relationship or would it have exploded into a confrontation?
- Did you say anything that may have hurt the relationship?
- Do you feel your relationship will be stronger or weaker?



BREAK

RETURN  
AT  
2:30 P.M.  
EASTERN



# LET'S GET PRACTICAL

- As an Order, we sometimes face conflict and we need communication skills to help us deal with them. The next few slides will give us a very practical format for some of those real problems that we may face in fraternity and in family.
- The process could be overwhelming for you and that's very understandable. These techniques require time and practice to help us get comfortable with the process and to develop our skills.
- For now, let's just learn about how the process would work.





# MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS

## *WHAT IS IT?*



A way of resolving disputes between two or more parties. If the process works, they will make concrete decisions which will help them come to an agreement.



A third party, the mediator/facilitator, assists the parties to negotiate a settlement. He/she helps the two gain a clearer understanding of the situation/impact from both perspectives.

Using our Franciscan DNA as a guide and inspiration



A group of people are hugging each other in a circle outdoors. The scene is backlit by a bright sun, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare. The people are wearing casual clothing like t-shirts and jeans. One person's back pocket has a pair of yellow work gloves tucked into it. The background shows the silhouettes of trees.

## **MEDIATION** *NOT FOR ALL SITUATIONS*

You may or may not be able to carry out a true mediation but it's helpful to understand the process and to know that it's available to you should your fraternity need one.

However, some of the techniques used in mediation might be helpful in averting a real conflict and for problem-solving with a fraternity member.



A dramatic sky with dark, heavy clouds and bright, jagged lightning bolts striking down. The lightning is a mix of white and yellow, creating a powerful and somewhat ominous atmosphere.

# FRATERNITY PROBLEMS

## DISPUTES...

Are not pleasant

They impact the whole fraternity

- Cause tension
- Create opposing factions.
- Reduce or eliminate that joy which we have come to know as fraternity.
- Shatter us as a Franciscan family
- Turn us into a fumbling fraternity without a spiritual compass.

*Let's identify some disputes in the fraternity setting which may impact our relationships, destroy trust and cause discord.*





A dramatic sky with dark, heavy clouds and several bright, jagged lightning bolts striking downwards. The lighting is moody, with the lightning providing the primary light source.

## ISSUES THAT MIGHT REQUIRE MEDIATION OR PROBLEM-SOLVING

- The disgruntled/angry/ constantly complaining brother/sister
- Conflict over how to spend money
- One person insulting, offending another
- Disagreement on moral issues or political differences: gay rights, death penalty, abortion, war, positions on environmental issues and climate change
- The conservative or the liberal point of view in addressing church issues



A dramatic sky with dark, heavy clouds and several bright, jagged lightning bolts striking downwards. The lightning is a mix of white and yellow, contrasting sharply with the dark blue and grey of the clouds.

## ISSUES THAT MIGHT REQUIRE MEDIATION OR PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Battle over leadership roles/responsibilities
- A fraternity member who always monopolizes the conversation
- Not allowing participation at formation meetings
- Not allowing members of fraternity at council meetings
- Disagreement over how to address issues and problems with members
- Personality clashes
- Not complying with fraternity guidelines







HOW CAN WE HANDLE SUCH SITUATIONS?

***MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS  
OR A FRATERNAL PROBLEM-SOLVING  
CONVERSATION***



*MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS  
OR A FRATERNAL  
PROBLEM-SOLVING  
CONVERSATION TAKES US  
THROUGH SEVERAL  
STEPS:*

- *FACT-FINDING*
- *HOW THE PROBLEM HAS  
IMPACTED THE PERSONS  
INVOLVED*
- *POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS  
AND IMPACT ON THOSE  
INVOLVED*
- *AGREEMENT*



## VERY IMPORTANT

THE PURPOSE OF SUCH PROCESSES IS TO HELP US LIVE IN HARMONY -- TO COME TO RESOLUTION WHEN POSSIBLE OR, AT LEAST, TO ALLOW FOR OUR DIFFERENCES WITHOUT RESORTING TO AGGRESSIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS. WE MAY NOT FULLY AGREE WITH THE OTHER PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE, BUT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO BE RESPECTFUL AND TO LISTEN TO ANOTHER'S POINT OF VIEW. WE SHOULD LOOK FOR THAT COMMON GROUND – AS FRANCIS DID WITH THE SULTAN.





## MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION

### PRELIMINARY GUIDELINES

- **The mediator/facilitator** should know the rule, constitutions and statutes. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, the spiritual assistant might be invited to assist.
- Both the mediator/facilitator and spiritual assistant should remain neutral. Leave your own experiences out of the situation. Avoid giving direct advice.
- Don't jump in to defend a position. Don't take sides.
- Focus on what the person is saying – not on what you would like to say.





## MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION

### *PRELIMINARY GUIDELINES*

- Watch body language for clues of problems, lack of trust in the process, anger which may be interfering with sincere communication... and address those clues (Is there something you would like to say? Is there something wrong or something you would like to address? Do you feel so angry that it's hard for you to concentrate on our process here? Would you like a moment to pray about what is going on?)



# MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION

## PRELIMINARY GUIDELINES

Reminder: *With very serious problems, you should not handle a formal mediation within your own fraternity.* Ask the region to get you a qualified Franciscan mediator.



**MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS  
FRATERNAL CONVERSATION**  
WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

THE WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

- May the Lord give you peace.
- I asked you to come in to talk about the disagreement (just use one or two words which are non-accusatory to help the person/s remember) that happened yesterday. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me. I want to let you know that everything that you say here will remain **confidential**. Would you be willing to keep this confidential?
- Let us begin with a prayer. Ask the participants to add their own requests intercessions. (Sometimes this reveals a lot about a particular situation and their state of mind.)



# **MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION**

## **THE INTRODUCTION**

- This is an opportunity to be heard and to find a win-win solution. I want to hear everything you have to say and to truly understand what happened so that, perhaps, I can help guide you to a successful resolution to the problem.





## **MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION**

### *THE INTRODUCTION*

- Read a portion of the Rule or Constitutions which addresses dialogue, harmony and peace.
- In the story of Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio – even where there appeared to be no way to communicate and come to resolution, Francis brought the Wolf and the villagers together. Can we do the same?



## **MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION**

### *THE INTRODUCTION*

- I will be taking notes during the process to help me remember what you say, but I will destroy them before we leave the room. Feel free to take notes as well.
- If there are two members in conflict, remind them that one person speaks at a time, they are to speak respectfully to each other and be honest.



## MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION

### *THE INTRODUCTION*

- During the first step, you will speak with me and tell me what happened, why you think it happened and how you feel about it. You'll also tell me how you think it made the other person or the members of the fraternity feel.
- Then we will identify the issue/s or problems.
- You will then have a respectful dialogue with each other to get further clarification.
- And finally, together, you will discuss possible ways to resolve or, at least, improve the situation.



# **MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION**

## *THE INTRODUCTION*

- This is a voluntary process and you have the choice to leave or you may ask to have private session with me as the mediator/facilitator.
- I'm hoping you can help resolve the situation.





# MEDIATION A LA FRANCIS OR FRATERNAL CONVERSATION

## THE INTRODUCTION

- God loves us and wants us to do His will. By doing His will, we will be rewarded with great peace and joy. He asks us to forgive “seven times seventy times” – it’s a healing gift that, if we can find it in our hearts, will release us of the anger and hurt associated with the situation and free us to love and be loved.
- Forgiveness helps make the process of reparation more sincere.



A soft-focus background image showing two hands, one from each side, gently cupping a heart. The hands are in shades of pink and purple, and the heart is a lighter, glowing pink. The overall mood is tender and caring.

## STEP 2: WHAT'S THE STORY?

Using reflective listening, clarification techniques, ask the following questions:

- Can you explain what happened?
- Can you explain why it happened?
- How did you feel about what happened?
- How do you think it made other person (or the fraternity) feel?
- How do you think Francis or Jesus might have handled the situation?



## STEP 2: WHAT'S THE STORY?

- Summarize: Let me see if I understand: Re-tell the story in your own words, adding how the person may feel and the impact on other person or fraternity.

*If this is a mediation with two people, follow the same procedure with the second individual. During this step, the participants are speaking directly to the mediator/facilitator – not to each other.*



## STEP 3: IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM(S) OR ISSUES

- What do you think the problem/s is/are?
- What would you like to achieve in this process? What is your goal?
- How do you think this problem limits our ability to live the rule.
- How do you think that coming to resolution to the problem will help us live the rule and improve our family and fraternity life?

*Write down the problem(s)/issue. List them in order of priority – from the easiest one to negotiate to the most difficult or awkward one.*

## STEP 3: IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM(S) OR ISSUES

Example:

The Council is having issues with the treasurer

1. She arrives late to meetings and so does not really know what's going on.
2. She hardly ever has her reports complete.
3. There are errors in the reports.
4. There is money missing from the account.





## STEP 4: DIALOGUE

If there are two participants in the process, allow the participants to dialogue respectfully with each other. As mediator, you continue helping with reflective listening, clarifying their messages and summarizing.





**STEP 5: PROBLEM-SOLVING:**  
*WHAT WOULD FRANCIS DO?*  
*WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?*

Generate possible solutions:

What would you like to achieve?

What are some ways that you think you could resolve the problem and achieve your goal? (Have him/her brainstorm. You can help offer some options – some may be ridiculously unrealistic.)

What are the options that you could realistically do? With two participants, allow each one to offer an option or two for himself/herself.



**STEP 5: PROBLEM-SOLVING:**  
*WHAT WOULD FRANCIS DO?*  
*WHAT WOULD CHRIST DO?*

Select one or two solutions that you feel you can truly do. If there are two participants, balance the agreement, alternating offers from each side.

To help them through the process, remind them: You are a Franciscan and should live the Franciscan charism. What would Francis do? What would Christ do? How can you repair the heart?

Does the option address your important priorities?

Are responsibilities shared? Are you both agreeing to do something?

## STEP 5: PROBLEM-SOLVING: *WHAT IF?*

- Provide some “what if” scenarios: What do you think would happen if we can’t follow through on our promises here? How could it impact our lives and the lives of those around us?
- In “what if” scenarios, use situations which the participants understand from Church teaching and the Franciscan perspective. Guide your participants to moral and just decisions or solutions.



## STEP 6: THE AGREEMENT

What can the fraternity do?  
Negotiate if necessary.

Optional: In very serious situations, make sure the agreement is written and give a copy to each brother/sister. A second copy can be placed in a sealed envelope and given to secretary for safe keeping. Tell member/s that the envelope will not be opened unless member wants to revise it confidentially with you.







## COMING TO CLOSURE IN A FRANCISCAN-GUIDED SESSION

At the end of the session, take a moment to help the participant process all that has happened by reminding him/her of Article 7 of the Rule:

“United by their vocation as “brothers and sisters of penance,” and motivated by the dynamic power of the Gospel, let them **conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the Gospel itself calls “conversion.” Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.**

On this road to renewal, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.”

*“How can you make this situation one which will help transform you as a Secular Franciscan? How have you changed because of this experience?”*



## CLOSING PRAYER FRANCISCAN-GUIDED SESSION

- Lord Jesus Christ, grant me the gift of understanding. Help me to understand the feelings of others, the desires of others, the goals of others.
- At the same time, help me to understand myself in my actions and reactions. Widen my vision beyond my own small world to embrace with knowledge and love the worlds of others.
- Ask the participant/s to each help with the closing prayer.
- Help me to .... (participant 1)
- Help me to ... (participant 2)
- Amen.

## COMMUNICATION WITH THE COUNCIL

THE PROCESS SHOULD REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL – EVEN FROM THE COUNCIL – **UNLESS THERE IS AN ISSUE OF HEALTH OR SAFETY.**

- PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF HOW THE PROCESS WENT.
- DO YOU CONSIDER IT A SUCCESSFUL SESSION WHERE LOVE, RESPECT AND COMPASSION WERE PRESENT?
- DO YOU BELIEVE THAT POSITIVE CHANGE OCCURRED WHICH WILL HELP IMPROVE THE SITUATION?
- WILL THE FRATERNITY BE A BETTER, MORE LOVING PLACE?

IF YOU FELT THE PROCESS WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL, DISCUSS THE NEXT STEPS WITH THE FRATERNITY. REMEMBER, YOUR COUNCIL SHOULD CONSIDER THE WELL-BEING OF THE FRATERNITY WHILE ALSO MAINTAIN A COMPASSIONATE BUT FIRM AND HONEST ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BROTHER OR SISTER.



## LET'S DO IT!

- **Problem:** Two fraternity members who are both on the council hardly ever agree when the Council has to make a decision. George is always making excuses of why something can't work, grumbling through practically every decision. Julie gets impatient with him, sometimes avoiding what he says and other times shouting at him telling him to stop the complaining and get with the program. The last meeting was the last straw. The council was preparing to vote on the admission of an inquirer. George rejected the inquirer without allowing discussion, saying he didn't like him, and the inquirer just couldn't fit in. Harriet started yelling at George, saying things like, "you don't even like your own mother" and you just reject everything unless it's your idea. George walks out as he shouts that nobody ever listens to him and "you're all plain stupid."
- No decision is made on the inquirer.



## LET'S DO IT!

- In the Breakout Room: Discuss how would you handle this problem? How could you use listening and clarifying techniques? Do you think you can get a good Franciscan agreement?
- You will need a reporter to take notes on what is being said and a facilitator to guide the discussion.
- You will have 20 minutes. When you return, your reporter will share in the chat mode how you decided to address the problem and if you think you could get a win-win agreement which will benefit the members, the council and the fraternity.







## REVIEW OF CHAT COMMENTS

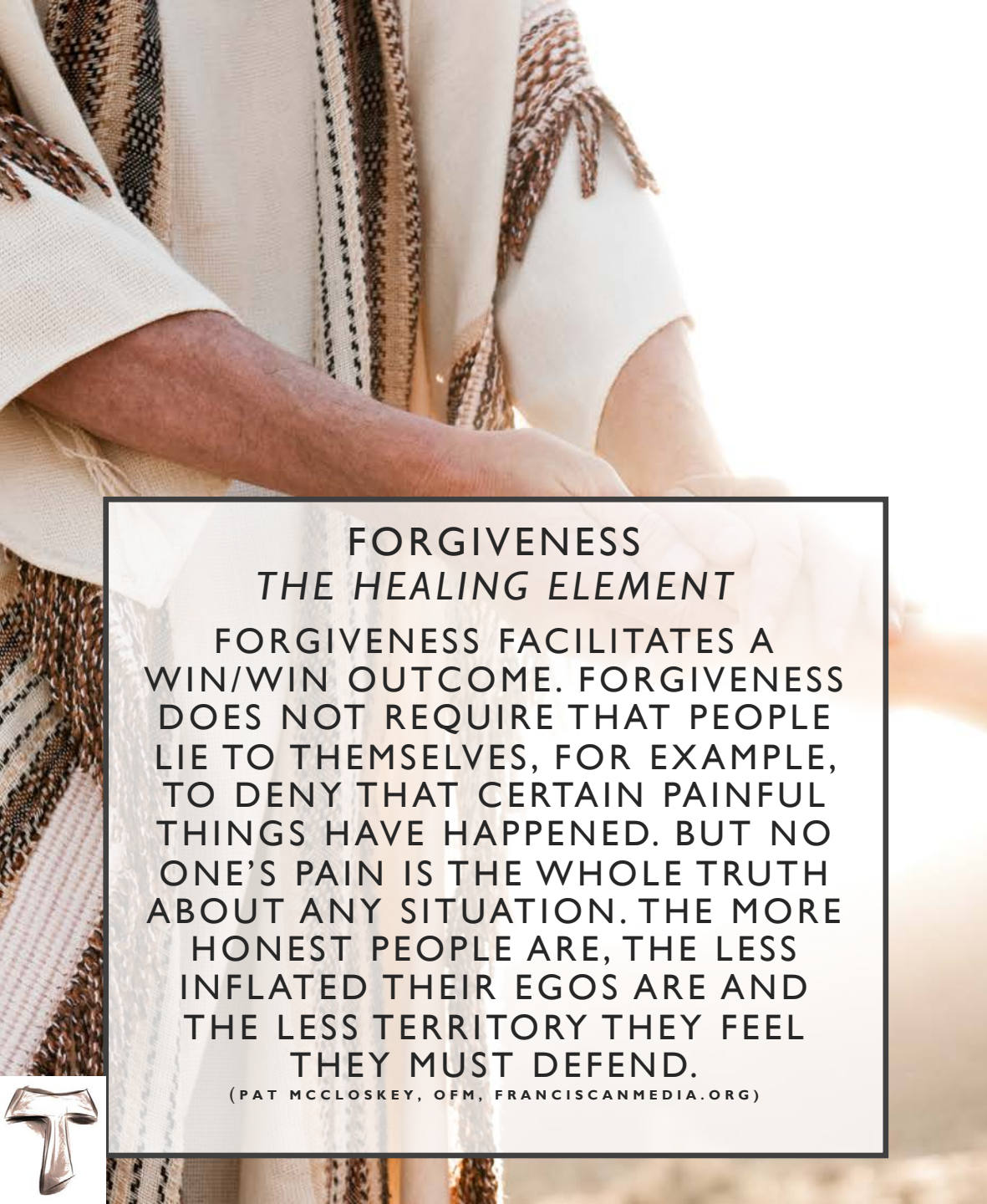
What happened in your discussion?

How did you decide to address the problem?

Do you believe that your approach will help the members, council and fraternity heal?

Was it a Franciscan solution?





## **FORGIVENESS THE HEALING ELEMENT**

**FORGIVENESS FACILITATES A WIN/WIN OUTCOME. FORGIVENESS DOES NOT REQUIRE THAT PEOPLE LIE TO THEMSELVES, FOR EXAMPLE, TO DENY THAT CERTAIN PAINFUL THINGS HAVE HAPPENED. BUT NO ONE'S PAIN IS THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT ANY SITUATION. THE MORE HONEST PEOPLE ARE, THE LESS INFLATED THEIR EGOS ARE AND THE LESS TERRITORY THEY FEEL THEY MUST DEFEND.**

**(PAT MCCLOSKEY, OFM, FRANCISCANMEDIA.ORG)**

Francis was a peacemaker.

*Let us strive for that same  
peace and harmony.*

All praise be yours, my  
Lord, through those who  
grant pardon  
For love of you, through  
those who endure  
Sickness and trials.  
Happy those who endure  
in peace,  
By you, Most High, they  
will be crowned.

(Canticle of Brother Sun)



# THE MINISTRY OF CONVERSATION



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In the end, the ministry of conversation is about love. It is a specifically Franciscan way of evangelizing the world, of promoting peace among our neighbors, of producing worthy fruits of penance. It is an apostolate every Secular Franciscan can engage in. We live in a society and at a moment in history when such an apostolate can truly make a difference.

May our conversations imitate those of Francis: **Out of the fullness of our hearts, let our mouths speak.**

Justin Carisio, Katharine Drexel Region Formation Monthly, June 2020





I'm still a cat... and you're still a dog. But aren't we beautiful together?

