

National Formation Visioning Project

Over the last two-three years, we have been listening.... To you, to your regional formation directors, in some cases to your local formation directors, and your spiritual assistants. Our two Visioning Workshops were part of the listening process and were guided by the Holy Spirit. We are now ready to go further in sharing the outcomes of our visioning.

- We have gathered ideas, suggestions, hopes and desires. We have been reporting some of this to you, but now **we are ready to go further** in sharing the outcomes of our visioning.
- We found that merely editing and reformatting our formation materials, principally the FUN Manual, was not the only need expressed.
- Essential topics such as prayer, Scripture, our Catholic Faith as expressed in the Creed, Franciscan sources and chapters dedicated exclusively to the role the Rule and Constitutions play in our lives were not included in our current formation texts or manuals.
- After many conference calls, meetings and prayer, we found that the best way to meet the needs expressed during our two Visioning workshops would be that:
 - The FUN Manual will move to the background to serve as a resource for two new texts to be used by those in initial formation.
 - The Franciscan Journey will eventually be set aside.
 - There will be one text combining the material for Orientation and Inquiry.
 - A second, separate text will include all the chapters necessary for Candidacy.
 - An accompanying guide for the formator will correspond to each chapter in the participant's texts and will have tips and ideas for presenting the material and suggestions of other resources that can be used for each chapter.
 - A fourth resource will provide general guidance for formators at all levels
- In this major update and renewal of our formation texts, we will incorporate rewritten versions of many of the chapters from the FUN Manual. The complete FUN Manual will continue to be available as one of our formation resources.
- We are aware that this will be a monumental project. Yet, with the help of the Holy Spirit and your support, we believe our efforts will bring about enhanced initial formation in the United States.
- The completely revised participant's text will be an attractive book. It will be:
 - user friendly
 - geared to initial formation and written in a clear, straightforward style.

- The authors of the original FUN Manual chapters have been invited to rewrite their chapters for the new text.
 - They will be provided with rubrics that ensure consistency in length, style and format.
 - The material will be translated into the major languages spoken by fraternities in the United States.
- We have contacted additional writers to author the chapters that will be added to the new text including members of the National Formation Commission, Visioning Team and other experienced formators. We have a Zoom call planned for all authors in November.
- The material will be clear and concise. Since we are dealing with persons in initial formation, we want the material to INITIATE them into and INTRODUCE them to the Order.
- This user-friendly book will include sidebars, questions for discussion and ideas for **practical application (praxis)**.
 - Rather than filling our candidates with information, our goal is to provide a resource that will assist them in the transformative process and in the discernment of their vocation.
- In the future, we plan to supply audio visual material to supplement the initial formation experience.
- Our intention is to make resources available for digital download.

Where are we headed?

The opening chapters (Orientation and Inquiry) will help those desiring to become part of the Order to discover who we are as Catholics and as Franciscans. As they become acquainted with the Order, their Catholic faith will be reinforced, and they will get to know Saints Francis and Clare. Discernment and understanding the meaning of vocation will be stressed. The new chapters on Franciscan Prayer, Introduction to Franciscan Sources, and the Franciscan approach to Scripture will encourage our inquirers to begin to think, pray and identify as Franciscans.

In Candidacy, there will be new, dedicated chapters on the Rule and Constitutions that focus on how these documents affect the way we live our lives in the world and the Church today. Additional chapters will focus on how being a Secular Franciscan informs our family life, our role as servant leaders, the way we treat one another and how we evangelize those we encounter in our families, work and social environments.

The practical application (praxis) of the content will be stressed throughout the program. Daily conversion, prayer, the example of our founders, understanding our secularity and internalizing what it means to be, live and act like a Franciscan will be paramount.