



**CONFERENZA DELLA FAMIGLIA FRANCESANA**  
**CFF: 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL**

**Roma, 17 April 2019**

**Dear Sisters and Brothers,**

Warm Franciscan greetings to all! It is our pleasure to write to you during the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Franciscans International (FI). As you know, FI is the only common ministry project of the Franciscan Family. It was created thirty years ago from the grassroots up, based on the vision of various sisters and brothers who were inspired by a dream of sharing our Franciscan message and values at a global level through the structures of the United Nations (UN). In the last three decades FI has undergone various changes, but it has continued its commitment to serve peace, the poor and the planet.

In the not-too-distant past FI passed through a difficult period and was challenged to undergo a thorough review and renewal. We are happy to report that this process has been completed. Financially, expenses are down and income has been re-directed in such a way that two-thirds of our receipts are now spent on the advocacy program. Our dedicated and competent staff is guided by a four-year Strategic Plan that was adopted two years ago, and which has recently been reviewed and updated for a further two years. The International Board of Directors (IBD) has been streamlined; it now consists of eight members (OFS, IFC-TOR, TOR, Anglican Franciscans, OFM Cap, OFM Conv., OFM, and the Executive Director of FI). The IBD works well with the staff and has a good relationship with the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF). You might be interested to know that recently FI received an award from UNICEF, recognizing it for best use of UN structures/processes in its work on “witch children” in Benin.

As we celebrate this 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we are thankful for the work of so many who have made FI into an organization that is highly respected at the UN: by the UN staff, by country delegations, by other religious groups, and by fellow NGOs and other civil society organizations that work together with us. At the same time, we need to look to the future. While the current situation of FI is “balanced”, finances are still tight and challenging. We do not look to become a huge organization, but we would be able to do our work at the UN more effectively if the staff were not so pressed to find the time to request the resources needed to make our operation run.

In this spirit we ask first of all for your continued prayers for the success of FI. The spirit behind FI is what keeps our work vibrant and effective. At the same time we ask that you consider supporting FI financially. You might want to make a one-time contribution during this 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, in addition to a yearly donation to FI's work. You might also know of others who would be interested in supporting the work that FI is doing at the UN; please approach them and share with them our vision of defending the human rights of our sisters and brothers throughout the world, in the perspectives of our Franciscan values. The staff of FI and the members of the IBD are ready to provide you any information you might need in these considerations.

We thank all who have been contributing generously to FI throughout these 30 years. We appeal to all members of the Franciscan Family to join together in supporting the work of FI, contributing spiritually and financially, thus seeking to promote the Reign of God in our midst today!

Tibor Kauser, OFS  
*Minister General*  
*CFF President*

Sr. Deborah Lockwood, OSF  
*Minister General*

Fr. Roberto Genuin, OFM Cap  
*Minister General*

Fr. Nicholas Polichnowski, TOR  
*Minister General*

Fr. Marco Tasca, OFM Conv  
*Minister General*

Fr. Michael Anthony Perry, OFM  
*Minister General*



## 30 Years of Human Rights Advocacy at the UN



**Franciscans International**  
A voice at the United Nations

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

For most of us 'human rights' is a vague and abstract term. It seldom moves us until we're confronted with what it means *to lack human rights*. Here's an example:

Try to imagine living without an official identity such as a birth or marriage record. As Americans our main concern is 'privacy' and how to protect our health and identity records. But have you ever imagined what it's like to have *no legal recognition of your existence*? No Social Security number or legal ID?

With a legal identity, an individual has improved access to essential services, such as healthcare, education and social welfare. Far too many in this world *lack an official identity*, and as mundane as this sounds, human rights advocates work on matters such as this.

This simple issue caught my attention several years ago and caused me to follow the work of Franciscans International (FI) more closely ever since. I subscribe to their newsletter and follow their activities online. Human rights and Gospel values are truly linked, and our Franciscan family has a voice that's heard at the United Nations through Franciscans International.

I encourage YOU to learn more about the mission of FI. Try utilizing their inspirational resources with your local fraternity. Please join in with prayer and financial support.

*Jim Thomas, OFS*  
*Bl. Solanus Casey Regional Vice Minister*

*"It truly is notable that Franciscans International is one of the few non-governmental organizations that have general consultative status. What this means is that Franciscans are really listened to because they are on the ground all around the world and know firsthand the suffering that is caused by injustice."*

*Jan Parker, OFS*  
*National Minister - OFS-USA*



*"The first thirty years of FI have been dedicated to a program promoting values of the Gospel, a Franciscan ethics capable of dialogue and collaboration with people, structures and mechanisms of the UN..."*

*Br. Michael Perry, OFM*  
*Minister General*



## 30 Years of Human Rights Advocacy at the UN



**Franciscans International**  
A voice at the United Nations

### *Conference of the Franciscan Family Celebrates 30 Years at the UN* **Memory and Prophecy: Franciscan Voices at the United Nations**

Thirty years ago, the Franciscan Family established a voice at the United Nations. As part of the celebration to mark this thirty-year presence, the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF) organized a gathering on 16 July in the Auditorium Antonianum in Rome.

Themed 'Memory and Prophecy', the event brought together over 90 sisters and brothers to reflect on the accomplishments of the past three decades as well as the challenges and opportunities ahead. The [keynote address](#) was delivered by Br. Michael Perry, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor. Tracing the history of Franciscans International (FI), he acknowledged the particular contributions of the late Sr. Elizabeth Cameron, OSF, and Br. Dionysius Minthoff, OFM – who, at age 88, continues to work with vulnerable migrants in Malta.

Their conviction that Franciscan spirituality and ethics shared many common values with the founding charter of the United Nations ultimately led to the establishment of FI as the first ever common ministry on the international and intra-familial scale in the history of the Franciscan movement.

For the full article see FI's home page at [www.franciscansinternational.org](http://www.franciscansinternational.org)

The Conference of the Franciscan Family is the collaborative body which unites Franciscans worldwide. The Secular Franciscan Order is a member of this conference.

***We are a Franciscan voice at the United Nations protecting the vulnerable, the forgotten, and our wounded earth through advocacy.***

#### ***Financial support is needed***

Franciscans International is entirely dependent on donations from Franciscan Orders and Congregations (including the OFS-USA), funding agencies and institutions, parishes, and people sensitive to Franciscan values of solidarity, peace, social justice, and respect for the environment.

Make a difference with your donation and help us **protect** human rights.

**To donate - make a check payable to:**

*National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order – USA (NAFRA)*

*Please note in the memo: "Franciscans International" and send to:*

**Claudia Kauzlarich OFS / 2007 Maverick Trail / Harrisonville, MO / 64701-1545**