



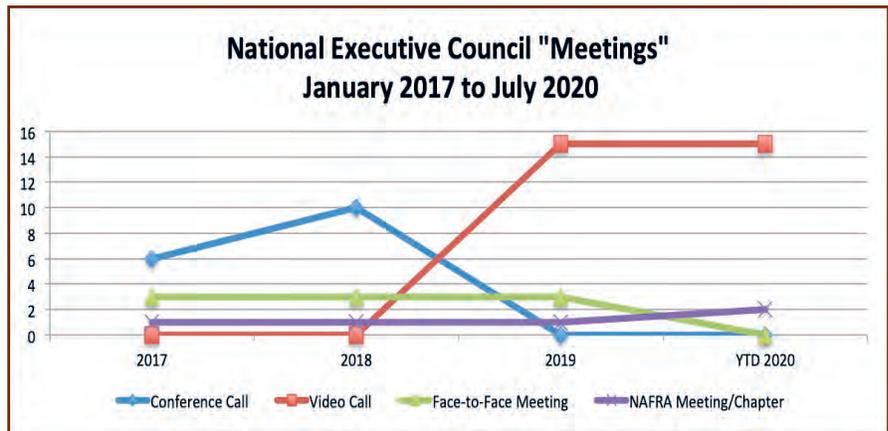
# SHARING THE VISION

## NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

*COVID-19 changes the National Executive Council's Plans too.*



The National Executive Council (NEC) typically meets 2-4 times per year to conduct the business of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States with a few phone calls in between meetings. Due to the pandemic the NEC began to meet only virtually. Most of those meetings were two hours or less once or twice a



month. In March, the scheduled four-day meeting at the Chiara Center in Springfield, Illinois was replaced by virtual meeting sessions over the same period of time. As of July 2020, the NEC virtually met 15 times in 2020. See chart of meetings for the NEC:

The NEC takes time for a little fun during the numerous meetings. This snapshot is from our Virtual Meeting, July 25-26, 2020.

### Some specific actions taken during the spring and summer include:

1. Guidelines for Fraternal Gatherings in Times of Social Distancing were issued in May 2020. <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/2020/05/13/guidelines-for-fraternal-life-during-social-distancing/> The guidelines address what types of events can happen virtually (fraternity gatherings, council meetings, and initial formation sessions). Other events will need to be postponed until it is safe to gather together (visitations, elections, and Rites of Admission and Profession).
2. The International Council of the OFS (CIOFS) sent out a draft of new International Statutes this past spring. The NEC reviewed the statutes and drafted comments with recommendations and questions. The draft will be shared with the Regional Ministers for review and comment prior to returning it to the CIOFS this September.
3. The CIOFS elective chapter has been postponed until 2021. Please continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide all as CIOFS prepares for the chapter.
4. A new CIOFS website, [www.ciofs.info](http://www.ciofs.info), was launched in early July.
5. Our three National Commissions – Formation, Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) and Franciscan Youth and Young Adults (FY/YA) – were undaunted by the Covid-19 limitations and over this past summer enthusiastically hosted virtual workshops. Hundreds of OFS from across the country benefitted from these gatherings, enjoying both formation and

fellowship in large and small groups. At the JPIC Visioning II Workshop, held virtually May 8-9, 2020, 36 national leaders came together to continue the conversation that was begun in August 2019. During this workshop, the idea of JPIC Focus Groups came up as a way to educate and communicate about certain social justice issues: Immigration, Care for Creation, and the Spirituality of JPIC. Less than three weeks later, the world was shocked at the brutal killing of another unarmed black man by police. People were able to see the killing unfold on TV and on social media. Seculars all over the country were crying out, "What is ours to do?" As a result, an additional JPIC Focus Group was formed to address the issue of racism and practice mindful dialogue. This past August, the Formation Commission two-day workshop drew nearly 100 attendees. (See related article in this issue.) The FY/YA Commission hosted weekly gatherings over an 11-week period. All these virtual gatherings have received rave reviews.

6. Guidelines for Regional Archives were approved in May 2020 and have been posted on our website. For a copy of the guideline, please contact Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS ([ofsusasecretary@gmail.com](mailto:ofsusasecretary@gmail.com))
7. Regional Visitations and Elections have been postponed due to the pandemic. NEC members are working closely with the Regional Ministers to see when the events can be rescheduled.
8. The Spanish translation of the OFS Ritual is nearly complete. Many people were involved with this effort. It will be sent for final formatting and printing in the near future. The NEC is looking forward to having this resource become available.

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### **A Reminder about the National Database**

Beginning in December 2020, the number of fraternity members listed in the database will be the number used to establish the Fair Share amount for your region. This is an important reminder for each local fraternity to make certain that their data in the National Database is accurate.

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## **20th Quinquennial Congress Postponed Due to Covid-19**

There's a late 60s tune made famous by Glen Campbell that starts out, "By the time I get to Phoenix..." That song comes to mind as we announce that the 20<sup>th</sup> Quinquennial Congress, scheduled to be held in Phoenix in August 2021, is now postponed due to pandemic related concerns.

This past August, the 40+ members of the National Fraternity Council gathered via Zoom to deliberate on this difficult decision. There were important factors to consider, including the safety of our members, the financial impact, and the desire for a successful Q. There were no easy answers. In the end, a strong majority voted to cancel the current contract and rebook for a later date.

The new date for the 20<sup>th</sup> Quinquennial Congress has not yet been established, but we are negotiating for the Summer of 2023. Let's pray that "by the time we get to Phoenix..." this pandemic will be history. More information will be in upcoming issues of TAU-USA.