

Ecumenical Interfaith Committee Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity

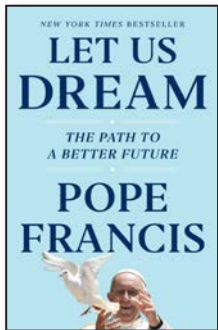


NEW BEGINNINGS WITH A HOPEFUL VISION OF UNITY AMONG ALL PEOPLE

by Donna Hollis, OFS, National Councilor

We are called to rebuild. We must dare to dream! We must dare to Hope!

(Reflection from the book "Let us Dream" by Pope Francis)



Pope Francis has been transforming the tone and approach of the Catholic Church towards Ecumenism by reaching out to non-Catholic denominations to reconcile past differences, opening the doors to dialogue and understanding, focusing on what we have in common and not differences, celebrating and reconciling "That they may all be one."

Pope Francis inspires us to dream of a future that seeks to restore the dignity of every person and creation in order to foster healthy relationships. As Franciscans we ask, "How do we work to heal the Body of Christ, to speak as Franciscans to the world based on 'one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism?'" Certainly, our vocation is meant to be one of healing and witness to the urging of the Spirit. Doesn't our vocation to "live the gospel in fraternal communion" call us to create a sisterhood and brotherhood beyond borders of our beliefs? Fraternity itself is our challenging new frontier.

How might these ideals look in practice? Scripture asks us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and give hope to those in most need. Doing these works of mercy tears down the walls of differences, and we find ourselves working together for the common good for all people.

Members of a number of Christian denominations are working together to assist refugees coming across our

Southwest Borders seeking asylum due to threats, and a way out of violence and poverty. They have their own stories to tell. One family arrived with their oldest son, having left the younger behind, only to find out that he was killed while they were on their journey. They faced a difficult choice. Going back would mean not being able to return; moving forward in search of a better life would require leaving the heartache to heal in time.

We listen to their stories and our hearts are broken; compassion is released as we serve together in helping those whose hearts are already broken. We recognize that we are all children of God, men and women of every race, of every faith. If we really see someone in their fullness, recognizing the Divine seed in everyone, we cannot help but treat treating them with kindness and compassion.

Where do we go from here? Working with the refugees reminds us that God Himself chooses to go to the margins; they are places full of possibilities. We need to become those "saints" who have an awakened heart to seek those in the marginal places where possibilities are waiting. We let those stories told of the journey of desperation change our hearts. We need to rethink our priorities and dare to take risks. Enkindle the fire of the Spirit that we experienced when we were first Professed, and that in itself will be a witness to others and catch on like wildfire! So keep living it out!

"Live a life worthy of your calling"

Prayer for Franciscan Unity

O gracious and loving God,
Having brought us into the body Of
Christ
And Called to follow Francis and Clare:
Let your Holy Spirit inspire all
In the Franciscan Family to be of
One heart and mind in love with
You and one another.

Grant, we pray, that our common
Charism and Vocation,
Shared by Franciscan Orders, from every
Christian tradition, help build up
The Body of Christ
And heal the Franciscan Family,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Refugees Seeking Asylum - Juarez, Mexico



CHRIST HAS NO BODY BUT YOURS, NO HANDS BUT YOURS, NO FEET BUT YOURS.

* In the spirit of celebration of our 2022 Franciscan JUBILEE *

We invite you to share your business or personal message in the 2022 Quinquennial program booklet!



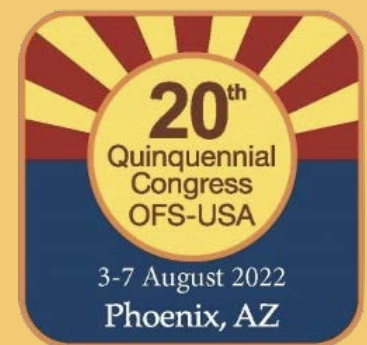
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Book size: 8.5" x 11"

Ad sizes:

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Be a part of acknowledging our blessings and our praising of their origins!

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