

## SO NOW WHAT???



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Have you been concerned about how to care for the newly professed in your fraternities? Have you questioned which materials to share with them? Have you wondered where you would find the time?

In SFO General Constitutions Article 44.2 The Fraternity has the duty to give special attention to the formation of the newly professed and of the temporarily professed, to help them become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging.

Last Fall, Anne and I shared with the Regional Ministers that this task might be overwhelming for those local formators who are overseeing both initial and ongoing formation processes. We suggested to them that this one year of formation be handled on the regional level. Here is the plan we set forth:

### **Guidelines for Regional Formation Gatherings of the Newly Professed**

*Time Frame:* Four meetings within a year

#### **1. Regional Day of Unity**

As your regional fraternity gathers for its annual Day of Unity, invite the newly professed; have them gather together in their own session to share:

- How is your vocation going?
- What do you find difficult about not being in the smaller formation group?
- What new insights have you gained?
- What has surprised you?
- What has happened that you did not expect?

#### **2. Day of Recollection**

Regional Executive Council invites the newly professed to a Day of Recollection set up just for them. Invite them to a uniquely Franciscan prayer experience. Have someone present a talk that pertains to the newly professed. Afterward, invite them to share:

- How has their prayer life changed?
- What does it mean to be professed?
- What were their expectations?
- Have their expectations of being a professed Franciscan been met?
- Have them share their initial formational experiences.

#### **3. Clusters of Newly Professed**

Clusters, districts, areas, local fraternities gather the newly professed together in smaller groupings. Afterward, invite them to share:

- What are their fraternal issues?
- Are they feeling included?
- What surprises continue to unfold for them?
- What new insights are they gaining as they enter more deeply into fraternal life?
- How has these times of gathering together enhanced their lives?

#### **4. Gathering with other Newly Professed**

Invite newly professed members of the Franciscan family. Invite newly professed members of other Third Order groups in your area. Afterward, invite them to share:

- How do they give an ecclesial witness?
- What apostolate are they involved in?
- Do they reach out to other ecumenical gatherings?
- How might they continue to network?

How does this sound? Talk it over with other local formators and with your Regional Formation Director. See how you can implement this process in your region, cluster, or district. Sharing resources, time and experiences is just one more way we can enhance our fraternities and serve our newly professed.

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#### **Familiar Quotations:**

Keep thy heart  
with all diligence;  
for out of it  
are the issues of life.  
Proverbs 4:23

The art of being wise  
is the art of knowing  
what to overlook.  
William James

God loves to look at us,  
and loves it when we  
will look back at Him.  
Kathleen Norris