

# Continuing To Build With Living Stones

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National Minister



In March of this year, 135 Franciscans, from every branch of the family: SFO, OFM, OFM Conv, OFM Cap and friars and sisters of the TOR, as well as Ecumenical Franciscan communities, such as the Anglican/Episcopal TSSF and the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans, gathered in Baltimore to discern the possibility of a united commitment to speak as one voice (Franciscan) for Advocacy; to discuss and discern ways to bring a more visible and effective Franciscan presence to the effort of repairing relationships to establish justice in the world. The gathering represented the largest Franciscan group ever assembled in the U S, solely to discuss ways to be better advocates with persons who are poor, marginalized or victims of injustice.

What does this all mean for us? It will offer us a new and vibrant way of living out the Holy Rule, as it relates to our Apostolic Commissions. At first glance, it mirrors the friar's offices of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. This corresponds to our Peace and Justice and Ecology Commissions. This is certainly very timely, as we continue with our ad hoc Committee's study of our present model of living the apostolic commissions and how we integrate the whole of the Rule in living out our gospel journey.

The challenge of how we will collaborate with the other members of the Franciscan family, I am sure will be the topic of discussion in our regional and local fraternities. With openness to the Holy Spirit, we will discern how we can contribute to the family effort; how we will make this collaboration visible

in our local fraternities, as well as regionally and nationally.

We are sailing into new waters, but we do so with confidence and with a renewed commitment to our fraternities and to our larger Franciscan family.

More exciting news! The Formation Commission is hard at work, preparing the National Workshop for Regional Formation Directors, this coming January. This exciting new program will focus on giving the Regional Ministers the tools to help local fraternity formation directors grow and become confident in their roles. While the focus will be primarily on initial formation and the discernment process, on-going formation of the Professed will also be addressed. This workshop promises to be stimulating, challenging and fulfilling. I urge the Regional Formation Directors to plan to attend this workshop.

All of these wonderful goals can and will be accomplished, as we commit to become the living stones for the heavenly builder. Let's approach these new initiatives with enthusiasm, confidence and openness, secure in the knowledge that the Holy Spirit lights our way.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessing.

## Vision Statement of the Franciscan Family

Adopted March 9, 2007

We Franciscan brothers and sisters, Religious and Secular, from throughout the United States, gathered together in Baltimore, MD to discern the possibility of a unified Franciscan Voice for justice. With great concern for dehumanizing issues in our society, we recognized trends contrary to our calling as followers of Christ. We see that we have the power to effectively advocate for the redistribution of resources, the responsible care for creation, and the healing of relationships within the Franciscan Family, the Church and society. To these ends, we commit ourselves and call all members of the Family to speak with one Franciscan Voice to effect the transformation of national social policy. By walking with our brothers and sisters who are poor and marginalized, we intend to advocate for peace and to reaffirm the dignity of all creation.