



2016 Quinquennial Congress - Reviving Our Spirit

By Jan Parker, ofs

At the time this issue of TAU-USA went to press, we were busily preparing for the 19th Quinquennial Congress of Secular Franciscans in the United States (the “Q”), to be held June 30 – July 4, 2016, in St. Louis, Missouri. Our Q Committee was in the home stretch of endless hours given to organize and present us with a wonderful program, and I take this opportunity to thank them once again for their tremendous contributions. We can look forward to photos and coverage of the Q in the next issue of TAU-USA, but one thing I can say with certainty even now—in those photos you will see a joy that is reviving!

Our Franciscan joy is truly the joy of living the Gospel. It is a gift that revives us, and a gift we treasure, but from the very beginning this charism was never given for ourselves alone. We recall Christ’s words “go rebuild my Church,” as well as Pope Innocent’s dream of Francis coming from the shadows to support on his own shoulders the Church of St. John Lateran, which was leaning and about to topple. When we truly live our Franciscan call we rebuild and revive the Church. In the process we ourselves are revived in that same joy.

Our Minister General Tibor Kauser shared about this in his letter of welcome in the Q program, “...let us remember the theme of the “Q” —Reviving Our Spirit. *If you reach out to a new Franciscan friend and try to revive his or her spirit, your own (spirit) will be blessed abundantly.*” It is so true. As it is said, and attributed to our brother Francis, “It is in giving that we receive.” Thinking about the experience of the Q, I will say it this way, “It is in reviving others that we are revived.”

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, our Holy Father Pope Francis talks about the delightful and comforting joy of “reviving others.” He encourages us by quoting Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ.” (*Evangelii Gaudium* #10)

My brothers and sisters, we have received the joy of Christ, so let us be instruments of revival by sharing this joy with everyone we meet.

Renew, rebuild, and revive! “*O how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them, because ‘the spirit of the Lord will rest upon them’*” (cf. Is 11:2).