

Report to the National Fraternity on Franciscan Youth and Young Adult (FYA) Ministry

From the National Executive Council - October 2016

At its first meeting in December 2015, the current National Executive Council (NEC) made a decision not to appoint a Franciscan Youth and Young Adult (FYA) Chair, but to spend some time of discernment reviewing the efforts of the past three chairs of the Youth Commission and to determine, together with the National Fraternity, the direction our youth efforts need to follow in the future. We agreed that no Youth Commission Chair would be appointed until that process was completed.

During this past year, the NEC devoted as much time as possible to this topic. In the spring of 2016, we compiled FYA and YouFra documents and resources, and at our May NEC meeting we began a review of this material. In July 2016, International Councilor Ana Fruk, OFS, and General Minister Tibor Kauser, OFS, attended our NEC meeting for a discussion on Franciscan Youth. We benefited greatly from their input and from our discussion. We have grown in our understanding of YouFra and what is ours to do in our outreach and ministry to youth.

What we have learned

1. Outreach to youth is a ministry, a service. It is possible that YouFra (referred to as FYA in the USA) can grow from OFS youth ministry, but we do not start with YouFra. Our ministry to youth offers service, knowledge of the Franciscan charism and, at the right time, introduces fellowship in YouFra as a possible vocational path. Likewise, our goal is not to win future OFS members, but our efforts could help youth discover an OFS vocation.
2. Youth ministry and the development of FYA are carried out locally, with local fraternity support and association.
3. There is no “one size fits all” approach for OFS outreach to youth. Youth ministry can take many forms. We answer the call to minister to, and with youth in the many various ways the Holy Spirit inspires and directs. There are many opportunities.
4. We can be open to OFS youth ministry with all youth and young adults using age-appropriate

means. Those OFS members who work with youth under the age of 18 need to refer to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People composed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and to abide by it.

5. We have had several different approaches in past years. We have learned from each of these approaches.
6. The organization of YouFra fraternities is outlined in the National FYA Statutes approved in 2004. Youth who are inspired to form a YouFra fraternity may choose a name for their FYA fraternity.

When General Minister Tibor Kauser, OFS, and Presidency Councilor for YouFra Ana Fruk, OFS, met with the NEC in July 2016, they noted the following:

- Outreach to youth is a service to youth. It is not an OFS factory.
- The path to YouFra starts small, moves to groups, and then goes to structure.
- OFS members have responsibility for YouFra, and should appoint an OFS fraternal animator to the YouFra group.
- Utilize the lives of Francis and Clare as touchpoints – youths relate to their stories.
- Three to six months after a group is established, introduce the members to YouFra. It takes five members to start YouFra. There may or may not be interest in YouFra, and that’s ok.
- Give them experiences, but look at their needs. Give proper content, not just meeting their desires. Help them learn discernment so they can discover their vocation in life.
- It may be easier to start Franciscan youth groups in Franciscan parishes or colleges – but there are many opportunities: Don’t give up.

- An OFS Fraternal Animator and the pastoral care of a Spiritual Assistant are very important in the development of YouFra.

Where we are now

1. Youth outreach is a priority. This current time of discernment is critical for the development of national leadership, but is not meant to stop any of the good work currently being done with youth. We applaud our OFS members who are currently involved in youth ministry. Other OFS members who are inspired to do so should not hesitate to begin youth ministry.
2. We have wonderful documents that provide the basic information we need.
3. The Holy Spirit is moving the National Fraternity in ways that will help set the stage for youth outreach all across our National Fraternity. There are new ideas from our Vocations Committee and Social Media sub-committee, and new developments in Communications and Public Relations. The NEC sees a connection between this movement and our build-up towards new national FYYA leadership. This new energy is exciting.
4. The NEC will continue this time of discernment with further study and discussion, follow-up on responses on the topic of Franciscan Youth from the Management of the Order survey, wider conversations to explore possibilities, and a 2017 National Gathering on the topic of Youth.

Where do we go from here?

With assistance from the National Fraternity Council, the NEC will compile a list of OFS members who (1) are actively involved with FYYA or YouFra, (2) have experience with youth outreach or youth ministry, (3) are interested in being part of a national OFS leadership in the area of youth, or (4) are interested in promoting Franciscan youth outreach. From this list, the NEC will invite a group of individuals to St. Louis in July 2017 to discern together the next steps, which we hope will include the appointment of a National Youth Commission Chair. Those interested in attending this important event should contact National Secretary Jane DeRose-Bamman OFS at janedsfo@msn.com for an application form. Applications will be accepted through March 15, 2017.

2017 National OFS Gathering on the Topic of Youth July 27-30, 2017

Are you interested in being part of national OFS leadership in the area of youth?

Are you interested in promoting Franciscan Youth outreach?

Do you have experience with youth ministry?

**If you answered yes to any
one of these questions we
would like to hear from you!**

The National Fraternity Council is seeking applicants for a special National OFS Gathering on the Topic of Youth to be held from Thursday, July 27 through Sunday, July 30, 2017, at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. This gathering will include prayer, sharing of Franciscan experiences, presentations on YouFra and FYYA resources, presentations by guest speakers and discernment on the appointment of a National Youth Commission Chair. A substantial part of the cost of this gathering will be covered by the National Fraternity.

If you are interested in attending, please contact National Secretary Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS, at janedsfo@msn.com for an application form. Applications will be accepted through March 15, 2017.