

INTRODUCING ELFO

EXECUTIVE LEADERS OF FRANCISCAN ORGANIZATIONS

By Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Executive Leaders of Franciscan Organizations Members

- Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities
- Commission on Franciscan Intellectual Tradition
- Federation of Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular
- Franciscan Action Network
- Franciscans International
- Franciscan Media
- Franciscan Mission Service
- Franciscan Pilgrimage Program
- Lutheran Franciscan Order
- Secular Franciscan Order USA

We'd like to introduce you to a group called ELFO - Executive Leaders of Franciscan Organizations. This group consists of leaders of 10 national Franciscan organizations who come together each month for a virtual meeting. The idea of ELFO originated with the Franciscan Federation, most notably Sr. Margaret Carney. The inaugural meeting was in August 2020, and meetings continue on a regular basis.

During their meetings, ELFO participants have built strong relationships. They share about the unique mission of their organizations, as well as news of their organizations' programming and significant events. During this past year, participants have identified common themes and challenges, including finances, technical support, public relations and communications, fund-raising, and demographic changes in Franciscan provinces and congregations.

"Sharing information and insights on a monthly basis among Franciscan organizations provides a space to create options and an opportunity help each other," said Layna Maher, OFS, a member of the National Formation Commission and Regional Formation Director for the St. Kateri Tekakwitha Region. She is the OFS representative on ELFO.

Layna said the organization will be helpful to the Secular Franciscans because of the skills each group is able to share. National Minister Jan Parker, OFS, stated, "We are already benefitting from this collaboration. These relationships have opened doors to new possibilities. One example is our collaboration with Franciscan Media, which has provided expertise on several OFS-USA publication projects, and is helping us navigate copyright issues. Another example is the Franciscan Pilgrimage Program, which worked with the OFS to offer our members a virtual pilgrimage."

ELFO members are committed to ongoing collaboration. Each of these organizations share the charism of living a Gospel life. Working together, they hope to find new ways to further the mission of the wider Franciscan family through their presence in the world.