

Thursday, July 16, 2016

Session 1- OEF Chapter in St. Louis, MO

Shoshanah welcomes everyone to Chapter. Each participant was invited to introduce themselves. Franciscan family guests offered greetings from their communities.

Small groups engaged with this question:

“Listening for God, what does God say when I ask 'why am I here?'”

After regathering, Br. Coyote circulated a draft response affirming the FAN response to Pope Francis' Laudato Si. The community was encouraged to provide feedback and suggested edits. Coyote and Katie Cook made themselves available as JPIC animators to discuss the encyclical and the draft response.

**Announcements:**

Coyote- Mueller Farms tour

Greg Williams- Freedom School

Session 2- OEF Chapter

**Announcements:**

Markie- worship orientation

Presentation of the candidates

Greg Williams

Louis Canter

John “Just Plain John” Fitch

Betty Lou Leaver

Obadiah Greene

Richard LeFevre

Entry into Membership Session- 9:17 AM

Candidate statements and questions

Why has God called you here?

Obadiah “The poverty of privilege & the privilege of poverty”- Reconcilers, stewards, gentle footstep on the earth. My struggle is a community struggle.

JPJ- The divide between the congregation and the neighborhood- Pastor vs. Monk? Finding God in the neighborhood. “I don't want to do silent worship, I want to go paint someone's house.” “It's worth it”

Greg- “Your hat hath ribbons, our hats have none”- William Penn “We are a silly people if we are worried about what people are wearing and not their spirits” I wanted to be in community with people and I didn't want to be in community with people who were perfect. I need to be here

Louis- Needed to be a part of something larger. Music as a path to ecumenical ministry and

relationships. Accountability, siblings in common. I don't have to hide anything, be myself and have others be authentic. I want to cast my lot here because the community has cast their lot with me.

Richard- Instead of cops and robbers, I played church. Helping others heal from the inside out. I belong here, you belong here and we're really in this together.

Betty Lou- I don't always know the why of God, but I know it's not about me. Jonah stories. SD- "You're Franciscan whether you profess or not" "Pre-guilt? Pre-confession!"

Do you feel free to leave us or will you always remain?

To Obadiah- so far away! How to connect and sustain the call?

To Louis- what can you bring from your community life and from experimental communities to enrich our lives?

Candidates were dismissed for Professed session at 10:14

Ballots were distributed to the voting members.

The ballots were reviewed.

The vote was unanimous to receive all 6 candidates for profession. They have now been admitted to voting privileges for the remainder of the meeting.

Session 3- OEF Chapter  
Called to Order at 10:45 AM

Opened with the singing of "Spirit of the Living God"

Michael Vosler introduces the 3 sessions:

1. Review of process
2. The discernment process
3. Where do we go from here?

Chapter 2014- the three options (with collaboration as a core value)

1. Existing Statutes
2. Statutes draft with a Co-Minister model
3. Statutes draft with a Council model

Three major changes:

1. Trust in the Spirit to guide our process.
2. From Minister General to a Council leadership
3. Collaboration and mutuality in all of the service offices

Carlo Gendron sets a ground rule: let us make business into prayer.  
1 minute of silence

Michael Vosler poses questions:

What would be the role of Franciscan statutes?  
What would you expect of Franciscan statutes?

Nots?  
Not juridical  
Not constraining but challenging

Comparisons:  
Simple in the way of Francis' original rule  
Holding the creative tension between Francis and Elias  
Guidelines for taking care of business, but with norms grounded in the Gospel  
What does business require and What would Francis do?  
Focus the organization and functioning of the Order around Gospel imperatives  
Shape and inform how and why we are a community grounded in the Gospel of Jesus

General:  
To enhance the effectiveness of our principles in the backdrop of the Gospel  
Empower, endorse and embrace the multitude of manifestations of the grace of Christ  
Support the inward journey and outward mission.  
Diversity, openness, equality, respect- the role is Love  
A loving, gentle guide to shape how we face the world as an Ecumenical Franciscan Order

Carlo Gendron prayer  
1 minute of silence

Michael Vosler examines the wide variety of feedback from members while noting that no amendments or revisions were included in the proposed draft.

Carlo Gendron leads a review of the responsibilities of the Council (Article V.)

Four Highlights:

1. Collaborate/Delegate as needed
2. Deep listening/prayerful discernment
3. Spiritual Development
4. Encouraging all members to care for one another

Open Question & Answer:

1. Leaders vs. guides?
2. Potential risks- lack of clarity leading to ineffective membership?
3. Overscheduling/regulating the council? How to understand who does what.
4. A timeline for the Council to share how they are sharing responsibilities.
5. Trusting in the prayerful discernment vs. a win-lose model

Shoshanah closes session in prayer.

Session 4- OEF Chapter  
Called to Order at 4:15 PM

Carlo Gendron introduced the session with some highlights from the introductory letter, highlighting the core values that the team followed in preparing the draft.

Background information

Small groups were formed to tackle the following question:

1. When you are personally seeking God's will, how do you discern God's voice from your own?
2. How does my participation change in discerning God's will when I am in a group?
3. How are we to discern together when the Spirit has spoken?

Presentation of the foreword and afterword

Session was continued to 6:00 PM

Group sharing

Questions:

1. Can we say that we are prepared to use prayerful discernment for our community business?
2. Can we say that we are willing to experiment for at least a year with a council instead of an MG and a Chaplain?

Session 5- OEF Chapter

Called to order at 4:15 PM

Michael Vosler opens with a reading from Richard Rohr, OFM about the power of the indwelling Spirit.

Members were invited to share their experience of yesterday's sessions.

As one Sister described it:

"There was abundant sharing, most often with simply a word or phrase. Some of those included: truth, courage, unity, community, communion, peace, love, patient trust, deep listening, humility, softness, openness, willing to risk, receptive, awake, shift, openness to the Mystery, presence of the Holy Spirit was palpable, surrender."

Shoshanah expressed a sense of unity on the use of prayerful discernment for business and requested input, questions feedback from those absent yesterday.

There was no additional feedback given, unity was affirmed

Shoshanah expressed a sense of unity on the willingness to experiment with the council model for a period of time to be determined.

There were a few brief comments, but no decision to block or stand in the way. Unity was affirmed.

Juniper began a discussion of the Council Selection process in the proposed Statutes

There was a sense of unity that we have affirmed 1. prayerful discernment, 2. The council, 3. a selection process at the next chapter.

We closed out session with a prayer from Michael Vosler and with music from Br. Al Mascia, OFM

Session 6- OEF Chapter

Shoshanah opens in prayer

Michael Vosler offers words of welcome and recognition to Petra.

Shoshanah announced the completion of her term on the Joint Commission on Franciscan Unity and the appointment of Br. Louis Canter and Br. Elijah LeFevre. She gave thanks for the work of Br. Coyote & Sr. Katie Cook and announced the appointment of Br. Romero Williams and Sr. Magdalena Stebbing as additional JPIC animators.

An opportunity for feedback on the servant reports was given.

Some questions were entertained about the financial report, including encouragement to all members to make a regular habit of financial giving to support the work of the Order.

The idea was proposed that our financial stewardship covenant could be enhanced by intentional work of one or more professed purposefully engaging the membership and the cloud of witnesses who are connected to the community.

Community affirms Michael Vosler and Coyote as the Generosity Team.

JPIC work was affirmed as a valuable resource to share with the larger world.

Invitation to prayer

Shoshanah clarified some next steps on the Statutes Renewal Team.

Potentially willing to Continue: Juniper, Bruce James, Lorraine

Willing to Contribute: Magdalena, Markie, Romero

Willing to be a listener: Obadiah

Prepared to let go with thanksgiving: Shoshanah, Michael Vosler, Anne Nancy Vosler, Brenden, Carlo

Additional charges to the Team:

Encouraging regional gatherings to practice an act of prayerful discernment

Community affirmed the new team and their ongoing work.

Requests for the team:

1. Prompting for pre-chapter preparation

2. Work on process to prepare the community for a Council Selection process

3. In preparing for selection, consideration should be given to balance of continuity, stability and

durability. The team can communicate with the members to help define some of these needs.

Invitation to prayer

Members should be prepared to respond in full to the next inquiry about Chapter 2017 date.

Thanksgivings were offered for the Scribe, the Servant Team, the Interim Minister, the DFC, and the Fiddlesticks editor.

Submitted by Br. John Michael, OEF  
7/19/15

Appendix 1.

### **Chart Paper**

1. This is the best of times in the history of this earth to be a Franciscan. With so many peoples intrigued & inspired to walk this path. How do we re-inspire each other to seize the moment & walk together in the footsteps of Clare & Francis as we follow Jesus?

### **2. The Proposed Statutes- 3 sessions**

1) How did we get here?

2) The prayerful discernment process

3) Where do we go from here?

Let's trust the Spirit!

The Spirit is with us

The Spirit will speak

We will listen- with openness- but how?

*Franciscan Statutes* -our particular calling (charism)

What do we expect?

Not juridical

Not constraining, but challenging

Simple, not complex

Holding the tension between Francis & Elias

Guidelines for doing business with norms grounded in the Gospel

### **3. What do we expect (continued)**

What does business require and what would Francis do?

Focus the organization and functions around Gospel imperatives

To shape and form how we are a Franciscan community

Focus on humility and service

To enhance the effectiveness of our principles in the backdrop of the Gospel

To enhance, embrace and empower the multitude of manifestations of the Christ we worship

Support the inward journey & outward mission

Diversity, openness, equality & respect – and love.

A loving and gentle guide to shape how we function in the world.

### **4. Differences/Challenges**

Structuring the leadership roles in the Council

The length of time before we can move into our new way of being

Wariness of de facto leadership in councils

Different terminology

*Confusions*

How are we going to decide anything about the statutes?

Terminologies

Flexibility, rigidity, permanence, amendments

Placement of what goes under statutes versus norms

Simplicity of Statutes, more detailed norms

Where do we go from here? Revision process

5. *Enthusiasms*

With the process, and collaboration

Trust in the Spirit's guidance

Trust in the people chosen

That we come to the meeting without an agenda

For the stability of the 5 chosen people

The adventure of being called into the mystery

The example of Clare and her emphases, especially the role of the Holy Spirit.