



National Board

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Happy New Year! May you each be blessed with kindness, peace and hope throughout this new year.

We are not only beginning a new year but our monthly communication with you is taking on a new look and format. This is a result of the survey you completed a little over a year ago. We took your suggestions and created something new. We also welcome your feedback on these changes.

The year 2020 was not what we had hoped for as we began with many plans and great ideas. In early March life as we imagined was totally interrupted, changed, and brought to a standstill. Our new mantra was stay at home, social distance, wash your hands and wear a mask. What a shock to most of us as we faced a complete lifestyle change in how we operated whether at work or play. Hopefully, we can look back and see what we truly value in life and make some lifestyle changes that will lead us to deepen relationships and make us aware of being kinder and more compassionate with one another each day.

The National Board was faced with changes as well. We were eagerly working with committees, speakers, facilitators, and others planning for a new and exciting AFC for June 2020. As the Virus was not letting up, we were faced with a huge decision to cancel the AFC. We were sorely disappointed but took necessary steps to keep our same plans and make it happen in June 2021. Our excitement was restored when the speakers and facilitator were able to continue with us for the year. The hotels were very understanding and generous in working with us without penalty. We thank NIX group for their work in making that happen.

Our big plan for the 2020 AFC was to start 2 groups with the purpose of leading us to what is needed in the future so we may keep Franciscan values and charism alive as we are declining in numbers and age. The Emergent Group is formed with young people from all walks of life who seek to live Franciscan values. The conveners of this group are Corrina Thomas, OSF and Michelle L'Allier, OSF. This group was formed in June with 30 young people who have committed to participate in zoom meetings each month led by facilitators until June sharing what is emerging as new ways of living a Franciscan life. Religious life is changing, and we need to evolve into what is needed for future generations.

The second group which also formed in June is Executive Leaders of Franciscan Organizations (ELFO). The convener of this group is Margaret Carney. This group will also meet monthly January to June as they share ideas and concerns for the future. One area they have already discussed is collaboration in sharing expertise and personnel in various situations. ELFO is also working with the Commission of Regions in providing zoom meetings for all grassroots members of the Federation. I strongly encourage you to register and participate in these meetings as we need your input to evolve into the future.

Evolution has been in process since the beginning of the world and continues today in every aspect of life. Religious life has a purpose in the world, and we need to look at the signs of the time and be ready to change to meet what the world needs from us. Let us get involved in the coming zoom meetings and 2021 AFC so we can move our Federation to meet the needs of the new normal in our world.

With all the happenings of the past year one thing that gave me energy was the plans being made for our 2021 AFC. I hope you will join me in this excitement and get involved in the upcoming zoom meetings as well as the virtual AFC which is something new. Do not forget to register for the zoom meetings beginning January 21, 2021.