

Franciscan Federation

OPEN NATIONAL CONSULTATION – MAY 2022



PROPOSALS prepared by Transformational Task Force II[†]
in preparation for
Annual Federation Conference 2022: June 3-6, 2022 Pittsburgh, PA



Franciscan Federation

of the Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular
in the United States

COMMISSION OF CHARISM SERVICES—Draft 4

1. Commission title:
The TTF agrees that a change in title for this commission would communicate what its priority tasks are. The current “charism services” is very broad. One suggestion is Commission for Franciscan Life and Mission. Another is Commission for Franciscan Education Resources. This is an open item.
2. Nature of the Commission:
This commission acts as an “umbrella” group to coordinate a number of related activities that have to do with continuing to grow in our commitment to the Franciscan tradition. It assists members with developing knowledge of emerging understandings of our Franciscan role within the church and the world.

Its chief concern is to be a conduit of good resources for this continuing formative work. It need not be the source of programs—although it would be ideal if new programming services might emerge from its work. A new era of opportunity is here with the advent of more “on line” programming. In person programming is far more difficult to organize and congregational needs are more complex than in the recent past when workshops, days of study/retreat, were the stock in trade of this type of committee. This commission will be engaged in developing resources that meet the needs of both lay and religious followers of Francis and Clare.
3. Sub-Committee: Franciscan Formation Resources:
A sub- committee of Franciscan formative resources will carry this key responsibility. It will be important for this committee to network with other entities that also work on Franciscan education: CFIT, Franciscan Media, ELFO, etc.
4. Sub-Committee: Franciscan Associates/Co-journer Network:
The ECCS is already developing a national outreach to associates/co-journers of Franciscan congregations. This work continues through this sub-committee which is now in its infancy. Future developments can be supported and communicated through the CCS structure.
5. Sub-committee: Emergent Initiatives:
The Emergent group is currently linked to Federation by membership at the board level and membership in the current ECCS. Current leaders of the Emergent group believe that their members will enter into newly formed commissions or sub-groups, thus eliminating the need for a separate structure. The option to retain some structure for this group will stay with this proposal until we can assess results of the coming Federation assembly consultations.
6. Peace and Justice—Sub-committee or Commission:
Should the Peace and Justice committee be one of these sub-committees? The advantage would be to bridge the gap—real or imagined—between Franciscan spiritual formation and action on behalf of justice. The commission members would like this idea to be discussed with the P&J leaders. An alternative position was that it may hinder giving the time and attention that a fully independent commission for JPIC would have. Please see the separate proposal for a Commission with this function.

Note: Each sub-committee would have a chair or co-chairs. These chairs make up the body of the main Commission along with other commission members at large.

Summary:

Please note that both 5 and 6 may change with further consultation.

Changing the Commission title can be done by soliciting other suggestions.

We still lack an “official” definition of difference between commission/committee for the Federation.



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COMMISSION OF ELECTED LEADERS—Draft 4

1. Title change:

1.1 New title would be: Convocation of Canonical Leaders. (Once this new form of participation is initiated a title for the structure that is less technical could be selected.)

2. Background to proposal for change to name and function of the CEL:

Study of the current structure's history and the division of responsibilities between the board and the CEL indicate the need for change to the responsibility of CEL for financial approvals. (See by-laws Article 6.2) The board, to function with full legal authority, must have the fiduciary responsibility that is the normal function of a board. Therefore, a future board will have the responsibilities itemized in Art. 6.2. However, a directive for consultation with canonical leaders for major decisions can/will be included in new by laws if these proposals are accepted.

This means that the future function of a CEL would change and the need for a commission of leaders will change due to changes in board composition and responsibility in the future. (Board composition would change to specify a certain number of canonical leaders to hold seats. These could (should?) be nominated by members of the canonical leaders structure.

4. Convocation of Canonical Leaders

These convocations—held at least twice a year—would allow the board and executive director to inform, consult, and receive advice from the leadership of the TOR congregations that comprise the Federation. Since financial stability and accountability are important, reports given regularly will help—it is hoped—to increase trust and cooperation. Canonical leaders will be able to exercise appropriate leadership with this format.

- 4.1 There is need for programs on Franciscan leadership to complement the work done by other national groups (CMSM, LCWR, CMSW)
- 4.2 Support for national assemblies to focus on practical application of Franciscan identity and vision
- 4.3 Current members can reach out to non-members through LCWR sessions to invite their participation in Federation
- 4.4 Leaders affirm need for good national programming such as those formerly offered by Spirit and Life Committee.

5. Possible agenda for Convocations of Canonical Leaders

To hold regular meetings (virtual) of these leaders for the following purposes:

- 5.1 Provide direct reporting from Federation leaders on key issues and activities.
- 5.2 Assure leaders of financial operations' stability.
- 5.3 Receive feed-back/advice on key issues facing Federation.
- 5.4 Provide options for deeper engagement by individuals or congregations/provinces.
- 5.5 Assist with current issues such as formation of PJPs for ministries

6. Centrality of TOR Charism

- 6.1 While open to inclusion of new forms of membership for lay partners such as ELFO and EMERGENTS, the centrality of identity based in our shared Third Order Regular identity should not be weakened or lost.
- 6.2 An ecumenical perspective can be developed to find ways to structure inclusion and cooperation with those who are not vowed to the TOR life.
- 6.3 New membership types will need to include consideration of types of dues or financial support for those seeding membership



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COMMISSION OF REGIONS —Draft 4

1. Commission title:
 - 1.1 Commission agrees that name should change. One suggestion: Commission for Grass Roots Engagement
2. Developing work of this commission:
 - 2.1 Commission should focus on time zones, not regions for Zoom programming.
 - 2.2 Commission members will work on updating role of the regions and cluster chairs.
 - 2.3 Members are open to new possibilities for developing programs and services:
 - 2.3.1 Virtual and in-person events
 - 2.3.2 Support programs provided by other commissions/board
 - 2.3.3 Serve as a “hub” for programs and events
 - 2.3.4 Provide more retreat days

N.B. This commission is a structure working to come to a new understanding of its role. Formerly, the regions were able to plan and to host in-person days of retreat, renewal, etc. This has clearly become nearly impossible for a multitude of reasons. Defining a new mode of operation will require communication with board and other commissions in the coming year.

3. New role for this commission:

Rationale from TTF:

What has become clear in the last two years is that the COR remain a structure that can provide the very important service of hosting virtual programs using ZOOM—or other technologies. For this reason we suggest that the commission be maintained and that those who serve as regional chairs or conveners work in tandem with the board and other commissions to create programs or meetings done by technology or in person. This creates a shared sense of participation and engagement. It has also shown to be very effective in allowing many who do not attend national assemblies to feel part of the Federation’s work. Members of COR appreciated the recognition of their new role as conveners for “regional” meetings done by ZOOM. These meetings played a significant role leading up to the June, 2021 Assembly outcomes. This year they are hosting the McLaren discussions.

4. The communications hub for outreach:
 - 4.1 How can the Federation’s message and service be expanded to all potential partners?
 - 4.2 Those to be served include: Secular Franciscans / Young adults / Other religions’ members / Catholics who are not Franciscans
 - 4.3 Developing modes of communication that reaches multiple constituencies will require cooperation with office communications and professionals
5. Continue efforts to create national programs:
 - 5.1 There was reference to some of the outstanding programs done for all regions/members in the past.
 - 5.2 NB: Members of CEL requested a program for elected leaders
 - 5.3 Such nationally available programs can be a joint effort with other commissions



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Peace and Justice Committee –to become: JPIC COMMISSION

This committee should be given the status of a commission with clear objectives and capacity for needed connections and communications to membership. Propose that the Commission be named as JPIC.

We understand that the primary work of the Commission is to provide leadership for Federation in providing education and proposing advocacy regarding priority social concerns. (This presumes that rather than trying to address every possible social ill, this commission works from priorities drawn from consultation with Federation members.)

If possible, the commission should contain regional representation and work to provide members with knowledge of those issues which may be of importance within the various regions or for individual congregations. In this way, a solidarity of concern and action can develop within the Federation. Some regional issues may not have national implications, but can be highlighted as the work of members in those regions. Issues of shared national significance can be the core concerns while honoring the needs and difficulties experienced in the regions.

A key element of the commission's work will be to establish a working relationship with FAN. This means that FAN programs, etc., can be disseminated by Federation and duplication of efforts avoided. It may be that a formal liaison role on the commission is give to a FAN leader or officer. However, the Federation itself should maintain its autonomy so that Federation is not obliged to support every FAN program or position on issues. This will avoid future conflicts and allow for necessary difference in approach and advocacy work.

There is a massive amount of material coming from Franciscan sources on "Laudato si." These resources can be offered and utilized by Federation members. Again, the key is to not duplicate what is already available. (Fratelli tutti will also be the subject of a great deal of material and conferences in the future. Both should be priority tasks for Franciscans.)

