

CIOFS PROJECT 2008 Report

St. Francis Region

Southern California

USA

September 13, 2008

- **In putting this report together, we realized that CIOFS is not looking for textbook answers to the questions that our Minister General sent to us. We created 4 Lesson Plans and spread them out over a 4 month span, May through August. As the months evolved, we (the facilitators) noticed an evolution taking place in most fraternities. They were coming to a better understanding of their profession and had made changes in their lives. So we are responding below with 3 major observations we felt were of importance to CIOFS because many of the fraternities responded this way, plus some other observations and stories from SFO's in our Region.**

Major Observation #1

What does my profession mean to me now?

- The importance of the commitment to the SFO, and my relationship with my entire Franciscan family.**
- We are all responsible for formation of one another and our monthly meeting should be created around good solid Franciscan spirituality.**
- It's our way to put our dreams into action.**
- That the SFO is truly my second family.**

- .. **That our monthly meeting is a spiritual exercise in our vocations.**
- .. **It strengthened our commitment as professed members.**
- .. **We will wear our Tau crosses daily instead of once a month.**
- .. **We look forward to sharing our journey together in small meeting discussions.**
- .. **We now feel like we belong to a family.**

Major Observation #2

What changes have you made in your life because of the CIOFS Project ?

- .. We realize the importance of modeling our Franciscan vocation with everyone and everywhere. It can make a difference to others. So we will try harder to be a good model.**
- .. Because we feel the sense of belonging to our worldwide Order and that we are truly a part of our Region, we will attend more of the Regional events.**

- **We are listening better and more willing to enter into a dialogue with an open mind.**
- **The small group discussions over the 4 months made us realize how important it is that we continue with this form and methodology in our Initial and On-Going Formation programs. Witnessing who we are with one another is a testimony of our Franciscan vocation.**
- **We are prioritizing our lives with newly realized priorities.**

- **We are living our Rule, and by doing so, we are bringing the Gospel to life.**
- **We came to the reality that having WHAT WE NEED not WHAT WE WANT is most important.**
- **We like the open sharing and listening.**
- **We realize that BEING is more important than DOING.**

Major Observations #3

Based on asking what did you like about the CIOFS project

- .. We learned more about fraternity relationships.**
- .. We felt a sense of belonging to our worldwide Order.**
- .. We realized we had better growth with regular attendance.**

- .. **We felt part of the uniformity of fraternities all over the world.**
- .. **We learned more about the meaning of our RULE and are more interested in learning more.**
- .. **Many mentioned they tried not to miss any of the CIOFS meetings.**
- .. **We liked praying with other SFO's all over the world.**

Requests made by many Seculars:

- **Have more On-going Formation about the meaning of Discernment.**
- **Have more Regional workshops like the CIOFS project.**
- **Help us to stay connected to CIOFS and keep us informed.**
- **Have Region prepare more lessons plans for the local fraternities. We liked the uniformity of doing what other fraternities in Region were doing.**

Stories about changes and what happened

- I own a restaurant and when people would come in and sit for a long time chatting after they had finished eating, I would get very upset because we couldn't serve more customers. But because of the CIOFS project, I came to the reality that they were ministering to each other in their own way and that as a Franciscan I should make them feel more welcome in my restaurant. It has taken a great deal of stress out of my life. Thank you CIOFS and St. Francis Region.**

Story # 2

- .. When I became a Franciscan, I would go and visit some sick people once in a while. So, since we started the CIOFS project, I started visiting an elderly lady regularly and the last time I visited her, she told me she wanted to become a Catholic. I never mentioned this to her and I never asked her, it was her own decision. I know I have changed, because I am happier and living the Gospel better.**

Responses from fraternity council members and Facilitators:

- We noticed that attendance improved each month as the project progressed.**

General Comments

- **The program created had the correct mixture of ingredients to interest members and make them think about the order and their profession.**

- **The international request gave a sense of importance and universality to the project.**
- **The concepts were basic and strengthened or rebuilt the basic concepts, especially understanding and commitment that were slipping away or never established.**
- **Provided an excellent opportunity to reestablish the formation form and methodology.**
- **Improved sharing and fellowship in fraternities.**
- **They now appreciate the uniformity and diversity of St. Francis Region and CIOFS more than ever.**

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- The process developed and the effect on many members are the real results of this project.**