



CALLING FRANCISCAN YOUNG ADULTS

by
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The mission of the *Franciscan Young Adult Commission* of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America (*YouFra*) is to bring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the young adults of America.

To advance this mission, SFOs in Kennebunk are interested in establishing a *YouFra* group in the area to affiliate with our fraternity. We organized a week dedicated to evangelizing area young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 about the mission of *YouFra* in the United States and worldwide.

The week's activities for young adults culminated on September 17, 2011, where we arranged a second annual Spirit-filled Franciscan Day celebration on the grounds of St. Anthony's Franciscan monastery for SFO members in the region, including young adults who may be discerning a possible call to *YouFra*.

During the week of September 13–17, the friars of the monastery hosted members of our Secular Franciscan and *YouFra* International fraternal family, including the National President of the Lithuanian *YouFra* and the SFO, accompanied by the *YouFra* National Spiritual Assistant and young adult members of Lithuanian *YouFra*. Franciscan Youth has a strong evangelistic presence in Lithuania. Speaking about their own call to serve the Lord through the Franciscan organization of *YouFra*, our visitors taught by example through song, discussion and testimony about their experience as young adults who serve the Lord. Visiting members of *YouFra* from Lithuania evangelized local youth by educating others in their age group about the global existence of *YouFra*, and the call to service as part of the Franciscan family.



Holy Mass being celebrated by Fr. Antanas at the Lourde shrine on the monastery grounds.

YouFra-USA has a web page at: <http://www.franciscanyouthusa.com>

and has a strong presence for outreach in many parts of the United States, as shown on their site. The northeastern United States has need of *YouFra* presence, however. One of the goals of *YouFra* USA is given in their mission statement: *To motivate and encourage Regional and Local Fraternities to be mindful of the importance of youth in the Franciscan family.* Included in the statement is the following Biblical quotation from Jeremiah:

The word of the Lord came to me thus: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." "Ah, Lord God!" I said, "I know not how to speak; I am too young." But the Lord answered me, "Say not, "I am too young." To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. Then the Lord extended His hand and touched my mouth, saying, "See, I place my words in your mouth!" (Jeremiah 1:4-9)

Anne Mulqueen, SFO International Councilor and speaker at our annual fraternal retreat in Kennebunk, wrote in the Winter issue of *TAU-USA*,

"First, I must admit, I am not an authority on youth, nor do I have all the answers on how to attract young people to form fraternity. What I do know is that the charism of our founder is just what spirit-filled, optimistic young people need and are looking for. The obligation to involve and assist young people in the Franciscan family was voted the third priority during the International Chapter in 2008."

She provided guidance to all SFOs in this responsibility of ours in the following words:

Working with youth is not an option. It is an article of our Rule. Article 24 states: "...the council should organize ...meetings with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups." We need to pray that the Lord of the Harvest will show us the way to fulfill this priority and follow our Rule."

Through our efforts during *YouFra* week and on Franciscan Day, we will be joining with Anne and the National Secular Franciscans in making the evangelization of American youth a priority, beginning at our local level. If you know of young people who are interested, please email Kim Tison at ktison@biddschools.org

We will be truly blessed to hear from you!

