

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE WORK COMMISSION MANUAL

Ann Devine, SFO

The Work Commission Manual was designed to be a resource for the local/regional Work Commissions. As such, the manual provides basic reference material, continuing formation material and material for apostolic initiatives on the topic of Work. The only limit on how these sources can be used is creativity.

What follows are some suggestions, which admittedly, only touch the surface of the topic. They are not the only way to use the materials. Since you are looking here, the assumption is that your fraternity is looking for "something on work", so the suggestions made seek to introduce the topic to a fraternity and help the fraternity begin to reflect and verbalize on their understanding of work.

1. NEWSLETTERS

- a. Use the Sources section to include short quotes on work in your monthly newsletter. Start with a short quote, one that strikes you particularly relevant. A good one to start with is a segment of Article 16 of the Rule.
- b. If space permits, try including one of the Reflections on Article 16 of the Secular Franciscan Rule (best if used also within the next fraternity meeting)

2. FRATERNITY MEETINGS

- a. Start with the Reflections on Article 16 of the SFO Rule. Distribute copies of one of the reflections at each meeting (or have them published in your newsletter); ask members to share their reflections on the Dialogue Starters. Save their reflections from each meeting (either have someone "play secretary" or jot down a few of the prominent phrases). When you've finished all ten reflections, present the fraternity's "theology of work" based on what their reflections were during the previous ten meetings.
- b. Distribute/make available articles based on the interest of those in your fraternity. Some articles have a seasonal approach, for example, Mary Zablocki's "In the Trenches."
- c. Ask fraternity members to share LOCAL newspaper articles on some aspect of work. Whether it's the local school board actions, teacher contracts, sexual harassment or a local business story, your members will probably provide you with plenty of material for discussion and reflection of work in light of the SFO Rule.
- d. Another idea in the same vein as the above is to ask members to share activities in which they engage where they consider themselves doing work, but do not get paid. Help them compare and contrast their understanding and feelings about this type of work and the work for which they receive compensation.

3.. THE WORLD BEYOND

Encourage members to be aware and become involved in local employment issues. (The reading of news articles above is a beginning.) Many opportunities also exist for volunteers in the local social service agencies, shelters, senior centers and job corps. Unions, churches, and civic organizations can also provide opportunities for further involvement.

The task of taking what we understand and believe into the world beyond the family and fraternity and then developing that understanding within the work world can be a uniquely individual task. Sharing with other members employed or active in the same field about the everyday concerns and challenges is a good way to develop the understanding and put it into action.