

## **DEVELOPING A WORK COMMISSION OVERVIEW**

This section contains some basic guidance and tips for developing a work commission at the regional level or, for larger local fraternities, at a fraternity level. There is no exact formula and each regional commission should be developed within the context of the status, needs and goals of the region.

One of the most interesting things about the work commission is that it, of necessity, takes a different approach than the other commissions. Becoming involved in the work commission requires a change in one's attitude toward work. The beginning of the process of developing a commission begins with oneself. It is truly a process of "on-going conversion." It is not something to be frightened of, however. The change in attitude is one of perhaps hearing for the first time the Good News about work. Working is how we spend most of our hours, each one of us, every day. Yet we have rarely been taught through our religious education or heard through homilies of the Good News about work; how it plays a crucial role in God's plan for mankind and for the world. Yet the Catholic Church and, within it, our Franciscan family, has developed a whole body of thought relating work to spirituality, theology and social justice. It takes a while to really catch on to this new perspective on work.

So the first task of a work commission is to form oneself and others in this Gospel-oriented vision of work. The work commission begins not in asking Secular Franciscans to do anything in particular but to see and understand with new eyes and heart what they are already doing. Many of us don't understand how our work life and our faith life mesh in any conceivable way – they are like two different, distinct worlds. Some of us don't appreciate that we are still at work even if retired – that the Church understands all productive activity as work.

Once we have experienced a change of heart concerning the meaning and importance of work in God's plan and in our Secular Franciscan way of life, then we can truly begin to desire to act on behalf of those for whom the dignity of work is denied. When we come to realize how important work is in God's plan for mankind, we shudder when others are diminished by their work or not allowed to work at all. We truly desire to act on their behalf.