

# OFS-USA FUNDS FORMATION WORKSHOP IN ETHIOPIA

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS

A grant from the Duns Scotus Formation Fund helped sow Franciscan seeds in the soil of Ethiopia, according to project leader Fr. Mathewos Ajaba, OFM Cap. Fr. Ajaba is the National Secular Franciscan Spiritual and Pastoral Assistant and Vocation Animator at the Capuchin Post Novitiate Formation House in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



The Duns Scotus Board recently received a report on the success of a four-day formation workshop in Ethiopia, January 14-17, 2021, that was financed by the Duns Scotus Fund. “The workshop became a place of real encounter through learning and sharing different views and ideas,” Fr. Ajaba said.

Fifty-one participants from five fraternities and YouFra members throughout Ethiopia attended the workshop. Attendees were expected to return to their fraternities and share the information. Most of the \$5,000 workshop cost was covered by the grant from

the Duns Scotus Formation Fund. The project was approved in 2020 but delayed until January 2021 because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The workshop was a time of sharing and growth. “One of the key moments of the event was the Zoom meeting all the participants had with General Minister Tibor Kauser. The presentation given by Jenny Harrington, OFS, General Councilor, was also a highlight,” Fr. Ajaba said.

Ethiopia currently has five local fraternities with a total of 81 members. Since none of the fraternities was canonically established, that is the immediate goal, according to Fr. Ajaba. All the procedures to establish the fraternities are in place. Other goals include emphasis on formation in both conversion to Christ and a deepening in the Secular Franciscan vocation.

“The lack of authentic conversion is, by far, considered one of the most serious problems in the Order. At the moment, authentic initial formation needs to be our top priority. To accomplish this, we would like to put much effort into translation work so that all the essential documents are accessible to everyone, and national fraternities should engage in this uppermost priority,” Fr. Ajaba said. Other priorities include continued animation of YouFra and a method of financially supporting the fraternities.

