

SECULAR FRANCISCAN QUINQUENNIAL GATHERING JUNE 30-JULY 4, 2016 ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The



The Q is a spirit-filled and intentional congress to rejoice in the gifts we have been given to serve one another with our brothers and sisters of Francis. It is a time to meet and learn from both young and older adults from all walks

of life and varied cultures who reside throughout the United States and beyond our geographic borders. It is a Chapter of Mats, as our dear St. Francis called it 800 years ago. Inspiring presentations by nationally and locally recognized Franciscans, formation, prayer, contemplation, Mass, fraternity, discernment, reflection, involvement, merriment, and compassion, are a few of the activities you will experience during the Q.

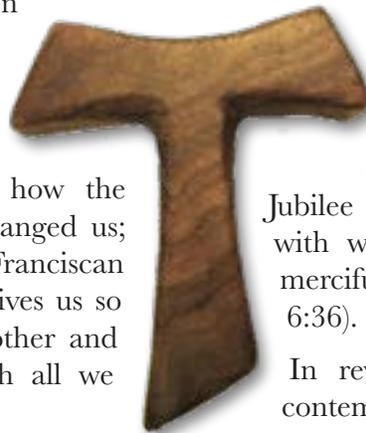
The purpose of the Q is to revive the spirit within us and to share the gifts we have been given in order to animate them better in our Franciscan way of life. In unity, through our profession and the Rule, we are *called* to be evangelical people to bring Christ to others, to protect all creation and to live a Gospel life. Following Jesus's example, Francis sent his brothers out two by two. We also are to go out to the world and preach the Gospel through our way of life, using words when necessary, and then to return in fraternity at least every five years to celebrate in community and Communion our Franciscan family; to discuss what we have spiritually and cognitively learned; to share how the experiences and knowledge have changed us; and to seek better ways to live our Franciscan way of life. Being spiritually fed revives us so we are better able to serve one another and thus build the Body of Christ with all we meet.

The theme for the Q 2016 is Reviving Our Spirit. We are given gifts to share, and one way to revive our spirit is to be in community where the environment fosters open dialogue, different perspectives and opportunities to witness one another's gifts expressed in diverse ways.

The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan order is "to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." How can we revive ourselves to grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father, and therefore with one another? We comprehend and appreciate that all we have is a gift from God. We have answered His call to follow Him. In doing so, we were given the grace of being called to the Secular Franciscan Order, to grow deeper in our relationship with the Trinity and thus with all creation. As we live the life of Penance, we grow in the understanding of the meaning of daily conversion. It takes effort to surrender completely to God's will and to open our hearts to and for one another. We want this Q to stir our hearts spiritually so we can be better Franciscans in our mission to build the Body of Christ.

Pope Francis has named 2016 the Year of Mercy. In solidarity with the Pope, we want to revive our hearts to be more merciful in all we do, say and think. In doing so, we must peacefully practice open dialogue and recognize the dignity of all creation. As members of the Franciscan Family, our journey begins, as St. Francis has shown us, with spiritual conversion. Mercy is part of who we are, yet we can always seek better ways to improve how we show mercy. Pope Francis calls us to prayer, which opens the door to experience God's mercy. We live this Jubilee year with God's mercy at the center with words of our Lord in our lives, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Lk 6:36).

In reviving our spirit, we invite you to contemplate on other distinguishing words



Franciscans strive to practice in your daily lives: poverty, humility, simplicity, compassion, joy, prayer, contemplation, Eucharist, penance, Mary, peace, unity, creation are only a few illustrations. What pictures do these words paint for you? How do you currently use your gifts to practice them in your life, and what do you see that needs improvement?

So during the next 11 months, we humbly ask for your prayers, and we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us continuously as we plan and prepare for our Franciscan family's five-year gathering — our Chapter of Mats.

The following reflection questions are to begin the journey to the Q 2016. These reflections can

be considered individually or in a local fraternity gathering.

Reflection Questions in Preparation for the Q 2016

- ❖ How can you revive the spirit in your life to bring about God's design to others as we live the Franciscan way of life?
- ❖ How do you live the Gospel in mercy with all you meet and know?
- ❖ How do you imitate St. Francis's love for all creation?
- ❖ How are you the voice for those who have no voice?



Q 2016 Committee Core members:

- Judy Haupt
- Kate Kleinert
- Barbara Morgan
- Susan Simeone
- Kathryn Wohnoutka

Plan to attend the Q 2016 with open hearts and enthusiasm to grow deeper with our Franciscan spirituality while witnessing how God works through each of us in special ways. We want YOU to meet us in Saint Louis!

We all need to go back to the well, to be refreshed, to be revived.

Look for detailed registration information this fall.