



Regional Fraternity of Eastern Canada

Leadership Bulletin #2

Our OFS Ritual offers members of a fraternity Council the following words in a closing prayer for their regular meetings:

“...may we prove to be worthy leaders of this fraternity; may we see what we should do, and have the courage and perseverance to accomplish it.”

And in our simple Franciscan Morning Prayer that we are invited to recite daily we find these words of petition:

“Lord, look on me and leave in me peace and courage and your humble wisdom that I may serve others with joy...”

We want to draw your attention to the word “courage”. Does it not strike you as rather an unusual request in both of these prayers? Who would have thought that Secular Franciscans should pray for the virtue of courage. **We might ask ourselves: for what do we need courage?**

This leads us to consider some of the thoughts/ideas that emanated from a session entitled “I have a dream” at our recent Leadership Development Workshop. We invite you to recall what some of your OFS sisters and brothers spoke about when they articulated their dreams for their fraternities:

- *To have a strong Council to set the tone by articulating the vision of the fraternity*
- *To be open to new ideas, flexible, welcoming...promoting the gifts and talents of each other and the pastoral care of each other*
- *To be visible in the community with the poor, care of creation and to create peace*
- *To witness, be disciples (missionaries), be contemplative (deep spirituality)*
- *To build a strong unity among members*
- *That our fraternity be known for our joy and love*
- *To extend our solidarity with people in need, to be open to youth, and to collaborate with other groups*
- *To have more prayer, harmony, joy, more leaders and followers, and a greater sense of community (brotherhood and sisterhood)*
- *That fraternity be a prophetic witness in dealing with the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*

Note: These are just a few of the statements recorded on the flip charts at this workshop session.

When we ponder such dreams for our fraternities, they are indeed challenging and aspirational. And for those of us who were in attendance at the workshop, we will recall that many of these

dream statements were put forth with “joyful enthusiasm”. As the closing prayer for a Council meeting suggests, such aspirational ideas were made in the spirit “of seeing what we should do”. Now the challenge is to **have the courage** to make them happen!

As an exercise in leadership, we invite you to revisit this idea of proposing “I have a dream” statements for your fraternity. You might want to schedule a special meeting of your Council to engage in such an endeavour. And, with prayerfulness, take time to dream about the possible future of your fraternity...it may prove to be a refreshing experience. It is our hope that as leaders of your fraternity you indeed do undertake this exercise and that you do so with joy.
May God bless your dreams for your fraternity!

What is the point of creating dreams for your fraternity? In so many words, it is aimed at having a vision... proposing a direction...fostering beneficial initiatives...setting out worthwhile objectives. Remember: dreams for our fraternity need not be big...they can be small and readily achievable...and can lead to bigger dreams, in the future.

As a reminder, here are a few words from our workshop facilitator, Paul Donovan:

“Vision is not about seeing far; it’s about seeing clearly- what God is calling us to be, here and now. And that clarity often begins with a dream.

Dreaming together as a Council isn’t wishful thinking – it’s an act of hope. It is the decision to believe that the Holy Spirit still has more to do in us, and through us, for the good of our fraternity. Vision doesn’t mean having all the answers. It means being attentive to what the Holy Spirit is stirring in the life of the fraternity, and helping others to see it too. It’s the ability to lift our eyes from the immediate and ask: What are we being called toward?

Of course, vision also asks something of us. It asks for courage – not only to speak new dreams aloud, but to take the first steps toward them. And those steps, as we reminded one another in the workshop, begin not with brilliance or perfection, but with humility, prayer and joy.

If your Council has the courage to name your dreams, even small ones, you are already leading!”

Footnote: Just a little advice regarding acquiring the virtue of courage, from a renowned philosopher: “According to Aristotle, virtue is something we cultivate with practice. ‘We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.’” This quote is taken from a recent book by our new Prime Minister, Mark Carney entitled *Value(s): Building a Better World for All*.