

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Franciscan Federation Inspires

Contact: Brother Damian Novello, OSF or Sister Carol Woods, SFMA  
Franciscan Federation Co-Executive Directors  
135 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Office: [franfedoffice@franfed.org](mailto:franfedoffice@franfed.org) / 718-858-8819

[Brooklyn, NY] The Franciscan Federation of the Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular of the U.S., and their associates resolved “to stand in solidarity with Native American People in care of their land and of our Sister, Mother Earth” in a resolution affirmed by some 240 attendees representing 61 member congregations at their annual meeting, just ended.

The Resolution, promoted by the JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee) of the Federation, is rooted in the words of Pope Francis in the encyclical, **Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home, #146**: “It is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift of God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact and maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best.” It goes on to say, “As Franciscans, being in solidarity with our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters, in particular Native Americans, we act on the words of Pope Francis in the encyclical: **#217**: “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork, it is essential to the life of virtue; it is not an option or a secondary aspect of our Christian life.” **#218**: “In calling to mind the figure of St. Francis of Assisi, we come to realize that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion.”

This resolution calls for a pledge to learn about the enduring effects of the Doctrine of Discovery, including its application in US law as the justification for claiming that Native Americans do not have title to discovered lands, that they are mere tenants on their ancestral lands. This Doctrine of Discovery is the result of three Papal bulls that provided the moral and legal rationale for Christian explorers to confiscate all land and possessions of the inhabitants of “barbarous nations.” Members of the Franciscan Federation are encouraged to “learn from

Indigenous Peoples about their history and cultures and to value their worldview that respects the interconnectedness of all life, including that of Mother Earth” and, “in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi” to seek pardon for the sufferings imposed upon Indigenous Peoples and to petition Pope Francis to revoke the Doctrine of Discovery.

The Franciscan Conference, called this year **“Bonaventure’s Journey into God: Franciscan Inspiration for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”** in honor of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, a theologian, spiritual guide and servant leader. Three animators, Fr. Andre Cirino, OFM, Josef Raischl, SFO and his wife, Bernadette Raischl combined historical insights, prayerful chants, and personal experience with Bonaventure’s texts over thirty years to engage participants on Saturday. Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF presented on Sunday and Monday mornings about Bonaventure’s emphasis on a ‘Sense-able’ approach to God that both St. Francis and St. Clare lived in their own day. All inspired and encouraged our following his inspiration in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The Most Reverend Richard J. Malone, Bishop of Buffalo, celebrated a festive Liturgy of the Eucharist on Sunday morning with participants at Adam’s Mark Hotel, the Conference’s venue, in downtown Buffalo. His homily for the Feast of Corpus Christi and the music of St. Mary of the Lake Parish in Hamburg, NY, led by Ms. Cristina Voto, added much joy.

On Sunday evening, the Conference Banquet honored 31 Sisters and Brothers of member congregations who, like St. Bonaventure, “embodies the best of our teaching tradition” or “who, in their ministry, embodies the values of being incarnational, personal, communal, transformative, engaging the heart and developing servant-leaders.”

For more information on the Franciscan Federation and the Resolution on Solidarity of Care of Creation with Indigenous People, see our Franciscan Federation Facebook page.

Other events of the Conference included: Friday evening’s prayerful Opening Ritual, designed by Sister Margaret Carney, OSF; a welcome to Buffalo by Sister Ann Lyons, FSSJ, the Chairperson of the Local Planning Committee, and the Presidential Address by Sister Kathie Uhler, OSF. On Saturday evening,

participants could choose from three optional venues: the showing of THE SULTAN AND THE SAINT, a docudrama from Unity Productions Foundation, recounting the Muslim-Christian Peacemaking efforts of St. Francis and the Sultan of Egypt during the Crusades, hosted by FAN, Franciscan Action Network, and Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF and Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF, that serves as a model today; an introduction to the Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition to grow in 'seeing ourselves as responsible stewards of a treasure that has much to offer for the healing of humanity and of the world itself;' and "Mentoring on Tap," a conversation with members of Next Generation Franciscan Mentors on passing on the Franciscan way of seeing life and living in the world.

On Sunday afternoon, the Federation's Commissions of Elected Leaders, Charism Services and Regions met to discuss implementation of the Board's Direction Statement. The desire to reach out to all branches of the Franciscan Family, include more TOR congregations, and encourage associate memberships among our congregational companions and Secular Franciscan fraternities drive this Direction Statement. The groups discussed how our resources, like our regional events, website, Annual Federation Conference, and collaborating entities, can be used to further our charism and mission; named potential mentors and presenters to help us achieve our goals; and considered how our Annual Conference would need to evolve to accommodate our future needs.

The National Board of the Franciscan Federation met after the Conference and elected Friar Frank Scornaienchi, TOR as President for 2017-2018. In September, the Board will meet to continue its work and plan for next year's Conference in Buffalo, NY on June 11-15, 2018, again at Adam's Mark Hotel.

DVDs of all keynote presentations from the 2017 AFC are available from our AV Coordinator: "Lisa Zmuda FSPA" (lzmuda@fspa.org).