

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Franciscans to meet in Denver, Colorado

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Franciscan women and men will meet in Denver, Colorado July 23 to 27, for four days of prayer, education, and discussions on the theme *Pilgrims and Strangers: Eyes Fixed on Christ*. The conference presentations will focus on topics of spirituality, prayer, the growing needs of the environment and issues of social justice, especially immigration. It is anticipated that 500 Franciscans, members of more than 75 religious congregations and their associates will attend the annual conference. Each year, the conference gathers to pray together, to meet and to discuss issues of concern as members of the Franciscan Federation – religious sisters, brothers, priests and those who serve with them in schools, colleges, parishes, hospitals and communities in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean.

Sister Joanne Schatzlein OSF, member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Milwaukee, WI and Father Tod S. Lavery OFM, a Franciscan friar of the province of St. John the Baptist, Cincinnati, Ohio will be keynote presenters. Both Joanne and Tod have years of experience as presenters, teachers and pilgrimage guides.

Five breakout sessions are planned on the following topics: The Theology of the Francis Cycle in Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi by Jay M. Hammond, Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at St. Louis University. Immigration: A Catholic Journey of Compassion & Concern by Jennifer Kraska, Executive Director of the Colorado Catholic Conference. Exploring with the Franciscan Family by Tod Lavery OFM. Walking the Labyrinth As a Pilgrim Journey by Carol Mitchell, co-director of Room for the Spirit, a spirituality center in St. Petersburg, FL. Cosmic Pilgrimage: Journey to the Center by Sister Pat Irr OSF, Wheaton Franciscan.

The conference will work to reaffirm their 2005 resolution of Immigration, to promote a comprehensive approach to immigration issues and concerns and advocate for just and humane immigration policies and laws. Geographic regional gatherings will be held during the conference for members to meet and set priorities for actions to carry out the above resolution. A history of Federation resolutions and actions can be found on the Resolution tab of the Franciscan Federation web site at www.franfed.org.

The Conference includes a festive banquet on Saturday, July 26 at which Father John Cella OFM, Executive Director of the Franciscan Pilgrimage Program will be the featured speaker.

The Franciscan Federation is grateful for the funds received from the May Bonfils Stanton Memorial Trust of Holy Name Province which will be used in the development and presentation of this year's theme.

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