

# FSPA called to envision the future with new formation team

[fspa.org/content/s/fspa-called-to-envision-the-future-with-new-formation-team](https://fspa.org/content/s/fspa-called-to-envision-the-future-with-new-formation-team)

December 21, 2020

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"We welcome others whom God calls to follow the Gospel in the lifestyle of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, and we accept the responsibility for initial and continuing formation," begins FSPA's Unity in Diversity declaration #11, the commitment of the community to create and cultivate relationships with women discerning religious life. "We guide those who have been accepted into the congregation as they carefully consider their vocation. We provide for them an atmosphere of growth within a viable and valid community experience. We also recognize our own need to grow continually in understanding the principles of the Gospel, the meaning of religious life, and the spirit of our Franciscan-Eucharistic heritage."

With these guiding principles at heart and an evolving global community — those with whom we walk in vocation and those we serve in ministry — in mind, FSPA has undertaken a profound discernment of this mission. What emerged is a carefully-crafted new model of formation that renews and reimagines the promises of both Unity and Diversity #11 and FSPA's commitment to serving our brothers and sisters while living modern lives.

This vocation transformation will be carried out by a collaboration of members to be known as the FSPA Formation Team. It is framed by the understanding of formation in three phases: discerning, entering and dedicating. In the discernment phase, Sisters Jacinta Jackson and Julia Walsh will accompany women discerning a call to religious life from initial inquiry with FSPA through what has been known as the associate phase (now called the candidate phase). Ministers to women experiencing what is now the entering phase

(including novitiate and temporary vows) are Sisters Corrina Thomas, Karen Lueck and Katie Mitchell. The third phase, the dedicating phase, is focused on lifelong formation and will be coordinated by Sisters Kathy Roberg and Paulynn Instenes.

In reflection on the question "What do we envision for the future of FSPA, and what do we hope FSPA membership will look like?" Sisters Corrina and Katie offer this response: "We are hopeful that our congregation continues to reach out in 'encuentro' (which translates to 'encounter' in English) to all people and that we will mirror the diversity of the Church and the world in all its richness. We desire to faithfully accompany and journey into the future with our new FSPA members, working in partnerships and collaboration, as together we build a culture of encounter and the kin-dom of God."

The FSPA Formation Team appreciates your prayers, support and participation as they enter into a new vision of Unity and Diversity 11.

## Then

## Now

### FSPA Membership Office and Incorporation Team

We thank Sister Amy Taylor and Sister Beth Saner for sharing their gifts!

### FSPA Formation Team

Sisters Julia Walsh and Jacinta Jackson  
Co-ministers with Discerners and Candidates

Sisters Karen Lueck, Katie Mitchell and Corrina Thomas  
Co-ministers with Novices through Final Vow Profession

Sisters Kathy Roberg and Paulynn Instenes  
Co-ministers with all FSPA through lifelong formation

### Associate Phase

### Candidate Phase

A move to adopt modern language as a way to describe the phase as “candidate for novitiate.”

### Age of a potential discerner with FSPA

21-45 years old

### Age of a potential discerner with FSPA

21-50 years old

### Show me a Sign

### Join Us

A monthly e-newsletter for discerners

### Messy Jesus Business

A blog and podcast to engage a wide variety of audiences, including discerners

[membership@fspa.org](mailto:membership@fspa.org)

[discerning@fspa.org](mailto:discerning@fspa.org)

A new email address to connect potential members with Sisters Julia and Jacinta.

# Access to healthy food and white privilege

[fspa.org/content/s/access-to-healthy-food-and-white-privilege](https://fspa.org/content/s/access-to-healthy-food-and-white-privilege)

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Tim Sullivan, FSPA affiliate, hard at work in the produce department of PFC Food Co-op in Kalamazoo, Michigan

**By Tim Sullivan, affiliate**

A simple but fundamental example of white privilege is access to affordable, healthful food. The COVID-19 pandemic may have given a small glimpse of what it is like to go without what you want to buy when you want to buy it. But for the many urban and rural communities without full-service grocery stores — areas referred to as food deserts — this is the everyday reality.

If you've lived in a food desert, you may be more inclined to call the experience "food apartheid." Why? The absence of grocery stores in these communities is not happenstance but systemic racial injustice.

Sadly, our country has a long history of racial injustice. When it comes to food, one of the earliest systemic injustices impacted land ownership. After the American Civil War, the government enacted a program dubbed "[40 Acres and a Mule](#)" (the story of which was shared on NPR's "All Things Considered" on Jan. 12, 2015, at [npr.org](#)). The program was an attempt to support the efforts of African Americans working to build sustainable lives on the land.

Caucasian staff members of the United States Department of Agriculture fought Black access to this and other farm programs every step of the way. Evidence of this resulted in the landmark Pigford vs. Glickman decision, the successful class-action suit brought by North Carolinian Timothy Pigford that found the USDA guilty of widespread discrimination. As explored in the book "Dispossession: Discrimination Against African American Farmers in the Age of Civil Rights" by Pete Daniel, Judge Paul Friedman suggested that General William T. Sherman's unfulfilled promise of land during the Reconstruction era resonated with Black farmers' journeys from slavery to freedom to sharecropping to ownership and, finally, to debt and dispossession. As the Pigford decision made clear, racism had continued to circulate through federal, state, and county USDA offices.

I live in Western Iowa and am very aware of how our federal government's farm policy dictates what happens to our farmland and farm practices. Earl Butz was U.S. Secretary of Agriculture from 1971 to 1976 under presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. In his time leading the USDA, Butz drastically changed federal agricultural policy and re-engineered many New Deal-era farm support programs. His mantra to farmers was "get big or get out." These policies, combined with science and technological advancements, increased agriculture yields and made hand labor obsolete but drove 3.1 million farmers from the land.

In the quarter century after 1950, over a half million African American farms went under, leaving only 45,000. In the 1960s alone, the Black-owned farm population in 10 southern states (minus Florida, Texas and Kentucky) fell from 132,000 to 16,000 — an 88% decline. Whites also left southern farms during this decade, though the decrease was not as dramatic: 61,000 farms remained of the 145,000 in existence a decade earlier, a 58% decline.

Black land ownership is considered critical to food security in African American communities. [Black/Land Project](#) tells the stories of the impacts of Black land ownership and makes this declaration: "Black/Land creates fertile soil in which the seeds of self-determination and social change can germinate, take root and grow."

Another example of systemic racial discrimination was the 1930s practice of redlining. The 1934 National Housing Act set guidelines for bank lending for communities. The term "redlining" comes from the development of the New Deal and by the federal government's maps of every metropolitan area in the country. Those maps were color coded by the Home Owners Loan Corp. and the Federal Housing Administration and then adopted by the Veterans Administration, designating neighborhoods in which it was "safe" to insure mortgages. Predominantly African American communities were colored red to indicate to appraisers that these neighborhoods were too risky in which to insure mortgages. The

resulting disinvestment in African American communities, as reported in NPR's Fresh Air broadcast, "A 'Forgotten History' of How the U.S. Government Segregated America" on May 3, 2017, led to less Black home ownership and Black wealth, to more white flight and an exodus by businesses, including grocery stores, to the suburbs.

In a 2018 study funded by Reinvestment Fund, an organization "reimagining neighborhood revitalization by combining expertise, analysis and creative approaches to investing with a social purpose," found that while healthy food access had improved, 17.6 million people were still experiencing food insecurity. In recent years, there has been a movement in food apartheid communities to improve access by organizing food cooperatives. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a few of these start-up food co-ops. We estimate that there are currently more than 25 communities around the country working to start food co-ops or other types of food stores to address healthy food access. Two examples include Gem City Market, located in Dayton, Ohio, and Louisville Community Grocery in Louisville, Kentucky.

I frequently hear my white friends and family struggle with the concept of white privilege. One of the common comments I hear is, "I worked my way up, and so can everyone else."

But access to healthy food is just one white privilege born from systemic injustices that "working your way up" does not resolve.

# Finding 'great hope' in "Fratelli Tutti"

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 [fspa.org/content/s/finding-great-hope-in-fratelli-tutti](https://fspa.org/content/s/finding-great-hope-in-fratelli-tutti)

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St. Francis of Assisi challenged injustices of war, culture and religion in the time of the Crusades and counseled his brothers and sisters to live together in nonviolence, acceptance and fraternity. Now, in a humanity overwhelmed by inequity of every kind, Pope Francis calls us in "Fratelli Tutti" to again follow our patron saint's lead.

There is much to consider in the pope's third encyclical letter, published in October 2020. We offer these reflections as invitation to "Fratelli Tutti" contemplation and conversation.

## **Sister Laura Nettles**

Our Christian identity and Franciscan charism remind us that we are all inextricably linked to one another — that we are all brothers and sisters. But how do we authentically encounter each other when there are so many physical, ideological, intellectual and emotional barriers?

This is the question that is at the heart of Pope Francis' "Fratelli Tutti." Despite the numerous challenges to our fraternal humanity, the Pontiff invites us to reimagine a better, more just world that recognizes, through word and deed, our connection to each other.

But we can only do that when we reach out with unselfish and unconditional love. This love moves us beyond our limitations and invites us to see the humanity in each other while helping to mend our world and ourselves. This, for Pope Francis, is truly "love in action."



ENCYCLICAL LETTER

# FRATELLI TUTTI

Of the Holy Father Francis  
On fraternity and social friendship

## WHAT IS IT?



The third encyclical of Pope Francis, after *Lumen fidei* (2013) and *Laudato si'* (2015).



It was signed on October 3, 2020, in Assisi, Italy.

## ON WHAT IS IT BASED?



- ▶ Questions about fraternity and social friendship that have concerned the Pope in recent years.
- ▶ Themes put forward in the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, which the Pope signed jointly with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb in February 2019.

## WHAT DOES IT PROPOSE?



- ▶ It is a social encyclical dedicated to fraternity and social friendship.
- ▶ It treats the universal dimension of the doctrine of fraternal love.
- ▶ Its aim is to put forth a new vision of fraternity and social friendship.]
- ▶ It encourages us to dream as a single human family and as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh.

## TO WHOM IS IT ADDRESSED?



To all persons who will accept this reflection an invitation to dialogue.

## WHERE DOES THE TITLE COME FROM?



- ▶ *Fratelli tutti* is an expression of Saint Francis of Assisi (Admonitions, 6, 1).
- ▶ The saint used the expression to propose a way of life marked by the flavor of the Gospel.
- ▶ Saint Francis invites all men and women to a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance.

## HOW IS THE ENCYCLICAL ORGANIZED?

- ▶ *Fratelli tutti* consists of a general introduction and 8 chapters.

**Introduction**

**Chapter I:** DARK CLOUDS OVER A CLOSED WORLD

**Chapter II:** A STRANGER ON THE ROAD

**Chapter III:** ENVISAGING AND ENGENDERING AN OPEN WORLD

**Chapter IV:** A HEART OPEN TO THE WHOLE WORLD

**Chapter V:** A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS

**Chapter VI:** DIALOGUE AND FRIENDSHIP IN SOCIETY

**Chapter VII:** PATHS OF RENEWED ENCOUNTER



**ECUMENICAL CHRISTIAN PRAYER**

“Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty, reflected in all the peoples of the earth, so that we may discover a new that all are important and all are necessary, different faces of the one humanity that God so loves.”

Amén

### **Sister Sarah Hennessey**

"Fratelli Tutti" gives me great hope. As a keen observer of the global pulse, Pope Francis deftly diagnoses our current woes and charts a path of not only dreams but of concrete actions. The answer for Francis is love. "Charity is capable of building a new world" (183). Love works to change the conditions that cause suffering (186) and seeks to make the oppressor end his oppression (241). And he boldly declares "the adoption of a culture of dialogue as a path; mutual cooperation as a code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard" (285). I have hope for a real way forward for the world.

### **Affiliate Emily Crook**

In an age where the voices of our leaders are engaged in the shouting of demands and fake news, here comes Father Francis, quietly stating the truth we feel in our hearts all along. From someone who is working with society in ways that leech the heart, it's so beautifully comforting to witness a leader who knows what's going on and who has the beautiful message of gritty hope so desperately needed.

### **"Fratelli Tutti" study guide**

Now available at [fspa.org](http://fspa.org): "Fratelli Tutti" Study Guide, prepared by Sister of St. Francis of the Providence of God Margaret Carney and Father Pat McCloskey, member of the Order of Friars Minor, and their team of collaborators. Sister Margaret and Father Pat invite you to use this study guide with small or large groups and for personal reflection. Also available on the [resource page](#) is a link to the full encyclical.

# Hope for the world radiates from Villa St. Joseph

[fspa.org/content/s/hope-for-the-world-radiates-from-villa-st-joseph](https://fspa.org/content/s/hope-for-the-world-radiates-from-villa-st-joseph)

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This fall the sisters residing at Villa St. Joseph were led in a virtual retreat by Sister Joann Gehling. The theme was "Active Hope, a very timely and encouraging focus," says Vicki Lopez-Kaley, a member of the Villa Spiritual Life Team who helped to facilitate the retreat. "The gift of hope was renewed as the participants explored gratitude, held suffering and began to see with new eyes." As the retreat ended, sisters were invited to compose a message of hope for the world that could be shared with others. "We all know that their wisdom as elders of the community is inspiring."

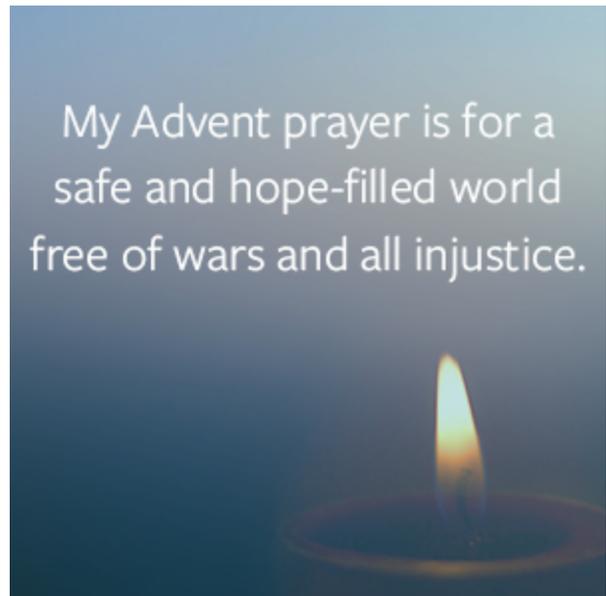
"Hope has a contagious ripple effect," says Vicki, "and we are grateful to the sisters who have shared how the Spirit inspires and comforts all who seek God."

Several retreatants chose to write a reflection or poem that expresses active hope in their lives. Presence is thankful to share and celebrate their sentiments with you.

We often spend Advent waiting for Him whose coming brings us to His Father. We learn about the Kingdom and that He has a mansion there for us. Sometimes hope seems an endless wait ... Hope continues and sometimes wanes. Faith brings it up as we venture forward to our goal.

We need to Hope! Dear Lord, give me the Hope I need each day to be a Christ-like person in our world today. To help feed the many hungry souls, to clothe the naked and cure the sick and suffering, to care for the poor. To be a Beatitude person, to comfort those who mourn, to be merciful and a peacemaker, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to help keep the action of Hope alive in our everyday lives and in the world.

In Psalm 33 we read, "May your faithful love be upon us, oh God, as we place our hope in you." Our hope in God comes alive, is nurtured and is evident in our love and care for one another. Hope is expressed in words of encouragement, kind actions, mindful living and loving presence. In living this way, we send out positive hope-filled energy to all the world for the good of all people everywhere.



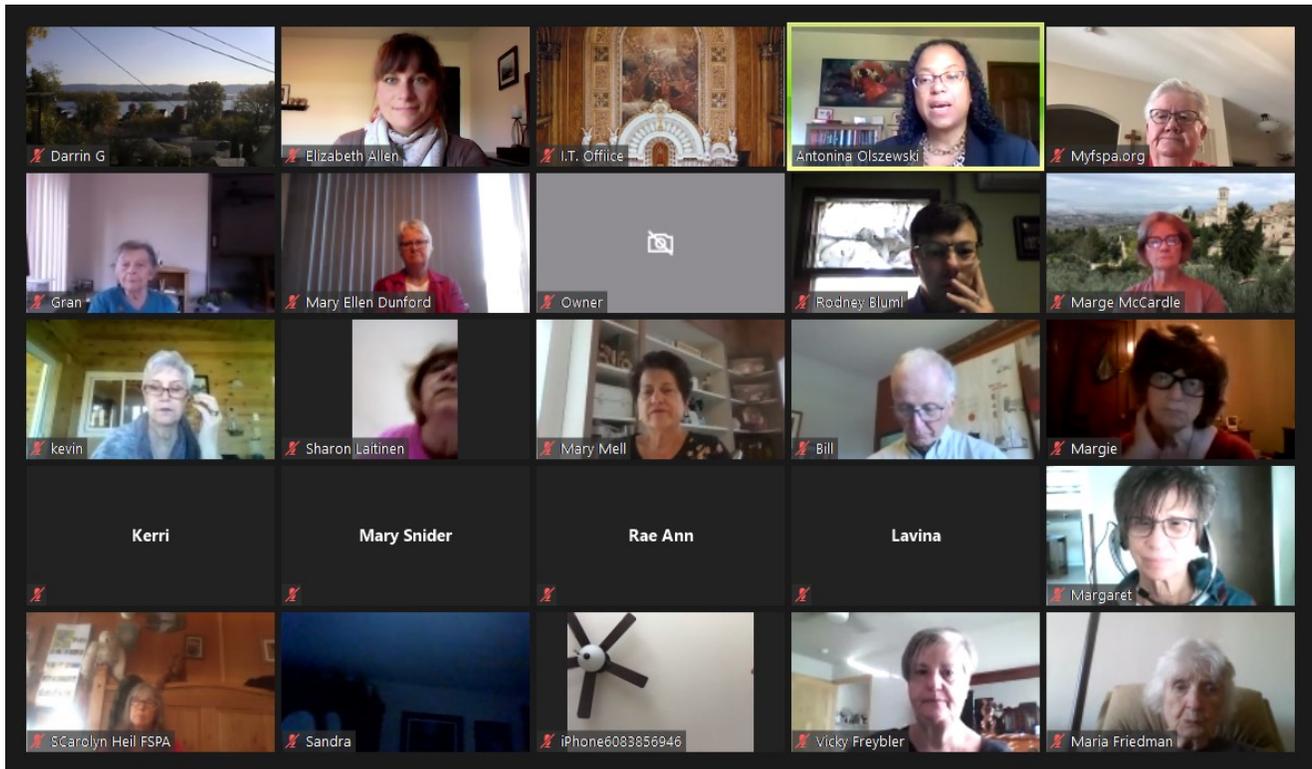
Heart of the stars,  
I bring to the day  
A smile to each one I meet  
To open in a personal way.  
God looks down and  
smiles to me.  
Thank you, God, for the gift  
of Hope.

# FSPA sisters and affiliates embrace virtual fall gathering

[fspa.org/content/s/fspa-sisters-and-affiliates-embrace-virtual-fall-gathering](https://fspa.org/content/s/fspa-sisters-and-affiliates-embrace-virtual-fall-gathering)

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## By Beth Allen, director of affiliation

Antonina Olszewski, director of Ascension Health Wisconsin's spiritual services, presented "Embracing Humility: Encountering the 'Other'" at the first-ever FSPA Virtual Affiliation Fall Gathering on Oct. 10.

The objectives of Antonina's presentation included establishing a shared understanding of and responses to stereotypes, biases and microaggressions as well as "next steps" for expanding inclusivity in one's social circle.

Numerous sisters and affiliates reached out to me after the event to express gratitude for the opportunity to celebrate FSPA affiliation virtually (which made attendance easier for some), the "compelling speaker" and "thought-provoking presentation."

Several attendees dug even deeper into their own experience and share their thoughts here.

**Madalene Buelow, affiliate**

Hope, light and joy ... words that Antonina Olszewski chose to use as she presented "Embracing Humility: Encountering the 'Other'" at our fall affiliation gathering. I was impressed with those words. It's been hard since March to even believe in them due to the pandemic and the social unrest in our country.

Antonina has hope that by sharing our stories and looking into ourselves we can uncover our biases and begin to shed light on them, that we can become more joyful and less fearful of the "other."

Before the presentation, I did take a look at myself and wondered about the internal/personal biases I hold. Immediately I thought of my bias against the improper use of our English language and how it affects my relationship with people. Interestingly enough, Antonina has the same bias and shared that it is coming to grips with our personal stories, our family stories, that guides us in understanding our biases. She identified mine as "classist." I get that. My work is to figure out why this bias affects me and how a deeper relationship with a person might help me mitigate the bias. Knowing why and how a person may be different from me makes the difference. Aha!

It all goes back to how important building relationships with people is. Such a Franciscan way of thought. We as affiliates have known this all along, but do we practice it outside our familiar community? It's time to practice it with the "other." Antonina closed with three more words: pray, learn and engage. My prayer is that we continue this journey of inclusion, equity and justice with prayer, learning about ourselves and others and engaging in the important conversations.

I am ever grateful for the 15 years I have been affiliated with the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Peace and all good!

**Mary Ellen Dunford, affiliate**

I appreciated the speaker and the topic for the fall gathering. Antonia Olszewski was genuine with a calm and gentle presence. The topic was relevant and essential for our current times. I thought the program aligned with FSPA values and mission with an emphasis on the attitude of humility, respect and hospitality toward others. We were invited to "give grace" to others who disagree with us or commit microaggressions against us. In order to embrace humility, it is necessary to understand the other's story and history. Giving grace allows this to happen.

The presentation invited me to pause and evaluate my own stereotypes, biases and microaggressions. I am now very aware of the microaggressions against individuals and groups who share differing political views on social media. Much of this comes from friends and relatives as well as the media and advertisements. It was helpful to identify these posts and tweets for what they are and to curb my temptation to counter with my own microaggressions rather than to "give grace." With the quote from Mathew 23:26, "clean our

own dish, before others ...," I am reminded to challenge my own biases and stereotypes before I judge others. "Giving grace" to others will be the first step I take as I invite others into an open and honest conversation to understand our differences.

My thanks to Beth Allen for choosing this timely topic and wonderful speaker!

**Sister Lucy Slinger**

WOW! Antonina Olszewski is truly an outstanding teacher on the behaviors of stereotyping, bias and microaggression. each playing a part in our daily actions. I hope that everyone who believes in the dignity and goodness of every other person takes the time to watch her insightful presentation about reframing the way we move through life by embracing cultural humility. The questions she asked us to reflect on led us to the heartfelt desire to be different and invite us to the "social friendship" that Pope Francis calls us to in "Fratelli Tutti," his latest encyclical.

**Editor's Note:** All sisters and affiliates are invited to view Antonina's presentation, available on the sister and affiliate intranet, [my.fspa.org](http://my.fspa.org).