



# A Call to Prophetic Creativity

Presented by: Sr. Agnes Marie Regan, OSF



May the Lord  
give you peace!

# Prophetic Creativity: "Rebuild"

Pope Francis spoke about the **need for prophecy in the church** today, saying "prophecy is born whenever we allow ourselves to be challenged by God, not when we are concerned to keep everything quiet and under control. When the **Gospel overturns** certainties, prophecy arises. **Only someone who is open to God's surprises can become a prophet.**"

Francis added that "**we need lives that manifest the miracle of the love of God.** Not forcefulness, but forthrightness. Not palaver, but prayer. Not speeches, but service. You want a prophetic church? **Then begin to serve and stop talking. Not theory, but testimony.**"

Moreover, he said, "We do not need to become rich, but rather to love the poor. We are not to **save up for ourselves, but to spend ourselves** for others, not to seek the approval of the world...We need pastors **[Franciscans]** who offer their lives" like Peter and Paul. **What they did "was prophecy. And it changed history** (America Magazine, June 2020)."



“[Service] is not limited to “bureaucratic issues”  
not to the execution of the “guidelines” of the  
Council of the high level, but requires

## Prophetic Creativity

for the realization of the Secular Franciscan  
life, both as individuals and as Fraternity,  
consistent with the **Gospel** and the  
**Magisterium** of the Church (Instrumentum  
Laboris, p.5, 2021).”



Tibor Kauser, OFS, Minister General of the Secular Franciscan Order, and General Council



# A Call to Prophetic Creativity

“Our God is the God of Surprises”

- Pope Francis

Summary: Message of Jan Parker, OFS, National Minister



St. Clare: "Let us be filled with a remarkable happiness and a spiritual joy."

Hope is bold!

"It is an exciting time for Franciscans as, one after another, God's gifts to the Franciscan Order *just keep coming . . . three . . .*"

# The three gifts . . .



“Instrumentum Laboris”  
CIOFS Presidency



“Fratelli tutti”  
His Holiness Pope Francis



Christmas Letter  
Ministers General

. . . God is continuing to chart our course.

“God’s purpose in sending us  
these three documents . . .

# Prophetic Creativity

. . . I believe God is calling us to focus our **prayer** and **energy** in  
this direction.”

“I firmly believe that, based on the experience of the first 40 years, the future of formation in the Order must be oriented toward **BEING**. Only by **DOING**, without **BEING**, the Order will not mature, and gradually regress to a simple and tired routine.”

Encarnacion del Pozo, OFS,  
General Minister,  
Rome, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2019



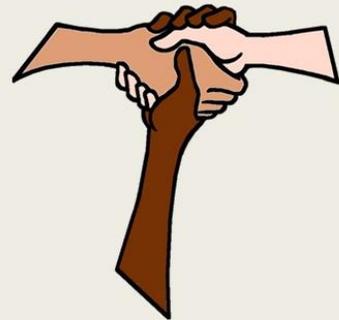
**Taking Stock in 2021**

**CIOFS:  
Instrumentum  
Laboris**

**FRATERNITY: SPECIAL  
INGREDIENTS**

The diagram shows five rectangular boxes: 'Community' and 'Communication' at the top; 'Collaboration' and 'Commitment' at the bottom; and 'Conversion' at the very bottom. A red heart is positioned in the center, overlapping the 'Collaboration' and 'Commitment' boxes, with the text 'Formation and Prayer Life' written inside it.

**FRATELLI TUTTI**



- ▶ That challenge to all of us is exactly what we read in the **INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS** :
- ▶ [Service] “ . . . is not limited to “bureaucratic issues” nor to the execution of the “guidelines “ of the Council of the higher level, but requires **“prophetic creativity”** for the realization of the Secular Franciscan life, both as individuals and as Fraternity, consistent with the Gospel and the Magisterium of the Church (Instrumentum Laboris page 5).”



# What is PROPHETIC CREATIVITY?

- ▶ To see as God sees with spiritual eyes– and then to act, allowing God’s grace to strengthen us to do his will
- ▶ It is innovative action taken in response to the Holy Spirit working with and within us
- ▶ Example of Pope Francis: uses “create” no less than 44 times
- ▶ **GENERAL MINISTERS: CONVERSION** impossible without motivation and change
- ▶ It directs us to look at Jesus . . . and to Francis for our examples

# THOUGHT QUESTIONS



“ . . . To be a faithful witness and instrument of the (Church’s) mission among all people (**Ritual** p. 25).”

- ▶ If we follow in the footsteps of St. Francis, how can we not do that and still be faithful to what we promised?

# PROPHETIC CREATIVITY

**Servant  
Leadership**  
That means  
ALL of us!

Animate

Guide

**NOT** limited to administration  
and bureaucracy

**MOST IMPORTANTLY** focused on  
the **HEART** of our call . . .

**Living the Gospel of Our  
Lord Jesus Christ**

**HOW?**

# INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS:



1. Seek new ways to help development of fraternities – both new ones and by infusing life into older ones
2. Seek new ways to help the development of the spiritual life of the sisters and brothers: they're hungry for a deeper relationship with God and a broader understanding of their Franciscan calling
3. Being open to and responding to the voice of the **Holy Spirit** along with the signs of the times.



# THOUGHT QUESTION

What will move our fraternities, and our Order(s) forward, so we become what the Church expects as the *Instrumentum Laboris* challenges us?

A GOOD QUESTION: does **PROPHETIC CREATIVITY** apply only to servant leaders?

## **CO-RESPONSIBILITY**

Applies to every member of the Order

*"The brothers and sisters **are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity** to which they belong and for the OFS as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world (Article 30. 1)."*

*"The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires **personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration**, in accordance with each one's situation and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity (Article 30.2)."*



# THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ▶ Co-responsibility: what is **MY** part?
- ▶ What would result **if we all responded** to the Holy Spirit's call as did Francis and Clare?



- ▶ We would grow closer to God and to each other
- ▶ We would engage more deeply in our vocation and what we have promised and there would be a re-birth of our Franciscan Order
- ▶ Our fraternities would be more alive with enthusiasm, joy, and hope



HOW can this happen?

# The three gifts . . .



“Instrumentum Laboris”

CIOFS Presidency



“Fratelli tutti”

His Holiness Pope Francis



Christmas Letter

Ministers General

God will continue to chart our course . . .

“We need to unpack them in the months ahead as a part of Ongoing Formation in local fraternities . . .”

“I believe strongly more than ever God is calling us to live a life worthy of our call, and as always, he is providing us with all we need . . .”





▶ “It is true that our God is the God of surprises. Each day carries another surprise! . . . We will never move forward if we do not have the courage **[HOPE IS BOLD]** to break the mold, for our God impels us to do the following:

▶ BE CREATIVE ABOUT THE  
FUTURE!!

- ▶ **YOU** . . . shall be called a prophet of the Most High
- ▶ for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways and
- ▶ to give knowledge of salvation to his people . . .





... to give light to those who sit in darkness ...

and guide our feet into the way of peace  
(Luke 1.76ff)."



Sarah laughed because they were "too old"



Apostles: Last Supper on Thursday, desertion on Friday



Jacob – wrestling match with God !



Jonah . . . Well, it wasn't on Carnival Cruise Line!

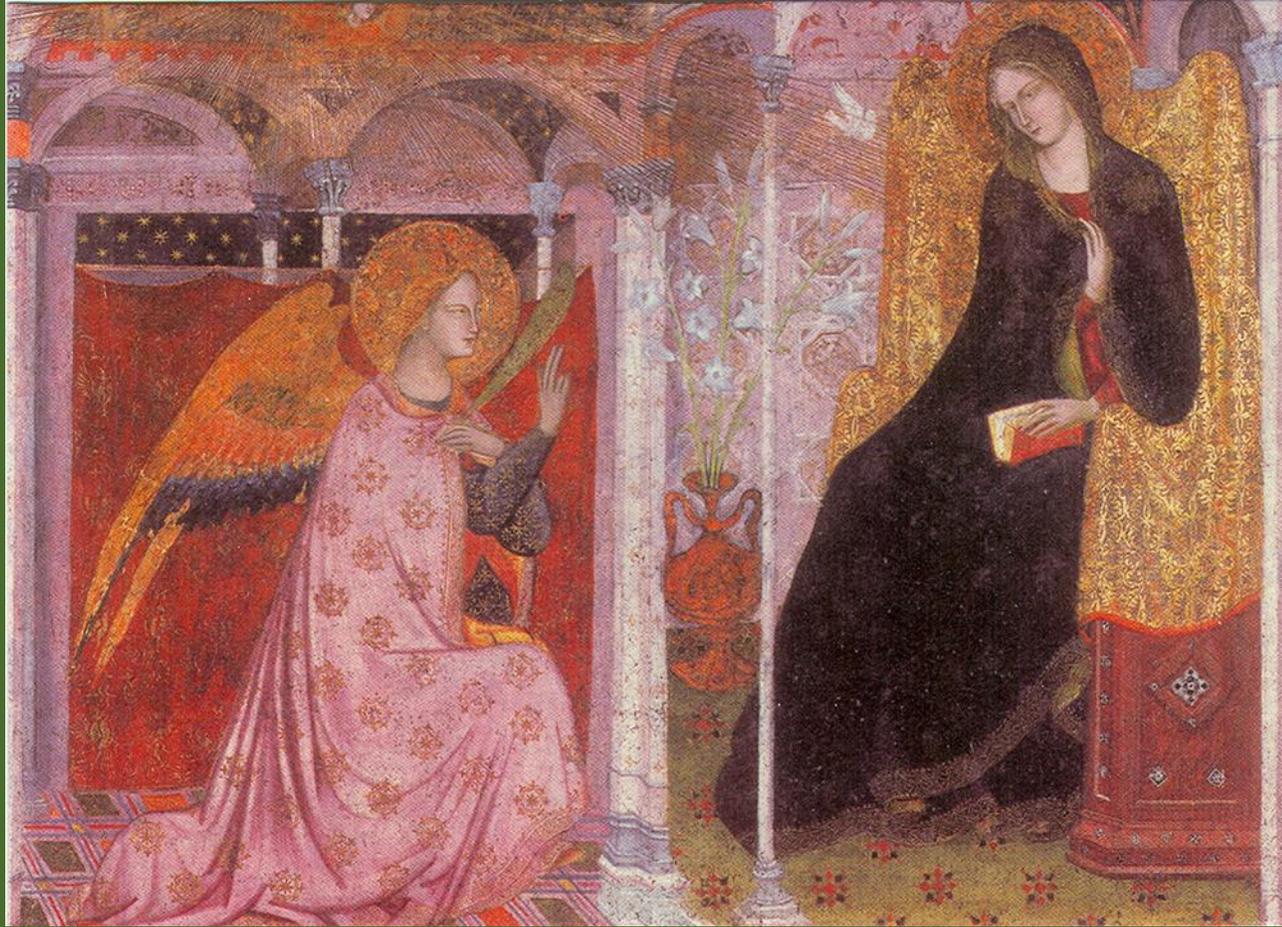


Moses said, "Send my brother."



St. Paul, "I'll kill them all."

How do you react to God's call to be a prophet . . . to rebuild?



"May it be done to me, as you say . . ."



Tibor, you're head of  
the largest religious  
Order in the world.

Where are you?

Let's answer that question later . . .



## Prophetic Creativity – we've been challenged !!!

“ . . . appreciate it as coming from St. Francis through Pope Francis, like a new musical score to be learned, practiced, and performed as part of the great composition of history (IL, p. 2).”

Be Creative about  
the Future!

- ▶ Renaissance
- ▶ Rebirth
- ▶ Re-found
- ▶ New Pentecost
- ▶ Renewal
- ▶ Rebuild
- ▶ Identity
- ▶ Contemplation
- ▶ Telling Our (my)Story
- ▶ Etc.

# From the RULE . . .

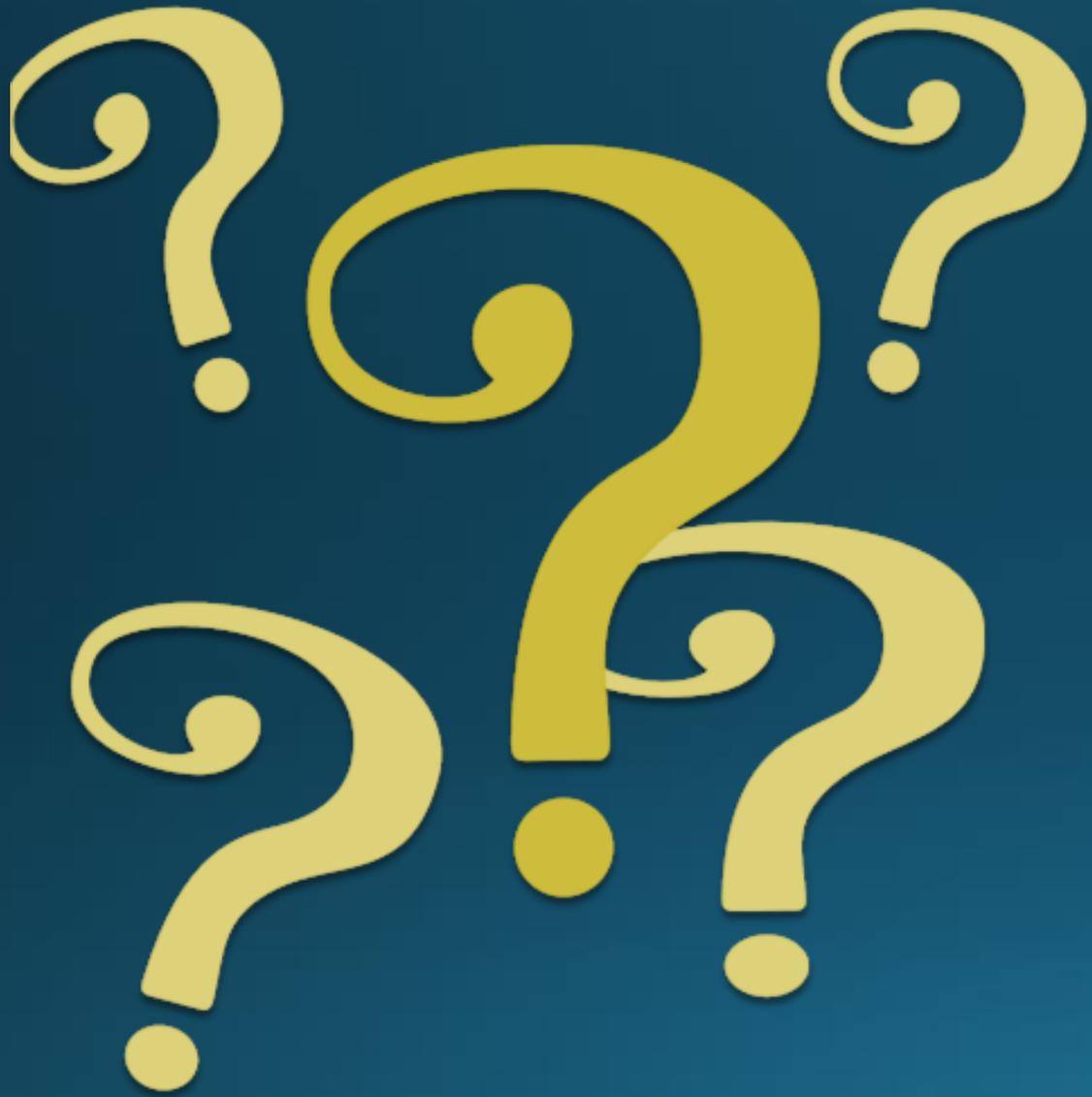
6. “They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. **Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically** to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of **apostolic effectiveness and creativity.**”

“Why do we in the Church today constantly stare only at the decreasing numbers instead of **JOYFULLY** and **CREATIVELY** doing what is possible with the sisters and brothers who are there? . . . I am convinced that the future of the Gospel does not depend on numbers.

The Gospel unfolds its power where people honestly commit their lives to the message of Jesus.”

--Cornelius Bohl, OFM





Where  
are  
YOU?

Here we are!



Send us, the living stones!

# Questions for Discussion and Discernment

Where do you see **PROPHETIC CREATIVITY** being most needed in our Order?

How have you applied it in the past?

How could you apply it now in your Fraternity and in your Region that they might be "... **visible signs of the Church, a community of faith and love** (Ritual, p. 22)

What could be YOUR part in doing it? "**YOU . . . shall be the prophet of the Most High . . .**"

How can we motivate our brothers and sisters to be **prophetically creative** about rebuilding and renewing our Order ?

## Acknowledgements:

1. Letter of National Minister, Jan Parker, OFS, "A Call to Prophetic Creativity" in TAU Magazine, Winter 2021
2. "Christmas Letter from the Franciscan Ministers General", Christmas 2020,
3. Links to Reading Materials (Courtesy of Tim Short, OFS, Regional Formation Director, Our Lady of Indiana): <https://ofsongoing.com/2021/03/08/a-call-to-prophetic-creativity/>

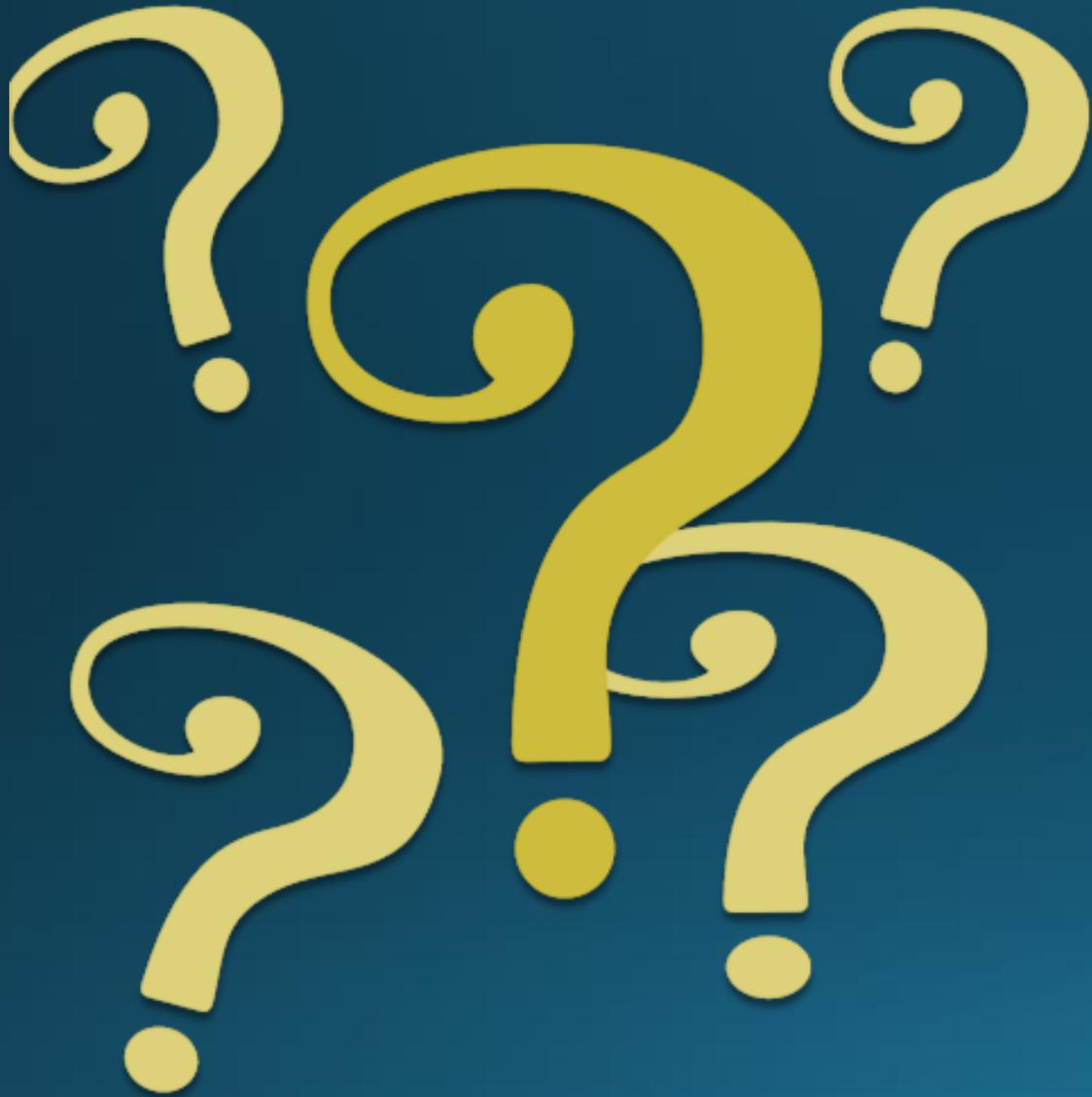
Also see: [www.ofsongoing.com](http://www.ofsongoing.com)

4. Summary of Letter and Power Point presentation: Sr. Agnes Marie Regan, OSF, Regional Spiritual Assistant, Our Lady of Indiana.
5. Best attempts have been made to indicate sources of images with credit given. If there are any omissions, this author is more than willing to make necessary corrections in this nonprofit educational work.



May the Lord  
give you peace!





# Discussion Questions for Discernment

Making PROPHETIC  
CREATIVITY concrete action

Questions to ponder at  
another time . . .

1. "The function of servant leaders.....is not limited to administration or bureaucracy but, most importantly, applies to.....the full realization of the Secular Franciscan life....."

"This goes beyond the "day to day" running of the fraternity. We should always seek new ways that help the development of the.....spiritual life of the sisters and brothers."

How can we help " . . . the development of the spiritual life of the sisters and brothers" at all levels of the fraternity?

"What future world do we wish to hand to those who will come after us(CL, p.3)"

What specific gifts can we offer them? How would they like to be gifted toward a deeper spiritual life? " "What will its values, lifestyle and thought look like?(CL, p.3)"

2 "What is *prophetic creativity*? .....  
It is innovative action we take in response to the Holy Spirit working within us."

"This "full realization" is the renewal we long for."

Would you agree that *prophetic creativity* requires personal interaction to bear fruit?

What specific ways might we an Order be more responsive to the voice of the Holy Spirit? How might we be more proactive in limiting the effects of *competitive* voices from our surrounding culture?

"Our hearts are restless until . . ." and our Franciscan hearts are also restless. Identify specific ways we as an Order can bring about the renewal we long for. "Where can we learn the notes of this new piece of music?(CL)."

Are you open to “breaking molds”  
order to better serve your members?

Being creative is not easy. Not everyone is gifted in that area. If you are a leader, but you are not sure how to implement *prophetic creativity*, dialogue with your brothers and sisters to find some common ground and innovative ideas.

If you are willing to engage in “a season of *prophetic creativity*,” brainstorm with your brothers and sisters a list of possibilities –don’t be afraid to list what seems to be impossible and incredulous. **Don’t forget: HOPE IS BOLD!**

3) In the quote at the end of the article, Pope Francis says this: “We will never move forward if we do not have the courage to break the molds, for our God impels us to do the following: *to be creative about the future.*”

# Secular Franciscan Rule

- where “the Holy Spirit leads us” (4)
- “going forth as witnesses and instruments . . .” (6)
- “united . . .” and “motivated by the dynamic power of the Gospel”(7)
- “by means of that radical interior change . . .”(7)
- In “prayer and contemplation” (7)
- “going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel (10-12)
- “selfless service”(14)
- “promoting justice be the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives: (15)
- “mindful that they are bearers of peace”(19)
- “messengers of perfect joy(19)