

Interview with Doug Clorey OFS, President of the IBD, May 2012

1. What is your background and previous involvement with the Franciscan Family and FI?

I have extensive experience in both the public and private sectors, having been a teacher, an information technology professional and a public service manager in areas such as disability pensions and health care. I became a Secular Franciscan in 1987 and have served as Minister of my local fraternity, as well as National Minister of Canada (3 years), International Councillor for Canada (6 years), Presidency Councillor for English-speaking Nations of Europe and North America (6 years) and, since 2008, I have served the Secular Franciscan Order as its Vice-Minister General. In March, 2009, I was appointed to the Board of Directors of Franciscans International and, subsequently, as the Vice-President of the Board. After a three year term, in March 2012, I was reappointed to the Board and, subsequently, elected as its President.

2. What drew you to the work of FI?

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order challenges me, along with all Secular Franciscans, to be active and engaged in building "a more fraternal and evangelical world", and calls each of us to be in the forefront of promoting justice by the testimony of our lives and through our courageous initiatives. For me, Franciscans International is one of these "courageous initiatives" which allows us to influence the building of a more fraternal and evangelical world. As a Franciscan Family, we are very fortunate to have an organization that can intervene at the United Nations, with the "rulers of the people", as St. Francis would say, and that allows the voice of the vulnerable to be heard, including the voice of our wounded earth. Isn't it wonderful to support an organization that envisions a global community, built on Franciscan values, in which the dignity of every person is respected; resources are shared equitably; the environment is sustained; and nations and peoples live in peace!

3. Why do you think human rights advocacy at the UN is so important?

Most of us would like to live in a world that respects our individual and collective freedoms, treats us with justice and promotes the building of a peaceful society. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly points out in its Preamble, this kind of world can only be built on a foundation that recognizes the dignity and the equal rights of all the members of the human family. So, if we want to build this kind of world, then we must put our energies into ensuring that the dignity of all people, and their rights, are recognized, respected and protected. We know that, in many parts of the world, this is not the case and, unfortunately, nations often choose to allow violations of human rights to go unchallenged. Sometimes, the only challenge to these violations comes from other nations and organizations at the United Nations. Therefore, the work of Franciscans International at the United Nations in advocating for human rights throughout the global community is an important cornerstone of building a more fraternal and evangelical world.

4. What are the key objectives for this IBD in the coming three years?

In responding to this question, it is important to reflect on the role of the International Board of Directors (IBD) within the broader context of the role of the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF). The Conference of the Franciscan Family, which represents the entire Franciscan Family, is responsible for ensuring that the purpose of FI is maintained in conformity with its Vision and Mission. Under this umbrella, the International Board of Directors, appointed by the CFF, is responsible for providing the oversight necessary to ensure that the Franciscan Family's objectives regarding FI are met. At the end of the day, the primary objective of the IBD is to ensure that Franciscans International continues to bring the voice of the Franciscan Family to the United Nations in order to protect the vulnerable, the forgotten and our wounded earth. There are many challenges to meeting this objective, not the least of which are financial challenges. However, the Board is composed of Franciscans from across the world, including a representative of the Anglican Franciscan community, who are all committed to ensuring that the Vision and Mission of FI is maintained during their term of office and beyond. We look forward to building on the work that previous Boards have undertaken, including the outgoing Board of Directors led by its President, Fr. John Doctor, OFM. We also look forward to working with Sr. Denise Boyle, Executive Director of FI, along with her capable operational staff.