

## Brotherhood

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*Jesus Christ, the first born of many brothers, fashions a true brotherhood out of the human race. He is present as the bond of unity in the midst of those who gather in his name. (Constitutions of the Capuchin Friars Minor)*

Francis of Assisi recognized that everyone was a brother (or sister) to him. When others choose to follow his Gospel way of life he proclaims, “And the Lord gave me brothers.”

We are told that St. Francis was an only child. Yet he learned to be a brother to all of creation, especially, to those who were considered “*minores*,” “lesser” in his day and age. This class of people were those who did not possess the means, materially or intellectually, to have some form of “status” in society. They fell into the categories of the uneducated, poor, and social outcasts (due to their health or ethnicity.) It was to these people that Francis gravitated for the following reason.

If Jesus, incarnated in humanity, was “*the first born of many brothers*,” then all of creation was related to him and to one another. Franciscan brotherhood is necessarily linked in a general way first to Jesus Christ as “the bond of our unity,” and then specifically, to minority – to the diverse members of our population who find themselves without “status or voice.” It comes from a conversion of the heart – prayer, and then ultimately experienced through human interaction with one of God’s chosen ones – a “lesser one.”

It was from the “Last Judgment” of the Gospel of St. Matthew that St. Francis found his calling to live the Gospel Life, “Whatever you do to the **least** of my brothers (and sisters), you do to Me.” This sense of universal brotherhood came after his own conversion, initially from hearing the words of Jesus from the cross in the church of San Damiano, (“Francis, rebuild my church which is falling into ruins.”) and then experientially, when he embraced the leper on the road.

This call to universal brotherhood comes through prayer and action. When we put prayer into action, through Christian Service, we grow in the experience of our oneness with all of humanity. In this we learn that we are all “lesser brothers” who have been loved and kept in existence by the Jesus Christ.

Our Mission Statement of St. Francis High School reads, “We create a family environment for young men of diverse backgrounds and their families.”

It is our hope that our student population and their families continue to reflect a diversity that speaks to our unity as brothers (and sisters), with a greater understanding that we must reach out to those in greatest need – the “*minores*” on the streets of our society. Then we will truly grow in humility because we will realize that we are all one.

