

SHARING
GOD'S LOVE
in the spirit of
ST. FRANCIS

 **franciscan media**[®]
Live in love. Grow in faith.

2020 Annual
Impact Report



*Make me an
instrument of
your peace.*

Letter from our publisher

2020 tested our mettle.

When the country went into lockdown in March because of COVID-19, Franciscan Media was forced to rethink how we perform our jobs, how we minister to our audience, and how we engage with one another. We followed the example of our founder, St. Francis of Assisi, who longed to be an instrument of peace.

In March, a small group gathered to assess the needs of our audience considering the pandemic. We quickly realized that our audience was in need of hope. This ad hoc group of marketers and content creators sent three messages a week to our entire audience for the first few months of the lockdown.

We wanted to share with them what we already knew: The Franciscan spirit heals. Where there is division, the Franciscan spirit unites. Where there is despair, the Franciscan spirit provides hope. Our audience of subscribers, customers, and donors engage with our materials because they understand the power of this charism.

Whether it is a daily resource, such as *Saint of the Day* or *Pause+Pray*, a time-tested monthly publication, or one of many books we lovingly produce, we are honored to provide materials—in various formats—that soothe the wearied hearts of our audience, our family.

It brings us such joy when we hear from people such as Pascual from Dewitt, Iowa, who lets us know that we “are proclaiming the Gospel in your ministry like a beacon to show the way when all we see is darkness. May God bless the work of your hands and send forth a bountiful harvest.”

Messages such as that remind us that we are succeeding in our mission to spread the Gospel in the spirit of St. Francis. He would be pleased.



Fr. Dan Kroger, OFM
Publisher

Letter from our president

Dear Friends,

Peace be with you!

At the beginning of 2020, we had a solid strategic plan to help us accompany ever more people on their faith journey. But then COVID-19 hit. Navigating an unprecedented global pandemic was not in our plans.

Suddenly, within a few days in early March, we had to shift to operating our far-reaching ministry virtually. We worked to create new content to support the emotional health of our audiences and the extraordinary challenges we were all facing. We adjusted marketing strategies when we recognized the disruption of several of our distribution channels, some of which are still closed.

Our small team of 24 people focused on the work that God has given us to do—accompany spiritual pilgrims through an extremely difficult time and help them grow closer to God; to provide light in an often-dark world. Every morning, we gathered via Zoom to pray for God to guide our work—and we still do.

I am grateful and honored to be part of this organization that sincerely cares for those we serve and has worked to provide a bit of hope amid so much suffering. As you review the information shared in this report, I think you'll be as amazed at what we were able to accomplish as I am. And your generous donations made it all possible. We pray that you will continue to partner with us to help share God's love, in the spirit of St. Francis.

Peace and Every Good,



Kelly McCracken
President

*Where there
is darkness,
light.*

*Where there is
sadness, joy.*

Blessings and Accomplishments in 2020

Our virtual community is our lifeblood. Despite the challenges of this year and the last, we continue to strive to bring people closer to God in the spirit of St. Francis. People are in need of hope—to feel joyful again.

In response to the pandemic, we quickly transitioned from in-person work tasks to virtual. Despite these challenges, our e-newsletters went out daily, St. Anthony Messenger was produced on time, book production continued, and we were still able to produce materials that nourished the faith lives of millions.

Whenever we can touch someone's life through something we offer, we count that as a blessing. In 2020, we delivered 28 million blessings via our electronic offerings, books, and our magazine. Those blessings are a wonderful reminder of why we do what we do and why we will continue to do it. St. Francis said to preach the Gospel using words if necessary. In his footsteps, we continue to seek out new and bold ways to spread the message of the Gospel to all we can.

Website

Last year, finding connections online became more important than ever. Our website, FranciscanMedia.org, had 8.2 million website visits during the year from people using many of our resources such as articles, videos, and e-newsletters.

In looking at our previous website, we recognized that it was a house in need of repair. After 18 months of work—in collaboration with TQI—we presented a new website in October 2020. Visitors were treated to a seamless and secure web

environment where they could enjoy our online materials.

In 2021, we will be working to launch phase two, which will add new features to invite connection, cultivate communities, and enhance engagement. This coming year will see us investing in outreaches to share God's love in the spirit of St. Francis. We will collaborate with other Franciscan organizations to develop a network to help share stories that will inspire people to embrace Franciscan Spirituality, which promotes healing, harmony and peace.

The redesign was part of "The St. Francis Project: Continuing the Mission," which will see our offerings grow over the next few years. And while the project focuses on increasing the reach and enhancing the user experience, the investment contributes to the long-term sustainability of our ministry as well.

Alexa and Google Skills

We are always looking for new ways to bring information to people in a wide variety of ways. The software tool, Alexa, is one such way. In 2020, about 350,000 people asked these devices to provide them with their daily *Saint of the Day* or *Minute Meditations*.

Videos

Our videos took on a bit of a different look this year, with many of them being recorded in people's homes. The videos, which received 1.2 million views, offered not just reflections on informative topics, but also shared stories of people—including staff—who were dealing with the reality of our COVID-19 world.

Seasonal Celebrations

During the seasons of Advent and Lent, our team put together daily e-mails to help people get the most out of these yearly celebrations. For 2020, the Advent booklet, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, guided readers through the season and was our first bilingual booklet.

Nearly 60,000 people were impacted by these two seasonal celebrations.

E-newsletters

Our wide range of e-newsletters continued to go out daily or weekly and over 17 million were read in 2020. *Saint of the Day* and *Minute Meditations* continue to be our strongest daily e-mails, but we also have our *Franciscan Spirit* blog, which features pieces on a wide variety of topics.

For families looking for help in passing on the faith to their children, we offer the *Faith and Family* e-newsletter, a weekly resource to help families prepare for that week's Sunday Mass via reflection, discussion, and activities.

Pause+Pray

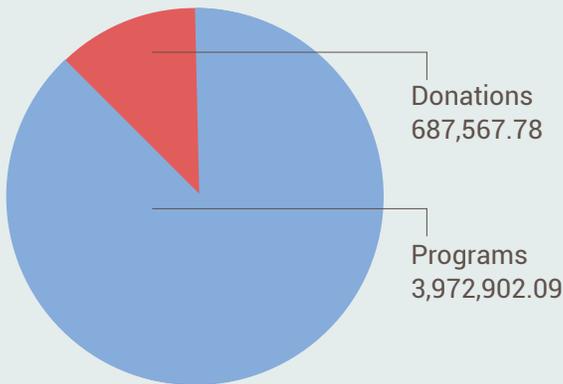
In November, we added a new daily e-newsletter to our line. *Pause+Pray* is a prayer resource that seeks to engage people in a moment of prayer, reflection, and action. Currently, 9,800 subscribers are receiving this new tool every day to help them embolden their faith.

St. Anthony Messenger

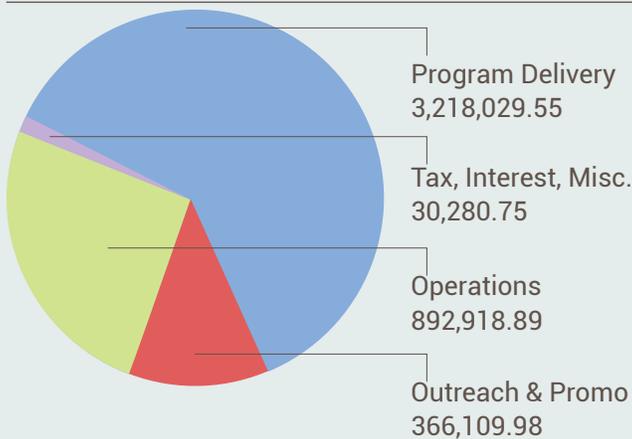
In June, our national magazine *St. Anthony Messenger* was awarded the highest honor of general excellence from the Catholic Media Association. Last year, there were 500,000 issues

Financial Report: January 1-December 31, 2020

Revenue: \$4,660,469.87



Expenses: \$4,507,339



of the magazine mailed out and shared in homes throughout the world.

The magazine took on many challenging issues, including suicide, immigration, the 2020 election, and gun control, along with a wide variety of other topics. A special issue in June/July addressed the theme "Discipleship in a Digital World."

Books and Other Products

In 2020, Franciscan Media published eight new titles: *The Wisdom Pattern* by Richard Rohr, *Radical Saints* and *Brotherhood of Saints* by Melanie Rigney, *A Retreat with Saint Anthony* by Carol Ann Morrow, *The Gift of Enough*, a guided journal by Terry Hershey, *Soul Training with the Peace Prayer of St. Francis* by Albert Haase, OFM, *Let Go* by Casey Cole, OFM, *Let Us Begin Again: A Franciscan Journal* (by our own team) and *Encountering Jesus* by Monsignor Vincenzo Peroni. In addition to these newly published books, we continued to offer our vast catalog of books on a wide range of topics. In total, we mailed out 200,000 books to our customers during the past year.

In a year where many stores were closed and in-person events were cancelled, we had to reframe how to make readers aware of our products. Through thoughtful e-mail messaging, social media, and careful advertising placement, we were able to increase visits to our own digital online store, resulting in a 40% increase in sales in that channel in 2020. We also explored different ways to provide content. Specifically, we tested a new, live format for events, partnering with the Franciscan Retreat House in Pennsylvania to offer a four-week guided meditation course via Zoom.

We also began to think differently about new product development and marketing. We created new tools and approaches to help us better

understand what our consumers desire, and how best we can fulfill those desires through our product offerings. We have enhanced our innovation processes to bring products to life in more effective, efficient ways. As a result, we reviewed and prioritized over 100 new product ideas in 2020, which helped us to fill in our pipeline for the coming years.

Staff

Despite our separation, the entire staff continued to gather for prayer each morning via Zoom. The time gave us not only an opportunity to gather and reconnect with each other, albeit virtually, but also to pray for the intentions of the 12,000 people who mailed in prayer requests during the year.

We have continued a disciplined study to deepen and nurture our education of the Franciscan charism. Each month, we gather as a staff to learn more about St. Francis, St. Clare, and what their ministry means for us and our mission as a company through our study of selected books and videos from Franciscan scholars.

The team at Franciscan Media confronted a dark and uncertain time with love and with hope. In working hard to bolster the faith lives of our audience, in turn, our own faith lives were bolstered. It is a partnership that brings us immeasurable joy—and harkens to the Peace Prayer of St. Francis...

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love.*

*For it is in giving
that we receive.*

"I especially enjoy sharing *Saint of the Day* with my students, who in turn share daily with the student body during our morning assembly time." —Teresa G., San Diego, California, United States

"With so much suffering in the world you give real hope. Thank you." —Gerard S., Chicago, Illinois, United States

"You are doing an excellent job of spreading the Gospel and supporting those who have heard them to continue on the journey! God bless always!" —Celeste S., Preveessin-Moens, France

"Thank you. There are days when I am down, and words of encouragement come from you." —Ana Y., Los Angeles, California, United States

"Franciscan Media has always been a wonderful resource and source of information, reflections, and all things Franciscan that have greatly helped me both personally and professionally. Thank you for your ministry which reaches and sustains me in southern Australia. Peace and all good." —Anne D., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

"I have subscribed to *St. Anthony Messenger* for many years. It has been a guiding force in my life and my faith! Thank you so much for your prayers and your kindnesses." —Sue L., Canyon Country, California, United States

"I enjoy reading the daily *Minute Meditations*. I'm a cradle Episcopalian, who, for many years of my adult life, didn't attend service, who has been attending the past 5-10 years. I like and respect the way I see the Franciscans take on things, especially after discovering the writings of Richard Rohr. Thanks!" —Peter M., Lanark Village, Florida, United States

