

PURPOSE
History & Memory
Knowledge

We recognize the urgency for Franciscan congregations to find permanent repositories for their archives that will safeguard the community's charism and legacy for future generations.

Services and Initiatives

- ◆ Guidance and resources concerning archives
- ◆ Assist leadership with hiring or contracting archivists
- ◆ Needs assessment and strategic planning for members and FCA
- ◆ Assist members to prepare their archives for transfer
- ◆ Seek grants and donations to assist members and reduce costs
- ◆ Enable donor development and gift campaign to support efforts
- ◆ Initiate agreements for members
- ◆ Facilitate move of members' archives to the FCA
- ◆ Promote and increase accessibility to FCA collections, bringing forth the shared Franciscan spirit

The FCA plans to open by 2033. If a community has a more immediate need to transition, interim storage options are available with on-site archivist support.

Mission: The Franciscan Central Archive (FCA) preserves, protects, and provides access to the records of its Franciscan entities for the purposes of research and knowledge through a collaborative repository that will carry the Franciscan charism and legacy into the future.



THE REALITY

The time to plan is now!

CARA's National Women Religious Archive Survey Report 2022:

Respondents that anticipate transitioning their archive to a repository most favored a charism-based archive by 42%.

Average Age of Individuals:

Under 70 = 20%
70 to 79 = 27%
80 or older = 50%

Size of Community:

More than 100 = 20%
51 to 100 = 30%
50 or fewer = 43%

When Communities Anticipate Transitioning Their Archive to a Permanent Repository:

Within the year = 3%
3-5 years = 15%
5-10 years = 21%
+10 years = 20%
Unknown = 41%

In the United States, the Franciscan Federation has 48 member congregations of the Third Order Regular brothers and sisters. There are three First Order congregations (OFMs, Conventuals, and Capuchins) and multiple Second Order Poor Clare communities.

CONNECT WITH US

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FranciscanCentralArchive.franciscanway.org/

A sustainable, charism-based collaborative repository for the combined archival collections of Franciscan entities across the United States.



Participation is open to Franciscan communities and organizations.

The **Franciscan Central Archive**

will be a physical center, following national archival standards, with a reading room, exhibition space, lecture hall, and robust virtual presence. Researchers will be able to study congregational ministries, shared vocations, and Franciscan charism across the collections. The FCA will be supported by charism-based educational programs and social engagement to ensure its members' legacies are carried into the future.

The FCA recognizes the value of processing and describing collections within their communities to document the provenance and intent, thus preserving integrity prior to moving the collections. This enables efficient access to collections so that the FCA can be responsive to its members.

Timeline

- 2017 ▪ Call to action
- 2018 ▪ Initiated the working group
- 2022 ▪ Academy of American Franciscan History grant awarded
 - Established a bank account with PNC Bank
 - Decision to join the Chicago Collaborative Archive Center
- 2023 ▪ Hired archival consultant, Veronica Buchanan
 - Needs assessment and strategic planning
 - Filed for incorporation in Illinois as a religious nonprofit
 - Applying to be listed in the Official Catholic Directory

GOALS

**Preserve
Inform & Connect
Foster Collaboration
Engage & Inspire**

Our Story: In 2017, Franciscan Federation President, Kathie Uhler, OSF, sent a letter to Third Order Regular USA leadership asking for discussion. This brought together a working group of archivists and leaders from interested communities to discern how best to ensure the future care of the congregations' archival collections and the Franciscan legacy they document through a charism-based collaborative. Those meetings led to the Franciscan Central Archive Initiative.

Starting in 2023, the FCA hired an archival consultant, Veronica Buchanan, with assistance of grant funds from the Academy of American Franciscan History to perform a needs assessment and strategic planning. We have six communities participating in this phase:

- ◆ Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity:
 - ◇ Holy Name Province, Stella Niagara, NY
 - ◇ St. Francis Province, Redwood City, CA
 - ◇ Sacred Heart Community, Denver, CO
- ◆ Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY
- ◆ Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph, Hamburg, NY
- ◆ Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Rochester, MN

The FCA is seeking additional grants to help carry out recommendations. This will include providing the communities with support to prepare their archival collections to move including processing, archival housing, and intellectual control through inventories and collection summaries. New communities will have an opportunity to have their archive collections assessed. We will be seeking grants to assist project management, communications, development, and fundraising.

The FCA has joined the Chicago Collaborative Archive Center (CCAC). The CCAC will be a collaborative archive center in downtown Chicago that offers economy of scale, shared resources, professional interaction, and will be a central repository for scholars. The facility will meet professional standards for environmental control and have an exhibition space and lecture hall. It will be within reach of multiple universities and have easy access to public transportation and airports. The CCAC Board of Directors has been in active conversation with Preservation Chicago, Dominican University, the City of Chicago, the FCA, and the Order of Franciscans Minor six USA provinces, among others. Dominican University has a library and information science program which could aid in preservation.

The CCAC is under development and plans to open within ten years. If a community has a more immediate need to transition, interim storage options are currently available with on-site archivist support in Chicago.

Next Steps

- ◆ Provide individual communities archival support defined by the needs assessment and with assistance from grant funding:
 - ◇ Collection preservation and supplies
 - ◇ Special projects
 - ◇ Contract archivist(s) or intern(s)
 - ◇ Storage needs
- ◆ Assess new members' archives
- ◆ Prepare members' archives to move their archival collections
- ◆ Meet members' needs and schedules for moving their archives
- ◆ Development and capital campaign with unified communications strategy
- ◆ Legacy planning to include an endowment fund such as a trust

Funding is dependent upon grants, donations, participating members, and fundraising. We need your help to see the FCA through the next steps. How to support:

- ◆ **Volunteer:** We are seeking assistance with grant writing, development, and fundraising.
- ◆ **Donations and Planned Giving:** We welcome support for the legacy of our communities and Franciscan charism through the preservation of our archival collections.

Partnerships and Affiliations

- ◆ Academy of American Franciscan History
- ◆ Chicago Collaborative Archive Center
- ◆ Preservation Chicago
- ◆ McGreal Center at Dominican University
- ◆ Archival Resources for Catholic Collections
- ◆ Society of American Archivists - Archivists of Religious Collections Section
- ◆ Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious

VALUES

**Responsible Stewardship
Integrity & Accountability
Professional Service
Sustainability**