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FRANCISCAN JOY SPANS GENERATIONS AT THE VATICAN

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Features



THE PRESIDENCY

The autumn meeting of the CIOFS Presidency can be described as a week of work, prayer and fraternity.

PAGES 3-15.



FRANCISCANS AT THE VATICAN

Members of the Franciscan Family gathered at the Vatican for an audience with Pope Francis to discuss plans to celebrate the 800th anniversary events in the life of St. Francis of Assisi. *COVER PHOTO*: An infant was a center of attention prior to the pope's arrival. PAGES 16-18.



YOUFRA ASSEMBLY

Participants from 23 countries converge on 3rd International Assembly held in Mexico. PAGES 21-23.

OFS IN ACTION AROUND THE GLOBE

PAGES 24-32

Southern Cone's
School for
Formators



...

Remembering
the First OFS
Minister General



...

A Meeting of
the Franciscan
Mediterranean
Fraternities

...

National
Fraternities
Hold Elective
Chapters

The CIOFS Presidency's fall meeting

by ROBERT STRONACH, OFS

The servant leaders of the CIOFS Presidency met in person Nov. 5 to 12 for their fall meeting at the Seraphicum in Rome. They began meeting Saturday evening, Nov. 5, and welcomed a new OFM Conventual general spiritual assistant, Fr. Stefan Acatrinei of Romania. He succeeds Fr. Alfred Parambakathu, whose term was up.

The evening session included fraternal sharing and was capped off by evening prayer and exposition of the eucharist.

As the sun rose Sunday morning, rays streamed through the stained glass of St. Anthony's Chapel, heralding a new day for the Presidency to rise up and begin its work anew. The multilingual mass was in Latin and

Italian; the homily spoken in Italian and English, and uplifting musical stanzas varied from Italian to Spanish to English.

"If you believe in resurrection, you cannot be paralyzed," General Spiritual Assistant Pedro Zitha, OFM, preached. "The Resurrection is the life... Live as a resurrected people. Jesus is the Resurrection. It's beautiful to live like resurrected people... Every day is an opportunity to resurrect."

He then urged the members of the Presidency "to live as a resurrected Presidency... to be there for the brothers and sisters."

Continued on next page.

'Live as resurrected people'



Fr. Pedro Zitha, OFM, urges members of the CIOFS Presidency to "live as resurrected people" at the opening mass of the fall Presidency meeting, held Sunday, Nov. 6, in the Seraphicum's smaller chapel of St. Anthony.

Photos by Robert Stronach, OFS.





Members of the CIOFS Presidency at the fall meeting wore headsets to hear translations in Italian, Spanish and English. At right is Fr. Carlos, who offered a spiritual formation session on St. Angela of Foligno.

Continued from previous page.

THE PRESIDENCY conducted business of the order for the whole week, through the following Saturday. The daily work sessions included reports on the progress of organizing and coordinating various offices (secretariats and commissions), the status of the OFS fraternities and presence in a host of countries around the world, and plans for several OFS/YouFra congresses. Each day began and ended with prayer (Mass and liturgy of the hours).

ON SUNDAY some on-going spiritual formation helped kick off the week. The formation session offered by Fr. Carlos Ginés Campos Julve, TOR, brought to life the mystical experiences of St. Angela of Foligno, an intelligent and strong-willed woman who came from a wealthy family. She lived in the late 1200s and, inspired

Continued on page 5.



CIOFS Presidency at work

Continued from page 4.

by Francis of Assisi, eventually became a Franciscan tertiary.

Saint Angela teaches us to explore our interior life to the point where it harmonizes with our exterior life, Friar Carlos noted. “She can help us link the interior with the exterior, and see our identity with the world and neighbor as if we were meeting them for the first time... She invites us to see the world with a child’s eyes... It was the way Francis saw sister water, sister earth...”

Angela put it this way: “And so with my soul’s eyes open, more can be seen than with the eyes of the

body”... seeing with clarity, fullness. Her advice was to pray, pray, pray in order to daily walk with God and deepen one’s relationship with Him.

On Monday evening, members of the CIOFS Presidency got to hear a presentation on Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, by Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. He gave his talk at the Seraphicum (in the library of the Pontifical University of St. Bonaventure, a college of theology operated by the Conventual Franciscans).

Continued on next page.

MEET THE PATRIARCH



OFS Minister General Tibor Kauser chats with Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, gave a presentation on “Fratelli Tutti” at the Seraphicum on Nov. 7.

A native of Cologno al Serio (Bergamo), Italy, the Patriarch was ordained a priest in the Order of Friars Minor (OFM) on September 15, 1990. The following month he was sent to the Holy Land and subsequently entered the service of the Custody of the Holy Land. He obtained a Licentiate in Biblical Theology at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem.



Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, discusses “Fratelli Tutti”.

He lectured Hebrew at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, was Vicar of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem for the pastoral care of Hebrew-speaking Catholics in Israel and in 1995 was responsible for the publication of the Roman Missal in Hebrew, and translated various liturgical texts in Hebrew for the Catholic Communities in Israel. He was ordained archbishop in September 2016 and appointed patriarch in October 2020.

He speaks Italian, Modern Hebrew and English.

CIOFS Presidency at work

Continued from previous page.

TUESDAY'S SUNRISE sparked another challenge by Friar Pedro to live as good servants of God because Jesus gave his all for us. That means being open to God so that He works through us. He pointed to Mother Teresa of Calcutta who claimed she wasn't anything special – but just a pencil and it is God who writes.

In addition to the spiritual inspirations coming out of daily liturgies, formation sessions helped to launch the day's work. For example, Councilor and Legal (Juridical) Office Coordinator Noemi Paola Riccardi and Minister General Tibor Kauser spurred discussion and reflection on service and on servant leadership, respectively.

LIKE ST. FRANCIS, Secular Franciscans feel at home in God's house, Fr. Stefan Acatrinei, OFMConv., suggested during Wednesday morning's Mass. And what better way to be at home and support Holy Mother Church than on the Feast of the Dedication of the Basil-

ica of St. John Lateran. The Lateran Basilica is the seat of the Bishop of Rome and the mother of all churches, he noted, and it is where Francis sought out Pope Innocent III to approve his Rule of Life. In a dream, the pope saw the church falling apart and realized that it was Francis who would repair and support it.

Like "living stones," Fr. Stefan said, "it is our responsibility" to repair and support the church.

AFTER A MORNING filled with work, the Presidency members were given a break and got to visit several of Rome's historic sites, some within a few blocks of the Lateran Basilica. In fact, Secular Franciscan Guide Massimiliano Scarponi pointed out, in 1209 St. Francis walked right past the first site they visited – the Basilica of St. Clement -- to get to the Lateran Basilica, which was visible just down the street.

Continued on page 8.



Basilica of St. Clement

CIOFS Presidency at work

SERVANT LEADERSHIP



Tuesday's meeting began with Minister General Tibor Kauser giving a formation talk on servant leadership.

Leadership is tied to community; that is, a leader needs a team to move ahead with a project or strive for a goal. So, he said, a leader helps form and protect community, and helps members grow in their OFS vocation.

When looking at traits of leaders, one should recognize that leaders are not uniform. "Look at Moses, Jesus, St. Peter, St. Francis, St. Bonaventure..."

But some characteristics should be common to OFS leaders:

- Help form and strengthen the fraternity – it's the OFS home.
- Encourage and maintain communication, which brings people closer.
- Encourage collaboration, with mem-

bers using their charisms and talents.

- Serve the growth of everyone.
- Do not be afraid of new approaches.
- Be prayerful (be ready to be with the Holy Spirit).
- Live a sacramental and penitential life.
- Embody a spirit of service ("washing the feet of others").
- Maintain an overview; have vision.
- Be able to organize; and be ready to speak.
- Always be open to dialogue, and able to evaluate a situation.
 - What would Jesus do?
 - Listen. Consult. Discern. Decide.
 - Collective decisions are collegial when everyone respects one another.
- Love your brothers and sisters. (Mutual respect essential for servant leadership.)
- Be Franciscan.

MINISTRY OF SERVICE



Being a Secular Franciscan means being engaged in a ministry of service, Noemi Paola Riccardi reminded fellow members of the CIOFS Presidency in a Monday morning session.

"St Peter tells us what to do and how to do it: 'Let each one place the gift he has received at the service of others...' and '... whosoever does a service, let him do it with the strength that is given to him by God...'"

She went on to point out that in the OFS the function of "animation and guidance" is a collegial one. "Guidance and animation are entrusted to a set of elected persons, called to exercise co-responsibility and co-participation. We know well that with Profession we are all 'animators' or, at least, called to 'animate' the Fraternity, making available the talents/gifts God has

given us."

She noted some key traits of service, among them:

- Personal presence (a fundamental requirement).
 - Witness of life (living evangelical life).
 - Prayer (it is the fuel for serving).
 - Collaboration (taking active interest in all service areas).
 - Graciousness ("Pope Francis emphasised that, like Jesus, we must serve without asking for anything and reiterated that we must not take control of service 'by turning it into a power structure.'")
- Noemi identified another important element of service – listening. Listen before acting or making decisions. She suggested following the advice of a Greek philosopher: "We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak."

CIOFS Presidency

Continued from page 6.

After touring the St. Clement basilica and its underground archeological and historical treasures, the group moved on to San Pietro in Vincoli (Saint Peter in Chains), a basilica that houses Saint Peter's chains and Michelangelo's famous Moses statue.

Then they walked to the Colosseum as the sun was setting, and finally made their way to the Basilica of Saints Cosmas and Damian, which is under the care of Third Order Regular (TOR) friars.

In fact, TOR Minister General Amando Trujillo Cano greeted the group and offered a personal tour of the historical and artistic wonder.

FR. CARLOS REMINDED everyone to pay attention

to their inner life in his homily at Thursday morning's Mass. Sometimes we can get so caught up in our daily lives – so determined to control everything – that we do not cultivate our inner life the way we should.

And that interferes with not only our duty as Christians to proclaim the Kingdom of God but also especially to live the Kingdom.

Jesus tells us “the Kingdom is here among us...inside us.”

“We lose the ability to enter the Kingdom with our concerns. So Jesus tells us to cultivate our inner reality to live the Kingdom of God.”

Continued on page 10.



Basilica of St. Clement



Archeological and historical findings beneath the Basilica of St. Clement include corridors sprinkled with religious frescoes.

CIOFS Presidency

Continued from previous page.



Michelangelo's Moses at St. Peter in Chains Basilica.



Members gather around tour guide at the Colosseum.



TOR Minister General Amando Trujillo Cano gives tour of Saints Cosmas and Damian Basilica.

CIOFS Presidency at work

Continued from page 8.

LILTING HYMNS, sung a cappella by Presidency councilors from the Ukraine and Zimbabwe, opened and closed Friday's mass.

"Hello, Christ! (Вітай, Христе!)," Dina Shabalina sang softly in Ukrainian. "...Accept our prayers, our honour, our love..."

Then, as if reminding Presidency members to keep God close in the work ahead, Eremenciana Chinyama lifted her voice in the tongue of Shona in a hymn titled "Spring Water (Mvura Yechitubu)".

"God, you are the spring of everything. The thirst of my heart and my spirit is only quenched by You..."

In between the songs Fr. Pedro presided at the liturgy and took a cue from Francis for his homily. Like the saint from Assisi, he decided to preach without words, offering a "sermon" of silence -- which allowed Presi-

dency members time to meditate on the Gospel message and the life-giving Eucharist, especially since their time together was quickly coming to an end.



Dina Shabalina and Eremenciana Chinyama

MEET FRIAR STEFAN

Fr. Stefan Acatrinei, OFMConv, is a long-time educator who has been lecturing at Franciscan Theological Institute in Roman, Romania, since 1998 – right up to his move to Rome this past fall to begin his duties as a general spiritual assistant for the OFS. In addition to teaching in Romania, Friar Stefan was a visiting professor at Franciscan International Study Centre in Canterbury, UK, from 2013 to 2017.

Throughout his teaching career, he also served the Conventual Franciscans as rector of postulancy in Husi, Romania, 1998-2000; as rector of the seminary in Roman, Romania, 2000-2004, and as pro-

vincial vicar of "St. Joseph, Spouse of Blessed Virgin Mary, Province" in Romania, 2000-2008.

Born in 1966 in N. Balcescu (Galbeni), county Bacau, Romania, Fr. Stefan entered novitiate in 1990, made his solemn profession in 1995, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1997. He earned his degree in theology in 1996 and his licency in Franciscan Spirituality in 1998, both at the Pontifical University of St. Bonaventure (Seraphicum) in Rome. Then in 2003 he received his doctorate in theology from University of Bucharest, and in 2012, his licency in spirituality from Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.



Some Presidency councillors

MEET NOEMI PAOLA RICCARDI



Noemi (left) with General Secretary Isabella Di Paola (right).

My name is Noemi Paola Riccardi. I am 56 years old, I am Italian and single, and a lawyer by profession.

I was born in southern Lazio but I live in the Marche region, in a small town heavily hit by the 2016 earthquake: the house where I lived and the office were irretrievably damaged. On that occasion, Jesus allowed me to experience the reality of the Gospel and how material goods are ephemeral: I understood the true meaning of being simple administrators of the goods of creation that I had read many times in the OFS Rule.

I began my Franciscan journey on January 31, 1981, at the end of a popular mission of the Friars Minor, who offered me a vocational experience for women. After a couple of years, a YouFra fraternity was established in the area where I live, in which I remained until 1998, when I finished my service as regional YouFra councillor.

Already at the age of 13/14, I had wondered why I was Catholic: if this depended on the decisions of my parents or because it was I who really believed in Jesus Christ. In my spiritual search I was part of different youth groups but it did not feel right: I felt that they did not help me to grow or give answers to my inner search.

On the Franciscan journey I finally felt I was at home and I understood that I believed because God gave me faith. Initially, as a Franciscan youth, when I saw the Third Order I told myself that I would never be part of it: then I fell in love with the OFS!

In September 1992 I began to attend the OFS Fraternity of Tolentino. In 1994 I began the time of formation, organized for YouFra of the Marche region by the Regional Council of the then-Minor obedience together with that of the Capuchins. On 25 November 1994 I did the rite of admission and on 14 April 1996 I professed in the OFS. I had the great gift of being able to live the dual membership of the OFS-YouFra and this was a further fundamental step in my life, both spiritual and personal.

I served the OFS at various levels and in November 2021 the Lord called me to serve the world-wide order. Years ago I understood that if you say YES to the Lord, even a small one, however much you can try to escape, He always carries out the plan He has for You!

The Secular Franciscan form of life is my dress! I could not try to live the Gospel if not in the style of Francis of Assisi.

MEET FRANCIS BYUNG JU PARK



Francis with Councillor Eremenciana Chinyama, Councillor Dina Shabalina,, and General Spiritual Assistant Fr. Stefan Acatrinei.

I'm Francis Byung Ju Park, OFS, of Korea. Last year at the Chapter I was elected as Presidency councillor of Asia-Oceania area.

I was born on October 1, 1957. My hometown is Gwangju. Its name is composed of the words, Gwang meaning “light” and Ju meaning “province”.

In May 1980, peaceful demonstrations took place in Gwangju against Chun Doo-hwan, leader of the military coup d'état of 12 December 1979. The demonstrations were suppressed by military forces. The situation escalated after a violent crackdown, resulting in the Gwangju Uprising, where civilians raided armories and armed themselves. By the time the uprising was suppressed nine days later, many hundreds of civilians and several police forces / soldiers were dead.

After civilian rule was reinstated in 1987, a national cemetery was established to honor the victims of the incident. Now the South Korean constitution credits the Gwangju Uprising as a root of South Korean democracy. I have come to realize that peace without justice is not true peace.

After graduating college, I got married on Feb. 6, 1983. Around the time of the uprising. I was a Protestant, not very strong in my faith, and my spouse was a Buddhist, but her faith was shaken. Only Catholic priests spoke out for justice, and Pope John Paul II decided to visit Korea. So as a couple we decided to join the Catholic Church

in 1983, and we were baptized with the names of Francis and Frances on Easter in 1984, when the Pope came to my hometown, Gwangju.

I have two daughters and one son, named Clara, Rosa and Simon. They were named after saints associated with Saint Francis. When I saw the Damiano Cross at my neighbor's house, I was deeply attracted to it, so I bought one. The person next door saw it and recommended that we join the OFS in 2000. We professed as a couple on April 25, 2004.

My hometown is very interesting in its Franciscan elements. We have First Order OFM, 2nd Order Poor Clares, and Third Order OFS. Also, the OFS Regional Fraternity has its own building, which can accommodate meetings of up to 100 members.

In my fraternal life, I have served as secretary, formator and local minister; as regional minister, for a short time, as international councillor for the National Fraternity before being elected as a Presidency councillor. I speak English at the CIOFS meetings, but I'm not fluent as I would like to be. For now I am trying to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

In February 2023 I will retire from a 40-year career as a university professor, with plans to move to another city, Seoul – which will allow me to focus more on the duties of a Presidency councillor. Please pray for me as I pray for all of you in the Order.

MEET FELIX CHOCOJAY



Felix Chocojay with Presidency councillors Silvia Diana and Ana Maria Raffo.

When writing about me, it is inevitable to place next to my name, Felix Chocojay, other names such as: Panajachel (Sololá) and Aldea Vista Hermosa. These are names of places. The first is where I was born on January 2, 1996 and where there's Lake Atitlán, one of the most beautiful lakes in the world. The second is in the municipality of San Pedro Sacatepéquez, located 21 kilometers from Guatemala City, where I currently live. Both sites are part of my personal geography.

Felix Guamuch, Rosa Amelia, Adolfo and Alex are the essential names to understand my relationship with the Franciscan world. I discovered this charism through them.

Much of my family belongs to the OFS. My late grandfather Felix Guamuch was the one who encouraged his children and grandchildren to love the Franciscan charism. I had my first encounter with the Franciscan fraternity through my mother, Rosa Amelia. In 2010 I started my path in YouFra; my cousins Adolfo and Alex invited me to join the local fraternity.

YouFra has something special, a warm atmosphere full of joy. From the first day I felt that I had a new home where I could share with other young people that desire to discover the meaning of my existence and the discernment of my vocation. In 2011, at the age of 15, I made the promise to YouFra, one of the best decisions in my life.

My commitment to God and to the brothers was strengthened through the call to service. Four years later I was called to serve as local president. Thanks to this service I got to know other fraternities and supported

the national council on some occasions. In 2016 I was elected as national vice treasurer.

The year 2017 was a particular milestone for me. I participated in the fifth meeting of YouFra Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. I was elected national president of YouFra of Guatemala for the period 2017 - 2020, an experience that I keep in the depths of my heart. On October 8, I made perpetual profession in the OFS, thus beginning the experience of double OFS-YouFra membership.

In 2019 I participated in the international YouFra meeting in Panama where I was able to meet fraternities from other continents. In addition, I participated in the Tenth Latin American OFS-YouFra Congress held in Guatemala where I was able to form ties with fraternities in South America.

In 2021 I was elected as international councilor for the YouFra of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. And in November of that year I was elected international coordinator of YouFra during the OFS General Chapter and I had the opportunity to meet Pope Francis, a dream come true.

Service has been the key that God has given me to open doors to new paths, new names of people, places and experiences. This dimension of openness towards the novelty that God wants to write in my life is now my life itself and that is how I try to live my youth.

Let yourself be surprised by God's will!

CIOFS Presidency at work

For a few days before the fall meeting of the CIOFS Presidency, two of the secretariats approved by the 2021 General Chapter were forging ahead with their first in-person meetings and with designing plans of action.

They were the Secretariats for Formation and for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

The formation team includes:

- Silvia Noemi Diana, OFS, CIOFS Presidency Councilor (Argentina)
- Eremenciana Chinyama, OFS, CIOFS Presidency Councilor – Project Africa (Zimbabwe)
- Fr. Stefan Acatrinei, OFMConv, General Spiritual Assistant (Romania)

- Lucia Hidveghyova, OFS (Slovakia)
- Mayara Ingrid Sousa Lima, OFS (Brazil)
- Diane Frances Menditto, OFS (USA)
- Alonso Acevedo, OFS (Chile)

The JPIC team consists of:

- Ana Maria Raffo Laos, OFS, CIOFS Presidency Councilor (Peru)
- Maria Iadanza, OFS (Australia)
- Pietro Ferri, OFS (Italy)
- Adilson De Pina, OFS (Cape Verde)
- Ricardo Herrera Sandi, OFS (Costa Rica)

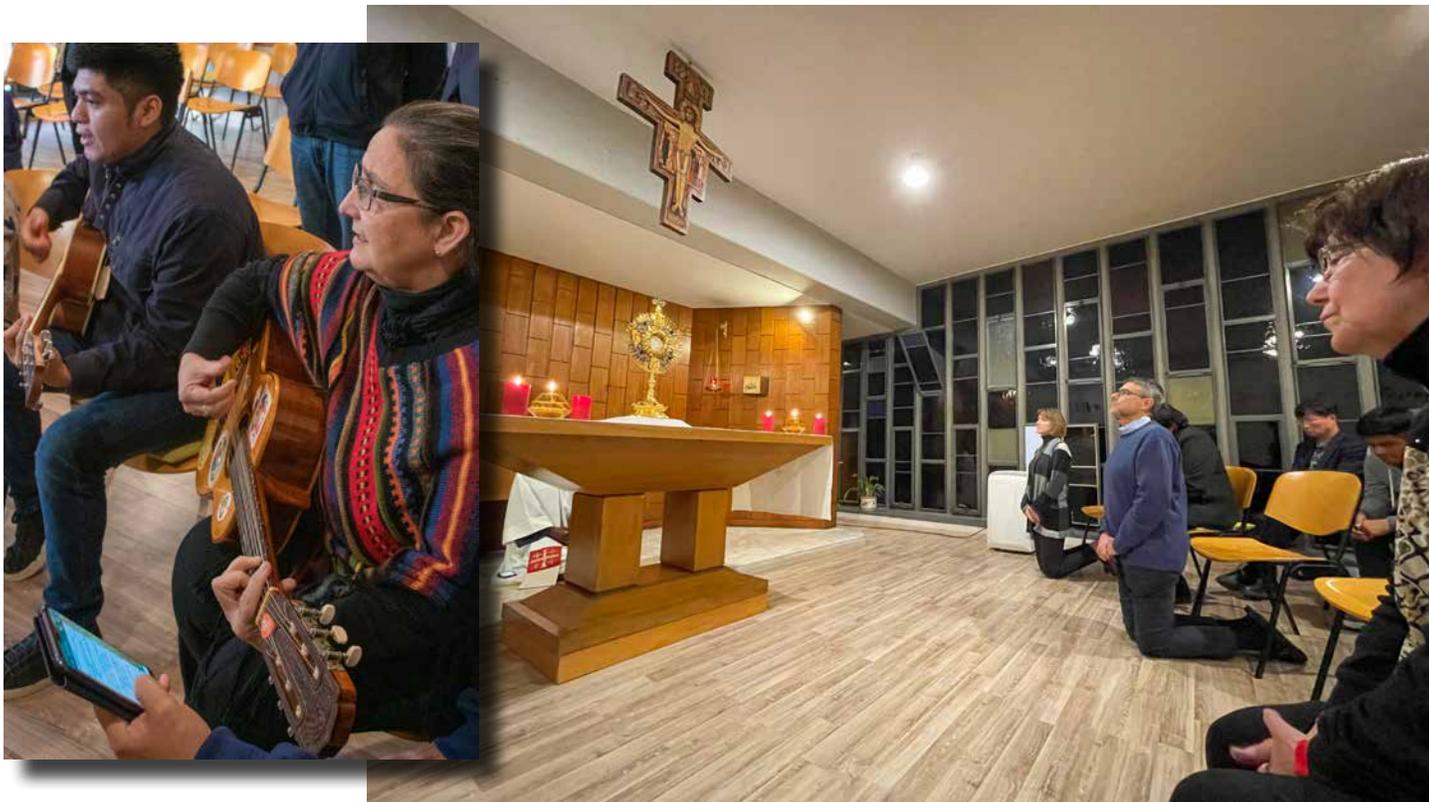


LEFT: Lucia Sorrentino, 2nd from right, briefed the JPIC Secretariat on the “Laudato Si” Movement, inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical of the same name that has a distinctive call to “care for our common home.” Lucia is the LSM member organizations coordinator and is based in Naples. She holds a PhD in History and International Relations of Africa and spent more than 15 years in the African Continent serving as humanitarian and development worker. She believes that social justice and environmental justice are closely connected, and issues that impact the environment cause significant impact especially on the poor. The Secretariat members are, from left, Ricardo, Maria, Pietro and Ana Maria Raffo. (Not pictured is Adilson.)



Members of the Formation Secretariat give a “thumbs up” to the work ahead. FROM LEFT: Fr. Stefan, Silvia, Diane, Eremenciana, Mayara, Lucia and Alonzo.

CIOFS Presidency at prayer and at work



CIOFS Presidency at prayer and at work



8th centenarries: opportunity for renewal



VATICAN
NEWS

PAPA VATICANO CHIESA MONDO



Pope Francis greets members of the Franciscan Family during a private audience Oct. 31. (Vatican Media)

FRANCISCANS HAVE AUDIENCE WITH POPE FRANCIS

Recalling how he was moved to choose the name of Francis, the pope congratulated Franciscans of all types on plans to celebrate the five Franciscan centenarries over the next few years, specifically citing:

- in 2023 the Rule and the Christmas at Greccio,
- in 2024 the Stigmata,
- in 2025 the Canticle of Brother Sun, and
- in 2026 the Transitus of Francis.

OFS Minister General **Tibor Kausser** and OFM Conv. Minister General Fr. **Carlos Alberto Trovarelli** joined OFM Minister General **Massimo Fusarelli** as Fr. Massimo addressed Pope Francis and explained that

For guidelines on celebrating the five centenary events, see: <https://ciofs.info/projects/8th-centenary-events/>

Franciscans want to make the centenarries a public celebration, becoming ever-more missionary disciples.

Some 300 Franciscans participated in the private audience with Pope Francis on Oct. 31, including Secular Franciscans from the CIOFS Presidency and OFS contingents from Italy as well as friars, Poor Clares and other Franciscan religious. The audience with the pope recognized the work of a Coordination Committee, established in 2021 to plan joint celebrations of the 800th anniversary

of those significant events in the life of St. Francis of Assisi. The committee consists of representatives from several dioceses in Italy and the entire Franciscan Family.

In his remarks, Pope Francis pointed to the centenary celebrations as a way to live the “imitation of Christ and love for the poor” because “Francis lived the imitation of the poor Christ and love for the poor in an inseparable way, like the two sides of the same coin”.

Continued on next page.

POPE FRANCIS:

'St. Francis of Assisi still pushes the Church today to live her fidelity to Christ.'

Continued from previous page.

Listening, walking, proclaiming

He described the Poverello of Assisi as “a man of peace and poverty, who loves and celebrates creation.” Francis provides “the way to follow in the footsteps of Jesus: **this means listening, walking and proclaiming to the peripheries.**”

LISTENING LIKE FRANCIS means recalling how the saint, in front of the Crucifix, hears the voice of Jesus saying to him: “Go and repair my house”. The young man “responds with promptness and generosity to this call of the Lord”, the pope said, but slowly, he realizes that it was not a question “of repair-

ing a building made of stones, but of making his contribution to the life of the Church”; that is, “to put oneself at the service of the Church, loving it and working so that the Face of Christ would be reflected more and more in it”.

AS FOR WALKING, “Francis was a wanderer who never stopped, who crossed countless hamlets and villages in Italy on foot, making sure he was close to the people and eliminating the distance between the Church and the people”.

This teaches us, he said, that those who follow St. Francis must learn to be firm in contemplation, in prayer,

and then go forward, walk in witness, witness to Christ.

AND THEN, the pope noted, there is the proclaiming, taken to the most distant or neglected places: the peripheries.

In concluding his message, Pope Francis encouraged Franciscans “to live fully” the three years of celebrations, hoping that “this spiritual and cultural journey can be combined with” the church’s “Pilgrims of Hope” Jubilee of 2025, “in the belief that **St. Francis of Assisi still pushes the Church today to live her fidelity to Christ and her mission in our time.**”



OFM Minister General Massimo Fusarelli and OFS Minister General Tibor Kauser while awaiting Pope Francis in Clementine Hall in the Apostolic Palace. Photo by Robert Stronach, OFS.



Friars, seculars and Poor Clares gathered in St. Peter's Square, expressing joy at being part of the same family.



OFS Minister General Tibor Kauser and OFM Conv. Minister General Carlos Alberto Trovarelli joined OFM Minister General Massimo Fusarelli as Fr. Massimo addressed Pope Francis and explained that Franciscans want to make the centenaries a public celebration. Photos by Robert Stronach, OFS.

Look forward to a Chapter of Mats in 2024

ROME, Nov. 29, 2022 -- With great joy Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS, announced that, immediately following the 2024 General Chapter, a Chapter of Mats for the Secular Franciscan Order and YouFra would be held in Rome, Italy, November 14-19, 2024.

The Chapter of Mats will be open to professed and non-professed members of OFS/YouFra fraternities as well as family members.

The event is a way to come together as well as to celebrate the 800th anniversaries of important events in the life of St. Francis.

Calling it a “big fraternal event,” Tibor said the goal is to have as many members participate as possible. To help better plan for it, National Councils are being asked to provide estimated numbers of possible attendees by Jan. 31, 2023.

“Currently, we estimate the possibility of between 3,000 and 10,000 brothers and sisters attending,” he said, noting: “It is open to all our brothers and sisters from the OFS and YouFra, who want to celebrate together, spending four complete days together with others from around the world in Franciscan prayer, joy and fraternity. When could be there a better occasion than during the 800-year celebrations of some important events in the life of St. Francis? We intend to organize a fraternal gathering where we will have the possibility to meet each other from all the corners of the world -- to pray, to sing, to play together, to participate at various programs, and to listen to presentations, enjoy music, and perhaps even performances!”



Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS, at the Vatican.

He continued: “We hope to embrace our individual brothers and sisters, but we want to see our Secular Franciscan families with children, too... Of course, we hope to meet many of our Spiritual Assistants, as well.”

Tibor continued: “In the spirit of our Franciscan charism, the Chapter of Mats will be very simple, and intentionally kept at low costs, so that nobody will have difficulties to pay the necessary costs. A good part of the participants will be hosted by families, thanks to the hospitality of OFS Italy, and particularly that of the Lazio region. Others will be hosted in convents and retreat houses with simple accommodations. We do not intend to book hotel rooms to keep the costs of participation as low as possible. (Those participating at the XVII General Chapter will

have the possibility of remaining at the venue of the General Chapter.) Certainly, it cannot be absolutely free, but the intention is that whoever wants to come, can come without major headaches about participation costs.”

The minister general added: “The International Fraternity will take care of the participants from the moment of arrival to Rome, until the last morning. Travelling has to be organized and paid by each participant with the possible help of their own home fraternities. We intend to set up a solidarity fund to help those who really do not have other options, but the fund will have very, very limited resources. (Once we have determined the criteria, we will send details on the fund, on how to donate and how to request assistance.)”

YouFra Celebrates 3rd International Assembly

by FELIX CHOCHOJAY, OFS



Franciscan Youth is an experience of fraternity that depends on various dimensions of encounter between brothers and sisters, at different levels: local, regional, national and international.

Called to manifest this sense of belonging and unity, YouFra celebrated the Third International Assembly from August 20 to 26, 2022, at the Jesús Eucaristía Spiritual Exercises House, in Mexico City. Representatives from 23 countries -- from the Americas, Europe and Africa -- met to bring fraternity to life, dialogue, reflect and establish the priorities that will determine the path of YouFra around the world for the next six years.

Participants came from:

- Americas: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Canada.
- Europe: Italy, Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, France, Spain, Poland, Austria, Lithuania.
- Africa: Ivory Coast.

Gathered as a single fraternity, they shared experiences and reflected deeply on issues of common interest to Franciscan youth.

The call to live holiness in the various realities of our fraternities around the world was the starting point to reflect on the new challenges

and opportunities that youth have today.

YouFra participates in different missions around the world, the most obvious being those that it carries out in response to the commitment that Franciscans have as messengers of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. Fraternities from Brazil, Lithuania, El Salvador, Lebanon and France shared the experiences of their fraternities participating and promoting activities such as Human Rights Days, projects to guarantee the right to drinking water in different communities in Africa (“Well4Africa”), Ecological Walks , the Inter-

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Franciscan Youth Councillor Felix Chocojay, OFS.

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religious Dialogue and Franciscan Camps.

Service in the Fraternity was also one of the topics, based on the guidelines and advice found in the document, “Encouraging and Guiding with Service Leadership”, as well as the Instrumentum Laboris document of the General Chapter 2020 (2021). Tibor Kauser, the OFS Minister General, and Ailen Lucia Natali, YouFra Argentina, shared their experiences of service in fraternity underlining that this is a commitment of all and that it is a gift that does not belong to us, that must be cared for by listening to the Word and call of God.

Another theme that characterizes the Franciscan fraternity and that was reflected on was discernment; that is, the discovery of one’s own

vocation, with double belonging as an important option. It’s a reality that allows a transition between YouFra and profession in the OFS, but which is not currently a reality in all countries; however, in fraternities such as Mexico, Croatia, Brazil, Guatemala and El Salvador, it is a way of life that many YouFra members choose to continue their evangelical life in the Franciscan family.

After days of much work and reflection, the International Assembly of YouFra made a pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, to beg her intercession for all the projects that each fraternity undertakes after experiencing this fraternal gathering and for each one of our YouFra brothers and sisters so that they always maintain a longing spirit,

like that of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi, a spirit that leads us to seek to live Holiness to the full.

Last but not least, every night participants got together to joyfully share the cultural diversity of each country. That joyful atmosphere surrounded us throughout the Assembly; beyond the superficial sense of celebration, the joy of finding ourselves as brothers and sisters was what distinguished our way of living it.

Just as Thomas of Celano describes in the first Life of Saint Francis in chapter XV:

“... What love of the pious fellowship flourished among them! For whenever they came together in any place, or met one another in the way (as is usual), there it was to see the spiritual
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love that sprang up between them and how they spread a true affection... Love that was manifested in the chaste embraces, in tender affections, in the holy kiss, in the agreeable conversation, in the modest laugh, in the festive face, in the simple eye, in the humble

attitude, in the benign tongue, in the calm answer; they were consistent in the ideal, diligent in service, indefatigable in works."

The experience lived in the Third International Assembly of YouFra was above all an opportunity for a

true encounter with brothers and sisters eager to live the simplicity of fraternal life, and consequently to return to their countries walking in the spirit of celebration, recognizing themselves as part of a world-wide family.

OFS in action around the globe



2ND SCHOOL FOR FORMATORS IN SOUTHERN CONE

by SILVIA DIANA, OFS

The 2nd School for the Training of OFS-YouFra South Cone Formators was held in Corrientes, Argentina on May 26, 27, 28 and 29, 2022 with the motto, “Franciscans on the way out: Building Integral Ecology”. OFS and YOUFRA brothers and sisters from Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay participated.

Each country presented its JPIC experience of OFS and YOUFRA. The school featured lectures on:

- “JPIC: A family challenge” (Friar

Jaime Campos, OFM, General Director of the Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation)

- “The synodal path, an experience of fraternal construction” (Corrientes Auxiliary Bishop José Adolfo Larraigan, OFM).

In addition there was an interview with Gabriela Consolaro Nabozny, National YouFra Brazil formator, about her participation in the “Economy of Francis and Clare”.

Panel topics included: “Collegiate

spiritual assistance, a wealth of our Franciscan family” (with Fr. Carlos Ginés Campos, TOR, CAS/CIOFS) and “YouFra, presence and reality of the movement” (with Elías Molina, YouFra International Councillor).

Other presentations were:

- “Role of the trainer and the importance of teamwork” (by Mayara Ingrid Sousa Lima, Brazil National formator)

- “800 years of the letter of Fran-
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MANUELA MATTIOLI – 30 YEARS SINCE HER DEPARTURE

Nov. 3, 2022 was the 30th anniversary of the death of Manuela Mattioli, the first general minister of the OFS.

Manuela was one of those who worked tirelessly on the renewal of the OFS, and she gave her valuable contribution in the work on issuing the renewed Rule. She fully lived the Rule, in the writing of which she participated with so much effort and courage.

She was “an example of service, of responsibility in high ecclesial bodies, remaining in her place and always maintaining her own kindness and simplicity of a Franciscan woman”.



2ND SCHOOL FOR FORMATORS IN SOUTHERN CONE



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cis to a minister” (by Silvia Diana, CIOFS Presidency Councillor).

Participants were challenged to:

- Create a common work space like the Southern Cone, where the Formation and JPIC services of the OFS and the YouFra generate proposals

for shared experiences, with a projection of two years to work.

- Continue encouraging the commitment of the first school: that in each national, regional and local council, a councillor for the JPIC service be elected (in line with the Conclusions of the X Latin American

Congress of Guatemala).

- Continue with the schools for formators in the Southern Cone as they are a valuable experience of a fraternity without borders.

The 3rd Southern Cone School for Formators will be held in Bolivia in the first half of 2024.



CHAD HOLDS ELECTIVE CHAPTER

The OFS National Fraternity of Chad celebrated its Elective Chapter from January 9 to 15, 2023, joined by CIOFS Presidency Councillor Adolph Atsu Assagba and General

Spiritual Assistant Fr. Tomàs Ginga Panzo, OFM Cap. Angel - Gabriel Soulassanger was reelected national minister for the 3rd and last term.

FRANCISCAN MEETING OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

On the afternoon of Saturday, 25 June 2022, within the Franciscan Meeting of the Mediterranean held in Favara (Italy, 24 – 26 June 2022), moderated by the Area Presidency Councillor Noemi Paola Riccardi, a zoom meeting of the OFS National Fraternities of the Mediterranean Area was held on the theme: “Secular Franciscans builders of dialogue. Socio-political

commitment of Franciscans in the Mediterranean”. The Fraternities of Albania, Cyprus, Italy, France, Lebanon, Portugal, Slovenia, Athens, Bethlehem and Nazareth participated in this zoom meeting. Councilor Noemi Paola Riccardi also spoke at the 9.30 p.m. Forum on the theme: “The Mediterranean without frontiers: recognising each other as brothers”.





ELECTIVE CHAPTER IN HUNGARY

The OFS National Fraternity of Hungary celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 21-23 July 2022. Imre

Dániel was elected national minister and sister Adrienn Bognár as international councillor.



ELECTIVE CHAPTER OF PARAGUAY

The OFS National Fraternity of Paraguay celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 29-31 July 2022. Gustavo

Benítez was re-elected as national minister and international councillor, and Mirtha Ferreira as vice minister and substitute international councillor.



MOZAMBIQUE HOLDS ELECTIVE CHAPTER

The OFS National Fraternity of Mozambique celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 29-31 July 2022. Maneca

Paulo Castro Sindifae was elected as national minister and international councillor.



ELECTIVE CHAPTER IN BRAZIL

The OFS National Fraternity of Brazil celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 19-21 August 2022. Maria

José Zeze Coelho was reelected as national minister and international councillor.



ELECTIONS IN PERU

The OFS National Fraternity of Peru celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 14 August 2022. Patricia

Obregón Núñez was elected as national minister and international councillor.



CUBA HOLDS ELECTIVE CHAPTER

On September 23-25, 2022, the OFS of Cuba held its National Elective Chapter in Havana, with the main theme, "Living the Gospel in fraternal communion".

José Ángel Miranda Reyes was elected national minister and international councillor. Indri Yong Mulen was elected vice minister and substitute international councillor.



ELECTIVE CHAPTER OF SLOVAKIA

The OFS National Fraternity of Slovakia celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 3 September 2022. Da-

mian Berc was elected as national minister and Juraj Zonnenschein as international councillor.



ECUADOR REELECTS NATIONAL MINISTER

The OFS National Fraternity of Ecuador celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 25 September 2022. Marta

Osorio was reelected as national minister and Sandra Romero as national vice-minister.



FRATERNAL/PASTORAL VISIT TO ITALY

Vice Minister General Mary Stronach, OFS, and General Spiritual Assistant Fr. Carlos Campos, TOR, met

with the OFS National Fraternity of Italy Oct. 28-30 for a fraternal and pastoral visit.



ELECTIONS IN CROATIA

The OFS National Fraternity of Croatia celebrated its National Elective Chapter 7-9 October 2022. Marta Ra-

doš was elected as national minister and Goran Luketa reelected as international councillor.



ELECTIVE CHAPTER IN FRANCE

The OFS National Fraternity of France celebrated its National Elective Chapter 15-16 October 2022. Claire

Hulot was reelected as national minister and Claire Déchenaux re-elected as international councillor.



LEBANON HOLDS ELECTIVE CHAPTER

The OFS National Fraternity of Lebanon celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 23 October 2022. Gina

Charbacy was elected as national minister and Nicole Abi Assaf was elected as International councillor.



ELECTIVE CHAPTER IN GREAT BRITAIN

The OFS National Fraternity of the Great Britain celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 15 October

2022. Kathy Maskens was elected as national minister and international councillor.



ELECTIVE CHAPTER IN ALBANIA

The OFS National Emerging Fraternity of Albania celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 21 January

2023. Lazer Gega was elected as national minister and international councillor.



USA HOLDS ELECTIVE CHAPTER

The OFS National Fraternity of the USA celebrated its National Elective Chapter 15 October 2022. Jane DeR-

ose-Bamman was elected national minister and Mary Francis Charsky was elected international councillor.



ELECTIONS IN POLAND

The OFS National Fraternity of Poland celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 22 October 2022. Emilia

Nogai was elected national minister and Stanislaw Kowalski was elected international councillor.



RWANDA ELECTIVE CHAPTER

The OFS National Fraternity of Rwanda celebrated its Elective Chapter in January 2023.

Valens Hafashimana was elected as national minister and international councillor.



SINGAPORE HOLDS ELECTIVE CHAPTER

The emerging National Fraternity of OFS Singapore celebrated its National Elective Chapter on 7 January

2023. Janet Lim was re-elected as national minister and as international councillor.