



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

Consilium Internationale  
Via Vittorio Putti, 4/int. 6 - 00152 Roma  
Tel. +39 06.45471722 Fax +39 06.45473094  
E-mail: ciofs@ciofs.org  
www.ciofs.org

Prot. N. 3522  
Circ. n. 8/21-27

Rome, November 29, 2022  
Feast of All the Saints of the Seraphic Order

To all OFS and Franciscan Youth International Councilors  
To all OFS National Councils  
To all Franciscan Youth National Councils

Dear brothers and sisters,  
Pax et Bonum!

I have the great joy of announcing two celebrations. The first is the

**XVII Ordinary General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS)  
in Rome on November 9-14, 2024.**

The main goal of the Chapter, like that of each chapter is, to deepen our fraternal bonds, to evaluate experiences, to think about the future of the Order and to make necessary decisions. In 2024, we will have time to focus and finalize our International Statutes. We shall do this in a spirit of the Gospel and that of our Rule, seeking “to encounter the living and active person of Christ in our brothers and sisters.” (cf. OFS Rule 5)

The General Chapter will be the official meeting of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order, with the participation of its official members. Limited space should be available for some observers, as well. The venue, and all the other details will be communicated later, according to the customs of the previous years.

However, in addition to the Intermediate General Chapter, the Presidency has decided to fully experience the opportunity of the Franciscan Centenaries by inviting our worldwide OFS/YouFra family to celebrate the

**Chapter of Mats  
for the Secular Franciscan Order and YouFra  
in Rome, on November 14-19, 2024.**

immediately following the General Chapter.

The Chapter of Mats is not an official chapter, but a **big fraternal event**, with the goal of having as many of our members participate as possible. 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! The concrete program will be drafted in due time.

We hope to embrace our individual brothers and sisters, but we want to see our Secular Franciscan families with children, too. Participation is not limited to professed members of the OFS or YouFra. Everyone from the OFS and YouFra is welcome. Hopefully we will be able to meet some who are not yet admitted, but are close to our Franciscan family. Of course, we hope to meet many of our Spiritual Assistants, as well. The program will be prepared considering all our family members – OFS members and their families (including the children), those being considered for admission, YouFra and our Spiritual Assistants. All are welcome.

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 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.)

We are so excited as we plan this event, but we want and need your ideas, too. We invite you to share your ideas and thoughts about this big event, so that everyone, who is going to be present, will feel that “it is good that we are here!” (Mk. 9:5, Lk. 9:33) Just send your ideas using the attached application form.

Currently, we estimate the possibility of between 3,000 and 10,000 brothers and sisters attending. (There is no facility with a capacity bigger than 10,000 persons.) However, we will need to know from the National Fraternities, as soon as possible, how many you believe could realistically be participating from your country to celebrate together.

We ask you to send an estimate of the number of OFS members, their families, YouFra and Spiritual Assistants who might be able to attend. This is absolutely non-binding, but it will help us plan better for the event. **The deadline to send us** this estimate is:

**January 31, 2023.**

Please use the attached application form. It should be sent **only** by the national fraternities to the General Secretariat (ciofs@ciofs.org). Subject line should say: CHAPTER OF MATS. We ask you **NOT** to send individual applications. Based on your response, we will be able to determine if we can accept more future applications or if we have to limit participation in order to balance between the various OFS and YouFra fraternities. (A formal registration form will be available once we have confirmed the necessary details.)

I hope that this Chapter of Mats will be a “never-before event,” which will significantly strengthen our Franciscan spirituality, renew our sense of belonging, and will be a significant celebration of the Franciscan Centenaries in the Secular Franciscan Order. May Saint Francis and all the other Franciscan Saints bless and help us all in our efforts.

Your Minister and your brother,



Tibor Kauser  
CIOFS Minister General

