



# K O I N Ō N I A

*...together on the journey*

THE CONFERENCE OF GENERAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS OFS-YOUFRA

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## LIVING THE FRANCISCAN CHARISM IN TODAY'S WORLD

40 years after the *Seraphicus Patriarcha*

**“GO FORTH AS WITNESSES AND INSTRUMENTS” (cf. OFS Rule 6)**

*The Secular Franciscans in the Church and in the world*

Fr. Francis Bongajum Dor, OFMCap.

### Introduction

St. Francis of Assisi so wanted to insert in the Rule a chapter on mission, “for those who go among the Saracens and other Nonbelievers”. The Rule stipulates that: “As for the brothers who go, they can live spiritually among the Saracens and nonbelievers in two ways. One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes but to be subject to every human creature for God’s sake and to acknowledge that they are Christians”<sup>1</sup>. So, Francis saw in the simple testimony of Christian life an act of evangelization. The present Rule of life of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS), recovers the Franciscan spirit of the power of witnessing and wants that the preferred apostolate of the Secular Franciscans be “personal witness in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the situations of this world”<sup>2</sup>.

In this article, where we bring forth the reflections of the other General assistants of OFS in the previous issues of Koinonia in this year that marks the 40 years of the present Rule, we will base ourselves on the sixth chapter<sup>3</sup> to bring out our reflection on four points: 1. Called and sent by Christ and by the Church; 2. The strength of individual witness; 3. The fraternity as a sacrament of reconstruction; 4. Conflicts as opportunities of witness.

### 1. Called and sent by Christ and by the Church.

In the culture of the people of Nso' in the North West of Cameroon, when the leader has an important message to give (this normally done on a market day) the messenger goes through the market silently with a branch of a plant known as the peace-plant. The sight of this branch is enough to gather the people to listen to the message. If he is without the peace-plant no one notices the messenger. He is special when he is sent. By the profession or promise of Evangelical life, a

<sup>1</sup>Earlier Rule, (Rnb), XVI.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rule of OFS 6, and General Constitutions OFS, Art.17.

<sup>3</sup>«They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity»; (Rule OFS, 6. cf. C.G OFS. Art. 17).

secular Franciscan is united more profoundly and more consciously to the mission of the Church. It is important that a secular Franciscan of today feels called and sent by Christ and by the Church.

St. Francis was sent to repair the Church. After the vocation to do penance, which according to St. Francis, came through the encounter with lepers and merciful service to them<sup>4</sup>, the Seraphic Father received the call to repair the house of God. The Legend of Three Companions narrates the historical fact in this way: «...while he was walking by the church of San Damiano, he was told in the Spirit to go inside for a prayer. Once he entered, he began to pray intensely before an image of the Crucified, which spoke to him in a tender and kind voice: “Francis don’t you see that my house is being destroyed? Go, then, and rebuild it for me»<sup>5</sup>. If this was the word of God to Francis, as we believe, its efficacy should not be limited to time and space; “so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Is 55:11). This word heard by Francis began to be fulfilled with him and continues through the centuries with the heirs of his spirit and his charism. Thus all those who identify themselves as sons of St. Francis feel particularly involved in the reconstruction of the Church, which is the work of God, by the power of his Word.

Francis and his companions received from the Church the confirmation of their way of life and the mission to preach penance<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, Francis and his brothers knew how to make the mission of the Church their own. The Franciscan mission was renewed in our days in an unprecedented way through the person and work of Pope Francis and his predecessors. The words of Pope Benedict XVI, pronounced on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2009 during the great Chapter of Mats that was organized to commemorate the 800 years of the birth of the Franciscan movement, are very significant: “Go, and continue to “repair the house” of the Lord Jesus Christ, his Church. ...that of people and communities! Like Francis, always begin with yourselves”<sup>7</sup>. The exhortation of Pope John Paul II to the participants of the General Chapter of the OFS in 1982 still retains its power: “Love, study and live your “Rule”, because the values in it are eminently evangelical. Live these values in fraternity and live them in the world, in which, for the same secular vocation you are involved and rooted. Live these Gospel values in your families, transmitting the faith by prayer, example and education and live the Gospel exigencies of mutual love, fidelity and respect to life”<sup>8</sup>.

## 2. The power of personal witness

One day I went to the International College of St. Lawrence of Brindisi in Rome for a visit. On arriving at the College, the friar who received me made a seemingly insignificant gesture, but which struck me. In the corridor he found a piece of paper on the floor which he picked up to throw in the trash. This natural gesture, not intended to give lessons to anyone, but because it was what needed

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<sup>4</sup>“The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body”. (*Testament* 1-3). On the importance of this experience in the life and spirituality of Francis, see P. MARANESI, *Facere misericordiam, la conversione di Francesco d’Assisi*, 2007.

<sup>5</sup>The Legend of Three Companions, 13.

<sup>6</sup>Francis was not preaching to the people at the beginning(cf. 3Com., 33). Pope Innocent III told Francis and his 11 companions “Go with the Lord brothers; as He inspires you, preach penitence to all...” (3Com., 49).

<sup>7</sup>Discourse of Holy Father Benedict XVI to the members of the Franciscan family participating at the “Chapter of Mats”. Square of the apostolic palace of Castel Gandolfo, Saturday, 18 April 2009 in [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/speeches/2009/april/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20090418\\_capitolo-stuoie.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/speeches/2009/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090418_capitolo-stuoie.html)

<sup>8</sup>Discourse of Pope John Paul II to the members of the International Council of OFS, Monday 27 September 1982 in [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1982/september/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19820927\\_ordine-francescano.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1982/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19820927_ordine-francescano.html)

to be done, told me a lot. This is the strength of witness. The words of Pope Paul VI on personal testimony are emblematic when he said, “*Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses*”<sup>9</sup>. Pure and simple witness attracts with its beauty.

As Secular Franciscans, “*their preferred apostolate is personal witness in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the situations of this world*”<sup>10</sup>. Nowadays, dangerous ideologies threaten the stability of the institution of the family and institutionalized corruption destabilizes whole societies and provokes bloody wars. At the same time, the Church is committed to the promotion of the family, justice and peace, and for the care of “mother earth”, our “common home”<sup>11</sup>. Each secular Franciscan who perseveres in fidelity to his family despite the challenges involved in the common life, who avoids corruption, promotes justice and peace and takes care of the environment in accordance with his commitment of Evangelical life, becomes a light in his context; as the saying goes: “*the darker the night, the brighter the spark*”. It is important to remember that God would not have destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah if he had found there at least ten righteous persons<sup>12</sup>.

Laura and Luigi had a daughter, Marianna, who died a few minutes after her birth from a congenital malformation. Someone had proposed to them therapeutic abortion, which they strongly rejected in order to allow their daughter to live the time that God would grant her in this life. Telling their story 10 years later, Laura says: “*... and if we had not been the ones to uphold the dignity of the fragile life of our daughter, who else would have done that in our place?*”<sup>13</sup>. Many important decisions depend on an individual or a couple. Michel Quoist says it in a poem:

«...As the symphony needs each note.  
As the book needs each word ...  
The whole of humanity needs you  
here where you are, unique, irreplaceable»<sup>14</sup>.

### 3. The Fraternity as a Sacrament of reconciliation

In the last issue of Koinonia, Fr. Alfred Parambakathu OFMConv, explored the theme of fraternity in Franciscan spirituality and its importance for the OSF according to the new Rule of life<sup>15</sup>. In his article, he underlined among many things that *the vocation to OFS is a vocation to fraternal life*, because *Secular Franciscans are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world* (Reg. 14). During WYD in Krakow in July 2016, we were in a group of Franciscan youth from different countries: Philippines, Korea, Poland, Croatia, Uganda, Chad, India, Pakistan, China, Vietnam, Cameroon, etc. It was a very special group. While all other groups each bore the flag of the country of origin, our group carried as many flags as the countries we represented. It was great to see the flags of India and Pakistan walk side-by-side. Sometimes someone asked us where we were from. The whole group would answer then in one voice: «*we are the YouFra- Franciscan Youth!*».

<sup>9</sup> Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi* n° 41.

<sup>10</sup> General Constitutions of the OFS, Art. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si*, on care for our common Home, Rome, 24 May 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Gn 18:32.

<sup>13</sup> From the Testimony of Laura Lippolis and Luigi Gasparre in *Voce Francescana*, Bi-monthly of formation and promotion of the Capuchin Friars of Marche, 3/2017, pp. 22-25.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Quoist, “ha bisogno di te” (our translation) in “Il venerabile P. Innocenzo da Caltagirone”, n° April-June 2017, cover page.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Koinonia 2017 n° 2.

Living OFS fraternity according to the requirements of the Rule becomes at the same time a reparation of the Church and a witness of the world to come<sup>16</sup>. Since the OFS is also threatened by the dangers of division which threaten society in general and the Church in particular, the Rule of the OFS invites everyone to daily conversion<sup>17</sup>. To do penance means to strive always to give a central place to Christ in our personal and community life. Christ who is for us “*way, truth and life*” makes us brothers and unity is possible only through his spirit.

#### 4. Conflicts as opportunities of witness

Conflicts are part of life in common. Generally, when we speak of fraternity, we immediately think of good relations. However, the Bible shows us another side of the fraternity: it is a place of tensions and sometimes fratricidal struggles and conflicts, competition and even hatred, jealousy and betrayal.<sup>18</sup> Let it suffice here to mention the emblematic cases of Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. In the previous issue, Fr. Alfred also brought to light the conflicts of St. Francis within the fraternity. We can therefore say that the fraternity is naturally a place of competitions and conflicts: even among the Apostles there were struggles for the first places.

That's why in a Christian fraternity, what makes a difference is not the absence of tension and conflict but the way they are handled; “*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, «Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?». Jesus answered, «I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times»* (Mt 18,21-22). Conflicts managed in the evangelical spirit of mercy and reconciliation transform our fraternities into credible witnesses of God's Kingdom on earth. In a world still deeply wounded by divisions on the basis of nationality, language, race, tribe, caste, color, etc., a fraternity of people coming from different groups is truly a prophetic sign of the fact that God has reconciled all things in Christ.

#### Conclusion

The present Rule of OFS is a project of life that embodies the dream of the Church of Second Vatican Council on the universal call to holiness and on the participation of the lay faithful in the missionary work of the Church. Today, 40 years after the gift of the Rule, it still retains all its freshness and all its evangelizing power to renew the Church and transform the society as yeast. The first words of Pope Francis in St Peter's square to the whole world that welcomed him as the new Bishop of Rome have a particular resonance for the Franciscans: “*And now, we take up this journey: ... this journey of the Church of Rome which presides in charity over all the Churches. A journey of fraternity, of love, of trust among us...let us pray for the whole world, that there may be a great spirit of fraternity*”<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup>Cf. Rule of OFS 12.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Rule of OFS 7.

<sup>18</sup>On this theme, see, TEDROS ABRAHA, *La Fratellanza nella Bibbia*, course given at Pontifical University of Antonianum, 2010.

<sup>19</sup>First greeting of Pope Francis on 13 March 2013, in

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/fr/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130313\\_benedizione-urbi-et-orbi.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/fr/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130313_benedizione-urbi-et-orbi.html)

## News - Chapters - visits – MEETINGS

### **Bolivia – National elective Chapter**

The national elective chapter of the secular Franciscan order (OFS) of Bolivia took place on July 9 - 11 2017, in the House of spirituality at St Joseph's convent of the missionary province of St. Anthony in Bolivia of the Friars Minor. It was presided over by Silvia Diana, CIOFS Presidency Councilor and accompanied by Fr. José Antonio Cruz Duarte, OFM, as delegate of the Conference of Spiritual Assistants (CAS). The National Council and the delegates of the CIOFS Presidency came together to see the details of the Chapter. Fr. José Antonio Cruz Duarte, OFM celebrated the inaugural Mass of the Chapter. In the first session, the national Minister and his council presented the account of the three-year period. On July 10, Fr. José Antonio Cruz Duarte held a presentation on the theme: “*The role of the secular Franciscans in today's society*” and Silvia Diana presented the theme “*Fraternity and Family*” and Fr. Carmelo Galdos, OFM, President of Justice, Peace and Integrity of creation did an exhibition on the theme: “the OFS in Bolivia”. The elective session began at 5pm. Michael Cano Torrico, was elected as national Minister and International Councilor and Dania Cordeo Nuñez as Vice Minister and International Councilor substitute. The new National Council assumed its duties during the Eucharist presided over by Fr. José Antonio Cruz Duarte, OFM. Silvia Diana confirmed the new National Council. On July 11, after the presentation of the greetings from the Minister General Tibor Kauser to the new National Council, priorities for the next three years were voted on.

### **Pakistan – national elective Chapter**

The national elective Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order of Pakistan, celebrated in Lahore from 21 to 23 July 2017, was presided over by Augustine Yoon, delegate of CIOFS Presidency, accompanied by Fr. Eric Rassani, OFM, delegate of the Conference of Spiritual Assistants (CAS), who celebrated the inaugural and closing Masses. 20 capitulars from 5 Fraternities attended the Chapter. Fr. Clarence, OFM Cap, the local spiritual Assistant was present and explained the dedication of the friars in assisting the Third Order. Members of the Franciscan youth also present were. Albert Nazir was elected as national Minister. The chapter was organized in a proper way and was celebrated with a good spirit of cooperation.

### **Egypt – national Conference of OFS and the nomination of the national Minister and the Council**

The National Conference of OFS in Egypt was held at Alexandria, Egypt from 31 July to 4 August. There participated 120 persons, among whom 70 secular Franciscans, 3 spiritual Assistants, 3 friars of OFM in initial formation, one Franciscan sister and a fluctuating number of observers and members of YouFra, who collaborated with the animation of songs. From the part of the CIOFS Presidency were present Attilio Galimberti, Councilor of the area and Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, general Assistant. The central theme of the Conference was “*Let us begin brothers*”. The speakers were Fr. Nabil Aziz, OFM, national Assistant of the OFS, Amando, Attilio, Bp. Adel Zaki, OFM, Latin Bishop in Cairo, Rev. Michael Bishoy OFS, a Coptic priest, Fr. Lukas Helmi, OFM, Vicar provincial, Dr. Amani Nassif, and Fr. Kamel Labib, OFM, Minister provincial, who also presided over the opening and closing Eucharist. The Conference was held in a fraternal climate and the members of the Presidency were warmly welcomed both by the friars and the seculars. At the end of the Conference, Attilio Galimberti (delegated by the General Minister, Tibor Kauser) named a Minister and a provisional National Council which will remain in Office for a year and whose installation occurred during the closing Mass. Shehata Habib, former national Minister, was confirmed in Office. Attilio entrusted the national Minister and his Council with specific tasks, such as organizing a national elective Chapter. Attilio and Amando had also several meetings with the

new National Council, with the OFM provincial Minister and Fr. Farid Kamal, OFM, national Assistant of YouFra.

### **Chad – Moundou – Formation course**

The second formation course for Africa in French language by the Commission for Project Africa was conducted in Moundou-Chad from 2 to 5 August in the premises of the Sacred Heart Cathedral. The course, which was originally planned for Yaounde – Cameroon to encourage the participation of members of OFS and spiritual Assistants of neighbouring countries, had to be shifted to Chad at the last moment due to low registration and lack of on-the-ground preparation. The course in Moundou was facilitated by Adolph Assagba, Coordinator for Project Africa and by Fr. Francis Bongajum Dor, OFM Cap, General Spiritual assistant OFS-YouFra. It was attended by 50 participants comprising OFS members, Spiritual assistants and Religious Sisters, all from Chad. The formation was focused on the use of the formation guide prepared by the Commission for Project Africa. It treated topics such as: the preparation and celebration of the chapter, the service of authority, the preparation and execution of a budget, the social doctrine of the Church and the family. The course was a moment of grace especially for the host national Fraternity. Its realization was made possible thanks to the dynamism of the national Minister, Ange Soulasengay and the commitment of the national Council to prepare what was necessary at very short notice.

### **Angola – National elective Chapter**

The national elective Chapter of OFS in Angola was held on 5 August in the convent of the Friars Minor Capuchin, at the parish church of Fatima, in Luanda. The Chapter was presided by Silvia Diana, councilor of the Presidency, assisted by Fr. Pedro Zitha, OFM, General assistant OFS-YouFra, who celebrated the inaugural prayer. Among the participants were present a diocesan priest, Fr. António Pedro Amândio who is also a member of the OFS, and at the same time Regional Assistant of Centre South of OFS-YouFra, Fr. José Antonio dos Santos, OFM, Fr. Camilo Militão, OFM, Fr. Adelino Domingos Soares, OFM Cap and Sr. Maria Lucia de Sousa. There were only 19 voting members and this number did not reach the quorum of 29, determined by the statutes of Angola. So, we decided to appoint the outgoing Council as members of the Provisional Council for one year. All voting members present accepted the appointment of the Provisional Council by secret ballot. The concluding Eucharistic celebration was presided by the parish priest and during the Mass Silvia Diana installed the new Provisional Council. Thanks to God for it was a moment of spiritual and fraternal sharing.

### **Denmark – Fraternal and Pastoral visit and the nomination of the National Council**

The fraternal and pastoral visits (VFP) to the OFS in Denmark were headed respectively by Ana Fruk, OFS, councilor of CIOFS and Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, the General spiritual Assistant, from August 18 to 20, 2017. Visitors met the local fraternity of Copenhagen on the morning of August 18. After lunch, everyone went to Sacred Heart of Jesus Church to meet Mons. Niels Engelbrecht, Diocesan Vicar General, who was willing to assume temporarily the service of local spiritual Assistant. The meeting with the National Council took place on Saturday, August 19, 2017, at the Catholic Church of Our Lady in Århus. Other members of the local fraternity were present for lunch and for a brief encounter with visitors, during which the parish priest, Fr. Krzysztof (Kris) Augustyniak, SJ, visited them. He is also willing to become their local Assistant. The meeting with the National Council then continued, including the auditing of books and records.

At the end of the visit, Ana Fruk, on behalf of the Minister General of the OFS, confirmed the current national Minister and Council for another year, assigning them specific tasks, including the preparation of the national elective chapter in the next year. The visitors also made recommendations in several areas. The VFP ended on August 20, with the celebration of the

Eucharist presided over by Amando and with the participation of the members of the fraternity of Århus.

### **India – Meeting with the Major Superiors**

On 24 - 29 August 2017, we held several meetings in India. We started with the meeting of major superiors of the First order and TOR on Thursday 24 August, in Assisi Shanthi Kendra, Karukutty, the provincial curia of the Conventuals. There were present all the major superiors, except two. Tibor explained what had happened in the last national Chapter and the current situation of OFS in India. Fr. Alfred gave some suggestions for the revision of national statutes. The next day Tibor and Fr. Alfred went to Coimbatore to meet the National Council at St. Fatima Church of Friars Minor Capuchin. During the meeting they insisted on the need to convene the national Chapter in the next year. On days 26 and 27, a Conference of spiritual Assistants was organized, that again in the provincial curia of the Conventuals. There were 24 assistants from the first order. Tibor presented the general situation of OFS in the world. Fr. Alfred presented the history of OFS and the meaning of assistance in light of the new Rule and Constitutions today. They were given ample time to discuss how to resolve the difficulties of OFS in India.

In the evening of 26, Tibor and Fr. Alfred, with the national Assistants visited the Cardinal of the Syro-Malabar Rite, Major Archbishop George Alancherry. We were welcomed by His Excellency and we talked about the Ritual of the Order. On the following day Tibor and Fr. Alfred went to visit the Archbishop of Verapoli, of the Latin rite, Mons. Joseph Kalathiparambil.

### **Chile – National elective Chapter**

The national elective Chapter of OFS in Chile was preceded by a series of meetings, held from 23 to 24 August 2017, between representatives of the Presidency of CIOFS and various groups and individuals, in order to verify the implementation of the recommendations of the fraternal and pastoral visits (VFP) of the last year. On behalf of the Presidency of CIOFS were present: Chelito Nunez, Vice General Minister and delegate to preside over the Chapter; Silvia Diana, Councilor for the area; and Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, OFS-YouFra general Assistant. On Thursday, August 25 Fr. Amando had a meeting with Fr. Luis Andrés Cervantes Aguirre OFM, national Assistant of YouFra.

The Chapter was held in the retreat house of “Alvernia” in San Francisco de Mostazal, from 25 to 27 August. Also present were the national Assistants of OFS in Chile, Fr. Victor Hugo OFM and Fr. Jack Ginting OFMConv, with whom Amando had a separate meeting. 60 secular Franciscans with active voice participated in the Chapter and about 15 observers. At the request of the outgoing Council, the three members of the Presidency made a presentation on themes related to the OFS in today's world. On the afternoon of August 26, William Tapia was elected national Minister while Edit Olmos was elected Vice-Minister. During the Holy Mass on August 26, presided by Fr. Amando, the Vice-Minister Chelito Nunez, installed the new Minister and National Council. The Chapter was held in a fraternal and serene atmosphere, concluded with the celebration of Holy Mass, presided by Fr. Carlos Paz, visitor of the Friars Minor, from Argentina.

### **Ireland – Fraternal and Pastoral Visits (FPV)**

The fraternal and pastoral visit to the National Council of the Secular Franciscan Order of Ireland took place from 25 to 27 August 2017, at Dublin City University (DCU), where there were present all the members of the National Council. The visit was made by Attilio Galimberti OFS, delegate of General Minister Tibor Kauser, and Pedro Zitha, OFM, general spiritual Assistant OFS-YouFra. There came two national assistants Fr. Kieran Cronin, OFM and Fr Michael Duffy, OFMCap. In the afternoon of the first day on 25 August, we had a meeting with the members of the National Council, a time of reflection and questions on the situation of OFS in Ireland and at the same time a

meeting with the two national spiritual Assistants. On the following day some members of OFS, from various fraternities, came for the inaugural Mass and a moment of personal talks with the visitors. In the morning of the last day on 27 August, Attilio Galimberti gave some recommendations to the National Council and the visits ended with Sunday Mass presided over by Fr. Aidan McGrath OFM and a fraternal lunch.

### **Peru – National elective Chapter**

The national elective chapter of OFS in Peru was celebrated from 8 to 10 September at the Convent of San Francisco of the Order of Friars Minor in Lima. To preside over the Chapter, was Chelito Nùnez, vice Minister General OFS, delegated by Tibor Kauser, Minister General OFS. Chelito was assisted by Fr. Francis Bongajum Dor, OFM<sup>Cap</sup>, Assistant General of OFS-YouFra. There were 28 capitulars present among the 40 convoked for the Chapter with the right to vote and 2 national Assistants. The inaugural Mass was presided over by Fr. Guido Zegarra Ponce, OFM, Minister provincial and national Assistant of OFS. Maria Marta Vivanco Carter was elected national Minister and international Councilor. The newly-elected Council was installed on the last day by Chelito during the concluding Mass presided by Fr. Francis. Then, all the voting members signed the minutes, which should serve to begin the process of acquisition of legal personality for the Peruvian national Fraternity. The chapter took place in an atmosphere of great serenity and spirit of fraternity. Fr. Francis said he was very grateful to the Capuchins of Peru, who had welcomed and hosted for 2 days before and after the Chapter and facilitated his travelling in Peru.

### **Lithuania – National elective Chapter**

The elective Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) of Lithuania, celebrated in Kaunas from 15-17 September 2017, was presided over by Andrea Odak, councilor of the Presidency of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS), accompanied by Fr. Pedro Zitha, OFM, Assistant General of OFS-YouFra. There were 35 voting members with the national Assistant Fr. Antanas Bluzas, OFM, who presided over the inaugural Mass, 3 members representing the National Council of the Franciscan youth and Fr. Juozapas Marija, OFM, regional Assistant. On the first day of the Chapter a report on the work done during the last three years was presented and on the following day the discussions on the priorities for the national fraternity for the next three years was held. In the afternoon was the elective session, in which Virginija Mickutė was elected as national Minister and international Councilor substitute, Nerijus Čapas as Vice Minister, Monika Midverytė for the formation and as international Councilor, Natalija Verbickienė as Treasurer, Nijolė Raudytė as Secretary. The concluding Mass was presided by the Minister provincial Fr. Algirdas Malakauskis, OFM. The Chapter was well prepared and we truly lived fraternal moments.

### **Spain – national elective Chapter**

The national elective Chapter of OFS in Spain was held from 23 to 24 September 2017, at the residence of the Suore Francescane Missionarie della Madre del Divin Pastore, in Madrid, and was presided over by Ana Fruk, councilor of the Presidency of CIOFS, who was accompanied by Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, General Assistant of OFS-YouFra. Among the convoked 35 voting members 28 were present. Also some ten Assistants, including three national Assistants (Fr. Mario García, OFM<sup>Cap</sup>, Fr. Leonardo García, OFM and Fr. Miguel Campillo, OFM<sup>Conv</sup>) were present. The opening Mass was presided by Fr. Mario García. Antonio Álvarez (first term) was elected national Minister and international Councilor. Ana and Fr. Amando had a meeting with the new National Executive Council. On the second day of work, a meeting was held in which some members of the Executive Council dialogued with other chapter members on proposals for work for the next three years. The Chapter was held in a fraternal atmosphere of dialogue, prayer and joy and ended with the Eucharist, presided by Fr. Amando, during which Ana Fruk installed the new National Executive Council.