



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

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June 24th 2012

To National OFS and YouFra Councils of Europe
To International OFS and YouFra Councillors of Europe
To the Participants at the European Congress OFS-YouFra

Subject: Practical information for the Congress

Dear brothers and sisters,

Peace and all Good!

Our Congress is approaching quickly! Let's prepare our hearts to live it intensely and profoundly. It's somewhat like going on retreat: we come to be renewed close to Jesus, in order to receive Him, to spend time loving Him, to visit Him, to know Him. We will have the joy of living Eucharistic moments, of praise, of living as pilgrims, and the grace of being able to adore Him night and day ...



We will also come to be fed close to our brothers and sisters, from whom we will draw the charism and strength of witness. Despite the difficulties of language, we will build communion, asking St. Francis to give us all the zeal to rebuild the Church!

We will be united in this impulse with the Poor Clares from many Monasteries who pray for the fecundity of the Congress. And, full of living hope, we will leave for each of our countries, encouraged, in order to follow Jesus in his cry « *I have come to bring fire to the earth and I would so want this fire to be ignited* » in the Church, in the OFS and in YouFra.



St. Thérèse also wishes to teach us the secret of the "little way", a path to holiness for us too, sons and daughters of St. Francis! She wishes to give us much during these days.

And, now, please pay attention to the following important points:

1. Civil Liability Insurance

URGENT: We ask you to let us know, **BY RETURN MAIL**, if you have **civil liability insurance from your country** (check this out with the leader of your group). If you do not, we will take the necessary steps to ensure that you are insured during your stay in France.

2. Useful phone on arrival in France and address to Lisieux

a. At the airports in Paris or at the Eurolines train stations: you will be met when you arrive, after which you will travel to Lisieux by train or by car or, for those who arrive on Sunday evening, to a host family in Paris. Here is the telephone number that you can use :

- when you **arrive** in France, if you require assistance: 0033 698544155 - Jean will answer!
- For those who arrive in **Lisieux** directly: if necessary, please call Birgit: 0033 650252128.

b. **The address of the Congrès :** Ermitage Ste Thérèse, 23 Rue du Carmel, 14100 LISIEUX

c. **Telephone** to which it is possible to contact you **in case of emergency:** 0033 231485510

3. Are you ready to serve during the Congress?

It would be good if each one could offer their service to the brothers and sisters, in supporting the organization of each day of the Congress. Click on the link below to register (refer to paragraph 4)

We suggest the following areas:

- Singing
- Music
- Cleaning/Housework
- Adoration (the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed throughout the Congress)
- Oral translation in the small work groups (specify the language)
- Translation of written documents (specify the language)
- Learning a dance from your country to participate in the program for the final vigil
- The service of joy in all circumstances



4. Work Groups: Choice of Themes to Develop

For the work groups of July 11th: it would be good if EACH participant chose, in advance, a theme that reflects his/her interest. You can then begin to develop the chosen theme in order to nourish your reflection and the discussions that will take place during the Congress.

To do this, please register yourself by clicking on the link at the end of the paragraph:

A. Workshop on “Formation”

Some points to consider ...

- Some of the themes noted in the Conclusions of the General Chapter are sense of belonging and Franciscan identity, the social doctrine of the Church, the values of the family, ecumenism : how can these points be integrated into our daily lives at a practical level and not just at an intellectual level?
- How can we take this into consideration in pursuing the New Evangelization?
- The grace proper to Secular Franciscan is given for the work of sanctifying the temporal order in the light of the social doctrine of the Church. The social doctrine of the Church: how is it shared in our fraternities?
- Does the ongoing formation provided by our national fraternity allow us to open ourselves to human realities (family, work, ecology ...)?
- Does it include Pope John Paul II’s theology of the body?
- Question regarding initial formation
- In our fraternities, how do the current teachings of the Church (*Caritas in Veritate* for example) enable us with certainty to discern right from wrong, particularly for the younger members of our fraternities?

B. Workshop on “Franciscan Youth”

Some points to consider ...

- The appropriate connection between YouFra and OFS
- In the formation agenda: new content (theology of the body) and formation methodology
- In the dialogue between the OFS and YouFra, what paths, what bridges for today, for tomorrow?
- How can we support the incorporation of youth of YouFra into the OFS fraternities?
- How can the OFS stimulate the establishment of YouFra in their own countries?
- The YouFra Promise / the OFS Profession, how are these engagements connected?
- How can we enable the preparation of our youth to a more long-term engagement?

C. Workshop on “Family”

Some points to consider ...

- Rule 17, Constitutions Art 24-25: “They should concern themselves with respect for all life in every situation from conception until death”: how is this lived out in practical terms within our fraternities?
- In our society where the family is not taken into account very much, how can our fraternities be places where couples and families can find resources and be nourished?
- What elements of “Familiaris Consortio”, of “The Letter to Families”, of “The Dignity of Woman”, of “The Theology of the Body” are lived within our fraternities: Is the reality of the family integrated into our formation programs?
- What initiatives from our fraternities can we share with each other dealing with the defence and protection of the family? Which ones need urgent attention (reflection on the ideology of gender, welcome extended to children with disabilities, etc.)?

D. Workshop on “Social and Political Life”

Some points to consider ...

Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer engaged themselves as Christians, in accordance with the social doctrine of the Church. They have understood that there needs to be a just relationship between salary and the family, a just sharing of goods. They have worked in the social, political and community arenas.

- Do our fraternity meetings prepare us sufficiently to be engaged in politics? Is this their role and, if yes, how do we go about doing this?
- From private initiatives to public engagements, how do our fraternity meetings prepare us to be engaged “in the city”?
- Our Rule and Constitutions associate the word “courage” to our engagements in society and in politics (Rule 15, Constitutions Art. 22). How can we cultivate and stimulate this courage, encouraging our brothers and sisters in their personal and community initiatives? How can we make them known?

Register now by clicking on the link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dGo0dkZaY2ZtazYxU3VpZHM0d2wzY1E6MQ>

5. Specific preparations: don’t forget

- a. the presentation of your country through dance, mime or song for the Festival of Nations on the first night,
- b. the Powerpoint presentation which presents a joy, a difficulty, an expectation of the OFS and the YouFra
- c. written material that you would like to make available on the stand.

6. Final Program

- On July 12th, Cardinal Christoph Schonborn will not be with us in person. However, he will be with us through Skype and, thanks to this technology, he will assist us in our reflection on the “challenges of the Church in Europe” and we will be able to engage in dialogue with him.
- For those who will not be going to Mont St. Michel, an alternative program will be offered.

7. The ciofs.org website

The important moments of the Congress (a synthesis of each day with photos) will be posted on the CIOFS website each day; please communicate this information to all of your Fraternities so that the brothers and sisters of the OFS and YouFra in your country can be in united with us *online*.



8. Photos

A small, but necessary, legal reminder concerning photos taken at the Congress that will be posted on the internet site: all photos posted on the site assume that permission has been granted to use the photo from the person photographed. We do not have the right to distribute photos without the authorization of the persons concerned. We count on you to ensure that the person's permission has been granted for photos posted on the website.

9. Reminder to bring, if possible:

- photo of a saint (or image, banner),
- flag,
- specialty from your country,
- Rule and Constitutions, Gospels,
- musical instrument (guitar ...)
- sleeping bag for those youth who will be sleeping on the ground (YouFra),
- belongings: warm clothes (it appears that the weather in Normandy, and therefore in Lisieux, will be cool. Take whatever clothing you deem necessary), rain coat, hat or cap, small backpack, sun screen, personal medications, towel.

10. After the Congress

It will not be possible to remain in Lisieux after July 15th. Those who return to Paris on the 16th, 17th or 18th, will be transported from Lisieux to Paris. For those who have not arranged accommodations, we can suggest places where you can stay with a local individual (family). However, it will be your own responsibility to organize any touring activities (tour of the city, daily program, etc.).

Peace and all Good,

In the name of the organizing team of the OFS-YouFra Congress,

Michèle Altmeyer and Elisabeth Collet



*Lord,
Grant me the grace to love You with a strong and burning love, and,
in You, to love all people, and everything that is good, true and beautiful.
Give me great courage so that I attach little importance to the things of this
world when they threaten to come between You and me.
Grant me faithfulness and joy in the vocation that you have chosen for me.
Give me the grace to labour and to achieve great things
in the depths of humility and uprightness of heart.
And wipe out the debt of my sins. Amen*

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