



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

Consilium Internationale

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Thursday, March 1st 2012

To the SFO National Ministers of Europe
National Training Directors
YouFra National Animators
International Councilors
National Spiritual Assistants

To the YouFra National Presidents and Councils
YouFra National Spiritual Assistants

Peace and all Good!

Object: practical preparation for the 1st SFO-YouFra European Congress.

Dear brothers and sisters OFS and YouFra,

To work together, we need to get to know, and discover more about, one another through an exploration of our differences, our complementary talents and our common identity. One whole day of this Congress will be devoted to introducing ourselves to one another.

But how can we introduce 33 national Fraternities simply without it becoming tedious? Each Fraternity of YouFra and of the OFS is invited to be creative and to give free rein to their imagination.

Three moments or 'activities' will give each national OFS/YouFra the opportunity to give witness together.

1. **The Introductory Evening of July 9th.**

- It should be a very short festive or cultural act (a song, or a dance, or a mime, etc.).
- That evening, each OFS/YouFra national Fraternity will be asked to choose a Franciscan saint from their own country and to display either a photograph or picture or a pennant of that Franciscan saint. A procession with those pennants or pictures will be held on July 14th.

2. **Introducing the reality of SFO and YouFra in each one of the 33 countries.**

There will be 3 and a half hours to introduce 33 countries which means it must be very brief (5 min per country)...

→ Each country will be asked to introduce itself using a PowerPoint slide show or a video, which should last no longer than 5 min. At the same time, this resource will enable the CIOFS to build up its archives. *This* presentation is not intended to be festive or cultural.

Suggested outline for such a slideshow, in 4 steps:

- A map of the country indicating establishment places – a few photographs (to bring out the atmosphere and show faces),
- A presentation sharing a moment of joy, of beauty, of thanksgiving in the life of the OFS/YouFra Fraternities,
- A presentation sharing a difficult time or an expectation or aspiration in the life of the OFS/YouFra Fraternities,
- Some possible responses to the challenges or possible responses as to how to participate in the impetus for new evangelization.

Our brothers and sisters are asked to write down the text beforehand and to send it to us as soon as possible. This text will be included in the folders for the Congress and will enable all of us to get to know one another better.

3. The different stalls and the “Resources Centre”.

- To complete the introductions, we suggest that each National OFS/YouFra Na Fraternity bring something traditional, home-made or hand-made as a gift:
 - o A speciality dish to be sampled together (a small drop or a tiny morsel for each will be sufficient)
 - o A cultural curio that might possibly be given as a souvenir,
 - o Depictions of one or more saints from your country, etc.
- The “Resources Centre” is designed to be an area for sharing ideas. We suggest that each OFS/YouFra Fraternity bring:
 - o A few copies of their leaflets - booklets, pictures, magazines or journals, photographs, CDs or DVDs, formation booklets – resources used for the formation and animation of OFS and YouFra members.
 - o But also anything that could be useful for groups of teenagers and younger children..

Our diverse languages will definitely make communication a great challenge for us. However, the enthusiasm and energy within each one of us, and his/her expertise in one field or another should help and inspire us all enormously. We will go back to our Fraternities enriched by everything we will have seen and understood better. Indeed, it is a challenge to find alternative means of communication to speech and words but aren't we living in the time of the Holy Spirit?

Together, Secular Franciscan Order and Franciscan Youth, are resolved to respond with determination to the urgent call of the Church for a new evangelization of Europe. This is the goal of this our first OFS-YouFra European Congress which will be held from **July 9th to July 15th 2012**.

So, do not forget to, first of all, **REGISTER FOR THE CONGRESS** immediately!

And if, regrettably, it should be impossible for any one of our Fraternities to join us, let them, nonetheless, take part in the three activities described above by sending their PowerPoint slideshow, a song, the picture of a national Saint, leaflets and activities ideas, etc. to the postal address of the French OFS headquarters: “Fraternité Franciscaine Séculière, 27 rue Sarette, 75014 PARIS France”.

So that, regardless of physical absence, our secular Franciscan brothers and sisters from all over Europe will be able to have a sense of the presence and interest of all in this first OFS/YouFra Congress.

Fraternaly yours, as we enter the Lenten season, confident in St Joseph whose feast we celebrate this month.

On behalf of the CIOFS-JeFra Working Commission for preparing the Congress,

Michèle Altmeyer and Elisabeth Collet

P.S: In a future letter, you'll be invited to think about themes for the workshops, from which you will choose one in which you will be prepared to take an active part.

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