



CONFERENCE OF GENERAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

to the Secular Franciscan Order
and the Franciscan Youth

Via Vittorio Putti, 4, int. 6
00152 Rome - I T A L Y

Rome, 18 June 2013

The Provincial Ministers and Custodes
Their respective places

Cc: The National Assistants to the OFS
Their respective places

Dear Major Superiors of the First Order
and of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Assisi

May the Lord give you peace!

By the present letter, the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants (CAS) to the OFS and YouFra would like to let you know about the **Program of Formation** developed specifically for the preparation of Spiritual Assistants to the OFS-YouFra not belonging to the First Order or to the TOR (A.N.A.P.O.T.). This program was developed at the specific request of the *General Chapter of the OFS of 2008*, held in Hungary, which in the formation section of its conclusions, declared the following: *The Presidency will be asked to prepare adequate tools for an appropriate formation for the lay and religious spiritual assistants not belonging to the 1st Order and TOR*. Such a request responds to a growing need, felt in certain countries and regions in which there are no religious of the First Order or TOR, or where they are prevented from offering this service that the Church has entrusted to our Orders (cf. Const. OFS 85.2; Statutes for spiritual and pastoral Assistance to the OFS 1).

As some of you will recall, to reach this proposal we followed a long process of consultation that included the work of a first team, made up of certain Secular Franciscans with vast experience and us, and in 2011 there was carried out a survey on the condition of spiritual and pastoral assistance in the national fraternities of the OFS and YouFra. The results of the study were tabulated by our Conference and communicated to all the members of the Presidency of the OFS, the General Chapter of the OFS of 2011, and finally to all the national Assistants and Major Superiors of the First Order and TOR in January 2012, by a circular letter of CIOFS (cf. Prot. N. 2381/12).

These results and subsequent contributions of various secular members of the Presidency of CIOFS were the base for the Program of Formation developed by our Conference, toward the end of responding directly to the needs expressed by both the General Chapter of 2008 and by the responses to the survey of 2011. Note that this *Program* was conceived as a tool to accompany the *Manual for Assistance to the OFS and YouFra*, developed and publishes in Italian by CAS in 2006 and then translated and published in various languages.

The *Program* includes elements necessary for the formation of all the Spiritual Assistants of Franciscan Youth and OFS, but also includes other elements that are directly linked with the particular situation of the ANAPOT. This is a list of the specific elements grouped into five areas: 1) Historical Aspects, 2) Legislative Aspects, 3) Doctrinal Aspects, 4) Functional Aspects, and 5) Ongoing Formation. This list proposes to be a sure guide for the formation of such assistants and, at the same time, can be enriched and adapted to the particular circumstances of each national fraternity.



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The Program was also planned in relation to the running of formation courses at the national and regional levels for spiritual and pastoral Assistants to the OFS. Such courses must be organized regularly, every year or two years if possible, because they are a necessary and beneficial means to guarantee the quality of assistance. As you know, the Major Superiors of the First Order and TOR are those primarily responsible for the spiritual and pastoral assistance to the OFS and the quality of this service (cf. *Statutes for spiritual and pastoral Assistance to the OFS* 5). Therefore we present to you this tool for formation, inviting you to disseminate it, above all to the national and regional Assistants, such that they, as your delegates, may organize such courses and spaces of formation in close collaboration with the other members of the National Councils of the OFS.

We invite you to give your full support to the formation of the spiritual and pastoral assistants by means of this *Program of Formation*, that it may be a clear sign of your fraternal commitment towards the OFS and YouFra which will further and better promote the lived experience of the Franciscan charism by our secular brothers and sisters and by the Franciscan youth. It will also contribute to a greater commitment to the spread of the Kingdom of God in the world, which offers many opportunities and challenges. By means of these, the Lord of history asks and calls us to respond with evangelical boldness and authentic fraternal witness, as St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, the service of mercy inspired by St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and through making a transforming and prophetic effect in the world, as did St. Louis IX, King of France.

We appreciate all that you have done and continued to do to supply the Fraternities of the OFS with prepared and suitable assistants (cf. *Statutes for Assistance*; 5.4 Const. 87,3SFO, Rule OFS 26) and above all for the attention and commitment you will give to put the *Program of Formation* for the ANAPOT into effect.

Please contact us if we can be of help in the full realization of this help to formation. We let you know that we are able to participate in courses of formation for Assistants, as we have done up to now, as we are able to do according to the time we have and counting on appropriate scheduling.

Fraternally in Christ and St. Francis,

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