



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

Consilium Internationale

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To the National Ministers OFS
To the International Councilors OFS and YouFra
To the National Councils YouFra

Object: Formation Program for the Spiritual Assistants OFS-YouFra not belonging to the First Order and to the TOR (ANAPOT)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

Considering the difficulties occurring in several countries to ensure the spiritual Assistance, both to the Secular Franciscan Order and to the Franciscan Youth, the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants of the OFS and of the YouFra (CAS), listening to the request of the OFS General Chapter held in Hungary (2008): "*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*", has prepared a formation program for the spiritual Assistants, sent to all the Major Superiors responsible for the pastoral care, along with a circular letter of clarification. Both are here attached for your information.

The purpose of this circular is not only to attach these documents, but to make sure that each Council of any level of the OFS and of the Franciscan Youth, know with certainty the procedure to be followed, in case it is not possible to give to the Fraternity a Spiritual Assistant of the First Order or TOR, as provided in our General Constitutions, Art. 89 with special attention to paragraphs 1, 2 and 4.

As regards the appointment of the spiritual assistant not belonging to the First Order and to the TOR, during the Fraternal and Pastoral Visits and Chapters, we found many initiatives which were **completely wrong**. It occurred very often that the Council of the local Fraternities itself, by its own initiative, appointed a brother or a sister, considered appropriate, chosen among the OFS members, the Franciscan or not Franciscan nuns or among the diocesan priests appointed by their own Bishop, etc.. whereas the Major Superior competent is the only person in charge of these appointments and,

in the case of diocesan priests or nuns, he must have a dialogue with the respective Superior and/or with the correspondent Bishop, in order to obtain the permission to provide this service.

So I repeat: **the appointment of the Assistant of any level of the OFS and of the YouFra is the exclusive task of the Major Superiors of the First Order and of the TOR.**

The documents prepared by the Conference of the Spiritual Assistants will help you in understanding:

1. The method of the appointment and who has the responsibility of this.
2. That an adequate formation is essential to exercise the service of spiritual Assistant and the Major Superior competent is directly responsible of this formation.
3. That those National Councils aware of the lack of religious candidates capable of offering this service, could use this help to work on the formation of those Secular Franciscans who have the characteristics to perform this service, with the aim of helping the Major Superiors when needed.
4. That it is not possible for a brother or a sister, except in very concrete exceptions evaluated by the Major Superior competent, to be the Spiritual Assistant of his/her own Fraternity.

With the confidence to serve you and help you in guiding more and better our brothers and sisters of the OFS and of the Franciscan Youth, we send you the abovementioned documents, certain that you will receive them with great sense of responsibility and joy, so that they may help us in understanding such an important issue for our Fraternities' life.

I wish you a happy feast of the Immaculate, Mother and Queen of the Franciscan Family, which comes to us during the Advent to confirm and give strength and hope to our waiting for the Messiah.

Your sister,



Encarnación del Pozo
Minister General OFS

Attached:

1. Circular Letter of the CAS to the Major Superiors
2. Formation Program for the Spiritual Assistants OFS-YouFra not belonging to the First Order and to the TOR