



K O I N Ō N I A

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CONFERENCE OF GENERAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS TO THE SFO

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EACH SFO FRATERNITY SHOULD HAVE ITS OWN SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

Practical interpretation of Article 89.4, letter b, of the General Constitutions

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Introduction

After the last SFO General Chapter approved the practical interpretation of Art. 89.4 b of the GGCC of the SFO in Budapest in November of 2008, it is now no longer possible to have a fraternity without its Spiritual Assistant.

In her letter of Sept. 29, 2009 (11/08-14 - Prot. N. 2081), Encarnación del Pozo, Minister General of the SFO, affirmed the following in this new document:

“We are now proceeding with its distribution, and calling the attention of the national councils on the need to identify and prepare Secular Franciscans, whether lay or cleric, to assume the delicate and highly important task of providing spiritual assistance to local Fraternities when necessary. We must absolutely avoid having Fraternities that do not have this essential guide, and at the same time, we must prevent the closing of some Secular Franciscan fraternities as a result of the unavailability of Franciscan religious who are members of the First Order and TOR, or religious brothers or sisters of other Franciscan institutes.”

We include below the whole document approved by the General Chapter with the sure hope that, by doing so, we are making a contribution to all the Friars of the First Franciscan Order, TOR, and all the members of the Franciscan families who will be reading these pages.

PRACTICAL INTERPRETATION of Article 89.4, letter b, of the General Constitutions, and Article 15.4, item 2°, of the Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the SFO, and relevant application.

“When it is not possible to give such a Spiritual Assistant to the fraternity, the competent major superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to diocesan clerics or other persons, specially prepared for such service, who are members of the SFO” (Gen. Const., art. 89.4,b).

“When it is not possible to give the fraternity a spiritual assistant who is a member of the First Order or the TOR, the competent major Superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to secular Franciscans, cleric or lay, especially prepared for such service” (Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the SFO, art. 15.4, 2°).

Introduction

Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order

1. In the Church, there are many spiritual families, with different charisms. One of these is the Franciscan Family, with its various branches, which recognizes Saint Francis of Assisi as father, inspirer and model (cf. Rule 2).
2. The Secular Franciscan Order has held, from the beginning, a special place in the Franciscan Family. It is an organic union of all the Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful (cf. Rule 2).
3. Since they belong to the same spiritual family, the Holy See has entrusted pastoral care and spiritual assistance of the SFO to the Franciscan First Order and to the Third Order Regular (TOR) (cf. Gen. Const. 1.4).
4. From the Franciscan history and the Constitutions of the Franciscan First Order and TOR, it is clear that these Orders, by virtue of their common origin and charism and by will of the Church, dedicate themselves to the spiritual and pastoral assistance of the SFO (cf. Const. OFM 60; Id. OFM Conv. 116; Id. OFM Cap. 95; Id TOR 157; Rule of the Third Order of Pope Leone XIII 3,3 and SFO Rule approved by Paul VI 26).
5. In their own jurisdiction, the Provincial Ministers and the other Major Superiors assure spiritual assistance to the local Fraternities entrusted to their jurisdiction and are responsible for the spiritual assistance of the local Fraternities that they have established (cf. Gen. Const. Art. 88, 1 and 3).
6. To be a witness of Franciscan spirituality and of the fraternal affection of the religious towards the secular Franciscans, and to be a bond of communion between his Order and the SFO, the spiritual assistant should be a Franciscan religious, member of the First Order or the TOR (cf. Gen. Const. 89.3).
7. When it is not possible to provide the Fraternity with a Spiritual Assistant who is a member of the First Order or TOR, the competent Major Superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to:
 - a. religious brothers or sisters of other Franciscan institutes;
 - b. diocesan clerics or other persons, specially prepared for such service, who are members of the SFO;
 - c. other diocesan clerics or non-Franciscan religious (cf. Gen. Const. 89.4 and cf. Statutes for the Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the SFO, art. 15.4).

Application

In due consideration of and in conformity with article 5.3 of the General Constitutions, the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO:

- a) realizing the need to clarify and unify the application of art. 89.4, letter b, of the General Constitutions, and art. 15.4, item 2° of the Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the SFO and prepare guidelines for the national statutes;
- b) considering that in defining the Assistant, being a priest is not a requirement, as his/her specific duty is not “sacramental” assistance, but **spiritual assistance**, the First Order and TOR can designate a brother or sister, who may not be a priest, to assist the SFO Fraternity on condition that he/she is “**suitable and prepared**”.
- c) considering that it is the duty of the Major Superiors to provide for the spiritual assistance to an SFO fraternity, in the absence of a friar.

clarifies

- a) The secular Spiritual Assistant (lay person or cleric) is appointed for the various levels - local, regional and national - by the competent authority (Major Superior or Conference of the First Order or TOR) to which he/she normally refers.
- b) To take on the task of Spiritual Assistant in a Fraternity, the secular Franciscan must have been professed for a minimum of 5 years.
- c) The secular Franciscan Spiritual Assistant must not belong to the same Fraternity to which he/she is providing assistance because:
 - ✓ the bonds of friendship, fraternity and living together may prejudice his/her duty, especially for what concerns fraternal correction, preventing him/her to act with impartiality in his/her directions;
 - ✓ when applying the directions given by the superior level, the involvement in the same fraternity makes his/her work more difficult;
 - ✓ an Assistant belonging to another fraternity is able to have a clearer picture of the difficulties, problems and progress in the Fraternity.
- d) For the ministry of spiritual assistance, the secular Spiritual Assistant must be suitable and well-prepared, that is:
 - ✓ have the psychological capacity and conditions to carry out the responsibility that spiritual assistance entails;
 - ✓ have moral rectitude;
 - ✓ give testimony of authentic Christian life;
 - ✓ be faithful to the Catholic faith and Franciscan charism;
 - ✓ give testimony of life in conformity with the SFO Rule and Constitutions.
- e) The lay secular Spiritual Assistant must have a solid Franciscan formation in view of his/her important role and influence in the fraternity, with a good knowledge of:
 - ✓ the Sacred Scriptures;
 - ✓ the Franciscan Sources;
 - ✓ the SFO Rule and General Constitutions;
 - ✓ the SFO and Church documents to ensure that the fraternity does not lose its Franciscan identity.

The Secular Franciscan Spiritual Assistant does not have the right to vote in financial matters relating to the Fraternity he/she assists nor will he/she have active or passive voice in these matters (cf. Gen. Const. art. 77.1 and 2; 90.2).

NEWS - CHAPTERS - VISITS - MEETINGS

Spain - Plenary Council of the TOR

From May 18-22, the Plenary Council of the TOR took place at the Shrine of our Lady of Care in the Island of Mallorca, Spain. In addition to the Minister General and his Council, present were also the Ministers Provincial of all the Entities of the Order. During his presentation, Br. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, SFO Assistant General, thanked the Ministers Provincial for their efforts to produce Spiritual Assistants who are ready and fit for the SFO; he likewise gave them an overview of the current state of the SFO in the world.

At the same time, he encouraged them to fulfill their service as Major Superiors with a big task according to the legislative documents of the TOR. Also, Br. Armando furnished them with some essential documents of the SFO and other handbooks.

Egypt - SFO National Convention

From Aug. 3-8, the National Convention of the SFO took place at the Friars Minor's house of Mokatam in El Cairo, Egypt. Several secular Franciscans from different local fraternities were present together with the National Minister Shehata Habib, Definitor Provincial Br. Lukas Sawarsan, OFM, and other members of the National Council who both organized and prepared the Convention. In addition to some Spiritual Assistants, also present on behalf of the Presidency of the International Council of the SFO (CIOFS) were both Benedito Lino, Councilor of the Presidency and Br. Ivan Matić, OFM, Assistant General. The main theme of the Convention was "*The Word of God: Lord to whom shall we go? You have the Words of Eternal Life (Jn 6:68)*". The many different reports given and comments made allowed participants to deepen their understanding of the importance of the Word of God in the life and mission of every Christian, especially in the life of the secular Franciscans. These themes dealt with Franciscan Spirituality and Evangelization, the rapport between religious and secular Franciscans, the theme of spiritual and pastoral assistant, and the profession of the SFO and also the presentation of the last SFO General Chapter, which was celebrated in November 2008. There was a lively and very engaging participation of all those present during the Convention, creating a beautiful atmosphere of fraternity and communion. The Convention then concluded with a solemn Eucharistic celebration in the Coptic rite by the Minister Provincial Br. Joseph Amin, OFM, together with the presence of some Friar students who animated both liturgy and song. In fact, during the liturgy, as a way of celebrating the VIII centenary of the Franciscan charism, the secular Franciscans renewed their profession of Gospel life, thanking the Lord for the gift of Franciscan vocation.

Paraguay - Fraternal e Pastoral Visit

From Aug. 7-9, the fraternal and pastoral visit to the SFO fraternities of Paraguay took place according to the program carefully prepared for about two months. The visitors were Maria Aparecida Crepaldi, Councilor of the CIOFS Presidency and Br. Martin Bitzer, OFMConv, SFO Assistant General. Both arrived first thing in the afternoon of Thursday, Aug. 6 and were welcomed at the airport by National Minister Alcides Isidoro Martinez Amarilla, Regional Minister of Saint Lawrence Carmelo Fleitas, Dolores Ramirez (Lola), SFO, and Sr. Irma Brites, both a Franciscan teacher at Christ the King and President of the Franciscan Famil of Paraguay. The OFM Provincial Custos and SFO National Assistant Br. Marcelo Benítez as well as the National Assistant of YouFra Br. Fredi Fernández, OFM both received the visitors in their convents in the city of Lambaré. Lambaré is where the first part of the fraternal and pastoral visit (FPV) took place with both the Major Superiors and Spiritual Assistants. There was also a meeting with the members of the Franciscan family. The day concluded with Holy Mass presided by Br. Martin in Spanish with readings conducted in the Guaraní language. The second part of the FPV took place in the seat of the SFO of Paraguay in the city of Caaguazú, where the Regional Ministers and other members of the National Council of both the SFO and YouFra. The exchange between the two Councils was fruitful. After having checked the bookkeeping, they made a few recommendations in the book of minutes. The Holy Mass celebrated in the Guaraní language was presided by Br. Luis Otazua, OFM, who had been National Assistant of the SFO for more than 20 yrs. The success of the FPV and the welcoming spirit of the Secular Franciscans and the Friars of Paraguay allowed to see a promising future for the SFO National Fraternity of that nation of South America.

Nicaragua - National Elective Chapter

From Aug. 14-16, the National Elective Chapter of the SFO Fraternity took place at the "Tepeyac" Retreat House in San Rafael of the North in Jinotega, Nicaragua. Present were 59 Capitulars of the 74 members eligible for election. María Esther Pérez Grimaldi, SFO, was delegated by the Minister General Encarnación del Pozo along with Assistant General Br. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, as a representative of CAS. Both carried out meetings of fraternal dialogue with the outgoing National Council before and after the Chapter and presented together a report entitled, "What is a Chapter?" In attendance were also National Assistant Br. Evaristo Beltrand, OFMCap, and New National Assistant Br. Francisco Medina, OFM. The Chapter was celebrated in a fraternal atmosphere of faith, prayer, and intense work without missing any moment of recreation. Members of YouFra were present to animate the occasion with song. José Antonio Miranda España was elected as National Minister and Luis Obando Hernández as International Councilor.

Lithuania - Congress of European Franciscans Youth

The V Congress of European Franciscan Youth was celebrated from Aug. 18-24 in Lithuania with the main theme, "Through Martyrdom to the Resurrection". Young people from around 11 countries were present with their Spiritual Assistants. Also present on behalf of the Presidency of CIOFS were both Ana Fruk, Councilor of the Presidency and Br. Ivan Matic, OFM, Assistant General of the SFO-YouFra. The Franciscan youth of Europe has willed on this occasion with great joy and in communion with the whole Franciscan family to give thanks to the Lord for the VIII Centenary of the Franciscan charism.

There were two significant reasons that coincided with the celebration of this Congress. First, Lithuania is commemorating precisely this year a thousand years to its name. Secondly, its capital, Vilnius, was proclaimed the European Capital of Culture for 2009. Because of these reasons, therefore, it was a real honor and privilege for the Franciscan youth of Europe to celebrate the V Congress in Lithuania. The Congress unfolded as a pilgrimage of thanksgiving, reflection, friendship, and fraternal sharing, including visits to places that are symbols of the Church and of the Franciscan Family in Lithuania. Examples of these symbolic places are the Hill of Crosses in Šiauliai, a sacred place, indeed, and a center of many pilgrimages that became famous in the world with the visit of Pope John Paul II there. For more information, you may visit the official web site of the Congress at <http://www.jaupra.lt/congress>.

Brazil - National Elective Chapter

The National Elective Chapter of the SFO was held from Aug. 21- 23 in the city of Manaus (AM), Brazil. It was presided by Silva Noemi Diana, National Minister and SFO International Councilor of Argentina and delegate of the Minister General. Sylvia was accompanied by Br. Luis Furgoni, OFMConv, SFO National Assistant of Argentina. Also, Antonio Benedito de Jesus da Silva Bitencourt was elected National Minister and International Councilor.

Ireland - National Elective Chapter

The Chapter unfolded in the "All Hallows College" in Dublin, Ireland from Sept. 28-30. There were 33 Capitulars invited, but only 30 showed up. On behalf of the CIOFS, Tibor Kauser presided over the Elective Chapter with SFO Spiritual Assistant Br. Irudaya Samy, OFMCap. The whole event unfolded with ease and without problems thanks to the brothers and sisters who organized the Chapter well with the National Spiritual Assistants, both Br. Benjamin O'Connell, OFMCap, and Br. Lomàn Mac Aodha, OFM. Br. Samy Irudaya gave an engaging discourse to the participants before the Chapter. John Murray was elected National Minister and Niall O'Neil International Councilor. In accordance with the National Statute, the Chapter elected the Councilor of Justice and Peace as a member of the National Council by full rights. There was much gratitude and esteem expressed to the outgoing National Council, especially to the former National Minister Sheila Hughes, and the former International Councilor Ita O'Neil. At the conclusion of the elections, the Eucharist was celebrated with the participation of the Definitor General Br. Peter Rodgers, OFMCap, and the Minister Provincial Br. Terence Harrington, OFMCap; their presences was indeed a cause of joy for all the participants.

Zambia - Fraternal e Pastoral Visit and National Elective Chapter

The Pastoral and Fraternal Visits to the SFO in Zambia were conducted from Sept. 16-20 by Jennifer Harrington of South-Africa, who was delegated both by Encarnación del Pozo, Minister General of the SFO and Br. Samy Irudaya, OFMCap, representative of the CAS. Both visitors were welcomed fraternally during the whole event. On Sept. 17, they visited the fraternity of Charwama where the Regional Council of Lusaka was also present. Some of the themes that were touched upon had to do with the communication and collaboration within the Council; participation in the meetings; relationship with the regional fraternity; spiritual assistance; national statutes; finance; the documentation of national fraternities, etc. The visitors, furthermore, were able to have personal meetings with both the members of the National Council and the Regional Ministers. They also met with the Minister Provincial of the OFMCap in Lusaka. The National Elective Chapter of the SFO fraternity took place from Sept. 19-20 at Nidola, Zambia with 38 Capitulars in attendance. Before the Chapter Br. Samy Irudaya and the new National Spiritual Assistant Br. Charles Chishimba, OFMCap, conducted a formation course for all the participants. The course lasted the whole day and the Chapter was a success with Honorius Chilufya being re-elected National Minister and Evaristo Mwila also re-elected as International Councilor. The participants all made their suggestions to the new National Council for the next three-year period. During the celebration of the Eucharist, Br. Samy Irudaya

preached and exhorted the brothers and sisters present to live out their profession of Gospel life and to have a strong sense of belonging to the Order.

Honduras - National Elective Chapter

The SFO National Elective Chapter of Honduras was held from September 18-20 in the “Help House” of the City of Comayagua, Honduras. This Chapter was presided by Maria Consuelo Q. de Núñez, of Venezuela (Councilor of the CIOFS Presidency). Br. Victor Aguilar, OFM, of Honduras was also present as a Delegate of CAS. Nelson Lizaro was elected both National Minister and International Councilor. A big thank you must be extended to Ana María Olmedo of the SFO of Guatemala who, on behalf of the Minister General, prepared the Secular Franciscans of Honduras for about 2 years so as to arrive at the celebration of this event so important for the SFO of this Central American nation.

Croatia - Concluding Celebration of the Eighth Centenary of the Franciscan Charism

Br. Ivan Matić, OFM, Assistant General of the SFO-YouFra, participated at the concluding celebration of the 8th centenary of the Franciscan Charism; it was celebrated from Sept 17-19 in Zagreb with the participation of the whole Franciscan Family present in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of the highlights of this celebration were a solemn concert on the 17th; a day of reflection on Franciscanism and the vigil of the Franciscan family before the crucifix of St. Damian on the 18th; and concluding with the solemn celebration of the Eucharist presided by Josip Cardinal Bozanić on the 19th in the Cathedral of Zagreb.

Sweden - Fraternal and Pastoral Visit and National Elective Chapter

Fraternal and Pastoral visits were made to the SFO of Sweden and its National Elective Chapter was held from Sept. 25-27 in Marielund near Stockholm. Present as visitors were Benedetto Lino, Councilor of the CIOFS Presidency and Br. Ivan Matić, OFM, the SFO Assistant General. Before the National Chapter began, the visitors met with National Minister Yvonne Ricci and SFO National Assistant Br. Henrik Roelvink, OFM. Later on, during the Chapter, they also met with other members of the National Council and participants of the Chapter. The main theme of the Chapter was “As Franciscans we are called to serve. What does this mean to us?” This theme was presented by both Benedetto and Br. Ivan followed by a very fraternal dialogue with all the participants of the Chapter. The Elective session was held in the afternoon of September 26. Jan-Olof Hellsten was elected as National Minister and Maurice Devenney as International Councilor. The SFO of Sweden is made up of 4 local fraternities with 75 professed members and 26 other candidates and aspirants to the SFO. Two local fraternities are assisted by the OFM, one by the OFMCap, and another by the TOR.

Albania - Fraternal and Pastoral Visit and National Elective Chapter

Fraternal and Pastoral visits were made to the SFO of Albania, and its National Elective Chapter was held from October 12-18. The fraternal visitor was Benedetto Lino, Councilor of the CIOFS Presidency whereas the pastoral visitor was Br. Ivan Matić, OFM, Assistant General of the SFO-YouFra. The visits and the National Chapter are organized by the National Council and greatly helped by the current SFO National Assistant in Albania Br. Julio Gómez, OFM. The visitors met with the members of the SFO National Council and YouFra, the brothers and sisters of the three SFO local fraternities in Scutari, Bajza e Lac; there are roughly 120 SFO members in Albania. There were also meetings with Msgr. Angelo Massafra, Archbishop of Scutari, Msgr. Rrok Mirdita, Archbishop of Tirana, Minister Provincial Br. Gasmend Tinaj, OFM, and the Poor Claries of Scutari. The visitors were able to meet with all the participants during the Chapter. The elective session took place in the afternoon of Sunday October 17 during which Ndreke Ndreka was elected as National Minister. The Chapter then concluded with the solemn celebration of the Eucharist during which the newly elected Council was confirmed.

United States - National Elective Chapter

The SFO National Elective Chapter of the United States was celebrated from Oct. 20-25 at Rio Rancho near Albuquerque, New Mexico. About 100 people were present at the Chapter among the Capitulars, observers, and four National Assistants. Present on behalf of the CIOFS Presidency were Vice Minister General of the SFO Doug Clorey, and Assistant General of the SFO-YouFra Br. Ivan Matić, OFM. A lot of work was put into the organization of the Chapter by the regional Fraternity of the SFO of New Mexico. These were days of real fraternal communion and mutual sharing of different experiences of life and of the missions of the regional fraternities. Moreover, there were sessions on Ongoing Formation prepared and guided by the

National Assistants and those in-charge of Formation. The Elective Chapter took place on Oct. 24 during which the new Executive Council was elected. Tom Bello was elected National Minister and Anne Mulqueen as International Councilor. During the closing Mass celebrated by Br. Ivan, the New Executive Council was confirmed. The National Fraternity of the United States is made up of 30 regional fraternities with about 15,000 professed members and another 1,300 candidates up for profession. There are also about 674 local fraternities canonically erected and 44 more pending. There are also groups of young Franciscans. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.nafra-sfo.org>.

Great Britain - National Elective Chapter

The National Elective Chapter of Great Britain took place from Oct. 22-25 at the Oblate Retreat and Spirituality Center Wistaston Hall in Crewe. About 40 members showed up, of whom only 32 were Capitulars with a right to vote; the rest were present as observers. Also in attendance were Tibor Kausar and Br. Amy Irudaya, Spiritual Assistant General from CIOFS. The outgoing National Chapter presented their reports and the participants ask for some clarifications. While Tibor explained to them how the Presidency of CIOFS works, Br. Samy Irudaya gave an encouraging reflection to the Capitulars. The former presided over the Chapter which unfolded in a fraternal and good atmosphere. Leon Davidson was confirmed as National Minister and Rober Hardie as international councilor. Three National Spiritual Assistants were part of the Chapter: Br. Peter Hall OFM, Br. Stephen Innes OFM^{Cap}, and Br. Vincent Kennedy OFM^{Conv}. The participants gave suggestions to the new National Council concerning the work that needs to be done in the next three-year period. At the liturgy of the Eucharist, Br. Samy Irudaya gave the homily, exhorting the brothers and sisters to live their own profession of Gospel life with eagerness and to develop a strong sense of belonging to the Order.

Assisi, Italy - Fraternal and Pastoral Visit

The Fraternal and Pastoral Visit to the SFO of Italy took place in Assisi from Oct. 23-25 by the SFO Minister General Encarnacion del Pozo and Br. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, the Assistant General of SFO and YouFra and representative of CAS. The visits began with a rite of welcoming at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. Then the meeting with Italian SFO National Council took place at the SFO Secretariat of Italy on Saturday morning, Oct. 24. While the meeting was in progress, Br. Antonio Tofanelli, OFM^{Cap}, the newly elected president of CimpCapp and of the Union of Provincial Conferences, arrived; he participated in the meeting by giving some reflections followed by discussion. Work resumed in the afternoon with the audit of the log book and bookkeeping of the C.N. SFO of Italy; it was followed by personal meetings of the visitors with each Councilor and the Conference of National Assistants. There was another meeting of the visitors with the National Council Sunday morning in order to share the observations and preliminary recommendations gathered after different individual meetings. The visitors then participated at the Assembly of Regional Ministers with the National Council. Toward noon, the Assembly joined in with the participants of the formation course for regional leaders and for a moment of fraternal dialogue. During this time, the exhortations already brought forward were summarized to the Assembly of Regional Ministers.

Rom, Italy - Meeting of the CIOFS Presidency

The members of the CIOFS Presidency came together at the Capuchin's Saint Lawrence International College in Rome from Oct. 31- Nov.7. The meeting began with Evening Prayer after which the Minister General of OFM^{Cap} Br. Mauro Jöhri greeted the members of the Presidency. Then a formative laboratory ensued on the themes, "How to Celebrate an Elective National Chapter and Preside over the Elections" and "How to Conduct a Fraternal and Pastoral Visit to the National Fraternities". The animators were Doug Clorey and Br. Martin Bitzer, OFM^{Conv}. At this meeting, Br. Amanuel Mesgun, OFM^{Cap}, the new Assistant General of SFO-YouFra was welcomed as the substitute for Br. Samy Irudaya OFM^{Cap}, who was already present for the first days. Also, Lucio Monti, SFO was appointed as the new Treasurer. Among the themes presented and discussed were formation, financial commission, juridical and patrimonial commission, commission presence in the world, Franciscan youth, conference of the Franciscan Family, decisions of the General Chapter of 2008 still pending, proofreading of translations of official documents of the SFO, emerging fraternities (especially the difficult ones), planning out National Chapters, fraternal and pastoral visits and other events for 2010, the locations for the next SFO General Chapters, the Convention on Saint Agnes of Bohemia in Prague, and the postulation of St. Elizabeth of Hungary as co-patron of Europe. In addition to the intense work, the members participated in the Liturgy and to different moments of fraternal recreation. Lastly, we prayed and shared in fraternity together.

Central African Republic – National Chapters of the SFO and YouFra

The SFO National Elective Chapter and the YouFra Chapter of Mats of the Central African Republic of Congo both took place in the city of Bangu from November 19-26. The SFO Fraternity precisely this year is celebrating 50 years since its birth. Many members of and those in formation for the SFO and YouFra participated together in all these events in a spirit of great fraternity. Those who were a great help preparing and ensuring the proper flow of the meetings were SFO National Assistant Br. Aristide Ngoto, OFMCap, Br. Toussaint Zoumalde, OFMCap, and Br. Thaddee Kusy, OFM, both SFO Regional Assistants. Present on behalf of the Presidency of the SFO International Council (CIOFS) were Encarnacion del Pozo, Minister General of the SFO, Michèle Altmeyer, Councilor of the Presidency for the French language, Elisabeth Collet as delegate for YouFra, and Br. Ivan Matić, OFM, Assistant General of the SFO-YouFra. They all guided all the moments of formation during the meetings. All the participants were attentive to all the themes presented. Especially beautiful were the moments of sharing and dialogue with the presenters at the plenary assemblies. The elective sessions of the SFO Chapter unfolded on Nov. 23 during which Cyriaque Dominique Kangala was re-elected as the SFO National Minister and Adolphe Leon Nzafio Binguinimi as International Councilor. The Chapter then concluded with the solemn celebration of the Eucharist presided by the Apostolic Administrator of Bangui Msgr. Dieudonné Nzapalainga, with the concelebration of the Spiritual Assistants present for the occasion.

Words of Gratitude to Br. Irudaya Samy

The Conference of the Spiritual Assistants General thanks Br. Irudaya Samy for his fraternal service of SFO and CAS during this seven-year period; we wish him all the best in his new assignment. Br. Irudaya Samy, OFMCap was appointed Assistant General of the SFO and YouFra in 2002. Thank you Br. Samy from the heart.

Welcome to Br. Amanuel Mesgun Temelso

We welcome with great joy Br. Amanuel Mesgun Temelso, OFMCap, the new Assistant General of the SFO and YouFra. Abba Amanuel was born on 06/04/1957 in Asmara, Eritrea. Once having completed both Elementary and High School, he made his first profession with the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin in 1975. He completed his philosophical and theological studies in both Addis Abeba (Ethiopia) and Asmara (Eritrea) and was then ordained a priest on June 11, 1982. After teaching in the Capuchin's Minor Seminary in Eritreat (1982-1988), he was invited to the United States to pursue post-graduate studies. In 1990, he received an MA in Franciscan Spirituality at the University of St. Bonaventure in Olean (USA), and in 1991 he received an MLS in Librarianship and Documentation at the Pratt Institute, New York (USA). He worked as Novice Master (1991-1997) and then as Provincial Definitor (1999-2005). As a member of the National Commission of Justice and Peace, he translated into the local language the "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church". In 2009, he was appointed Spiritual Assistant of Eritrea; he speaks both Italian and English.

Meeting of CAS

The members of the Conference of the Spiritual Assistants General (CAS) gathered in the Convent of St. Francis of Palma of Mallorca, where they were received with great joy by the Fraternity of the Third Order Regulars of St. Francis. In that friendly atmosphere, the CAS managed to draw up a program for this meeting which focuses mainly on the assessment of the work done during the year 2009 and the initial layout for the year 2010.