



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

Consilium Internationale

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SFO National Councils

SFO International Councillors

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

On December 8, 2010 we will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the final approval of our General Constitutions. It is an important event which concludes the process of renewal of the rules of the Secular Order which has lasted – in its various stages of study, elaboration, verification, experimentation and approval – over forty years! While we can safely say that the Pauline Rule has entered into the life of our local Fraternities, perhaps the same cannot be said for the General Constitutions which are still not well known and are not always fully applied. And it is a real pity because, as the General Minister of the Friar Minors, Fr. Giacomo Bini, wrote to us when he transmitted the Decree of the Congregation, “the Constitutions have revealed themselvesan essential and dynamic tool in helping us to define our identity and progressively shape our Franciscan life and vocation”.

In this spirit, the Juridical Commission of the CIOFS feels it is important, for the life and growth of the SFO throughout the world, to verify the present status of the National Statutes, which represent the true tool of application of the General Constitutions in each single country. In order to carry out this verification, we need the active collaboration of the National Councils since not all the documentation is available in the archives of the CIOFS Secretariat; if we based our work only on this source, we would risk carrying out an enormous workload with results at times unreliable and incomplete. We are, therefore, sending you a short questionnaire which we kindly ask you to fill in and return to us as quickly as possible.

The questionnaire is divided into three points which represent the different situations in which the national Fraternities can find themselves with regard to the state of progress of their respective Statutes:

1. National Fraternities with Statutes that have been duly approved with a Decree by the CIOFS Presidency.
2. National Fraternities with Statutes that are in the process of being approved by the CIOFS Presidency, or with Statutes that are being updated but have already been approved by the Presidency.
3. National Fraternities, that although already constituted, have Statutes that are still under study and which have not yet been sent for approval to the CIOFS Presidency.

The **first group** of National Fraternities is asked to indicate in the questionnaire the date of the Decree of Approval of their Statutes and to send a copy to the CIOFS Secretariat together with the text of the approved Statutes in an international language and the translation in the local language (or languages), normally in use.

The **second group** of National Fraternities is asked to indicate the date of approval by the National Assembly and the date in which the text was sent to the CIOFS Secretariat for approval by the Presidency. If the process of “revision” is already in progress, we kindly ask you to indicate the date of the last contact between the national Council and the “revisor” in charge, so that we will be able to intervene, if necessary, and accelerate the process of revision.

In the case of Statutes that have already been approved in the past but are now in the process of being updated, it is important that you also provide us with the information requested for the first group.

The **third group** of National Fraternities is asked to indicate the date they intend to submit the text for approval of the National Assembly, underlining any difficulties encountered in proceeding with this task, which is of the highest importance to the entire national Fraternity.

Please do not consider this survey a bureaucratic or formal initiative, but regard it as your participation in the intent of the Juridical Commission which is basically that of acquiring information which will enable us to assist you in your service and intervene, when necessary, to overcome “moments of impasse”, solicit the negligent and resolve doubts or perplexities. In particular, we recommend that the International Councillors follow this work with vigilance, as part of the responsibilities attributed to them by the FIOFS Statutes (art. 7.1 letter.e).

With fraternal regards,

On behalf of the General Minister,
Coordinator, Juridical Commission,
Tibor Kauser

Encl. 1 Questionnaire