

Brasile, 22-29 Ottobre 2011

**TO ALL THE BROTHERS AND  
SISTERS OF THE  
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER  
AND YOUFRA IN THE WORLD.**

Allegato n. 14

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace! It gives us great joy to offer you warmest greeting from the whole chapter of the OFS, which met for the very first time in South America in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

From this place, we want to share with you the enthusiasm and spiritual energy that this chapter has given to each and everyone of us.

The order is growing! It is growing not only in numbers but also in awareness of its identity, of its proper place in the Family and the Church as well as in awareness of the work it must undertake in the world in continuing the mission of Francis.

The number of emerging fraternities is increasing in all parts of the world, especially in those areas where the Church exists in very difficult conditions.

Once again, the chapter exhorts us to be generous and to get involved in accompanying these fraternities both spiritually as well as materially and to assist them in formation.

Franciscan Youth is growing stronger all over the world and is a witness to us of a profound commitment of Christian and human authenticity. We have received many great signs of hope and encouragement to help us understand how much we both need each other.

We exhort you to love, get to know, and support YOUFRA.

We were forcibly and passionately challenged to discover and to live out our fundamental Christian vocation in our secular state by living radically as Francis did.

Our mission is that of the Church: "To evangelize is the grace and vocation proper to the Church; it is at the core of her identity" (Evangelii Nutiandi 14) We are called to carry out this mission with courage, generosity and creativity.

While we were in Chapter, the Holy Father in his message, asked us " to confront with determination the evangelical challenges of this present moment, and to be builders of a civilization of love", "witnesses and instruments of the redemptive mission of the Church, announcing Christ both by word and their own example." It is a mission which is urgent and demanding.

We also seriously called ourselves to reflect on our engagement to build a more just and fraternal world, to become active witnesses and not just passive and distracted observers of the injustices and extreme material and spiritual poverty that a world without God imposes on a large part of humanity and creation.

We can no longer sit on the fence. The Church and the world is waiting for a courageous and effective response from us. The Church and the world has a need for Francis and for the Family of which we are the part that is the largest in number and the most deeply implicated in every place of the world.

There is still much to be done to create lines of stable and effective communication with all national fraternities and to fully develop a sense of belonging which is also attentive to the material necessities of the order. We need to be very much engaged in this way. The chapter reacted with responsibility and sensitivity to this issue. This is a great sign of consolation and hope.

We experienced moments of great fellowship with many religious brothers, our Spiritual Assistants as well as several provincial Ministers from Brazil and Paraguay. We leave with an immense sense of gratitude towards our religious brothers for the affection they have for us and for the genuine, vital and reciprocal communion that was already strong but has now grow stronger. We felt supported and surrounded by the love of our brothers of all the First Order and TOR who, through their respective Ministers General and many Provincial Ministers, sent us messages of encouragement and expressions of warm fraternal communion.

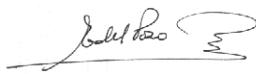
At the Monastery of the Poor Clares at "HOPE FARM", which we visited to show our love for the Second Order and to celebrate the memory of St. Clare, we received prayerful, enthusiastic and loving support for the Chapter and for all the order. The Chapter took advantage of this special time of communion to present a preview of the message the Secular Franciscan Order will send to all the Poor Clares of the world marking the anniversary of the birth of their order.

From thousands of brothers and sisters in this wonderful country, we experienced a joyous welcome as well as a great and generous hospitality.

The whole chapter was held under the maternal protection of Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, venerated here in this country as Our Lady of Aparecida. To her, our protectress and advocate, we entrust the whole Order that she might watch over us and lead us to the full realization of our vocation and mission.

We ask the Lord to give us “wisdom and insight” to welcome the conclusions of this General Chapter with great love as well as a determination to make them part of our lives and to implement them in a courageous manner .

On behalf of all your brothers and sisters of the Chapter,



Encarnación del Pozo, OFS  
General Minister

São Paulo, October 29 2011