LISIEUX 2012

Duc in altum!
Put out into the deep! (Lk 5:4)

1st European Congress of the Secular Franciscan Order and Franciscan Youth.

Lisieux, 9th-15th July 2012

The Secular Franciscans from all European meet this summer, for the first time since the birth of the OFS!
I - THE CONGRESS

A MAJOR EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER IN EUROPE

“At the beginning of the 3rd Millennium, together, we want to recommit ourselves ... Our Rule and our Constitutions call us to bold actions, consistent with our faith. For this reason the Congress will consider the role of Secular Franciscans within the family, and in social and political life. »

Encarnación del Pozo, Minister General of the OFS

-A European Congress for the OFS and Franciscan Youth, the first since the launch of the OFS.

The Presidency of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS) is organizing the “First European Congress of the Secular Franciscan Order and of Franciscan Youth” 9th to 15th July 2012 at Lisieux. Leaders of 34 national OFS Fraternities and 15 national YouFra Fraternities are invited from throughout Europe.

The theme of the Congress, "Put out into the deep", illustrates the challenges that the OFS and YouFra want to address in Europe in relation to the family and in social and political life, by bold and concrete actions.

The secular Franciscan Order celebrated its XIIIth General Chapter in Brazil, 22 - 29th October 2011, on the topic “Evangelised to evangelise”. The conclusions of the Chapter will inspire this Congress to revive the order’s passion for mission and evangelism. The Congress will also be a Celebration of diversity, improving the understanding between European Secular Franciscans Fraternities.

The delegates are invited to reflect on their vocation to be present in the world as lay members of the community, moving from the Gospel to life and from life to the Gospel, and translating into concrete actions their responsibilities as citizens involved in the Europe of the future. Participants will seek bold initiatives that can meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in their respective countries and their Fraternities: families, women, children, young people, poor people, all those who are in need. In reality, participation in the European Congress should be used for the social renewal of the nations who are present. A Congress like this is an opportunity for the expression of solidarity between the less well off countries and their brothers and sisters throughout Europe.
- An occasion to encourage fellowship and mission

*The Congress will be a celebration of diversity, a reciprocal sharing of knowledge, experience and cultural richness;
*It represents an important time for the Church in Europe; as shown by the participation of the Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, archbishop of Vienna.
*It enables us to encourage one another as secular Franciscans coming from different backgrounds but confronted with the same issues and challenges.

-At Lisieux, to benefit from the missionary enthusiasm of Saint Thérèse

Why Lisieux? The Franciscan Youth hope that other young Europeans would draw a new strength from the Patron of missions, Saint Thérèse, and discover how similar her doctrine is to the lifelong teaching of St Francis. Zélie Martin was also a member of the Secular Franciscan Order.
II - PRESENTATION OF THE OFS AND THE YOUFRA

- THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER AND THE FRANCISCAN YOUTH, ARE COMMITTED TO FOLLOWING SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*OF S = SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

The Secular Franciscan Order has a special place in the Franciscan Family. Saint Francis recognized from the outset the place of lay people and their unique vocation as baptised members implicated in the daily life of the world...

The OFS is formed by the organic union of all Franciscan Fraternities. Moved by the Holy Spirit, the secular members - whether they are married, unmarried, diocesan priests or devoted lay members - commit themselves to live the Gospel in the manner of Saint Francis, following the Rule approved by the Pope. All secular Franciscans, from all over the world, are called to a growing awareness of their identity and their mission both in the Church and in the world: to stand, with their secular identity, as living witnesses of the God’s Kingdom.

The OFS is present in 111 countries of the world, including 34 in Europe, with more than 400,000 members. There are also 50,000 young members of Franciscan Youth in more than 60 countries, including 15 in Europe. The OFS is growing faster in the poor but young countries, than in so-called developed older countries.

*YOUFRA = FRANCISCAN YOUTH

The Franciscan Youth, YouFra, is part of the OFS. The charism of YouFra is therefore the same as that of the OFS: to live the Gospel of Jesus-Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the centre and inspiration of his life with God and men.

Specifically, YouFra consists of young people between 16 and 30 years old, who meet regularly to find their vocation and to train to be an evangelist in everyday life. They commit themselves by taking a pledge. The framework of the meetings comes from the fraternal life, formation (human, Christian, Franciscan), and prayer.

In France, about 150 young people have chosen Francis as their personal guide, in four YouFra Fraternities: Arras, Bitche, Brest, Cholet. These young people get together each week in the cities where they study or work, such as Metz, Nantes, Paris, and Strasbourg.
III – ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CONGRESS

ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS
Consilium Internationale
Via Vittorio Putti, 4/int. 6 - 00152 Roma
Tel. +39 06.45471722 Fax +39 06.45473094
E-mail: ciofs@ciofs.org
www.ciofs.org

Circ. 30/08-14
Prot. N. 2335/11

Madrid, 5 July 2011

To the OFS National Ministers of Europe
OFS International Councillors
OFS National Formators
OFS National YouFra Animators
OFS National Spiritual Assistants
YouFra National Presidents and Councils
YouFra National Spiritual Assistants

Dear brothers and sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

I am pleased to announce and to convene the First Secular Franciscan Order – Franciscan Youth (OFS-YouFra) European Congress. This Congress will be held from July 9th to 15th, 2012 in Lisieux, France.

This Congress will mark a significant milestone for the Secular Franciscan Order as for the very first time, since the birth of our Order, Secular Franciscans from the whole of Europe will meet together as a group. YouFra, even though it has existed since the early 1950s, have already experienced 5 YouFra European Congresses, the last one being in 2009 in Lithuania. Asia, Africa, and Latin America have all been benefitting from continental gatherings of the OFS-YouFra for a number of years.

Europe has not yet reaped the richness and fruits of such a joint gathering. During this First European Congress, some sessions will be conducted jointly with the OFS and YouFra while others will be separate sessions for the OFS and YouFra. It will be a great joy to live moments of grace together, drawing strength from one another and reinforcing our bonds of vocation and communion.

With joy, I therefore address this invitation to:
1. National Ministers, National Formators, National YouFra Animators, International Councillors and National Spiritual Assistants of the:

   • constituted OFS National Fraternities of: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, Hungary; and

   • emerging OFS National Fraternities of: Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, Norway, Russia; and

2. National Presidents and Councils, and National Spiritual Assistants of the Franciscan Youth of:

   • Albania, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine; and

3. Representatives of the following realities: Cyprus, Finland, and Switzerland for OFS; Slovakia and Hungary for YouFra

This First OFS-YouFra European Congress will offer all of us the opportunity of coming to KNOW EACH OTHER and of understanding the different realities of the OFS and the YouFra which exist within the various countries in Europe. We will celebrate it with the purpose of: “knowing each other, understanding and loving each other, so as to learn how to live together to accomplish the mission which is ours in the Europe of today.

We will dedicate a significant portion of our time to exchanging knowledge, and to reflecting on our secular and Franciscan identity as it is lived in the different countries of Europe. We will have to learn to appreciate more fully our common Franciscan and secular identity, and experience the unity of the OFS despite the diversity of its members, and to respond together to the challenges that face our old continent.

In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Europe June 2003, the Blessed John-Paul II posed this grave question to Europe:

   « When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? (Lk 18.8) Will he find faith in our countries, in this Europe with its ancient Christian tradition? This is an open question, which clearly reveals the depth and the drama of one of the most serious challenges which our Churches are called to face. » (§47)... and to which our Fraternities are called to confront.

   « Church in Europe, the New Evangelization is the task set before you! Rediscover the enthusiasm of proclamation......let the proclamation of Jesus, which is the Gospel of hope, be your boast and your whole life! » (§45)... OFS Fraternities in Europe, rediscover the enthusiasm of the proclamation of Jesus!

Let us therefore regain the awareness of our presence as Secular Franciscans and Franciscan Youth in «the various responsibilities in civil life, the economy, culture, health care, education and politics». There is a need to rediscover the truth about family, as an intimate communion of life and love, open to procreation of new persons, as well as its dignity as domestic Church and its share in the mission of the Church and in the life of society. (§90)

We want to accept these challenges and to engage ourselves anew at the beginning of this 3rd Millenium. Our Rule and Constitutions call us to undertake courageous initiatives, concrete and consistent with our faith (cf. Rule 15). This is why the Congress will deepen the relationship of Secular Franciscans with family, life in society and political life.
Why Lisieux?

The Franciscan Youth of Europe hope to draw from the evangelical dynamism of Theresa of the Child Jesus, the little flower and co-patroness of missions, and discover the similarities between the doctrine of the youngest Doctor of the Church and the teachings of the little poor man of Assisi.

Zélie Martin, the mother of St. Theresa, was also a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. The liturgical memorial day of Louis and Zélie Martin is celebrated on the date of their Wedding Anniversary, July 12th.

Lisieux therefore appeared to be a special place for this common project, to reveal the grace of belonging to the OFS and YouFra, and to arouse a new missionary zeal in all of us.

To organize this congress, a Working Commission has been formed, composed of European members of the CIOFS Presidency, along with a General Assistant of the OFS and YouFra, Fr. Ivan Matic, OFM.

Details about the Congress will be provided in the near future regarding its organization, participation, etc. but, for now, please reserve these dates, and do not hesitate to share any of your suggestions and expectations.

In the meantime, we entrust the fruits of this Congress to the maternal intercession of Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, to Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus and to the Blessed Couple Louis and Zélie Martin.

Your sister,

Encarnación del Pozo,
Minister General of the OFS

Note: here is the smile of our sister Encarnación
Dear Youth of the YouFra Europe,

It has been said that our lives are formed by our encounters, and some of these occurrences have an effect on the rest of our lives. Encounters that leave a deep mark can change our lives forever. Is it possible that the First European Congress of the Secular Franciscan Order and the Franciscan Youth will be such an event? Will it leave an imprint – a footprint on our hearts that will direct and inspire the rest of our lives?

I believe that when Jesus first encountered those simple fishermen who later became His friends and disciples, that experience left a profound mark on them. The morning the fishermen met Jesus on the Sea of Galilee is very similar to scenes in our own lives. All night we let down our nets and catch nothing because we see only with human eyes. Jesus sees much further, much deeper and much higher than we can and calls us to follow him.

Today we Christians face many challenges. Jesus is calling us to respond as the first disciples did and commit our lives to sharing the good news of the Gospel. Jesus is with us today just as He was with the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus stands on our coastline and faces the sea with us. He knows us and He loves us. Just as He asked His first disciples to “put out into deep water” Jesus asks us to trust that He will be with us in our deep water. He assures us if we let down our nets with faith, our nets will be miraculously filled with good news to share with others. This is the same good news – the same Gospel – that inspired St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Therese’s parents and continues to inspire us.

We pray that their enthusiasm and love for the Church will be the inspiration and encouragement we need to take the Gospel message with us when our meeting in Lisieux ends and we return home!

Let our prayer be that this encounter with each other in Lisieux leaves a deep, lifelong mark on each brother and sister and that this encounter will be a source of encouragement. It is not easy to put out into deep water, but we know that when Christ calls us, He will be with us.

Bon voyage and good luck!

Ana
III - INTERVIEW

5 questions for... Elisabeth Collet, French YouFra president

1- What do you expect from this Congress for the young people?

Our main expectation is that young people from different countries should get to know each other, and that they find the strength to take up challenges by being encouraged by the each others' testimonies; the young people from Albania to Croatia, whilst including France and Spain... We are confronted with the same problems throughout Europe, in our political, social and family life, but we each react in a different way according to our different cultures. During the Congress, the young people will, for example, using "The Theology of the Body" by Jean-Paul II, start thinking together about the reality of the couple, family and love.

2- Why are you reuniting Secular Franciscan Order and Franciscan Youth?

We need to remind ourselves that the Franciscan Youth does not exist without Secular Franciscan order. There have already been five exclusively “YouFra” European Congresses. It seems also extremely important to bring two Fraternities together at a time when there has been a certain level of generational tension, and especially as has been felt. Even more so, as our elders can help us by their experience to take “bold actions”, this is one of the goals of the Congress.

3 The choice of Lisieux is not insignificant. Can you explain it?

Lisieux is the young people’s choice, because Sainte Therese is the patroness of missions: one of the goals of the Congress is to find a new missionary zeal to meet the call for new evangelistic initiatives. We must once again become passionate missionaries, in our daily lives... The second reason, it is that Zélie Martin was a secular Franciscan, and that we can be inspired by the example of life of the Martin’s married life. I will add that our inner life is also a great challenge; and that was Saint Thérèse’s secret!

4- How is the Franciscan spirit reflected in the Organization and the programme of the Congress?

In following Francis, the poverello, the humble poor, we rely on God's fatherhood and on his providence. Some poor countries such as the Ukraine, Bielorussia, can't afford to pay anything and so we have to trust in that the Lord will provide and that we will get sufficient donations to ensure that the young people of these countries are able to be present. The young people will be provided with basic accommodation. Francis liked to walk great distances whilst worshipping the Lord: which we will also be doing by going to Mont Saint Michel in pilgrimage. Finally, there is the Franciscan way to allow the Holy Spirit speak to each of us, from the “smallest” to the “greatest”. This will be provided by times of sharing in small groups. And many other things as well...

5- Are there some “Key” moments in this Congress?

One important time will be on Thursday July 12, the feast of Louis and Zélie Martin: we will have the pleasure of sharing the thoughts of Cardinal Schönborn; this will be a true ecclesial high point of the conference.
### VI - PROGRAMM

**OFS and YouFra in Europe: 'Put out into the deep, duc in altum!' (Lk 5:4)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday 9</th>
<th>Tuesday 10</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday 12</th>
<th>Friday 13</th>
<th>Saturday 14</th>
<th>Sunday 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MORNING</strong></td>
<td><strong>MORNING</strong></td>
<td><strong>MORNING</strong></td>
<td><strong>MORNING</strong></td>
<td><strong>MORNING</strong></td>
<td><strong>MORNING</strong></td>
<td><strong>MORNING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON</strong></td>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON</strong></td>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON</strong></td>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON</strong></td>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON</strong></td>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON</strong></td>
<td><strong>AFTERNOON</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 Lunch 15:00 Presentation of Therese/Lisieux + Site visit in 3 language groups 17:00 visit of the Cathedral 18:00 OPENING Eucharist at the Cathedral presided by the General Assistants to the OFS</td>
<td>12:45 Lunch 15:00 Prayer to Mary 15:15. Presentation of Countries (continued). 17:00. Visit of the Basilica and the crypt 18: Eucharist in the Crypt presided by F. Dominique Joly Provincial OFM France</td>
<td>12:45. Lunch 15:00 Prayer to Mary 15:15. Working groups 17:00. Plenary Assembly 18:30 Evening prayer</td>
<td>12:45 Lunch 15:00 Prayer to Mary 15:15. Working groups 17:00 Plenary Assembly 18:30 Evening prayer</td>
<td>12:45 Lunch 14: Meditation: Francis and St Michael 14:30 meeting with Bishop Lalanne 15: Eucharist, Prayer + consecration to St Michael 16:30 Great game discovery of place</td>
<td>12:45 Lunch 15:00 Prayer to Mary 15:15. Plenary Assembly all together 17:30. procession with banners and flags to the Buissonnets. Donation to Mary</td>
<td>12:45 Lunch 14: Meditation: Francis and St Michael 14:30 meeting with Bishop Lalanne 15: Eucharist, Prayer + consecration to St Michael 16:30 Great game discovery of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVENING</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVENING</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVENING</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVENING</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVENING</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVENING</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVENING</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VII - WITNESSES OF THE OFS

A few names

Lay members of the OFS:
Blessed Zélie Martin, mother of Ste Thérèse (19th c.)
Blessed Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi, Italian husband and wife (20th century)
Blessed Franz Jägerstätter, husband, peasant, martyr - he followed his conscience, Austrian (20s)
Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, husband, historian and humanist French (19th c.)
Holy Thomas More, husband, politician (XVIe S.)
Pauline Jaricot, Propagation of the faith, French (XIXe S.)
Alcide de Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer, husbands, politicians (XXe S.)
John Bradburne, poet and vagrant, martyr, English (XXe S.)
Leon Harmel, husband, French industrialist (XIXe - XXe S.)

Deacons, Priests, Bishops and Popes members of the OFS:
Saint Joseph-Benoit Cottolengo, Italian diocesan priest (XIXe S.)
Saint Jean-Marie Vianney, French diocesan priest (XIXe S.)
Blessed Alojzije Stepinac, Croatian cardinal (20th century)
Blessed John XXIII Pope (20th century)
Saint Pius X, Pope (20th century)

Duc in altum!

VII - CONTACTS

Michele Altmeyer, Coordinator of the Congress
The International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS)
altmeyer.michele@gmail.com

Elisabeth Collet, Youth leader
French National Leader of the Franciscan Youth (YouFra)
collet.elisabeth@gmail.com