

15th OFS General Chapter Opens!

ROME, Nov. 7, 2017 -- 73 chapter members began work today at the 15th General Chapter of the OFS. The Chapter opened yesterday with Mass presided over by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

The Chapter comes half-way through the present sexennial (2014 – 2020), an opportunity for the international OFS fraternity to review the situation of the Order at its different levels, while assessing progress in the implementation of current priorities and objectives.

In his homily, Cardinal Parolin exhorted Secular Franciscans to be “more closely united to Christ”, since this was “the essential foundation of any apostolic community and vision, as well as the guarantee that pastoral planning will be effective”.

The opening celebrations continued today with Mass presided over by Fr. Michael Perry, the OFM Minister General, who spoke of the need for “leadership based on identity, on the experience of Jesus”, but which at the same time must be “dynamic, relational and create partnerships”.

The work of reviewing the state of the Order began with presentation of various Reports. Tibor Kauser, Minister General of the OFS, recognized that the number of Secular Franciscans is declining, and warned that “we cannot deny the problem of lack of interest and failure to promote the OFS and YouFra”, although “we also see many encouraging signs in many national fraternities”.

In his turn, Fr. Amando Trujillo, President of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants (CAS), highlighted “the incorporation of the Assistants in the work of the Presidency”, and pointed to a number of challenges needing attention, such as “the lack of knowledge of the identity and mission of the OFS among many Franciscan friars”.

The 15th Chapter is being held at an especially emotional time, being the 25th anniversary of the death of Manuela Mattioli, the first Minister General of the OFS.