



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

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“8th Centennial of the Birth of Saint Louis, King of France”

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

“May the Lord give you his peace.”

This year we celebrate the “8th Centennial of the birth of St. Louis,” whom the church has named patron and model of life for the “Third Order” regular and secular.

This event was already announced to you on August 25, 2013, the day of its liturgical celebration. Today, I will limit myself in informing you about how we have considered celebrating this jubilee year, joining our brothers of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and of the International Franciscan Conference of the Third Order Regular (CFI-TOR) – religious men and women with an active lifestyle --.

- ✓ April 25 has been celebrated in each National, Regional and Local Fraternity, according to plans.
- ✓ On October 5, 2014, a solemn Eucharist will be celebrated in Rome in the Basilica of Saints Cosmos and Damiano, after which a conference will follow on the life of St. Louis. Those National Councils that can cover the costs can participate. The General Ministers, members of the Franciscan Family Conference will participate in these events.
- ✓ The closing of the jubilee year will be April 25, 2015. The new International Council Presidency of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS) will provide information for the events of this day.
- ✓ For on-going formation for the Order, we will publish on our web page monthly eight lessons on the life of St. Louis.



- ✓ Once we have translations available of a brief biography of our Patron Saint, St. Louis, prepared by the French language Counselor, Michèle Altmeyer, we will send it to all the National Fraternities, established and emerging, and it will also be published on the Web page.
- ✓ With this letter, we are sending you the hymn to St. Louis composed by Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, General Assistant TOR and a prayer for the centennial year.

Regarding the commemoration at the international level. We invite all of you to promote, with love and devotion toward St. Louis, whatever events (actions) you consider appropriate to raise awareness about his deep spirituality and to make it ours. This spirituality was based on:

The human and Christian education that he received from his mother, the Spanish Blanca from Castilla. He was educated by her on devotion (living a devoted life). Because of this Louis IX combined his work at governing, knowing how to care for the spiritual and temporal well-being of his subjects, with an asceticism that has been highlighted as much by Catholic hagiography (biographies of the saints) as by lay commentators. (Voltaire said: "It's possible that no other man has carried virtue farther," surrendering to strong practices of penitence on Fridays, or acts of mercy, that in those times were considered acts of humiliation, like washing the feet of beggars. On Fridays, he also used to share his meal with lepers.

His faithfulness to the Catholic religion. Few rulers in history have been such friends and so faithful to their being Christian as Saint Louis. He used to enjoy going to monasteries (convents) a lot to pray with religious and to attend liturgical ceremonies. When someone told him that there were people who were criticizing him for being so pious and attending so many prayer meetings, he answered: *"I am not embarrassed by that nor will I ever be embarrassed. And I am certain that if, instead of going to those meetings to pray, I were to go to other meetings to drink, dance and having fun, then, yes, those people would say nothing. I prefer to praise my God although the people may criticize me because it is for Him that I live and for Him that I work, in Him I hope for all things."*

Shortly after that he dictated his will that says: *"It is necessary to always avoid grave sin, and to be willing to suffer any ill, rather than commit a mortal sin. The most important thing in life is to love God with all your heart. When sorrows and sufferings come, one must offer all for love of God and as payment for our sins. And at times of success and prosperity to give thanks to the Lord and not to become worse due to pride. In the temple one must behave with supreme respect. With the poor and the afflicted we must be extremely generous. We should give thanks to God for his gifts, and thus he will grant us more favors. Let us always be faithful and respectful children toward the Holy Catholic Church, our mother, and the Supreme Pontiff as a spiritual father."*

On August 24 in the year 1270 he felt that he was going to die and he asked for the holy sacraments. Sometimes he would repeat: "Lord, I am happy, because I will go to your house in heaven to adore you and to love you always." On the 25 of August at three in the afternoon, he exclaimed: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," and he died a holy death.

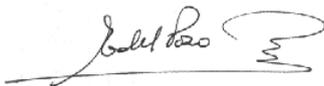
Brothers and sisters on venerating the figure of our co-patron St. Louis, King of France, let us keep the values that he lived present in our minds and in our hearts:

- ✓ As ruler, committed to justice and peace, when today we live in a world devastated by violence, corruption, selfishness and growing ego. He knew how to care for the spiritual and temporal well-being of his subjects.
- ✓ as loving son and obedient to the path indicated by his mother for his own well-being and the well-being of the kingdom of France, and, although respectful, when the time came, he acted decidedly in government, personal and family matters;
- ✓ as loving, passionate and faithful husband. Margarita and Louis had 11 children.
- ✓ as loving father, educator of his child in the faith, righteousness and austerity, respecting them as persons. Assuming suffering with faith and hope through the death of some of his 11 children. In short,
- ✓ As a Christian who desired to communicate his own “being” and “existence” to his fellow citizens and especially to the political class, instilling in it some values that it absolutely lacked.

St. Louis understood that everything in this world belongs to the King of heaven and from that conviction he assumed his mission. “He rebuilt” the Church of his time, putting the love of God, his family, neighbor and his people, ahead of any other earthly good.

I desire that all my brothers and sisters can “immerse” yourselves enthusiastically in the formation topics that will be published during the 8 months, as well as the short biography that we will make available to you as soon as we have the translations ready in the official CIOFS languages (always a challenge for this Presidency).

Roma, May 26, 2014




Encarnación del Pozo
Ministra General OFS