



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

Prot. n. 3564
Circ. n. 11/21-27

Rome, April 18th 2023

Subject: Change of Plans/Date for Chapter of Mats

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Peace and all good!

Last year we announced that we were planning to organize a ‘never-before’ event, a Chapter of Mats for the International Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order and YouFra. We have received so many wonderful responses to our plan and hope to have our own Secular Franciscan and YouFra Chapter of Mats. Our hope was to offer this once-in-a-lifetime family reunion in November 2024, however, unfortunately, due various reasons which we will state below, we have voted in the Presidency to delay the event two years.

The reasons for our decisions are:

1. The Presidency does not have the cash flow necessary for financing the advanced costs for the venue and services required to have the Chapter of Mats in a safe, protected area which is essential, due to weather uncertainties among other reasons. The costs associated with the event would be almost three million Euros -- at least 30% of which would have to be paid in advance.
2. The number of the possible attendees who have indicated an interest in attending is approximately 6,000. The 6,000 would not fill the venue which we have selected and is the only one available for 2024. We need to find a different venue which will be appropriate for the number of participants. Our prayer is to have the greatest number of brothers and sisters present with us.
3. The presidency believes that if we postpone the event until sometime in 2026, we will have time to determine if we can get donations (also helping us to pay for the advance costs) and, hopefully, to reduce the registration fee.

Our next steps will include:

1. Working with the committee to finalize steps forward, including, a possible new date (if it is determined that we can raise the funds), finding a new venue, finding local support, researching foundations, etc. (We already have many OFS families who would be willing to host an OFS/YouFra brother or sister or family. Will they be able to host once we have set a new date?)
2. Finding donors from around the world with the help of our National Fraternities. (Specifics to be provided by your presidency councillors and a follow-up circular.)

3. Once we have confirmed the number of attendees and the registration costs, determining if our brothers and sisters will be willing to pay their registration fee in advance to offset some of those initial costs. (More specifics on date and costs will be sent once we have done additional research on possible donors.)

We want to emphasize that participation cannot be free, as we already indicated in the previous circular letter. (There was some misunderstanding about this, so we think it has to be stated clearly.) We will, however, try to keep the costs as low as possible, but surely, everyone will have to pay. These payments will have to be made in advance, otherwise we will not be able to reserve the venue and services.

We apologize from the bottom of our hearts for this setback in plans. But we promise you that, if we can find the funding, we will have a family reunion we will remember and cherish for a lifetime.

This change in the program means, that the 2024 intermediate General Chapter will be held in the ordinary way, taking advantage of being together for a whole week. Soon a separate circular letter will be sent sharing some details and starting the concrete preparations.

In the meantime, we ask for your prayers and your suggestions. We would be especially appreciative if you could work with us to find possible donors who would consider supporting this truly Franciscan once-in-a-lifetime event. Please let us know.

Your brother in Christ and in St Francis,



Tibor Kauser, OFS
CIOFS General Minister

