

# DON'T SIT ON FENCE, GENERAL MINISTER EXHORTS

by  
BOB STRONACH, OFS  
NAFRA PR CO-CHAIR

The general minister, from the General Chapter in Brazil at the end of October, urged Secular Franciscans worldwide to support emerging fraternities, to get involved with Franciscan youth, to take on the church's urgent call to evangelize, and to stop sitting on the fence in creating a more just and fraternal world.

"The Order is growing!" said Encarnacion (Encarnita) del Pozo, OFS. "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."

She pointed to an increasing number of emerging fraternities in all parts of the world, "especially in those areas where the Church exists in very difficult conditions." She encouraged Secular Franciscans "to get involved in accompanying these fraternities both spiritually as well as materially and to assist them in formation."

Noting that "Franciscan Youth is growing stronger all over the world and is a witness to us of a profound commitment of Christian and human authenticity," the general minister said:

**"WE EXHORT YOU TO LOVE,  
GET TO KNOW,  
AND SUPPORT YOUFRA."**

Encarnita noted that the Holy Father, in his message to the chapter, asked Secular Franciscans "to be builders of a civilization of love" and "witnesses and instruments of the redemptive mission of the Church, announcing Christ both by word and their own example." She said: "It is a mission which is urgent and demanding."

The chapter also challenged attendees to reflect on the call 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."

She exhorted:

"We can no longer sit on the fence. The Church and the world are waiting for a courageous and effective response from us. The Church and the world have 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."

She closed her message by entrusting the order to the protection of Mary, mother of God, "that she might watch over us and lead us to the full realization of our vocation and mission."





## DID YOU KNOW THAT CIOFS HAS FORMALLY CHANGED OUR ACRONYM FROM SFO TO OFS?

The name of our Order remains the Secular Franciscan Order, but we will now be using the initials OFS after our names (and everywhere else we used to use SFO).

Below is a message from our National Minister Tom Bello, followed by the document from CIOFS.

Beloved National Family,

As all of us know, we are experiencing language changes in how we celebrate Mass. I am absolutely certain that it is still the same Lord and Savior that I receive at Holy Communion. At the last International Chapter in October in Brazil the following document was introduced, voted upon and approved. It is signed by our Minister General. You will see in the official document the words “Secular Franciscan Order” still used when referring to our Order in English, as well as “Secular Franciscans” still used when referring to us. I also give you these exact words in an email from Doug Clorey, who many of us know from previous visitations:

“Document on the ‘Name of the Order’ should be released shortly in a circular from our Minister General. This document was presented to the General Chapter in Brazil, voted and approved.”

Doug Clorey, OFS  
Vice-Minister General  
Secular Franciscan Order

Note that Doug, our Order’s Vice-Minister General, is still a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. When we use English, we are still the Secular Franciscan Order, not the Order of Franciscan Seculars or whatever. We remain Secular Franciscans, not Franciscan Seculars, when we use English. What has changed is that Doug is now, when he uses the initials after his name, Doug Clorey, OFS not SFO.

Again, I am absolutely certain that OFS or SFO does not make me or you or Doug any more or less Franciscan. We are still permanently professed. Our Order is still, in English, the Secular Franciscan Order.

Tom Bello, OFS, National Minister

## XIII GENERAL CHAPTER São Paulo, 2011 October 22-29

### THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THE ORDER THE USE AND THE TRANSLATION OF THE NAME OF THE ORDER

**1. The official name** of the Order is **Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis**.

#### 2. Translations of the name of the Order

**2.1** The translation of the name of the Order is already made in the four official languages, and these are the ones to be used in these languages, namely in Italian, in English, in Spanish and in French.

**2.2** The name can be translated into local languages only when the literal translation from Latin is easily understandable even by the civil society and does not change its meaning or substance.

**2.3** When the translation into the national language distorts the meaning of the name, or is linguistically impossible to transfer the genuine meaning, **Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis** must always be used, which can be followed by expressions to clarify and make more understandable the nature of the Secular Franciscan Order to everyone in the local language.

#### 3. The Acronym

The acronym which refers to the name **Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis** is **OFS** and is always to be used regardless of the language. For example, when Secular Franciscans use the acronym after their name, they must use “**OFS**”.

Encarnación del Pozo, OFS, General Minister

