

**Letter to announce and convoke  
the LXXXV General Chapter, 2018 A.D.**

(Prot. N. 00841/17)

To all the Major Superiors,  
Vocals of the General Chapter,  
and all the brothers of the Order  
Their respective places

Dear Brothers,

*Peace and good in the Lord!*

The moment has come for me to turn to you, in joy and hope, to convoke the LXXXV General Chapter of our Order. Let us entrust ourselves to the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, of St. Francis and St. Clare, as well as that of the great cohort of our brother saints and blessed, such that we might hold this Chapter with renewed zeal and openness to the Holy Spirit.

With this letter, after having received the consent of the General Council, in conformity with what is provided by our Constitutions (n. 124, 2) and by article 47 of the *Ordo Capituli Generalis Celebrandi* (OCGC), I announce officially the General Chapter of 2018.

Our Constitutions affirm that the General Chapter “is an outstanding sign and instrument of the union and solidarity of the entire brotherhood gathered together in its representatives.” (n. 124, 1) At the same time, however, the Constitutions recall that the Chapter is the opportune time to “deal with all matters relating to fidelity to our sound traditions, to the renewal of our form of life, the development of apostolic activity, and other matters of great importance for the Order, about which the brothers are to be consulted in advance.” (n. 125, 1)

In addition, I wish to notify you regarding what has been planned and arranged, with the consent of the General Council, in compliance with that what is provided by article 49 of the OCGC.

## **1. The place and time of the Chapter**

The General Chapter will begin on the morning of August 27, 2018 and conclude on September 16. It will be celebrated at our International College ‘San Lorenzo da Brindisi’ in Rome. All the capitulars are asked to arrive no later than the evening of August 26. For

logistical reasons, please do not plan to arrive at the College before August 20. Nevertheless, if one of the capitulars foresees his arrival before August 20, he must kindly inform the Rector of the International College. Regarding the work of immediate preparations, the brothers who will be assisting during the Chapter must arrive at the College in advance, according to the date that will be indicated in their letters of appointment.

## **2. The program of the General Chapter in broad outline**

In March 2017, after consultation with the Presidents of the Conferences (OCCG, art. 51), the General Chapter Preparatory Commission was appointed by the General Minister with the consent of the Council. Following the meeting of the Presidents of the Conferences the year before, work began on a possible program for the Chapter which we anticipate being ready by May 2018. At this time we can let you know about the most important elements of the Chapter:

1. Presentation and study of the General Minister's report;
2. Election of the General Minister and his Council;
3. Treatment of certain particular topics, among which the most notable is the *Ratio formationis Ordinis*, as well as some juridical questions.

However, we also keep in mind that all the friars of the Order can send topics they wish to be discussed and that the final decision on what matters to treat pertains to the Chapter itself. (OGC 8/10)

## **3. General Chapter Participants**

By the norms of our Constitutions (124, 4) the following friars are capitulars:

- The General Minister;
- The General Vicar;
- The General Councilors;
- The Provincial Ministers;
- The Custodes;
- The General Secretary;
- The General Procurator;
- The delegates of the Provinces;
- A lay friar from each Conference. (OGC 8/8)

Therefore, with this letter, I call the brothers who have this right and duty (OCGC, art. 3), according to the Constitutions, to thus participate in the General Chapter.

#### 4. Election of delegates

- The election of the delegates of the Provinces is carried out in conformity with what is provided in the Ordinances of the General Chapters. (ODG 8/9).<sup>1</sup>
- The number of professed friars (including those in temporary profession) of each Province shall be computed as of December 31, 2017.
- For the purpose of this computation, friars who are assigned to custodies and other friars who are in another circumscription for reasons of service are not counted among the friars of the Province, but among those of the circumscriptions where they exercise the right to vote and where they actually live. (cf. Const. 121, 6)
- Friars assigned to a delegation or *domus praesentiae* are included in the computation of the number of friars of the Province on which these presences depend for the purposes of the election of delegates.

The election of the delegates and their substitutes, in conformity with our proper law (OGC 8/9) shall be carried out at the beginning on 2018, according to the statistical information as of December 31, 2017. When the elections have been made, kindly communicate to the General Minister, as soon as possible, the name, surname, and email address of those elected. Thank you for making sure this information arrives at the General Curia by and not after May 25, 2018.

The delegates, as soon as they are elected and by virtue of their election are considered *ipso facto* called to the Chapter, without need of any further personal invitation. (OCGC 48, 2) The delegates shall then bring to the Chapter a personal document, signed by their legitimate superior, such that, if it should ever be necessary, their election can be verified. (OCGC 48, 3)

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<sup>1</sup> ODG 8/9:

1. Once the general chapter has been announced, in every province all the perpetually professed brothers shall elect one delegate to the general chapter and a substitute for every hundred brothers.
2. This election is conducted in the manner determined by the provincial chapter, and the results are to be published at least three months before the general chapter.

## 5. Chapters of Provinces and Custodies

I remind you that the Provinces and Custodies with a triennium to expire in 2018 must plan the celebrations of their chapters such that they conclude by May 30. Chapters may also be scheduled to begin after September 23, 2018.

Dear Brothers, I wish to invite you to enter into this time of preparation for the Chapter with prayer and thanksgiving to the Lord. Let us prepare ourselves with openness and a willingness to be instruments of his grace. I invite you to pray in the very words of St. Francis:

*All-powerful, most holy, most high, supreme God:  
all good, supreme good, You Who alone are good,  
may we give You all praise, all glory, all thanks,  
all honor, all blessing, and all good.  
So be it! So be it! Amen.*

I invoke the Spirit of the Lord that he may guide us, inspire us, and motivate us to spare no effort in fanning the living flame of our charism.

Fraternally,

Rome, from our General Curia, 18 October 2017  
Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist

  
Br. Clayton Fernandes  
General Secretary OFM Cap.



  
Br. Mauro Jöhri  
General Minister OFM Cap.