



MINISTER GENERALIS
ORDINIS FRATRUM MINORUM CONVENTUALIUM

Prot. N. 1/18

Rome, January 6, 2018

Dear brothers,

May the blessing of the Emmanuel, "God with us", be upon you!

In accordance with the Constitutions (nos. 171 § 1, 172, and 173) and the General Statutes (no. 106 § 1), in execution of Motion no. 1 § 3 of the 2013 Ordinary General Chapter, I hereby

**ANNOUNCE AND CONVOKE THE 201ST GENERAL CHAPTER,
during which the text of the Constitutions shall be finalized and approved**

The 2018 Extraordinary General Chapter will begin on **Tuesday, July 24, 2018, at 5:00 p.m.** and, as an indication, the closing date will be Sunday August 26. The Chapter will be celebrated at the Centro Ad Gentes Retreat Center operated by the Society of the Divine Word, Via dei Laghi bis no. 52, Nemi, RM, Italy.



After announcing the Extraordinary General Chapter to the friars (by letter dated July 24, 2017), the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life was also duly informed (by letter dated December 19, 2017).

Here are some points regarding the next Chapter:

1. Ordinary Members at the Chapter - Recalling what is set forth at no. 173 in the Constitutions of the Order:

§ 1. The Capitulars of the Ordinary General Chapter are: the Minister General, former Ministers General, General Definitors, Ministers Provincial, General and Provincial Custodes, General Delegates (of General Delegations with more

than ten friars) and Provincial Delegates, according to the norms of the General Statutes.

§ 2. When the Minister Provincial or General Custos is legitimately impeded, the respective Vicar shall attend the Chapter; and should he also be impeded, a Delegate should be sent by the respective Superior.

Moreover, given that some Provinces and Custodies of the Order will be celebrating their own respective Ordinary Chapters in the first months of 2018, please find attached to this letter of announcement and convocation a list of the Major Superiors currently in the office. It will be up to them, if confirmed, or their successors, to take part in the Chapter. Similarly, those Provinces with more than one hundred affiliated friars shall designate their respective Delegates to the Chapter in the coming months.

2. Auditors at the Chapter -Those participating as 'auditors' at the Extraordinary General Chapter are:

- the *Delegate of the Minister Provincial*, on the condition that the *Provincial Delegation* has already existed for a ten-year period and at least ten friars reside there. (General Statutes no. 10 §3);
- the Procurator General, the General Econom, the Secretary General for Formation and the Secretary General for Missionary Animation (General Statutes no. 120; 121; 30 §2; 66 §4).

As already mentioned in the letter to the friars announcing the celebration of the Chapter, the Minister General with his Definitory, having noted the favorable and unanimous opinion of the Presidents of the Federations, considering that all the Communities of the Order have had the opportunity to contribute to the revision of the Constitutions, considering that the Extraordinary General Chapter shall be especially characterized by voting on the articles of the Constitutions, hereby indicates that the Delegates of the Ministers Provincial (General Statutes no. 10 § 3) are free to participate, or not, in the Extraordinary General Chapter because, as Auditors at the Chapter, they cannot vote on the texts. Therefore, Friar Auditors who have decided not to participate in the Extraordinary General Chapter are asked to make a written request to the Minister General to be formally exempted from participating.

3. The main topic to be dealt with at the Chapter: the revised Constitutions of the Order-Taking into account:

- (a) the process started at the 2007 Ordinary General Chapter (Motion no. 1) and
- (b) reiterated and clarified by the 2013 Ordinary General Chapter (Motion no. 1),

- (c) whereas it has been worked on for the last ten years, through the Executive Committee for the Revision of the Constitutions (CERC) and the International Commission for the Revision of the Constitutions (CIRC),
- (d) having consulted and involved all the Communities of the Order, through their respective Friary House Chapters, in the discussion and definition of the changes in the texts of the Constitutions,
- (e) having incorporated the suggestions of individual friars and Communities,
- (f) the General Definitory has prepared the text of the Constitutions to be submitted to the Extraordinary General Chapter as an *Instrumentum laboris* to be discussed and voted upon.

The *Instrumentum laboris* shall be sent to the Capitulars and to the Communities of the Order by April 30, 2018 (General Statutes 108 § 2).

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Dear brothers, the Extraordinary General Chapter is not only “the supreme authority for the whole Order” (Constitutions 156 § 1), it is also an occasion to validate and renew the life of our Family and our prophetic vision in the Church.

In accordance with the thinking of our father St. Francis, the friars at Chapter must first “deal with those things that pertain to God” (Earlier Rule 18, 1; FF 50). The Chapter is an intensive time of prayer and faith, in which the Order intends to put the primacy of God at the center of its existence and choices.

The Chapter, then, is a time of fraternal encounter, of exchange of experiences, of mutual enrichment. The presence of so many friars of different cultures, coming from various parts of the world, increases our sense of family and, at the same time, demonstrates how the same charism can be lived in different forms.

It is a time, again, of serious and laborious examination through which the Order questions itself on its fidelity to the charism of St. Francis and seeks to be faithful and relevant in our time and in our society.

Finally, this Extraordinary General Chapter has the task of updating our Constitutions according to the signs of the times and the indications of the Church, and thus promote the prophetic vision, the mission and the significance of Conventual Franciscan religious life in the Church and in today's world.

In conclusion, I would like to remind you that the General Chapter is a powerful experience for everyone. I ask all the friars to pray and to pray especially that the work of the Chapter be carried out effectively. To this end, I would ask that they offer up their toil and daily sacrifice to the Lord for the benefit of our friars who are sick and suffering. Everyone will be able to follow the work of the Chapter on the Order's website by clicking on links that will be provided in due course.

As a moment of communion in prayer and supplication to the Lord, I recommend that from Easter Monday (April 2) until the conclusion of the General Chapter, each community add the prayers attached to this letter (or other suitable prayers prepared by the Ministers Provincial and Custodes) to the invocations of Morning Prayer and the intercessions of Evening Prayer.

Moreover, during the General Chapter, every community of the Order shall celebrate **the Mass of the Holy Spirit for three days.**

I entrust this time of preparation, and the work of the General Chapter, to the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin, our Lady and Patroness, and our Seraphic Father St. Francis. To all of you, I wish a life lived in holiness.

Rome, Friary of the Twelve Holy Apostles, January 6, 2018, *the Epiphany of our Lord Jesus!*


Friar Vincenzo Marcoli
Secretary General


Friar Marco Tasca
Minister General



NB. 1) This is a valid Letter of Convocation for all those who have the right to participate in the General Chapter and for those who are invited.

2) Attachments:

- Attachment n. 1 – Elencus Fratres Capitalares
- Attachment n. 2 – Prayers for the Extraordinary General Chapter
- Attachment n. 3 – Arrival-Departure Form
- Attachment n. 4 – Informations