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News from the Central Commission



The Central Commission meeting, Chile (photo: ocsa.org)

Summary:

One of the tasks of the Central Commission is to elect the Central Secretary for Formation.

In the light of

- the Abbot General's suggestions to the superiors earlier this year,
- the responses of the Regions to those suggestions, and
- the report of Fr. Mauricio, the outgoing Central Secretary,

it was decided

- ✓ to elect a Central Secretary, AND
- ✓ to elect a commission to study the formation needs of the Order, and to clarify the role of the Central Secretary for Formation.

The new Central Secretary for Formation is **Sr Eleanor** Campion (Generalate), who will be assisted by **Dom Marco Antonio** Maldonado Jaramilla (Generalate).

The members of the commission to make the study are **Fr Carlos Maria** Antunes (Sobrado), **Fr Samuel** Chua (Tarrawarra), and **Sr Elizabeth** Nnakimbugwe (Butende). All three are Formation Secretaries in their respective Regions.

In more detail:

THE TASK OF THE CENTRAL COMMISSION:

“The Central Secretary for Formation will be elected by the Central Commission for a term of three years.” (*Ratio Institutionis* 70)

THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL SECRETARY, ACCORDING TO THE *RATIO*:

“The Central Secretary's function is to facilitate communication between the Regions and to ensure the dissemination of relevant information about all aspects of monastic formation.” (*Ratio Institutionis* 70)

SOME POINTS FROM THE ABBOT GENERAL'S SUGGESTIONS:

- The superiors of the Order, in their “dreams”, asked him to make formation a priority;
- closer cooperation is needed between the Abbot General, his Council, and the Central Secretary for Formation;
- aspects of formation to be addressed include online courses, specific formation for superiors, cellarers, formators, chaplains, formation regarding abuse, etc;
- qualities of the ideal Central Secretary include having a heart for the theme of formation; ability to organize, to communicate, to connect; experience in the field of formation; experience of online formation or willingness to learn it; openness to other cultures; knowledge of languages;
- to carry out the task properly, the Central Secretary needs time and space, therefore it would be good if this person lives at the Generalate, at least part time.

SOME OF THE RESPONSES OF THE REGIONS:

- We need to rethink the role of the Central Secretary;
- Instead of electing a Central Secretary, could we appoint a commission to study the Order's real formation needs, reporting to the General Chapter of 2028?
- Could we have a Formation Commission instead of one person as central secretary?
- We encourage closer cooperation with the O.Cist and others in the area of formation.

POINTS FROM THE REPORT OF FR. MAURICIO (CENTRAL SECRETARY SINCE 2017)

(Fr. Mauricio gave his report by zoom connection from Azul, Argentina)

- It would be opportune to review the task of the Central Secretary for Formation;
- the Central Secretary is often not kept informed of what's happening in the Regions;
- there are formation opportunities that are not availed of by the Order;
- having the Central Secretary in Rome would be good.

<p style="text-align: center;">The Central Commission thanked Fr. Mauricio for his years of service!</p>

The *ad hoc* commission (Fr. Carlos Maria, Fr. Samuel, Sr. Elizabeth)

The task of the ad hoc commission is

- a. to study the formation needs of the Order,
- b. to clarify the role of the Central Secretary for Formation,
- c. and to present a report to the General Chapter of **2025**.

(Vote 16)

The members of the commission will work with S. Eleanor and Dom Marco Antonio. This work will begin soon, and you can expect to hear from us...

Revision of the Statute on Formation (*Ratio Institutionis*)

The Central Commission also voted that the General Chapter of 2025 will consider revising the *Ratio Institutionis*.

(Vote 17)

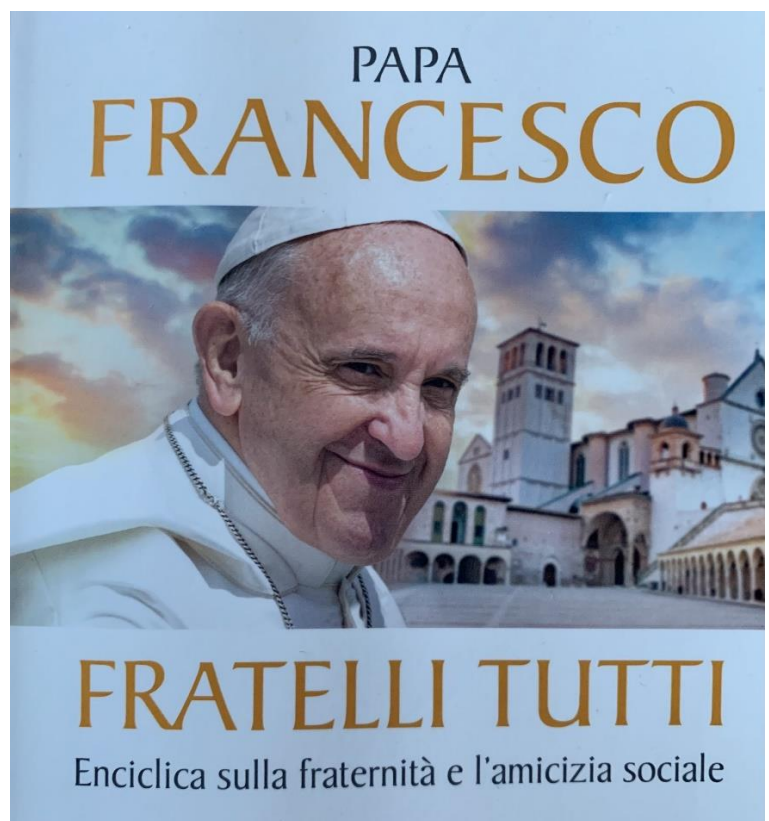
“The goal of the monastic journey is a gradual transformation into the likeness of Christ through the action of the Spirit of God.”

Fratelli tutti

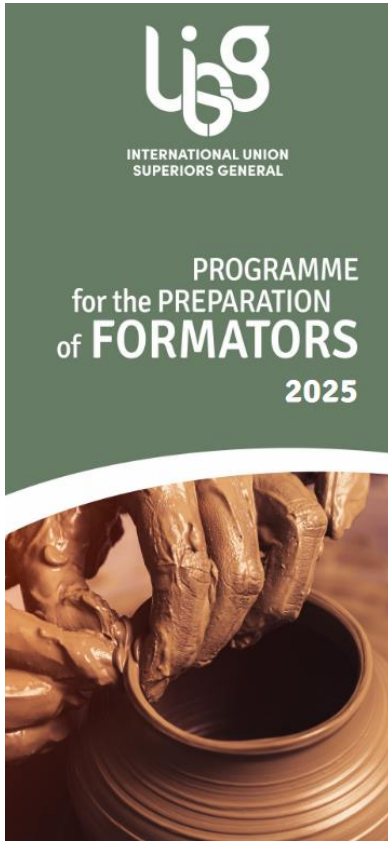
for reflection and dialogue

The Central Commission also voted: “In order to foster good intercultural relations within the communities of the Order and within the General Chapter, we ask the Central Secretary of Formation to prepare a program of reflection and dialogue for the whole Order on the basis of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*.” (Vote 80)

Various study guides to this encyclical are available (try googling it). If anyone has suggestions on how to adapt one of these for use in the Order, please contact me: secform.ocso@gmail.com



Courses noted:



Programme for the Preparation of Formators (six months, full time)

The UISG (International Union of Superiors General, female) offers a course to prepare sisters for formation ministry. Next year's course runs from Jan 13 to July 4, in Rome.

Language: ENGLISH

Applications close: August 15 2024

For details:

<https://www.uisg.org/en/news/Formators-Program-2025/>

(NB: This is not the Benedictine Monastic Formators' Programme which takes place at Sant' Anselmo every two years.)



Giubileo 2025 ("Jubilee 2025")

(ten 90-minute classes, online)

Run by the Pontifical Lateran University from

October 15 to November 13, 2025, covering the scriptural, theological, historical, spiritual, devotional and pastoral elements of jubilee.

Language: ITALIAN

Applications close: October 2 2024

For details: <https://www.pul.va/event/corso-di-alta-formazione-giubileo-2025/>

Do you know of any courses that may be of interest to others in the Order?
Please let me know, for possible inclusion here.
secform.ocso@gmail.com