



A LETTER TO POPE FRANCIS FROM THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

The following is a copy of a letter from the CIOFS Presidency that was sent to Pope Francis on behalf of Secular Franciscans around the world.

Rome, 13 April 2013

To our Beloved Father and “Lord Pope” Francis,

The hearts of the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order, present in 111 countries of the world, and of the Franciscan Youth, present in 68 countries, overflowed with joy at your election to the Chair of Saint Peter, and we thank the good Lord for this gift of His mercy.

We feel extremely close to you spiritually, not only on account of your decision to take the name of our blessed Founder, and of the foundations and style of your program and ministry, but also because of your charity and fatherly gentleness, which have touched our hearts, moving us all to commit ourselves even more deeply to “rebuild” a Church that is ever more holy, ever closer to the poor and to the least ones of our world.

Already we recognize our own identity in your teachings, so rich in the “Franciscan” charism, by which you enhance the wealth and depth of the profound and fruitful magisterium of our beloved Pope Benedict XVI.

As secular Franciscans, thanks to you, we feel even more profoundly challenged and stimulated to renew our commitment to serve the Church, our Christian brothers and sisters and all people, in the most authentic style of Saint Francis.

Beloved Father, to place the words “Lord Pope” and “Francis” together is a cause of deep emotion for us and we desire nothing less and nothing better than to be at your service as humble servants of your pastoral activity for the benefit of the whole Church and of the world.

Holy Father, we love you from the depths of our hearts and we hope to be able to meet you personally in the very near future, to express to you the depth of our communion with you, and to deepen “*the special bond with the Roman Pontiff, from whom the Secular Franciscan Order has received the approval of its Rule and the confirmation of its mission in the Church and in the world.*” (CC.GG. 99.2). Constantly “*inspired by Saint Francis and like him called to rebuild the Church, we wish to express to you all the living force of our desire “to live in full communion with the Pope, Bishops and Priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness”*”, as our Rule says (art. 6), which we have all wholeheartedly promised.

Confidently awaiting the joy of being able to meet you, beloved Father, and assuring you of our prayers for your Petrine ministry and for your life, we beg the favor of your blessing.

Encarnación del Pozo, OFS Minister General Spain

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