

PART 1

- Instrumentum Laboris means “**Working Instrument.**”
- Usually refers to a Vatican document produced before a Synod
- In our case it is a document produced by our International Presidency (CIOFS) in preparation for the triennial Chapter
 - This *Instrumentum Laboris* served as preparation for the celebration of the 2021 General Chapter, which constitutes the highest governing body of our OFS.”
- Theme for the General Chapter of 2021 was: “Animate and Guide with Servant Leadership”
- In the OFS our brothers and sisters must be properly **served and formed** in order to strengthen our vocation
- Councils must be “responsible servants” who know their jobs
- Each member must remember their **commitment to work as a team** alongside the servant leaders
- The leadership style chosen by St. Francis for his brothers is modeled on the service of Jesus— “...**you must wash each other’s feet.**”
- “... *the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves.*” (Luke 22:25-26)
- To be a servant-leader, in the image and likeness of Christ, the fundamental attitude of **listening and discerning** is essential.
 - Listening to God through **prayer**
 - **Listening to the members**, especially those in difficulty
 - **Discerning through dialog**
 - **Discerning the Divine Will in the signs of the times**
- St. Francis desired that Ministers would be servants to the brothers so that the brothers could talk to them [the Ministers] and truly treat them as brothers. **This takes humility.**
 - Our style of service is that exemplified by the washing of the feet.
 - Service is based on fraternity and fraternal relationships.
 - This style of leadership requires “prophetic creativity” for the realization of the Secular Franciscan life.
 - Both individuals and the entire fraternity act according to the Gospel and the Magisterium of the Church.
 - The responsibility to animate and guide our fraternities (at whatever level) requires leadership based on FRATERNAL SERVICE, in which **we bear each other’s burdens.**

- **Our service mirrors Jesus’s service—he gave his life for others**
 - for us as servant leaders this implies renunciation, humiliation, and suffering.
 - Our brothers and sisters are not objects to be dominated—they are to be carried—they weigh down on the shoulders of others.

Questions to answer in the CHAT BOX on your own computers

- + How does the Council in your fraternity exemplify the characteristics given above?
- + If you are, or aspire to be, a servant leader in the OFS, how do you (or will you) live up to what is asked?
- + How can this type of leadership be lived out in the world outside of the Order?

PART 2

- Through **FRATERNAL SERVICE** we bear each other’s burdens
- **Our service mirrors Jesus’s service—he gave his life for others**
 - Humility and suffering
 - We carry our brothers and sisters
- **Servant Leaders help the brothers and sisters to:**
 - Understand that our plan of life must be **centered on Christ** and in following him. (See GC 9.1)
 - Help the brothers and sisters to understand that all (the entirety) of the brothers and sisters make up the fraternity.
 - **Pray**—recognize the word and message of Jesus and know what God wishes to say to the world with your life.
 - Promote participation in the field of justice and public life with **courageous initiatives** and using one’s own life as an example. (Rule Art. 14) Political debate—a source of tension—must be avoided in the fraternity.
 - Form the brothers and sisters through the example of what is called for in Chapter 2 of the General Constitutions: “Active Presence in the Church and in the World.”
 - Grow within the Franciscan family making the **charism of St. Francis** present in the Church and in the world. (Rule Article 1)
 - **Understand the importance of the Rule, General Constitutions, and Statutes** regarding the orderly development of our fraternity life and of the communion of all fraternities in the Order.
 - **Participate unconditionally in the life of one’s fraternity.**
 - Understand and distinguish between: “**not being able to participate in fraternity life;**” “not wanting to participate;” or being “too lazy to participate.”
 - Accept with serenity, humility, and the spirit of obedience the decisions of the General Chapters which are the highest expression of responsibility of our Order.
- **When preparing for elections, the following must be taken into account:**

- To be elected to serve it is necessary to be familiar with the Rule and the General Constitutions
- Prospective servant leaders must have and make available the time to carry out their service.
- Fraternity gatherings respond to the needs of the members.
- Brothers and sisters should participate in the fraternity gatherings. **Having a large membership with little or no participation is “useless.”**
- They need to maintain a dialogue with the brothers and sisters and care for and engage “non-compliant” members.
- They should give due importance to Article 50.1 of the General Constitutions, developing the life of the fraternity, its presence in the world, and adoption of courageous measures in the apostolic life of the fraternity.

Questions to answer in your CHAT BOX on your own computer.

- According to the items above, how do your local and regional councils serve the membership?
- Which characteristics mentioned above do you see in yourself?
- How might you serve your fraternity now or in the future?

PART 3

Formation

- Formation continues to be the first challenge for our Order
- Formation programs should emphasize a formation on BEING
- The priority of BEING over DOING is strongly reaffirmed in Article 100.3 of the General Constitutions
- If we emphasize “doing” (activism) without “being,” our Order will not mature
 - We will end up with a simple and boring routine
 - We will end up as “activists” and “social workers” without the spiritual component and without being transformed spiritually
- Formation is not only intellectual/scholastic
- Formation leads us to adhere to the “heart of the Gospel.”
- A good leader guides like Jesus—so that anyone can understand
 - The Instrumentum Laboris tell us: “...brothers or sisters with little or no education can be received into the OFS if they are formed well and adhere to the spirituality of Francis of Assisi.”
- The local fraternity council must ensure:
 - Adequate formation of new members

- That the times established for Profession in the General Constitutions and National Statutes be followed (the timeframe may differ from country to country)
- That those who do not know the Rule cannot be admitted to Profession

Communication

- Essential: vital communion among all the brothers and sisters
- Essential: among all the fraternities
- Essential: must be a priority of Councils at all levels
- Essential: for building and maintaining relationships within the Order
- Lack of communication is a serious flaw in the Order.
 - Inhibits fraternal life
 - Overcoming this lack will facilitate communion between the various levels of the Order
 - Overcoming this lack will promote harmony within the Order
 - Overcoming this lack supports growth of the Order, guarantees transparency, and builds mutual trust.

Questions for discussion or to answer in your journal.

+ How does the ongoing formation program in your local fraternity make YOU a better Franciscan?

+ What are some suggestions you might make to your formation team based on the statements above?

+ If you are in initial formation, what are three things you particularly like about your formation sessions? What are three things you wish were different? (Be sure to share these with your formator.)

+Council members (all levels): How can you make communication a priority in your fraternity? (Local, Regional, National levels)

PART 4

World-wide challenges to be addressed

- The Secular Franciscan Order is a “**Fraternity of Fraternities**” spread all over the world. (See GC Article 1.3)
 - National, regional, and local fraternities are of different sizes—in some countries the number of local fraternities is small so there are no regional fraternities yet.
 - Fraternities at all levels may have different cultures and different languages.
 - all levels of fraternity need to communicate properly.

- **National Statutes** regulate the existence of Regional Fraternities according to the norms of the General Constitutions.
- identify and recognize the responsibilities and duties of the OFS itself toward **YouFra**. (See IL section 5.2.6)
- **Structure** of all fraternities (local, regional and national) needs to be well-balanced
- **Maintain focus on fraternal life, personal contacts, fraternal sharing** among the members, and **seeking God's will** within the fraternity

Challenges with Leadership [Concept of Servant Leadership was explained in part 2 of these posts.]

- Servant leadership should be **modeled** by those who animate and guide fraternities on various levels.
 - Ways and techniques of leadership should be shared from one level to another.
- **If there are difficulties**, check to see **what might be lacking**:
 - Possible lack of “core values” – Christian/Franciscan values
 - Lack of Franciscan spirituality; basic human virtues
 - Collegiality and collaboration—Minister and Council (including the Spiritual Assistant work TOGETHER)
- **Roots and reasons** for challenges with the concept of leadership
 - Incorrect understanding of leadership and what the role of leaders should be
 - Leadership incorrectly seen as a “pious service” only
 - Creativity is missing among the leaders.
 - Minister and Council members act like bosses— we are called to service, not power
 - **Those who serve fraternities at all levels must be persons of prayer who seek the will of God and the good of all the brothers and sisters and the entire Order.**
- Challenges with **nominations and elections** of excellent leaders
 - Lack of capable persons (possibly because the fraternity is small; some are “hiding” their talents; too involved in other things)
 - Acceptable reasons for not serving: Family or work responsibilities
- To prepare for elections, it is especially important that those who will vote (and those who will nominate and be nominated) **understand the General Constitutions and the role our Councils play in the life of the fraternity.**

Questions to answer in your CHAT BOX on your own computer

- + What suggestions can you make to improve the integration of cultural, language, and size differences in your local and regional fraternities?
- + In what ways do your local and/or regional servant leaders' model good leadership techniques?
- + How can election preparation be improved in your local fraternity? In your region?

PART 5

Proposals, ideas, suggestions, and solutions: (The items below are suggestions—remember, this is from the working document for what will be discussed at the General Chapter.)

- **Continuity of service** from the outgoing Council to the new Council
 - After elections, there should be more than one transition meeting
 - There should be adequate and proper transfer of materials (digital and physical)
 - The outgoing Council should explain how and why they carried out the vision
 - The outgoing Council should explain how they gave continuity to the work of the previous Council
- **Evaluation** of Servant Leaders
 - It is not necessary that servant leaders be charismatic—strong personalities are sometimes counterproductive.
 - How were collegiality, companionship, and collaboration modeled?
 - How has the outgoing council involved the fraternity and helped it progress?
- **Criteria** to remember regarding servant leaders
 - Service is temporary in nature – there should be a good rotation of leadership
 - The servant leader not only guides but accompanies
 - He/she must have a vision consistent with that of the fraternity—this must reflect the OFS rule
 - He/she must be productive—attracting new vocations and helping people so that they can take over leadership of the fraternity
 - He/she should develop a sense of belonging among the members
 - It should be clear that the OFS is an Order of the church and does not depend on the First Order
 - He/she should have the ability to involve, delegate, and inform the membership
- **Formation of Servant Leaders**
 - Possibility of courses developed by CIOFS

- This would provide a common base for all members of the Order
 - The course could be implemented at the regional level for local leaders and at the national level for regional leaders
 - The role of servant leadership should be discussed thoroughly in initial formation
 - Candidates should have a clear understanding of what it means to be co-responsible for the fraternity
 - Candidates should examine their talents to determine what they can offer the fraternity
 - Throughout candidacy they should develop a good idea of how commitment to the fraternity fits into their daily lives (Work and family commitments)
- **Finding suitable Servant Leaders**
 - One of the duties of Councils is to identify those who might serve in the future
 - Candidates should be invited to get involved in fraternity life
 - Generosity and volunteering are part of our OFS life—making yourself available is part of the charism
 - If formators are passionate about the Order, candidates will become passionate and “fall in love” with our life and commitment
 - It is important to remember that rotating roles refreshes the life of the fraternity
 - The role of the Spiritual Assistant should be understood well—both by the Council and the Spiritual Assistant
 - It is important to understand and develop the relationship among the council members themselves and with the entire fraternity
- **YOUFRA (Youth and Young Adults)**
 - This relationship is very important
 - Councils should be familiar with the documents on Youth particular to their country
 - Where there are YOUFRA groups, the fraternal animator should be a valued member of the YOUFRA Council
 - Section 14 of the IL document takes this a bit further

Key questions:

- + What kinds of general and fundamental problems are we experiencing in our fraternities?
- + Have the major problems mentioned been addressed by the Instrumentum Laboris?
- + What else would you like to see included