

## April 2018 Update following National Executive Council Meeting 7/4/18

This update includes more information concerning 2 major initiatives that you are already aware of: the Africa Water Project and celebration of the Jubilee Year marking 40 years since the approval of the OFS Rule, 1979. More on John Bradburne will follow very soon. We hope that members will welcome these, Paula ofS.

### 1. Well4Africa Project

Site:



**This project arose out of a direct appeal made from our members in Uganda, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Please ask a member who has access to the internet to look up this site which has pictures, brief accounts and a map for each country. It lists reasons to support the project.**

We know well that there are still many places which lack good clean water. But it's always more real when a family member is affected by something and we belong to the global family of our Order. The international councillors from these countries informed us that local communities, including Secular Franciscans, must walk 4-5 km every day to the nearest water source, are frequently affected by waterborne diseases, do not have the possibility of farming or to build the house of prayer they have been wanting for some considerable time. OfSgb national council agreed to encourage members to support this project. This is why I sent the link to Well4Africa to the regions. I hope this email will reach local fraternities and that members will be informed before their next fraternity meeting where they should consider what they could do.

It was the direct appeal from these African countries that led the organisers of the OfS/Youfra congress in Lithuania to ask us to help them raise enough money for three boreholes to provide clean water. Lithuania has already been very active in support of this project as you can see from the following. I include it here, not because we will be able to do all they do, but to encourage us to raise funds in a way that is realistic for our members, such as asking if we can make an appeal in our local parishes or seeking permission to carry at least one fund-raising activity in the parish. I will send information about this to the dioceses.

To avoid paying individual bank charges, it was decided that members of OfSgb would send any money raised to our National Treasurer, Michael Martin, possibly also via the website – to be confirmed. ***We would like to receive donations as early in July as possible so that gives us a couple of months to raise funds. It also means that Lithuania will receive our donations before the congress gathers in August. So this is urgent!!!*** Details re donation will be sent later.

#### What Lithuania is doing:

“We started national campaign in Lithuania, involved Bishop's conference and famous people (musicians, basketball players, etc) who support this social initiative and promote it. We thought that it's necessary to have ambassadors of the initiative who are well known in society and can be like guarantors of the transparency and reliability of this social initiative. It's also very important to involve authorities of the Church. So they agreed to speak in short video promoting the social initiative.

We also issued posters and special cups with the logo of the social initiative in order to invite people to buy them and to support this project. You can also use the logo of the social initiative to make souvenirs or any other kind of handicrafts.” (Email from Lithuania ofs)

## 2. Jubilee Year marking 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of OFS Rule:

The National Executive considered how we might celebrate the jubilee year for 40 years since the OFS Rule was approved by Pope Paul VI.

You may remember that some of our members have been involved in new translations of the OFS Rule, Constitutions and Ritual. Additionally, there has been an ongoing discussion with CIOFS concerning our National Statutes. These processes have made those involved aware that OFSGB members will need to become familiar with some terms that are recognised widely in the Church but are not in common usage in GB. Therefore, the council agreed that members may need help to understand and become familiar with these terms. This will be done during the first months of the jubilee year which opens on June 24, 2018.

The Chapter of Mats, 2014 proved a successful celebration, attended by many members, with every region represented. The executive decided that we will celebrate the jubilee at another chapter near the end of the jubilee year, in June 2019. (Details to follow) Having agreed to use the 2014 model, we had a discussion about the content, bearing in mind that every region + Scotland + Gibraltar would need to be given a theme to work on before the chapter at which they will make a presentation. We chose part of article 11 of our rule as our inspiration:

**“Thus in the spirit of the Beatitudes and as pilgrims and strangers (cf Hebrews 11:13-16) on their way to the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.”**

It was noted that St Francis was guided by the Beatitudes, eg the Admonitions that Francis composed for his brothers contain some of the Beatitudes and many of the admonitions begin “Blessed is”. This led the executive to look at the Beatitudes in Matthew’s Gospel. We calculated that we could have nine themes if we took each verse, of Matthew 5:3 – 11, separately. The 10<sup>th</sup> theme would be the section of article 11 of the Rule quoted above. The themes were put into a hat and allocation was made to the regions, already listed in alphabetical order, so the first theme drawn was allocated to East Anglia Region, etc. The results:

Gospel	Theme	Region
1. Matt 5:3	The Poor in Spirit	Midlands
2. Matt 5:4	Those who mourn	North East
3. Matt 5:5	The meek/humble	South East
4. Matt 5:6	Who hunger and thirst for righteousness	North West
5. Matt 5:7	The merciful	Southern
6. Matt 5:8	The pure in heart	Gibraltar
7. Matt 5:9	The peacemakers	East Anglia
8. Matt 5:10	Persecuted for righteousness’ sake	Scotland
9. Matt 5:11	Reviled and persecuted for the Faith “on my account”	South West and South Wales
10. Rule 11 (above)	In the spirit of the Beatitudes and as pilgrims and strangers	London

Also Paula will offer a presentation on the Prologue.