



Secular Franciscan Order  
Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis



## A Glimpse of the OFS in Other Countries

by Mary Stronach, OFS  
International Councilor

We all wear the Tau cross. That's a tangible, visible link uniting Secular Franciscans worldwide.

Just as your national leaders have been conducting regional visitations and elections, the order's international leaders so far this year (as of June) have presided at national elective chapters in The Netherlands, Flanders/Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Peru, and Columbia.



Chapter of Election in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Chapter of Election in The Netherlands

Secular Franciscans in other countries are tuned in to the plight of the poor and suffering children and families.

In Venezuela, for example, Secular Franciscans responded to extreme poverty by organizing a series of roving soup kitchens for children, with the OFS brothers and sisters cooking and bringing food directly to the hungry children in hard-hit communities.

Secular Franciscans in Mexico decided to "adopt" the children of Tarahumara Colony at the foot of Mount Bola by visiting them three times a year (Christmas, Children's Day, and at the beginning of the school year) to share gifts of food, toys and school supplies.

Further north, Secular Franciscans run the Canadian Food for Children project, which twice a year ships huge containers of food, medicine, clothes and household items to developing countries worldwide.

Across the "pond", Secular Franciscans in Spain set up the Road to Emmaus Association as a spiritual outreach to the poor and marginalized; and those in France started the Circle of Silence at Versailles to raise awareness about the plight of undocumented immigrants and treat them with dignity.

Further east in Hungary, Secular Franciscans founded the Franciscan Missionary Foundation for the Lower Carpathian Region, where they assist the disadvantaged and poor among Hungarian immigrant communities.

And in the Pacific island country of New Zealand, Secular Franciscans provide food and money for the Monte Cecilia Housing Trust, which helps homeless families rebuild their lives by providing housing and services such as adult education classes, budgeting, household management, and child care.