

# Fraternitas

OFM International News

## 2015 GENERAL CHAPTER

### What does celebrating a “chapter” mean?

The Benedictine Monks gathered to listen to the reading of a “chapter” (*capitulum*) of the *Rule for Monks of St. Benedict* after the hour of Prime in the early morning from the 8th century. Little by little this gathering of the monastic community became known as “the chapter” (of the monastery) and the place where it met the “chapter hall”.

There were two kinds of chapter in the monasteries. One was for consultation: the abbot or abbess sought the counsel of the community regarding some subject; the other chapter was for formation: the abbot or abbess made comment on the meaning of the extract of the Rule just read.

The “General Chapter” was established by the Cistercian Monks in 1195. All the Cistercian Abbots met once a year in the Abbey of Cîteaux, in France. The IV Latern Council, in 1215, established (in canon 18) that all religious Orders should celebrate “Chapters” at regular intervals (annual, triennial, etc.) after the example of the Cistercians as a means of promoting the reform of the religious life. The word “capitulum” had already acquired significance



by the time of St. Francis and enjoyed a long and varied tradition. From 1209 until about 1217, a “General Chapter” was celebrated twice a year: at the feast of Pentecost (May-June) and at the feast of St. Michael (29th of September). During the following period (1218-1223) the Ministers of Italy and surrounding regions celebrated a Chapter at Pentecost each year and “Provincial Chapters” were also celebrated each year at the feast of St. Michael. The Ministers of the “trans-alpine” Provinces attended the “General Chapter” at the Porziuncola every three years. Our normal practice today establishes a Chapter in the Province or Custody every three years and a General Chapter every six years.

## The OFM Fraternity in numbers

There were 13,632 Friars Minor on the 31st of December 2014: Some details: Postulants: 689 (not included in the total); Novices: 425; Temporary Professed: 1,413 (1,067 with a clerical option, 129 with a lay option and 217 without any option); Solemnly Professed: 11,794 (priests: 9,243; permanent deacons: 59; friars with clerical option: 416; Lay Friars: 1,957); Friar Cardinals: 6; and Archbishops/Bishops 113. 287 Friars died during the year.

The Friars are present in 120 countries, distributed as follows: Africa and Middle East: 1,161; Latin-America: 3,334; North America: 1,273; Asia-Oceania: 1,423; Western Europe: 3,999; Eastern Europe: 2,442.

The universal fraternity is structured in 103 Provinces and Autonomous Custodies; 9 Entities dependent on the Minister General; 19 Custodies dependent on Provinces; 16 Foundations; 14 Conferences of Ministers Provincial and 3 Unions of Conferences (Asia/Oceania: FCAO; Latin-America: UCLAF; Europe: UFME). Numbers do not constitute the most important element of evaluation. They can be, however, an “occasion” for “reviewing our mission and for experimenting with unexplored ways of presence and testimony” (M. Perry, Report to the PCO 2013, Rome, 2014, 12).

**The General Chapter can be following from the 10th May to the 7th June on:**

### The Official Site:

[capitulumgenerale2015.ofm.org](http://capitulumgenerale2015.ofm.org)

### Twitter:

[twitter.com/ofmdotorg](https://twitter.com/ofmdotorg)

### Facebook:

[facebook.com/ofm.org](https://facebook.com/ofm.org)

### Hashtag:

#capgenofm2015

### eMail:

[capgensec@ofm.org](mailto:capgensec@ofm.org)

## “Franciscans in The Holy Land”

A Conference by Eugenio Alliata on: “The Franciscans in the Holy Land: between archaeology and the collection of museum pieces” was held at the National Museum of Oriental Art, Via Merulana 248, Rome, on the 26th of March 2015. The Franciscan Alliata, an archaeologist and professor at the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, is the Director of the Museum of the Flagellation in Jerusalem.

## Hagiography on Bernadine of Siena

A day of study was held at the Pontifical University *Antonianum* on the 15th of April 2015, on the occasion of the publication of “The Hagiography on St. Bernadine (1450-1460)”, under the care of D. Solvi SISMELE - Edizioni Galluzzo, Firenze 2014.

The participants were: Letizia Pellegrini (St. Bernadine of Siena from the Process to the Lives); Giuseppe Cremascoli (Maffeo Vegio. Between the world of the classics and hagiography); Antonio Ciceri (The imprint of the Lives of St. Francis on the hagiography of Bernadine); Carlo Delcorno (The hagiography of a Preacher).

## Formation in the Novitiate



The Secretary General for Formation

and Studies, Br. Vidal Rodríguez, invited by the novice master, Br. Carlo Roberto, visited the Inter-provincial Novitiate of South COMPI in the convent of S. Maria Occorrevole in Piedimonte Matese, the Province of Caserta (Italy), on the 23rd and 24th of March 2015.

## General Secretariat for Formation and Studies



A formation meeting between the Secretaries General for Formation and Study of the First Order (OFM, OFMConv and OFMCap) was held at the OFM General Curia on the 26th of March.

The aim of the meeting was to continue and deepen collaboration within the Franciscan Family in the area of study by seeking strategies of work in common for the promotion of Franciscan Academic Institutions.

## PUA: Master in Franciscan Formation

A meeting about the Masters in Formation in a Franciscan Perspective at the Franciscan Institute of Spirituality of the Pontifical University *Antonianum* of Rome was held on the 30th of March 2015.



The academics responsible for the Masters met with the Secretaries General of Formation and Studies of the Franciscan Family, the Rectors of the Franciscan Higher Colleges and the Superiors of the religious houses who have students on the course for Masters.

The aim was to draw up a balance sheet for the present year (2014-2015), to dialogue about the criteria for admission to the Masters, as well as the requests for next year (2015-2016), to share some educational challenges for the future with the aim of coordinating the efforts at the accompaniment of religious.

## AVC: International Congress for Formators

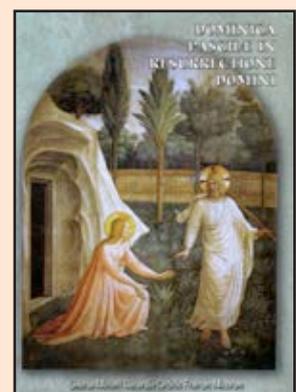


An International Congress for formators to the consecrated life of the

## Easter Letter of the Minister General of the OFM

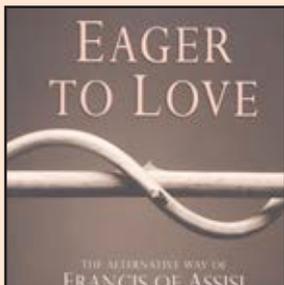
Dear Brothers, the life of Mary Magdalene was transformed through her personal meeting with Jesus, the Lord of the risen life. She was clearly a woman of deep faith and great loyalty, qualities which allowed her to go beyond the normal environment of her experience, to face up to the alienating forces of death and the loss of meaning and to discover again the living, faithful and loving presence of Jesus, her beloved Lord. Faith had given to Mary Magdalene – and can also give us – the necessary courage to face up to evil, injustice, dehumanising situations of political and social oppression and even death itself, in order to proclaim before God and humanity that love overcomes all evil, pardon overcomes every vendetta and hope every kind of menace and fear...

*The letter can be downloaded from the website of the Order.*



# FRANCISCAN BOOKMARK

## Franciscan Books

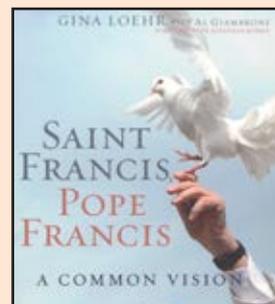


**RICHARD ROHR, *Desirous of Love*, Franciscan Media 2014, pp.294.**

Globally recognised as an ecumenical teacher, Richard Rohr, is and remains, a Franciscan Friar. Rohr helps us to look beyond the poetic image of the saint and to remember the long tradition based on his revolutionary and radical choice and how he embraced the change of life thanks to the teachings of Jesus.

**GINA LOEHR, *San Francesco, Papa Francesco, una visione comune [St. Francis, Pope Francis, a common vision]*, Servant Books 2014, pp.125.**

St. Francis lived a life of dedication to the Gospel. In his choice of this great saint as his patron, Pope Francis indicated that his pontificate would reflect a profound embrace of the same Gospel. Gina Loehr and Al Giambrone examined five gospel values that were important for both men: humility, the Church, charity, peace and joy.

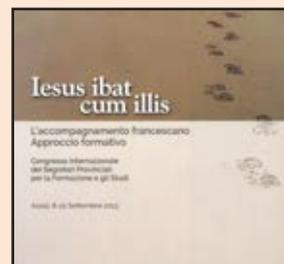


**AA.VV., *Silvio Bottes. Francescano*, Grafica 5 [Silvio Bottes, Franciscan, Graphic 5], Arco (TN) 2014, pp. 415.**

This dense book brings together the works of the Franciscan sculptor Br. Silvio Bottes, of the Trent Province of St. Virgil. It is a question, in fact, of a "catalogue" organised in thematic sections which permits us to trace the intense artistic life of Br. Silvio and gives an account of the extraordinary amount of works that this Franciscan, through silent dedication, succeeded in doing. There is a DVD with the "catalogue".

**"*Iesus ibat cum illis*" L'accompagnamento francescano. Approccio formativo [Franciscan Accompaniment. A Formative Approach]**

The GSFS published the book which contains the ACTS of the International Congress of Provincial Secretaries for Formation and Studies that took place in Assisi from the 8th to the 22nd of September 2013. It can be asked for by email: [formgen@ofm](mailto:formgen@ofm), or downloaded from the website: [www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)



whole world, organised by the Congregation for the Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life of the Holy See, was held in Rome from the 7th to the 11th of April 2015 on the occasion of the year dedicated to the Consecrated Life.

More than 1,300 religious formators, members of over 500 Orders, Congregations and Institutes, from more than one hundred countries participated. The assembly, therefore, presented a nice image of the reality of

formators to the religious life today, a mosaic characterised by being international, multi-cultural and inter-generational.

The aim of the Congress was to listen to the Word of God in an inter-disciplinary perspective by inviting the different cultures to reflect together on the fundamentals of the identity of the consecrated life in the Church and world, and on the needs of formation in the contemporary context in which we live and announce the Gospel.

The OFM General Secretariat for Formation and Studies invited the International Committee and the International Council of the same GSFS, and other formators from various Provinces of the Order to participate in the Congress. Our family, with the presence of 25 Friars, was the group of formators most represented.



## NEW VISITATORS

**BR GERGELY MAGYAR,**  
OF THE PROVINCE OF "MAGNA DOMINA HUNGARORUM", IN HUNGARY, FOR THE PROVINCE OF ST. STEPHEN IN TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA.

**BR RAFAEL COLOMER BARBER,**  
OF THE PROVINCE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BVM, SPAIN, FOR THE PROVINCE OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BVM, ARGENTINA.

## Florence - The Art of Francis



The Gallery of the "Accademia" in Florence, in collaboration with the Order of Friars Minor, and scientifically thought out with the "Chinese Commission" (The Higher School of Medieval and Franciscan Studies, at the Pontifical University *Antonianum* in Rome) is organising an exhibition, from the 31st of March to the 11th of October, in which it is proposed to document, to the highest level of quality, the artistic production with a Franciscan influence (paintings, sculpture, summary arts) from the twelfth to the fourteenth century and, at the same time, to highlight the extraordinary evangelising activity of the Franciscans in Asia, from the Holy Land to China, recalling it also through objects of exceptional historical importance and incomparable charm.

## Assisi, Italy – Exhibition on the Franciscans in The Holy Land

"For the first time – said the curator

of the Marco Pizzo exhibition – the historical mission of the Franciscans in the holy places have been documented through an organic production commissioned by a religious Order". The photographs in the exhibition, about 150, are in fact reproductions from the original contents of three albums realised by the studio of Luigi Fiorillo of Alessandria dated 1885-1887.

This photographic documentation of extraordinary importance and exceptional beauty, preserved up to now at the provincial archives of Aracoeli, of the Friars Minor of Rome, is finally accessible to the public. Requested by the 'Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio' of Perugia and organised by the 'Fondazione Cariperugia Arte', in collaboration with the 'Centro Culturale Aracoel' of the Friars Minor of the Roman Province of Sts. Peter and Paul and under the patronage of the 'Comune' of Assisi, the exhibition, at the Palazzo Bonacquisti in Assisi, will remain open until the 8th of November 2015.



## General Postulation



The Holy Father Francis received His Eminence the Most Reverend Cardinal Angelo Amato, S.D.B., Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in private audience on Wednesday the 18th of March 2015. During the audience, the Holy Father authorised the Congregation to promulgate, among others, the decree regarding the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Giovanna della Croce (in the world: Giovanna Vázquez Gutiérrez) a professed nun of the Third Order of St. Francis, Abbess of the Convent of St. Mary of the Cross in Cubas, Madrid: born in Villa de Azaña, today Numancia La Sagra (Spain) on the 3rd of May 1481 and died in Cubas de La Sagra (Spain) on the 3rd of May 1534.

## Inter-religious Prayer at the Antonianum

The 14th of April was memorable for the academic community of the Pontifical University *Antonianum*. In St. Francis hall, packed with people, there was an inter-religious prayer meeting, promoted according to the "spirit of Assisi" by the Friars of Istanbul and "swirling Dervishes", who are linked through a long-time friendship. The latter, Muslims from Istanbul, are inspired by a medieval mystic (Jalâl âlDîn Rûmî: 1207-1273) and were accompanied by musicians and singers during their dance.

The prayer meeting was carried out in two phases. In the first, the Franciscan Friars read or sang hymns inspired by St. Francis. In the second part there was the prayer and dance of the "swirling Dervishes".

The inter-religious prayer meeting for peace concluded with the blessing of St. Francis and a short message from the Minister General, Br. Michael A. Perry, read in Italian and Turkish.

