



ORDO FRATRUM MINORUM MINISTER GENERALIS

Curia Generale dei Frati Minori (OFM)

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To all the Friars of the Order



Nairobi -Kenya, January 27, 2024

Dear brothers,

may the Lord give you peace!

It is with a heavy heart that I received the news of Brother Hermann Schalück's passing to Eternal Life while in Nairobi with the General Definitorium and the Ministers, Custodes and Presidents of Africa. Brother Hermann was a friar that so many of us knew and appreciated.

Friedhelm Schalück was born in St. Vit on May 8, 1939, the son of a farmer Wilhelm Schalück and his wife Ida, née Surmann. He grew up with eight siblings. In 1959 he graduated from the Franciscan College in St Ludwig/Vlodrop.

On April 15, 1959, he was received into the novitiate of the then Franciscan Province of Saxony in Rietberg and was given the religious name Hermann. He made his solemn profession on April 19, 1963, in Warendorf. Archbishop Lorenz Cardinal Jäger ordained him a priest on July 22, 1965.

After continuing his studies at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, he received his doctorate in theology on Feb. 7, 1970, with a thesis on the idea of poverty in Bonaventure's theology.

After a short teaching period at the then Franciscan and Capuchin religious college in Munich, he was elected provincial of Saxony in April 1973. He held this office until 1983. His subsequent positions, until June 1997, were General Secretary for Formation and Studies in 1983, General Definitior in 1985 and General Minister from June 1991 until 1997.

After returning to Germany, in November 1997, he became president of the Catholic International Relief Organization Missio based in Aachen, a service he maintained until 2008. In 1998 he was appointed member of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

He continued to work for the mission of the Church and the Franciscan Order. Continuing issues with his health necessitated his admission to a rehabilitation center last year. Here he settled in well and continued to follow world events with eyes wide open.

On the morning of January 26, 2024, he passed away unexpectedly in his room while the Eucharist was being celebrated in the convent church during a retreat for the sisters.

Personally, I first met him back in 1985. The most vivid memory I have of him was his capacity for attention and listening, not only on a personal level but much deeper.

In this way, one could catch something of his spirit, along with his intelligence. Last year I had heard from him by phone after the operation he had undergone, and I found the same caring and attentive person I met so many years ago.

I always appreciated in Brother Hermann, especially while he was our Minister General, the opening of boundaries to the world that he knew how to give to our discourses and horizons. He sensed long ago the crisis of a certain model of religious life and knew how to point us towards the future.

He strongly sensed the urgency of a worldwide commitment to the poor and the safeguarding of creation, fueled by a deep Franciscan spirituality.

Now our dear brother, former Minister and Servant of what he himself taught us to consider an international Fraternity and not just a provincial one, is in the light of God and from there he sees people and situations. We continue perceive his fraternal presence and so capable of orienting us. It would be interesting for us to go back and read his writings and interventions, to find them always very relevant. His presence as a brother and minister continues among us.

I remind all the brothers and fraternities to pray for him, entrusting his life and death to the Most High God, Giver of all good things, that He may receive him into the communion of saints and multiply the fruits of his generous response to the Lord's call.

I greet each and every one of you, invoking the Blessing of St. Francis.

Fraternally,



Fr. Massimo Fusarelli ofm

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Minister General

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