

BALI, INDONESIA

## MEETING OF THE CONFERENCES OF ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA



On 1-5 May 2023, the year of the 8th Centenary celebrations of the Later Rule and Christmas in Greccio, forty-nine participants comprising Ministers, Bursars, and lay collaborators of the different entities of the Franciscan Conferences of Asia, Australia, and Oceania (FCAO), together with Br. John Puodziunas, OFM (General Bursar), Br. John Wong, OFM (Definitor General for Asia and Oceania) and the EAC (East Asia Conference) and SAAOC (South Asia, Australia and Oceania Conference) Secretaries, Animators, and Bursars were gathered in Jayakarta Hotel, Badung Regency, Bali, Indonesia, to celebrate fraternity, enhance collaboration, and discern the signs of the times in Asia.

In this gathering, we shared and reflected on the important concerns in our life and ministries in FCAO on matters related to Formation, Mission, JPIC and Finances.



## GENERAL CURIA AGENDA

- On 8 May the Tempo Forte began in the General Curia and it will end on Saturday 20 May. During this period, from 15 to 18, the meeting of the presidents of the Conferences takes place.
- From May 21 to 28, the Laudato Si' Movement and the JPIC General Office are promoting Laudato Si' Week virtually, to commemorate the eighth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical.
- From 22 to 25 May the Minister General, Br. Massimo, and the Definitor General, Br. Albert Schmucki, will be on a fraternal visit to Hungary.
- Later, from 26 to 30 May, Br. Massimo and Br. Albert will be in Transylvania (Romania). On the 27th they will celebrate Holy Mass in Ciuksolmyo, in the most important shrine in the region.



After five days of prayerful collective discernment, the conference came up with the following orientations:

**On a Regional Formators' Course:**

- That a committee comprising Br. Joel Sulse, OFM (EAC Secretary for Formation and Studies), Br. Charles Bernard, OFM (SAAOC Secretary for Formation and Studies), and two appointed members, namely Br. Azeem Lawrence, OFM (Custos, Pakistan) and Br. Derrick Yap, OFM (Custos, Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei) draft a program for a formators' course to be submitted to FCAO Ministers as a proposal before the end of August 2023.

**On the Initial Formation Collaboration:**

- That the EAC and SAAOC Secretaries for Formation and Studies develop conference-level programs for virtual gatherings of friars in initial formation.

- That the EAC and SAAOC Secretaries for Formation and Studies and Secretaries for Missions and Evangelisation study the feasibility of developing a shared post-novitiate formation program as a long-term response to the Order's need for missionaries ad gentes.

**On Lay Brothers' Gatherings:**

- That the EAC and SAAOC Secretaries for Formation and Studies, each plan and organize lay brothers' gatherings at their own conference level as an integral part of the international lay brothers' gathering in 2025.

- That each entity shall initiate its own lay brothers' gathering prior to the gatherings at the conference and international levels.

**On the Need for Missionaries in Papua New Guinea (PNG):**

- That the Minister and Secretary for Missions and Evangelisation of each entity strengthen their roles to animate friars with administrative, leadership, and formation skills to volunteer for mission work in Papua New Guinea.

- That the volunteer missionaries undergo mission preparation, orientation, team-building and progressive integration into PNG fraternities.



**On FCAO 2024 Meeting:**

- That the FCAO 2024 meeting with the Minister General, General Definitory, and representatives from various General Secretariats and Offices be held in Manila, Philippines, from 7–13 April 2024:

1. EAC and SAAOC Presidents and their respective Conference Secretaries, Secretaries for Formation and Studies, Secretaries for Missions and Evangelisation and JPIC Animators;

2. EAC and SAAOC Ministers (Provincials, Custos and Presidents) and their respective Secretaries for Formation and Studies, Secretaries for Missions and Evangelisation, and JPIC Animators.

- The Presidents of the two Conferences shall draft the related program for the FCAO meeting and disseminate it to all

ministers by the end of August 2023.

**On Voluntary Solidarity Contribution:**

- That the EAC and SAAOC Presidents will bring to the May 2023 meeting of Conference Presidents the feedback and preferred model for the Voluntary Solidarity Contribution.

**On Financial Collaboration and Formation:**

- That the EAC and SAAOC Presidents liaise with the General Development Office and the Bursars of the Conferences for conference level meetings on process and procedure for project funding applications and follow up.

- That the Bursars of conferences plan regular meetings between themselves and the ministers for the purpose of ongoing communication, collaboration and formation, in particular regarding stewardship.

- That the Bursars of EAC and SAAOC support stewardship as the basis for supporting the General Curia and its works, possibly through the development of a standard form of reporting of the financial reality of each entity to the General Curia. The Conference Presidents to present this reflection at the May 2023 Conference Presidents' meeting for further consideration.

*Prepared by Fr. Derrick Yap, OFM, Fr. Neil Badillo, OFM, Fr. Marco Angelo Vito, OFM (Secretary for EAC), Fr. Titus Angga Restuaji, OFM (Secretary for SAAOC)*





## CROATIA

## MEETING WITH THE SOUTH SLAVIC CONFERENCE CONCLUDED



The three-day meeting (26-28 April 2023) of the Order's animation Offices - Secretary General for Formation and Studies, Secretariat for Missions and Evangelisation and Justice Peace and Integration of Creation - with their counterparts from the South Slavic Conference concluded with an educational trip to Krka National Park, Visovac Island in Croatia, in the presence of the President of the South Slavic Conference, Br Marko Mrše and the Definitor General, Br Konrad Cholewa.

On the first day, after the greetings of the President of the Conference and the General Definitor on behalf of the Minister General, the Secretary General for Formation and Studies, Br Darko Tepert, presented the work of his Secretariat. He spoke about the preparation of the Meetings of Lay Friars in the Conferences, the preparation of the European Meeting of the Temporarily Professed Friars and the preparation of the Congress of the Franciscan Study Centres. Next, the General Secretary for Missions and Evangelisation, Br Francisco Gómez Vargas, presented the structure of his Secretariat and the responsibilities of the individual components. He also informed the participants of the point reached in preparing the Ratio evangelizationis of our Order. Furthermore, he underlined the importance of the Secretariat's work concerning new forms of life and evangelisation in Europe.

Finally, the Director of the General Office for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, Br Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, presented various commitments of his Office, emphasising the importance the Order gives to the Franciscan Network of Migrants in Latin America and the Franciscan Network of the Mediterranean.

In his speech, the President of the Conference noted how the Provinces of the Conference form a beautiful mosaic. He said that work must now be done to stimulate practical proposals for collaboration at the interprovincial level, with the need for the houses of formation to become more and more visible, also thinking of the possibility of organising different types of meetings in

initial formation. Finally, Br Marko presented the problem of the Franciscan Institute for the Culture of Peace, which has existed for decades in this Conference, in collaboration with the Franciscan Family, suggesting that we reflect on the future of this Institute.

Konrad Cholewa thanked all who had participated in this meeting, stressing the need to exchange information. He reminded those in charge of the various offices of the role of animation in their respective Provinces, reiterating how the indications given by the General Offices for the animation of the Order start from the mandates and guidelines of the last General Chapter.

In addition to the interventions of the President and General Definitor, the participants continued the discussion in the plenary, preparing proposals for the Conference of Minister Provincials. Finally, they agreed on proposals to improve interprovincial collaboration at the Conference level with closer cooperation between individual offices and the General Curia.

*The Southern Slavic Franciscan Conference comprises the Holy Cross and Assumption Provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Croatian Provinces of Saints Cyril and Methodius, St Jerome and the Redeemer, and the Holy Cross Province in Slovenia.*



FRANCISCAN CONFERENCE OF BRAZIL AND THE SOUTHERN CONE  
**ASSEMBLY PREPARES CHAPTER OF LAY BROTHERS AND MISSIONARY CONGRESS**

From 24-27 April 2023, the Assembly of Ministers Provincial and Custodes of the Franciscan Conference of Brazil and the Southern Cone was held in Franca, Brazil, at the Friary of St Mary of the Angels.

The purpose of the Assembly, as explained by Br Fernando Aparecido dos Santos, OFM, Custos of the Custody of the Sacred Heart and Vice-President of the Brazil and Southern Cone Conference, "is to share the experiences of the respective entities and, above all, to rationalise, with the secretariats and offices of the Conference, the work defined in the Enlarged Assembly held in March last year in São Paulo/SP, Brazil".

Br César Kulkamp, General Definitor of the area, shared the activities carried out during the 4-day meeting: "The climate in the Conference is quite good, sharing and we have seen that the animation services of the Conference are going well. These days we have had periodic meetings of the Animation, Mission and Evangelisation services, of the Educational Ministry, which is very significant in the Conference".

And for the future, Br. César added: "The Ministers discussed future activities such as the preparation of the Chapters of Lay Brothers and the Chapter of Mats that will be held in each entity of the Conference, as well as the Missionary Congress on New Forms of Evangelisation to be held in Peru in June 2023".

The following Ministers and Custodes participated in this Assembly: Br César Kulkamp, OFM – Definitor General for Latin America (Rome/Italy); Br Daniel Alejandro Fleitas Zeni, OFM – San Francisco Solano Province (Argentina), and President of the Brazil and Southern Cone Conference; Br Edilson Rocha, OFM – Franciscan Custody of St Benedict of Amazonia (Brazil);



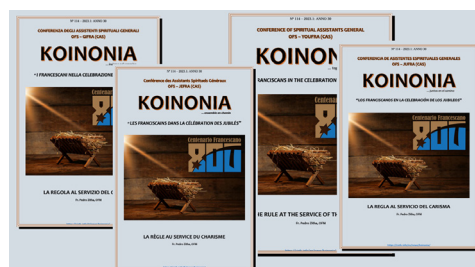
Br Fernando Aparecido dos Santos, OFM – Franciscan Custody of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Brazil); Br Rogério Viterbo de Sousa, OFM – Custody of the Seven Joys of Our Lady (Brazil); Br Antônio Pacheco Ramos, OFM – Our Lady of the Assumption Province (Brazil); Br Carlos Antônio da Silva, OFM – Holy Name of Jesus Province (Brazil); Br João Amilton dos Santos, OFM – St Anthony Province (Brazil); Br Hilton Farias de Souza, OFM – Province of Holy Cross (Brazil); Br Marino Pedro Rhoden, OFM – St Francis of Assisi Province (Brazil); Br Paulo Roberto Pereira, OFM – Province of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Brazil); Br Emilio Andrada, OFM – Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin of the Rio de la Plata (Argentina and Paraguay); Br Carlos Guillermo Paz Guzmán, OFM – Holy Trinity Province (Chile).

*The Conference of Ministers Provincial and Custodes of Brazil and the Southern Cone was created by the Minister General in 2020 as a result of the merger of two Franciscan conferences covering the following countries: Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay.*

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**THE FRANCISCANS IN THE CELEBRATION OF JUBILEES**

A Rule of Life is absolutely indispensable for living one's vocation correctly, alone or with others. Through Christ, every person who wants to live the evangelical way of life is able to understand that life comes before the Rule, and the Rule serves as a reminder to focus on loving God and neighbour. The Rule is a tool to safeguard our freedom to love and live our lives according to the love of God and neighbour.





The Franciscan family will have the joy of celebrating the Franciscan Centenaries with various opportunities to enhance the gift of the Franciscan charism. The celebrations will be divided into several stages: in 2023, with the approval of the Regula Bullata and the Christmas in Greccio; in 2024, with the Stigmata, 2025 with the Canticle of Brother Sun and in 2026, with the passing away of St Francis.

The Conference of Spiritual Assistants (CAS) decided to make its contribution by reflecting on several topics regarding the celebration of jubilees. For this year, the general theme is Franci-

scans in the Celebration of Jubilees divided into four subtitles: The Rule at the Service of the Charism; the Holy Gospel as a Rule of Life; the Meaning of the Crib in Today's World; the Nativity Scene in the Church.

We hope that these themes will give energy to the Franciscan family at various levels and new paths of life to rediscover the joy and meaning of living the Franciscan charism today.

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## CELEBRATING THE FRANCISCAN CENTENARY

### THE GENERAL CURIA ON PILGRIMAGE TO GRECCIO AND FONTE COLOMBO

**T**he centenary anniversaries, linked to the life and charism of Saint Francis, will be celebrated by the Community of Friars of the General Curia with various initiatives and proposals. The anniversaries of this year (Christmas in Greccio and the Rule) are a great opportunity to return to the pure and genuine source of our spirituality as a moment to verify and renew the vocation of every Franciscan.

For the Friars of the Curia, on the proposal of the Guardian and his Discretorium, this "living journey of memory" began on Thursday 3 May with a catechesis of ongoing formation, "Christmas in Greccio invites us to live the Rule according to the dynamics of Incarnation" held by Br Carlos Salto (Professor of the Antonianum University - Rome), centred on the events of Greccio and Fonte Colombo, holy places in the Rieti Valley where Francis celebrated the live Nativity Scene and wrote the Rule.

The following day, May 4, it can be said that the "word broken down the day before" took shape in the pilgrimage to Greccio and Fonte Colombo.

In Greccio, the friars visited the Shrine, welcomed and accompanied by the Guardian, Br Domenico, and were able to celebrate Mass in the Chapel which recalls the first living nativity scene in Christianity, the fruit of the heart and faith of Saint Francis who, "with joyous bliss", wanted to concretely relive the profound mystery of love "of the incarnate God".

In the afternoon, the visit to Fonte Colombo, where the Guardian, Fr Aldo, welcomed the friars in the "simple and humble refuge" loved by Francis where the Approved Rule was written,

still today the "seal, guide and faithful and sure foundation" to path wanted by St. Francis for his friars.



The holy valley of Rieti, which St. Francis loved deeply, appeared to us even more beautiful and precious after having spiritually completed this "embodied" pilgrimage of memory which we hope will bring abundant fruits to the spiritual life of every Franciscan with the living witness to the Gospel of Christ.

## ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFERENCE THE ESC MEETS IN DUBLIN

The Provincial Ministers and Custos of the English Speaking Conference (ESC) held their annual Spring meeting at the Provincial Curia of the Irish Province in Dublin from April 17-21, 2023.



Before the formal meeting began, the US-6 provincials met to discuss matters relevant to their regions and their future unified province. “Our time in Ireland has offered the opportunity for us from the US-6 to discuss our own excitement and apprehension as we walk together into a new, unknown future. Many of us walked two by two on the roads of Dublin talking about our hopes and our sadness about letting go of what we know. It was reminiscent to me of the disciples of Jesus on the Road to Emmaus”, explained Br Mark Soehner, provincial of St. John the Baptist in USA.

During the five day meeting the provincials and custos had time to share how they are coming out of Covid-19; they also discussed the future of ESC after October 2023, when some American provinces will be unified, the future ESC Conference meeting of lay brothers in 2024 and Chapter of Mats being held in 2025. Br Aidan shared the process relevant to Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Committee of the Order and

Br Tom shared the report on May 2022 Meeting of Conference Presidents which was held in Rome.

Representing the entities of the ESC, the following Ministers and Custos took part of the meeting: Br Thomas Nairn, OFM (Sacred Heart Province, USA), President of the ESC; Br Aidan McGrath (Province of Ireland); Br Robert Campagna (Province of the Immaculate Conception, USA); Br Evaldas Darulis (St. Casimir Province, Lithuania); Br James Gannon, OFM (Assumption BVM Province, USA); Br Mark Soehner, OFM (St. John the Baptist Province, USA); Br Michael Copps, OFM (Custody of the Immaculate Conception, UK); Br Pierre Charland, OFM (Holy Spirit Province Saint-Espirit, Canada); Br Ron Walters (Our Lady of Guadalupe Province); Br Philip Miscamble (Holy Spirit, Australia). Also in attendance: Br Jimmy Zammit, OFM (General Definitior); Br Pat McCloskey, OFM (ESC executive secretary); Br Juozapas Marija Zukauskas (Secretary, St. Casimir Province) – for some sessions.

*The ESC is an exception among the conferences of the Order in that it is not comprised of provinces in a certain geographic region, but organized on the basis of language. The ESC comprises 12 entities located in North America (Canada and the United States) and Europe (Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, and the United Kingdom). The Province of Australia is an associate member of the Conference.*

### DECEASED FRIARS \*

- 6 May: Br Imrich Neslusàn - Prov. Most Holy Name of Jesus, Italy
- 4 May: Br. Philippe Sicher - Blessed Duns Scotus Province, France
- 4 May: Br. Saraín Zenteno Hernández - Province of Sts. Francis and James, Mexico
- 2 May: Br Manuel Marques Novo - Province of Saints Martyrs of Morocco, Portugal
- 2 May: Br Adolfo Temme - Our Lady of the Assumption Province, Brazil
- 1 May: Br Roberto Mizicko - Custody of St Benedict, Brazil
- 29 April: Br Franciszek Rosinsky - Prov. St. Hedwig, Poland
- 24 April: Br Ludovic Champigny - Blessed Duns Scotus Province, France
- 23 April: Br Mauro Antonio Valencia Ríos - Province of Saint Faith, Colombia
- 22 April: Br Marciano Fontana - St Anthony Province, Italy
- 8 April: Br Celeste Raffaele Vecchi - St Anthony Province, Italy
- 3 April: Br. Oreste Sandri - St Anthony Province, Italy

\* Data received from the General Secretariat [secgen@ofm.org](mailto:secgen@ofm.org)



# OFM WORLD

Formation meeting in Leiria, Portugal



Inauguration of the art exhibition on St Francis of Assisi in the National Gallery, London, United Kingdom



New Definitors of the Province of St Francis Stigmatized of the Friars Minor, Italy



Chapter of Mats in the Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Poland



Ongoing formation of the fraternity of the General Curia at Greccio, Italy



Meeting of aspirants in Guatemala

BR DERRICK YAP APPOINTED CUSTOS

## MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE AND BRUNEI: AUTONOMOUS CUSTODY OF ST. ANTHONY ERECTED

**O**n the morning of 25 April 2023, Br Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, officially declared the autonomy of the Custody of St Anthony (Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei), previously dependent upon the Province of the Holy Spirit (Australia-New Zealand).

The fraternal celebration was also graced by the participation of Definitor General (Asia-Oceania) Br John Wong, himself the previous Custos of the Custody. The Mother Province in Australia-New Zealand was also well-represented by the presence of the Minister Provincial Br Phillip Miscamble, who was the entity's first Custos, together with the current Provincial Definitors and previous Ministers Provincial. It was truly a celebration of the sacrificial efforts of the many friars that contributed to the growth and maturation of our brotherhood here in this part of the world.

The decree of erection of the Autonomous Custody pronounced at the beginning of a Custody Assembly held in St Clare Hall on our Bukit Batok Complex. The appointments of the leadership team of the newly Autonomous Custody was also read out, with Friar Derrick Yap as Custos, Friar Michael D'Cruz as



Vicar, and Friars Vernon Chua, Esmond Chua, David Au and Aiden Peter as Custody Councillors. During this Assembly, the Custody's journey was reviewed and its future trajectory envisioned in the presence of Minister General and Definitor General for the zone.

The Evening Eucharist celebration of the Custody's Autonomy was presided by the Minister General at the Church of St Mary of the Angels in Bukit Batok, Singapore. Many Religious, parishioners of St Mary of the Angels, benefactors and friends were present to rejoice with us. After the rousing homily, Friar Nelson Evarinus was admitted to the Ministry of Acolyte and all the Solemnly Professed present recommitted their vows as a symbol of their dedication to the Franciscan Gospel way of life and of becoming contemplative fraternities in mission.

As a concrete expression of the Custody's ongoing commitment to the Poor and Marginalised, as well as for Mission and Evangelisation Efforts, the Custody launched 'St Anthony's Touch', a fund specially reserved for initiatives in these areas. A cheque of MYR50,000 (appro-

ximately EUR10,000) was presented to Friar Don Don Ramirez, the Rector of St Ann Mission (Kuching) to support the mission parish's effort to build houses for poor families in the villages they pastorally care for.

After the Mass, the Minister General blessed a statue of St Anthony preaching to the Fishes at the Piazza of the Bukit Batok parish and friary, symbolising the intentional commitment of the friars of the Custody to be 'Fishers of Men'. The souvenirs for the occasion consists of two pairs of chopsticks, a rich symbol to remind us, like the functions of chopsticks, to hold gratitude in our hearts, to feed God's people, and to lift each other up.

The Minister General also took time to have separate personal encounters with individual groups to dialogue and deepen his understanding of the Custody – with all the brothers in Initial Formation, with the Custody Council and individual consultations with the Provincial and Custos.

Following this celebration, Br Massimo and Br John will be accompanied by Br

Derrick to Sabah (Malaysia) for a visit to the newest mission of the Custody in Kota Kinabalu, where the Custody's presence was only recently established.

The Minister General will meet and dialogue with the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (FSIC) and with some of the almost 600 the members of the Order of Franciscans Secular in Sabah.

The Minister General and Definitor General will also have a personal meeting with the Archbishop of Kota Kinabalu. Archbishop John Wong and the Definitor General happen to have the same name, which often causes humorous confusion in the local Church!

In this part of the world, where there is a great diversity of cultures, religions and even degrees of affluence, the brothers of this newly Autonomous Custody are called to reach out to every persona and all creatures, just as St Francis did, as well as following the beautiful examples of their patron St Anthony of Padua and co-patron Blessed Gabriele Allegra.

## FRANCISCAN BOOKMARK

[I francescani di Terra Santa in Libano](#)  
Halim Noujaim, Bartolomeo Pirone  
Terra Santa Edizioni – 2023

[Padre Nostro - Il breviario del Vangelo](#)  
Piero Stefani  
Terra Santa Edizioni – 2023

[Paz a esta casa - Una lectura social de la Regla Bulada de Francisco de Asis](#)  
Fidel Aizpurúa Donazar  
Ediciones Franciscanas Arantzazu – 2023

[The Essence of Franciscan Spirituality](#)  
Eric Doyle  
Franciscan Publishing - 2023

[The Virtuous Economy: Reforms in the Franciscan Tradition](#)  
Roderic Hewlett  
Franciscan Institute Publications - 2023

[Light of Assisi: The Story of Saint Clare](#)  
Margaret Carney  
Franciscan Media 2021

[Possessed By Love Endeavours In Franciscan Living](#)  
Anthony M. Carrozzo  
Franciscan Publishing - 2023

[I penitenti volontari medievali e il francescano secolare](#)  
Piero Maglioli  
Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana - 2023



BR MASSIMO AND BR JIMMY IN MALTA

**CHAPTER OF THE PROVINCE OF “ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE”**

On 1-5 May 2023, Br Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, and Br Jimmy Zammit, General Definitor, took part in the Provincial Chapter of the Province of St Paul the Apostle of Malta. The Minister General personally presided over the work of the Intermediate Chapter, as part of a broader accompaniment of the Province by the General Definitory, which began almost two years ago.

The 35 capitulars, out of 43 brothers of the Province, with 3 novices and a postulant, carried out the review of the three-year period, especially in the areas of formation, evangelisation, administration and collaboration with other Entities. The dialogue gradually became more open and frank, to the point of touching the nodes of the life and mission of the Maltese friars in the 7 friaries present in Malta and Gozo, as well as brothers serving in Canada, Honduras, London and Libya and Rome.

On 4 May, the Chapter elected the 4 provincial definitors: Br Ramon Farrugia, Br Loreto Zerafa, Br Clive Camilleri and Br Martin Coleiro, who will continue the service entrusted in 2020 to Br Anthony Chircop, Provincial Minister, and Br Marcello Ghirlando, Provincial Vicar.

The Province has experienced a considerable decrease in numbers and the progressive ageing of its members. The Chapter, animated by the theme "Be strong, be of good cheer" (Deut 31:6), gave voice to the yearning for renewal so as not to be overcome by a sense of resignation and closure within oneself. At the beginning of the Chapter, the General Minister exhorted us to be strong and take courage in various aspects of the life and mission of the provincial fraternity, to respond with enthusiasm and courage to the challenge of the future, with creative fidelity and a sense of gratitude to God's action in the history of



over five centuries of Franciscan presence in Malta.

In the mandates and proposals of the Chapter, it was jointly decided to profoundly review the plan for ongoing and initial formation, through the elaboration of local and provincial projects of fraternal life, a greater commitment to the quality of personal and community prayer life, and choices to support paths of reconciliation and fraternal communion.

A decision was also taken to work on a Ratio Evangelizationis of the Province, re-launching youth and vocational pastoral work together with Franciscan missions to the people. The collaboration, already begun, with the Province of Sicily and the openness to welcome brothers from other entities for studies and/or to work with the many migrants present on the two islands, have reset the brothers' path for the next three years.

Malta is at the centre of the Mediterranean. It knows the reality of migration and faces the challenges of a renewed proclamation of the Gospel. The General Minister visited all the friaries of the Province and the realities of YouFra and the oratory for children and young people; of welcoming young people in distress, migrants and the soup kitchen that the friars of the Province accompany. The Archbishop of Malta, Bishop Charles Scicluna, and the Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Savio Hon Tai-Fai, visited the Chapter, while the Bishop of Gozo, Bishop Anthony Theuma, shared an impassioned reflection on the primacy of the relationship with God and the quality of fraternal communion for a religious life as being an eloquent sign in our time.

BR JOHN AND BR MASSIMO IN SINGAPORE  
**SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE IN SINGAPORE**

**O**n the afternoon of Thursday 27 April, the Minister General Br Massimo Fusarelli, Definitor General for Asia-Oceania and President of the Order's General Commission for Service for Dialogue Br John Wong, and Custos for Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei Br Derrick Yap visited the Harmony Centre at An-Nadhah Mosque in Singapore as part of the Order's engagement in the Service for Christian-Muslim Dialogue, in the ongoing spirit of Damietta.



The visit was organised by Custody Secretary Br Aiden Peter and the group of friars were very warmly and graciously welcomed by Ustazah ("religious teacher") Liyana Rosli Asmara, the Head of the Harmony Centre. In September 2019, Ustazah Liyana had participated in an interreligious pilgrimage of 22 young Singaporean and Malaysian adults together with Br Aiden and Br John to Istanbul, Cairo, Mount Sinai, Hebron, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem, as a special commemoration of the 800th Anniversary of the encounter between St Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik Al-Kamil.

in research, organises initiatives of respectful encounter and deep dialogue, and publishes materials to help build a more peaceful world. During the meeting, the Minister General and Director of the Harmony Centre shared on some common concerns, including the challenges of being persons of faith in societies that are secularised, pastoral care concerns, and how religious leaders can communicate with the youth in a relevant way in places that are now post-religious.

The Harmony Centre promotes the learning journey, engages

In addition, Br Derrick and Br John spoke with Ustazah Liyana about some possibilities for upcoming concrete collaborative initiatives in the service of dialogue.

TITULAR AND PATRONESS OF THE GENERAL CURIA  
**FEAST OF ST. MARY MEDIATRIX**

**O**n 7th May, the Fraternity of the General Curia in Rome celebrated the Solemnity of its Patroness: St Mary Mediatrix of All Graces. The most solemn moment of the feast was the Eucharistic Celebration, presided over by the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli, with the homily delivered by the Vicar General of the Order, Br Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, who reminded those present how St Francis wished to place the whole Order under the protection of the Mother of God. In his homily, he cited how St. Bonaventure "placing all his trust in her, he made her his Advocate and that of his friars, and for this reason, he led his friars to the Church of the Portiuncula because he wanted the Order of Friars Minor to grow and develop under the protection of the Mother of God".



The Vicar concluded his homily by inviting those present to implore Mary's intercession so that the Church and the Order may truly be credible signs of God's merciful presence in the midst of the men and women of our time through their commitment to a new world in justice and peace.

The celebration ended with a prayer before the image of Mary Mediatrix. The celebration was attended by the friars of the Curia and the friaries scattered around Rome, the religious sisters, and representatives of the Knights of St. Columbus, who, with their school, are the closest neighbours of the General Curia.



## CONFERENCE OF BRAZILIAN BISHOPS

**BISHOP JAIME SPENGLER, ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE CNBB**

On 24 April 2023, the 60th General Assembly of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB), meeting in Aparecida, elected Archbishop Jaime Spengler, OFM, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, as President of the CNBB for the next four years.

Archbishop Jaime was born in Gaspar (Brazil) on 6.09.1960, took his first vows in 1983, his solemn vows in 1985 and became a priest on 17.11.1990.

At the Antonianum in Rome, he obtained a doctorate in philosophy. In the Franciscan Province of the Immaculate Conception of Brazil, he held the following positions: Professor in the Franciscan Novitiate at Rodeio, Master of Postulants (1990); Parish Vicar at Guaratinguetá (1991-1994); Professor and Vice-Rector of the São Boaventura Institute of Philosophy at Campo Largo (2000-2003); Religious Assistant of the Brazilian Federation of Conceptionists (2001-2002); Guardian and Parish Vicar of the Senhor Bom Jesus Parish, in the Archdiocese of Curitiba (2004-2006), Vice-President of the Franciscan Association of Ensino Senhor Bom Jesus in Campo Largo. On 10 November 2010, he



was appointed titular Bishop of Patara and Auxiliary Bishop of Porto Alegre by Pope Benedict XVI. He received episcopal ordination on 5 February 2011. Three years later, on 18 September 2013, he was appointed Metropolitan Archbishop of Porto Alegre by Pope Francis.

To Archbishop Jaime, the Order's best wishes and prayers that his ministry to the CNBB and the Brazilian people will bear abundant good fruits.

*Photo: Vatican News*

## TAIWAN

**BR JOHN BAPTIST HUANG MIN-CHENG APPOINTED BISHOP OF TAINAN**

The Holy Father has appointed the Reverend Fr. John Baptist Huang Min-Cheng, O.F.M., until now director of the Centre for Franciscan Spirituality in Hsinchu, provincial counsellor and parish priest of Daxi Friary, diocese of Hsinchu, as bishop of the diocese of Tainan, Taiwan.

*Curriculum vitae*

Msgr. John Baptist Huang Min-Cheng, O.F.M., was born on 23 March 1955 in Madou, diocese of Tainan. After attending the Franciscan minor seminary in the Neihu district, he studied philosophy and theology in Taipei. He entered the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, and was ordained a priest on 29 March 1984 in Tainan.

After ordination, he first served in the Queen of Angels Church parish in Xinying in Tainan (1984-1992) and was Minister provincial of the Regina Sinarum province of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao (1992-1998). He was then awarded a master's degree in spirituality from the Pontifical "Antonianum" University in Rome (1998-2002). He went on to hold the offices of chair of the Commission for Interreligious Dialogue and Christian Unity (2002-2012); Provincial Definitor for seven three-year terms; parish priest of Baihe, Madou, Tainan; director of the Franciscan Hsientsaopo Rottgen House Centre for Franciscan Spirituality; spiritual director of the Biblical Apostolate Association; counsellor general of the Secular Order of Franciscans; vicar general of the diocese of Tainan (2013-2019); and since 2019, director of the Centre of Franciscan Spirituality in Hsinchu, provincial counsellor and parish priest of Daxi Friary, diocese of Hsinchu. *(From the Bulletin of the Press Office of the Holy See of 3 May 2023)*



WE ARE ALL BROTHERS AND SISTERS  
**THE UNIVERSAL EMBRACE BEGINS**

**O**n 30 April 2023, the first "Universal Embrace: We are all brothers and sisters", an initiative conceived and promoted by the Argentinean poet and philanthropist Alejandro Roemmers in support of the Order, was launched at the Porziuncola - Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Italy.

Welcoming the participants, on behalf of the Minister General and the entire Order, was Br Francis Piloni, Minister Provincial of the Province of St Francis of Assisi in Italy, who stressed how indispensable the need for peace and reconciliation is for our times, reading and delivering a special Diploma to Alejandro Roemmers, who will accompany this universal and symbolic embrace: "to the Orchestra and every person reached by its musical notes come the greeting of St. Francis: May the Lord grant you his peace".



Alejandro Roemmers expressed his gratitude, moved by the privilege of being present in a place so dear to St Francis, and how the "We are all brothers" Embrace seeks to be a fundamental starting point towards a new paradigm of humanity, where every act of human beings is guided by the love that inspired St Francis.

In support of the Franciscans, this initiative aims to inspire young people worldwide to be more sensitive in seeing others as themselves and as brothers and sisters. To the sound of music conducted by Maestro Nazareno Andorno, some participants from various nations, ethnicities, and languages circled around, stepping on a globe and in a long embrace, experiencing its great strength with their faces moved and wet with tears. From the Portiuncula, the Embrace of Assisi Orchestra will bring the greetings of St Francis to the whole world. A performance in the Vatican is planned for 10 June and in other parts of the world.

Prior to the Embrace of Assisi, on 28 April, Mr Roemmers was awarded the special "St Francis" prize by the Pontifical Antonianum University of Rome (PUA) for his commitment to his neighbour and world peace.

"We awarded Mr Roemmers with the St Francis Prize for the good practices he carries out in support of so many social realities in different parts of the world, which do good and bring him very close to our Franciscan charism", brother Augustin Hernández Vidales, Rector of the PUA, explained.





INDIA

# OFM & OFS CELEBRATE THE FRANCISCAN CENTENARIES



**B**rothers and Sisters of OFS (Order of Franciscan Secular) and the Friars came together in St. Sebastian’s Church, Madhavaram-Chennai, India on 16 April 2023 to inaugurate the 800th anniversary of St. Francis receiving the Papal approval of the Rule for his Order and also of the first Crib that he made while celebrating Christmas in Greccio in the year 1223.

As St. Sebastian’s Parish was concluding its patron’s feast, this Franciscan Parish celebrated these centenaries together with its parishioners and devotees of St. Sebastian. The OFS members highlighted the significance of the event through a meaningful prayer service. The parishioners who took part in the event expressed their admiration and appreciation for the person of St. Francis and especially for gifting the world, the Franciscan Movement and “the Crib”.

Br. Michael Anand, the Parish Priest, has planned to hold different programmes throughout the year commemorating these events which will conclude with the grand ceremony in the month of December 2023.

The Representations of St. Francis getting the Rule approved by the Pope and of the celebration of Christmas with a Crib were brought in a procession for the gathering to behold and be inspired. Br. Xavier Durairaj OFM, Minister Provincial, who presided over the ceremony spoke briefly about these two events inviting the faithful to embrace the life vision of St. Francis as presented in the Rule and to embrace the Incarnation Spirituality as St. Francis did in Greccio.



2023 - 2026

**A MULTIFACETED CENTENARY IN WHICH SEVERAL CENTENARIES WILL BE CELEBRATED**

# OFM

ORDO FRATRUM MINORUM

**Director:** Br Evódio João  
**Translator:** Br Hugh McKenna

**General Curia of the Friars Minor**

Via di S. Maria Mediatrix, 25 - Rome, Italy - [comgen@ofm.org](mailto:comgen@ofm.org)  
[www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)



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