

“LET JUSTICE AND PEACE FLOW” SEASON OF CREATION 2023

As every year, from 1 September to 4 October, the worldwide Christian family gathers to celebrate “Season of Creation”, a time of prayer and action for the protection and care of the common home. “Let justice and peace flow” is the theme chosen for 2023, while the symbol is a mighty river, an image taken from the words of the prophet Amos: “Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Am 5:24).

In his message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (to be celebrated on 1 September), Pope Francis elaborated on the theme: “This powerful image of Amos tells us what God wants. God wants justice to reign, which is as essential to our life as children in the image of God as water is to our physical survival. [...]

If we seek first the kingdom of God (cf. Mt 6:33), maintaining a right relationship with God, with others and with nature, then justice and peace can flow like an inexhaustible stream of pure water, nourishing humanity and all creatures”. The Season of Creation will end on 4



A Mighty River
Amos 5: 24

Let Justice and Peace Flow

Season of Creation 2023

October, the feast of St. Francis, which this year coincides with the opening of the Synod on Synodality. The Pope's message reads: "In this time of creation, let us live, work and pray as followers of Christ on our common synodal journey, so that our common home may once again be full of life. May the Holy Spirit breathe again upon the waters and lead us to 'renew the face of the earth' (cf. Ps 104:30)".

GENERAL CURIA AGENDA

- From the 4th to the 15th September, the "Tempo Forte" of the General Definitory was held in the General Curia. On the 14th September, the General Definitory and the Secretary General, Br. Antonio Iacona, met with the friars who carry various services to the Holy See.
- From the 16th to the 23rd September Br. Cesare Vaiani, Definitor General, will be in Jerusalem to preach the spiritual exercises to the Temporary Professed friars of the Custody of the Holy Land on the theme of the Regula Bollata.
- On the 18th and 19th September, Br. Darko Tepert, Secretary General for Formation and Studies, met in with the Board of the General Secretariat for Franciscan Missions in Waterford, Wisconsin (USA).
- From 19th to the 23rd September Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, accompanied by Br. César Kulkamp, Definitor General of that area, will visit the Province of The Most Holy Name. (Brazil). From the 25th to the 29th he will visit the Province of S. Francesco Solano (Argentina).
- On the 30th September Br. Massimo will participate in the Consistory for the creation of New Cardinals.
- From the 30th September to the 2nd October, Br. Cesare Vaiani will preach the Triduum of preparation for the Feast of St. Francis in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels in Assisi.

“CARING FOR CREATION IS A CULTURAL, SPIRITUAL AND HUMAN CONVERSION”

On the occasion of the Season of Creation 2023, Vatican Radio interviewed Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General. We publish an extract.

Francis of Assisi wrote the most important part of the Cantic of the Creatures when he was blind and could no longer see creation. It is therefore an interior vision that he matured of creation in the light of faith. In the Franciscan theological vision, Christ is the model, he is the archetype to whom all creation looks, from whom all creation comes and to whom all creation returns. To truly harm creation, then, is to put our hands in this project of God, it is to stop recognising this profound presence; we reduce creation to a matter of exploration, exploitation and use.

We are masters, not custodians. Francis of Assisi stands before creation with an attitude of praise and thanksgiving; for us believers it is always a Eucharistic attitude. We do not take creation just to use it: first, in biblical logic, we bless God, who is Father, for the gifts of creation. We give them back to him, they do not belong to us, they are given to us, they are entrusted to us and we participate in God's work.

Clearly, anything that tarnishes, if not breaks, this great 'mirror' that is creation, not only does not allow us to see the reflection of God, but also does not allow us to read our own life as the mystery that it is, crying out for something more than survival or biological integrity, but yearning for something more that we call soul, spirit, eternal life.

If we accept that there is this openness and that we are not all closed in on ourselves, then we can save creation.



Creation really is an opportunity for evangelisation! God's original and loving plan is imprinted in creation as a dynamic, evolving element; it is not just something to be carried out, but something to grow. I think that speaking of this original project as a common patrimony to be shared with all puts us in this dimension: medieval Christian thought spoke of a power of God imprinted in creation, which for us Franciscans, in our philosophical and theological reflection, has taken on the face of Christ.

This immense building site of creation, of the universe, is not just for itself or for some, but for all. And this is a great conversion to be made.

[Read the full interview on www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)

MOTHER EARTH, SISTER STARS FESTIVAL 2023

A SERIES OF EVENTS IN UMBRIA (ITALY) ON INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

From 1 to 10 September, Umbria (Italy) hosted the 3rd edition of the Festival "Mother Earth, Sister Stars", a series of events dedicated to integral ecology, scientific research and dialogue between science and faith in the wider context of the Season of Creation 2023.

Supported by the Convent of the Santissima Annunziata, home of the Amelia Planetarium, and by the Office for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation of the Friars Minor of the Seraphic

Province of St. Francis, the programme of the event was rich in initiatives involving university professors, representatives of different religious faiths, researchers, companies, representatives of ecological organisations and artists, all in dialogue in search of common projects to protect the common home from the perspective of integral ecology.

On Saturday 9 September, at 9.30 a.m., at the Bortolotti Auditorium in Narni, a Study Day organised by the Pontifical



University Antonianum on the theme of "Energy and Climate" took place, with the participation of Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General and Grand Chancellor of the PUA.

29 AUGUST - 1 SEPTEMBER

THE MINISTER GENERAL IN SYRIA

From 29 August to 1 September, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, visited the friars living in Syria, where the Order has fraternities in Damascus, Aleppo, the Orontes Valley and Lattakia.

In these fraternities, the friars dedicate themselves to parish pastoral work, which is very articulate and rich, to youth and vocational pastoral work, to the promotion and literacy of children, young people and women through specific projects, to the support of people living in difficult conditions through canteens and other types of activities, to education and culture. All this in communion and collaboration with the local Church and the various Churches and Christian communities in the area. The Minister also met with the Apostolic Nuncio, Card. Mario Zenari, who has been sharing everything with this people for 15 years.

Br. Massimo found a country wounded by 12 years of war and, more recently, by the earthquake. The current social, political and economic situation is so unstable and impoverished that the post-war period seems more difficult than the time of the conflict.

What he has been able to touch is the ever-present grief over what has happened, the many victims, the missing and the uncertainty about the future, which is turning into frustration. The first consequence is the desire of many to leave the country to ensure a more dignified life for their children. As Pope Paul VI said: 'With war all is lost'.

The Minister also met many people, especially young people, who want to stay in the country to contribute to its rebirth and who believe that Syria urgently needs appropriate political decisions at international level in order to regain the dignity of a country capable of self-determination. Without this, peace will remain distant and the development of the country and its people a chimera.

Br. Massimo told us about this visit: "Ensuring the presence of Christians in Syria is a very important objective because they are an integral part of the country's millenary history and culture. The friars have always remained close to the people, even in the most difficult moments and at the cost of their personal safety. Especially in the villages of the Orontes, this closeness has been very strong and has allowed the Christians to remain.

Our brothers, together with other Christians and many international realities, do much to alleviate the suffering of this strong and hospitable people. Faith sustains the people, as I saw when I prayed with the different communities. A sign is also the presence of vocations which enrich our Fraternity, especially in such a difficult context.

This reality calls for greater awareness and support. The solidarity that has developed towards Syria, including in our Order, is extraordinary. The friars are very grateful and feel our closeness. Syria still needs brothers from other entities of the Order who feel the missionary call to share Franciscan life and mission here, in the spirit of Chapter 12 of the Rule".



FRANCISCAN BOOKMARK

Saggi sul profetismo biblico e sulla storia deuteronomistica

Marco Nobile

Bibliotheca, 47

Antoniana - Roma 2023

Révélé aux tout-petits.

Une théologie à l'écoute des plus pauvres.

Frédéric-Marie Le Méhauté, OFM

Collection Cogitatio Fidei - N° 317

Francesco d'Assisi.

Raccontato alle donne e agli uomini di poca fede che lo hanno in simpatia.

Gilbert K. Chesterton

TS Edizioni - 2023

27-29 AUGUST

THE MINISTER GENERAL IN LEBANON

The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, was in Lebanon from the 27th to the 29th of August on a fraternal visit to show his closeness to the friars at a very difficult time for the country and to get to know their reality.



Arriving in Beirut in the afternoon of Sunday 27 August, Br. Massimo was welcomed by Br Jihad Krayem, Guardian, Br. Rashid Mistrih, Discrete of the Holy Land, and Br. Najib Ibrahim, Custos' Delegate for Lebanon. With them and the brothers of the community, he shared a beautiful moment of fraternity and sharing. The following day, all the friars of Lebanon gathered in Harissa with Mgr Hanna Jallouf, OFM, appointed Apostolic

Vicar of the Latins in Syria, for a meeting in which the friars shared their mission, their challenges and their hopes with the Minister General.

During the celebration of the Eucharist, Br. Massimo gave words of encouragement to all, recalling how God has "loved and chosen each one of us", and at the end of the Mass he left each Friar with the blessing of St Francis, a Tau and the Rule as a symbol and reminder of his visit. The Minister General then visited the Apostolic Nuncio in Lebanon and the friars responsible for Youth Ministry; at dinner he met some Conventual friars and some Franciscan sisters of the country.

At present the Friars carry out their mission in two Guardianates, in Beirut, with two filial houses, Tyre and Deirmimas, and in Harissa, Guardianate and house of aspirants, where the Custos' Delegate of the Holy Land currently resides, and in the district of Tripoli, as a filial house.

The presence of the Friars Minor in Lebanon goes back to the beginnings of the Order; in fact, the friary of Beirut is considered to be one of the first four friaries of the Custody of the Holy Land. The friars then spread to southern Lebanon, to Tyre and Sidon, and to northern Lebanon, in the district of Tripoli. They settled in Harissa in the 17th century.

RUSSIA

CHAPTER OF THE ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FOUNDATION

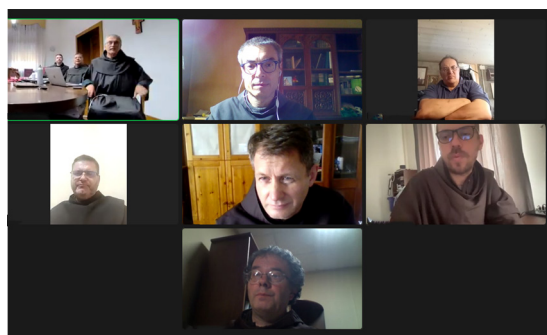
The Friars of the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in Russia celebrated the Chapter in virtual format on 26 and 27 July 2023. The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, the Vicar General, Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez and the Definitor General and Delegated of the Minister General for the Foundation, Br. Konrad Grzegorz Cholewa, accompanied the activities of the Chapter.

The first day was dedicated to listening to the various sector reports on the basis of which, in an open and frank fraternal dialogue, they searched for possible guidelines for the future.

On the second day, starting from the foundation of our charismatic identity, they concentrated on redefining the "mission" of the Foundation, identifying it primarily in the pastoral service to the local Church and in the witness of our charism. Finally, the dialogue was summarized in some propositions approved and

accepted unanimously, which will serve as a basis for further discussion during the Tempo forte in September of the General Definitory.

The meeting then concluded with a "recreation", again in on-line format, in which some brothers of the General Curia got to know the brothers of the Foundation.



OFM WORLD

Santa Lucia de la Sierra, Valparaíso, State of Zacatecas (Mexico)



Br. Massimo venerates the relics of the eight Blessed Friars Minor Martyrs (Syria)



Meeting in Colombia between the Mexican, Central American and Caribbean Conference and the Bolivian Conferences



Entry of novices to the International Novitiate at Killarney (Ireland)



Solemn profession of Br. Salvador and Br. Mauricio (Mexico)



New Franciscan mission in Tondod – St Joseph (Philippines)

BR. AIDAN MCGRATH CONFIRMED AS PROVINCIAL MINISTER IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN BECOME ONE OFM PROVINCE

On August 17, 2023, fifty friars from the Franciscan Province of Ireland and the Custody of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Great Britain, gathered in Chapter at the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Center, in Newry, Ireland, witnessed the act of integration of the Custody of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary into the Franciscan Province of Ireland and the confirmation of Br. Aidan McGrath as Minister Provincial.

“Desirous of guarding the spirit of our Seraphic Father and in order to unite energies to be spent for the good of our Order and the whole Church, we have adhered to the purpose of uniting the dependent Custody of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Great Britain into the Province of Ire-

land.” This was written in the Decree of integration read by the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, to the capitulars. The decree states that as of August 17, 2023, the British Custody is suppressed and “the friars legitimately enrolled in the said Custody, on the same date, enter the Province of Ireland, with all the rights and duties described by our legislation.”



The Minister General, who took part in the last two days of the Chapter, classified the act of integration as a reading

of reality and opening to hope. “After a journey of several years, the two entities arrive at this integration to walk together into the future. May the Lord accompany the journey of these our brothers in a Europe so profoundly changed, in which we know that our mission of living and proclaiming the Gospel in the style of St. Francis is still relevant and necessary.”

In addition to the integration, the Chapter confirmed Br. Aidan McGrath, as Minister Provincial and Br. David Collins, as Vicar Provincial. The Provincial Definitory now consists of Br. Patrick Lonsdale, Br. Stephen O’Kane, Br. Antony Jukes and Br. Damian Casey. The Chapter was presided over by the Visitor General, Br. Wim Pot, from the Province of the Holy Martyrs of Gorkum, in the Netherlands.

125 YEARS OF FRANCISCAN PRESENCE IN MOZAMBIQUE

THE MINISTER GENERAL AND THE DEFINITOR VISITED THE CUSTODY OF ST CLARE

On 125 years of Franciscan presence in Mozambique, from August 5th to 12th, 2023, Br Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, accompanied by Br Victor Luís Quematcha, Definitor General of the area, and Br Isidro Lamelas, Delegate of the Minister General for Mozambique, visited the Autonomous Custody of St Clare of Assisi in Mozambique. The Minister was welcomed by Br Lage Nhampoca Luís Afonso, Custos, together with the brothers of the Custody. The first stage of the visit began in Maputo on the 5th, Saturday, with the celebration of Mass and a meeting with the brothers in initial formation. The following day, the 6th, the Minister presided over the celebration with the Franciscan Family of the Diocese of Maputo, represented by many of its members.

"I greet you and express all my joy to be here with you to share the anniversary of 125 years of Franciscan presence in this country, the oldest Franciscan presence of our Order in sub-Saharan Africa, which began precisely here in Beira". With these words Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, began the homily in the Mass concluding his visit to the Custody of Mozambique, celebrated on 11 August, the solemnity of Saint Clare, patron saint of the Custody.

Commenting on the readings for the feast of St. Clare, the Minister General compared the Church, the Fraternity, to the vine chosen and cultivated by the Lord: "Today this word is very important for us friars here in Mozambique, as we commemorate the 125 years since the first six friars arrived in this hospitable land. The fruits we see today, including the four Friars who are making their solemn profession in my hands, are a sign of the Lord's faithfulness and the witness of so many brothers and sisters".

Br. Massimo concluded his homily by recalling that "St. Francis invites the friars to start again and again from the mission, stripping ourselves of the comforts that slow us down. I invite you to return to the midst of the people, not only in parishes, in homes, where people live, especially the most remote. St. Francis wants us to be simple and itinerant".

During the Eucharistic celebration, two friars were sent for a new presence in the mission of St. Joseph in Mitucue, in the



diocese of Lichinga: Br. Orlando Antonio and Br. Anselmo Elivio Manjor.

At the end of the Celebration, Archbishop Claudio Dalla Zuanna of Beira greeted the Minister and the friars present and thanked them for their presence in Mozambique. Addressing the friars who had taken their vows, Archbishop Claudio recalled that "they are the fruit of the encounter between the Gospel proclaimed by the missionaries and the Mozambican land".

In addition to the friars and the Archbishop, the entire Franciscan Family and the civil authorities of the city of Beira and the province of Sofala participated in the Celebration.



The Franciscan presence in Mozambique dates back to 1898 with the arrival in Beira of the first six Portuguese brothers: Br Antonio de Santa Maria, Br Rafael Maria da Assunção, Br José da Assunção Rolim, Br Daniel de Almeida, Br Serafim Felisberto and Br Salvador Franqueira. From Beira they expanded to the Dioceses of Chimoio, Inhambane, Xai-Xai, Maputo and Pretoria (South Africa). Over the course of 125 years, the Franciscan Province of the Holy Martyrs of Portugal sent more than 200 friars to the missions in Mozambique. During this time, the friars have founded churches, schools, seminaries for the formation of young friars, newspapers, radio stations and many charity works. The high point was on 7 September 1970, with the opening of the first Franciscan novitiate in sub-Saharan Africa. The Custody of St Clare of Mozambique currently has 88 friars (2 bishops, 44 solemnly professed and 40 temporarily professed), 4 novices and 6 postulants, distributed in 11 friaries in Mozambique and one in Pretoria. The brothers are dedicated to pastoral service in parishes, the education of young people with schools, spiritual assistance to the Poor Clares, religious and lay members of the Franciscan Family, and social charity.

Before returning to Rome, the Office of Communications of the Order spoke with Br. Massimo about the visit.

"I found a well-established and organized Franciscan presence; in fact, it is the oldest OFM presence in sub-Saharan Africa. The structures of the missions and presences speak for themselves. The friars are growing and are in good contact with the social and cultural context. The Poor Clares are relatively new in their two monasteries and are growing, entering more and more into the Mozambican culture and mentality.

The OFS really impressed me with its numbers and especially with its strength of organization, presence and sense of belonging to the Franciscan family. Our presence is parish pastoral and educational, I must say, in a more traditional way. It is recognized and this gives it a certain strength. All this is good, but it can also burden our presence a little with spiritual and material structures that

may no longer be able to intercept the changes that are taking place, especially among young people".



What are the challenges of the Custody and where do you think the Holy Spirit is leading it?

"The Custody is living the challenge of its growth and therefore of the institutional stability it needs to mature, especially in the perspective of becoming a Province. This requires from the friars a greater sense of belonging, of co-responsibility, of communion and of participation in the one vocation and mission. In a special

way, the Custody must qualify the formation of formators and the friars must adopt the same standard of living in order to witness to the youth the truth and beauty of our Custody. I believe that the Spirit is urging the friars in Mozambique to these goals and to consciously choose a greater closeness to the poor and even more missionary presences, such as the new reality of Mitucue in the north of the country.

This inauguration, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the presence, takes up the missionary journey that brought the first six missionary friars here in 1898. We must not stop, but we must go on, lighter and freer for the mission".



17 SEPTEMBER FEAST OF THE STIGMATA OF ST. FRANCIS

On the 17th September, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, presided at Mass at the Franciscan Sanctuary of La Verna. During his homily he said: "La Verna - with what Francis lived here before and after - is a key to enter into the mystery of the existence of this Christian man. Here we see how the centre of his experience is the simple friendship with the Lord Jesus, which simply gave meaning and light to his person and his message.

If we were to seek this nucleus in other elements apart from Christ, we would lose the compass to know and understand Francis of Assisi. [...] Today we still look with wonder and love at the wounds of Christ impressed on his servant Francis and we know that our own baptism propels us towards this encounter and this profound transformation so evidently manifested in him. As we make our way up to La Verna it seems to ask us to accept that, as believers, we remain on the journey, taken by an adventure, that of faith, which does not leave us calm and sedentary in what we already know how to repeat. Faith is like an expedition that makes us venture into the land of the other,

to dare to believe in God even today, and to believe in others, as brothers and sisters in the Church, not on our own, but with the little ones and the poor. It is meeting, seeing, and being transformed in Christ that takes place through faith in Him. Let us ask that this gift be revived by us so that we may show with our lives the Good News of Christ's transforming love for the difficult yet blessed times that we live in".

[Read the full homily of the Minister General](#)



2 AUGUST

THE PARDON OF ASSISI

On Tuesday 1st August, in Santa Maria degli Angeli, Assisi (Italy), Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General, presided at the Holy Mass for the official opening of the Pardon of Assisi. Br Massimo Travascio, OFM, Custos of the Convent of the Portiuncula, welcomed and greeted the Minister, the concelebrants, the Poor Clare Sisters and the pilgrims.

The Minister General began his homily by speaking of doors, closed doors "that do not open, that are heavy, that are locked with visible and invisible bolts", and added that of the Portiuncula, "for which the touch of a hand is enough to open it wide. It seems too easy, it is not real". There are three secrets to opening the door of the little church, Br. Massimo explained. The first is to set out on a journey: "Only when we set out on a journey does something begin to change in us, because on a journey we see things differently, the horizon changes, the perspective changes, we ourselves begin to change". For Christians, the Minister said, this journey has a name, it is called conversion, "a change that comes to us because we do not bring it about on our own".

The second secret, continued Br. Massimo, is to knock "hard and gently. Let us trust. There is someone who wants to open up to us, who has already opened up, but is asking for the gesture of our availability and openness".



The third and final secret that the Minister shared with the pilgrims was that of crossing the threshold of the open door and entering a new home: "Looking for the threshold is another powerful symbol. It means that I can trust, that there is someone waiting for me, that I can feel welcome". And he said that the Portiuncula is "a sign of Mary's womb that accompanies us to rediscover the tenderness and mercy of the Father. We can enter this house and finally feel at home".

Br. Massimo concluded his homily by wishing "a happy Pardon of Assisi to all, especially to those who are afraid to see this door open and do not believe that it is possible for them". At the end of the celebration, the procession "Opening of the Pardon" took place, with the recitation of the Creed and the intentions of the Holy Father.

Before the final blessing, the Minister greeted H.B. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who was present at the celebration, and invited the pilgrims to pray a Hail Mary for the Christians living in the Holy Land: Israel, Palestine and Jordan.

With the "Opening of the Pardon", so called because from that moment on, from 12 noon on 1 August to midnight on 2 August, the Plenary Indulgence is granted at the Portiuncula and extended to all parish churches and to all Franciscan churches throughout the world.

DECEASED FRIARS *

- 7th September: Br. Adriano Di Martino, Salernitano-Lucania Province of the Immaculate Conception (Italy)
- 6th September: Br. Louis Vitale, Province of Santa Barbara (USA)
- 5th September: Br. João Gualberto Spohn, Province of The Immaculate Conception (Brazil)
- 30th August: Br. Georg Scharf, Province of St. Elizabeth (Germany)
- 27th August: Br. Gerard Ris, Province of the Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (Netherlands)
- 22nd August: Br. Roberto D'Orazio, Province of Our Lady of Grace (Italy)
- 5th August: Br. Baran Dominik, Province of Our Lady of the Angels (Poland)
- 27th July: Br. Domenico Baranello, Province of St. Michael the Archangel (Italy)
- 25th July: Br. Cláudio Guski, Province of The Immaculate Conception (Brazil)
- 18th July: Br. Marcelo O. Tubac, Province of St. Anthony of Padua (Philippines)

* Data communicated to the General Secretariat secgen@ofm.

BR. KÉVIN ASSASSA ELECTED PRESIDENT

FOUNDATION OF NOTRE DAME D'AFRIQUE IN CONGO BRAZZAVILLE

The friars of the Foundation of Notre Dame d'Afrique in Congo Brazzaville, meeting in Chapter from 14th to 19th August 2023, elected Br. Kévin Eusèbe Assassa as President and Br. Armel Badi Bilombo as Vice-President. Br. Guy Patchel Yengo, Br. Fabrice Ntsiba and Br. Allan Sosthène Banzouzi Ba-Nzozzi were elected to the Foundation Council.

Br. Kévin was born in Brazzaville in 1972, took his first vows in 2000, his solemn vows in 2006 and was ordained a priest on 31 August 2008.

The Foundation Notre Dame d'Afrique currently has 30 friars and 5 novices. The friars are involved in pastoral work in the parishes, social work with street children, the education of young people through schools and the formation of friars and

assistance. The Chapter was presided over by Br. Victor Luís Quematcha, Definitor General and Visitor.



MOZAMBIQUE

BISHOP HILÁRIO DA CRUZ MASSINGA APPOINTED AUXILIARY BISHOP OF INHAMBANE

The Holy Father has appointed Bishop Hilário Da Cruz Massinga, O.F.M., until now bishop of Quelimane, as auxiliary bishop of Inhambane, Mozambique, assigning him the titular see of Cullu. The Order wishes Bishop Hilário the very best and assures him of our prayers in order that his ministry to the Church and people of Inhambane may bear abundant fruits of peace and all that is good.

From the Bulletin of the Press Office of the Holy See of 11 August 2023

15 - 29 OCTOBER 2023

XVII FORMATION FOR DIALOGUE COURSE IN TURKEY

In the spirit of Franciscan Charism and as a response to Global needs, the International Franciscan Fraternity, Turkey has been organizing Formation for Dialogue Course every year for the brothers and sisters engaged in the inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue in various parts of the world.

Also those who wish to learn more about two major world religions Christianity and Islam and their perspective and efforts for dialogue.

For further informations, please contact Br. Eleuthere Makuta: makutaba@yahoo.fr



INTEROBEDIENCE COMMUNITIES

THE WAY TO FRANCISCAN UNITY, IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF FRANCIS

The interobediential community is a community formed by Friars belonging to different Franciscan families (Friars Minor, Conventuals and Capuchins). There are only two such communities in the world, both in Italy, in Assisi and Rieti: they serve the Church, the people, the needy and the needs of the people of God in a spirit of service. The creation of interobediential communities is the fulfilment of a path born of the impulse of Pope Francis who, on 4 October 2013, addressing the Ministers General of the four Orders (including the Secular Franciscan Order) at the tomb of St Francis in Assisi, gave them a decisive encouragement: "Good! You must remain united".



Also in November 2017, when the Pope met 400 members of the Franciscan Families of the First Order and the Third Order Regular in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, he explicitly referred to the ongoing journey. "Without mercy there is neither fraternity nor minority," Bergoglio said on that occasion, reminding the friars that "while justice will lead you to recognise the rights of each one, charity transcends these rights and calls you to fraternal communion, because it is not rights that you love, but brothers, whom you must welcome with respect, understanding and mercy: brothers are important, not structures."

"I believe that inter-obediential communities are an important sign of our charismatic communion", said Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General, "that goes beyond historical differences and even our divisions, which have been so important in the past. It is a way of being today a Fraternity dedicated to the mission, starting from the common evangelical root, in order to elaborate, with the help of the Spirit, a common point of view".

In Assisi, the community is located in the Shrine of the New Church (the paternal house of Francis); it has been active for 4 years and is made up of 3 Friars Minor, 2 Conventuals and a Capuchin. "We have focused on prayer in common, living in

a shrine: a prayer made together and with the People of God," says Br. Rosario Gugliotta, OFM. The community of Assisi is also international, with brothers from Indonesia, Lebanon, Slovenia and Brazil.

In Rieti, the community has been active since December 2017 and is made up of three friars: a Conventual, a Friar Minor and a Capuchin.

"We were established at the behest of the then Bishop Don Domenico Pompili, and we are housed in a facility that is not ours, which means further dependence, but also free from the management of facilities", he said Br. Marcello Bonforte, OFM, who added: "We do and joyfully carry out all the services that are asked of us in order to be close to the people. Differences, both personal and charismatic, are not a limitation. Today we are not a clearly defined entity, and in a few years we will have to evaluate this new entity we have created. Things are going well, we need to look at ourselves as an experience that bears a beautiful seed for the future. Today the dialogue and service we offer to the local Church and to the Bishop is more alive than ever. We are committed to building mutual relations with the local church, and not mute".

17 AUGUST 2023, SOLEMNITY OF SAINT BEATRIZ DA SILVA

LETTER OF THE MINISTER GENERAL TO THE CONCEPTIONIST SISTERS

On the occasion of the solemn commemoration of St Mother Beatriz da Silva, which is celebrated on the 17th of August, the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, addressed a Letter to the Sisters of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, also known as the Conceptionist Sisters. In his message, the Minister General offers few lines of inspiration for the form of life of the Conceptionist Sisters, starting from the 8th Centenary of the Approved Rule and the Christmas of Greccio that the entire Franciscan Order is celebrating this year.

Read the full text of the Letter: [Italiano](#) – [Español](#) - [Português](#)



AUGUST 2023

BR MASSIMO'S REFLECTIONS

In my visits to Friars in different parts of the world, I see with my own hands how so many of our Entities bring together Friars from different cultures, languages, peoples and ethnic groups. Often these differences are a source of great conflict for the peoples in their respective countries, sometimes even leading to violence. This mosaic of "people from every tribe, language, people and nation" (Rev 5:9) offers us the opportunity for a prophetic witness to the Gospel, which is addressed to all peoples without exclusion.

Throughout its missionary history, the Order has not formed entities on the basis of ethnic or tribal affiliation, even at the cost of having fewer vocations for this reason. Therefore, internationality and interculturality have been a characteristic of ours from the beginning, and we must value them and learn to practise them again.

There is a call here to "enlarge the space of our tent", to become an ever more hospitable Fraternity. Living the Gospel is what binds us together as brothers and sisters and enables us to live in communion with so many others. The Spirit of the Lord makes our unity grow through the many differences that characterise us: from Babel to Pentecost!



Crossing borders and barriers was the way of our Brother Francis, from the leper to the unbeliever, from the sinner to the most distant. In a world in which so many are migrating and crossing barriers, and many others are closing themselves within them, we can become a sign of an evangelical fraternity that opens doors, where everyone can feel at home, where the Spirit is constantly creating a new reality of communion. The forthcoming Synod is an opportunity to grow in this sensitivity, if, while listening to different voices, we are ready to learn from others and not only to teach. In this way we will make our contribution to the Church, which is a pilgrim among the men and women of our time.

OFS IN INDIA

CELEBRATION OF THE 800TH ANNIVERSARY OF RULE AND CHRISTMAS IN GRECCIO

Representatives of OFS Fraternities (around 3109 members) from Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, totalling around 300 members, gathered in Velankanni from 28th to 30th July 2023 to celebrate the centenaries of the approval of the Later Rule and the Christmas Crib in Greccio. Velankanni's significance as one of India's most visited Marian Shrines, with a history of Franciscan missionaries serving as pastors from 1577 to 1889, added special meaning to the occasion.

Br. Oliver Fernando OFS – National President, India, Br. Br. Lawrence OFM-Cap Minister Provincial, Br. Antonysamy OFM-Cap Minister Provincial, Br. Xavier Durairaj OFM-Minister Provincial, along with Franciscan Sisters, including Sr. Maria Philo, Mother General of the Franciscan Sisters of Bon Secours (FBS), Sr. Stella Balthazar Provincial of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM), Sr. Camilla, Provincial of the Franciscan Sisters of the Presentation of Mary (FSPM), and Spiritual Assistant Friars (Franciscans, Capuchins and Con-



ventuals) to the OFS among others graced this occasion. Beyond the celebrations, these days of gathering were dedicated to inspiring the OFS representatives through training sessions, encouraging them to embrace the Francis- >>

can Spirit as depicted in the Rule of 1223 and the Greccio event. The aim was to invigorate their fraternities with renewed enthusiasm and Vigor, carrying back the Franciscan insights they gained during this memorable occasion.

Friars from the Capuchins and Franciscans and Sisters of the Franciscan Family delivered insightful addresses on various Franciscan themes. These included the Significance of St. Francis' Life in the Church, St. Francis' Relationship with the Gospel, St. Francis' Views on Ecology, Strengthening the Vulnerable through St. Francis' Example of Bearing Christ, St. Clare of Assisi and the Eucharist, St. Francis' Experiences at Greccio during Christmas, Notable Saints in the Franciscan Order, St. Francis' Connection with the Eucharist, Embracing the Gospel Life of St. Francis, St. Francis' Spiritual Journey at La Verna, and the Spirituality of St. Francis, among others.

The days were filled with engaging activities, including a debate on the spiritual upbringing of families – whether it is better led by men or women. Additionally, a Quiz Competition on the Rule of St. Francis and the Constitutions of the OFS added an element of excitement and knowledge-sharing to the event.



During the gathering, another remarkable achievement was the release of the Omnibus in Tamil, titled "Vergal" (Roots). The Franciscan Family of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry, under the guidance of Br.

Divakar, OFM-Cap, took on the challenging task of translating the entire Omnibus into Tamil. This initiative was undertaken with the noble intention of spreading the richness of Franciscan Sources to a wider audience.

The translation process was undoubtedly laborious, requiring dedication and concerted efforts from the team involved. Nevertheless, their perseverance and commitment to the project were commendable, and they succeeded in realizing this remarkable feat.

The gathering held in Velankanni-Tamilnadu was an unprecedented event, organized at this scale for the first time. Br. Lawrence OFM Cap, Br. Singarayar OFS, Councillor for Tamilnadu Region, along with other devoted OFS brothers and Sisters, played a crucial role in orchestrating the event with unwavering dedication and commitment.

15 AUGUST
ASSUMPTION IN THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION



The feast of the Assumption takes the Franciscans back to the little church of St. Mary of the Angels, the cradle of the Order, which has been dedicated to the Assumption since its origins. This is shown by the altarpiece painted by Ilario of Viterbo, which depicts "the angel giving the palm to the Virgin" at the moment when he announces her imminent death according to the apocryphal Gospel called the "Roman

Transit". St. Bonaventure recalls Francis' devotion to the Assumption when he writes: "He surrounded the Mother of the Lord Jesus with inexpressible love, because she made the Lord of Majesty our brother and obtained mercy for us. He put his trust in her above all else and made her his and his people's advocate. In her honour he fasted with great devotion from the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul to the feast of the Assumption" (FF 1165). (...)

And let us not forget Saint Clare, who, at the moment of her death, was comforted by the apparition of the Virgin, who approached her face and showed how the two were so completely united that they could not be distinguished physiognomically. Perhaps it is for this reason that in the Ave Maria, a prayer also beloved and widespread among Franciscans, we conclude with the words: "Pray for us now and at the hour of our death".

Read the complete article by Br. Stefano Cecchin, OFM, President of the Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis

LISBON

WORLD YOUTH DAY 2023

The XXXVII World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal ended with the celebration of Holy Mass in Lisbon's Tejo Park in front of one and a half million young people, priests, religious, authorities and volunteers.

Pope Francis, who arrived in Lisbon on the 2nd August, in the meeting with the students of the Portuguese Catholic University spoke of being pilgrims, of wanting to "leave your comfort zone in search of something, walking towards a destination". Obviously this path can involve risks, but we must never let ourselves be discouraged by fear. Everything must be done as soon as possible, the Pope continued, focusing attention on integral ecology: "We must recognize the dramatic urgency of taking care of our Common Home. [...] You are the generation that can win this challenge: don't forget that we need integral ecology, we need to listen to the suffering of the planet together with that of the poor; we need to parallel the drama of desertification with that of refugees; the theme of migrations together with that of falling birth rates; we need to deal with the material dimension of life within a spiritual dimension".



In this regard, throughout the WYD the "City of Joy" welcomed young people precisely on the theme of integral ecology. Amongst the organizers, were also the friars from the General Curia Office of JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation), who together with 45 other friars and the volunteers of the Laudato Si' Movement who created a series of events

throughout the week. Fr. Daniel Rodriguez Blanco, Director General Curia's Office of JPIC, commented on this experience as follows: "During this WYD 2023 we reflected, prayed and celebrated our faith with Pope Francis. Justice, peace and care for creation were present in each of the moments with him. Living these Christian and Franciscan values is a joy and, as the Pope told us, it is a missionary joy. The JPIC Office of the General Curia, with 45 volunteer friars, wanted to witness this in the Church of St. Anthony and in the City of Joy. Thank you, Lisbon!"

During the Saturday evening vigil, perhaps the most vivid memory that remains in the hearts of those who participated, was the theme of Mary's "haste", understood not as anxiety, but as a desire to do things urgently, was underlined by Pope Francis in his speech to the young people: "Why does Mary get up and hastily go to her cousin? [...] Why go if no one had asked her? Mary performs an unsolicited and undue gesture; Mary goes because she loves. This is what love does to us."

Pope Francis wanted to concretely express the missionary mandate for young people: "I leave you these ideas. Walk and, if you fall, get up again; walk with a goal; exercise every day in life. In life, nothing is free, everything is paid for. Only one thing is free: the love of Jesus! So, with this free gift that we have - the love of Jesus - and with the desire to walk, let us walk in hope, look to our roots and move forward, without fear. Do not be afraid!"

The Sunday Liturgy of the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord was the "fulfillment" of the journey of the young people in Lisbon. The beauty of the radiant face of Jesus and of being together, which Peter underlines, the desire to remain in that "bubble", away from the chaos and anxieties of life, collides with what Jesus Himself says: "Get up and do not be afraid" (Mt 17.7).

The next WYD will take place in Seoul, South Korea, in 2027. Pope Francis invited everyone to participate in the great "Youth Jubilee" which will take place in Rome in the Jubilee Year of 2025.

OFM

ORDO FRATRUM MINORUM

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