

## POPE FRANCIS RECEIVED IN AUDIENCE A DELEGATION OF THE SBF CENTENARY OF THE *STUDIUM BIBLICUM FRANCISCANUM*

On January 15<sup>th</sup>, on the occasion of one hundred years of the foundation, a delegation of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, was received in Audience by Pope Francis, in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican.

In his address, the pontiff recalled the origins of the Studium, inaugurated in Jerusalem on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1924; since then, Pope Francis highlighted, its history has always been linked to the presence of the Friars Minor in the Holy Land, who over the years has combined “the study of Sacred Scripture, the stay in the Holy Places and archeological research; and this has permitted you to significantly broaden and deepen programs and methodologies”, he said to those present.



The Holy Father also recalled how St. Francis approached Sacred Scripture: “For Francis, knowledge of the Word of God, and also its study, are not questions of simple learning, but experiences of a wisdom nature, which have as their aim, in faith, of helping human persons to live better the Gospel and to make them good. [...] I urge you



not to lose sight of this type of approach to Scripture. Rigorous and scientific study of the biblical sources, enriched by the most up-to-date methods and related disciplines, may always be for you combined with contact with the life of the holy people of God and aimed at your pastoral service, in harmony with and for the benefit of your specific charism in the Church”, the pontiff urged.

Present at the meeting were, among others, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and some members of the Order’s general definitorium.

[Read the complete text of the Holy Father’s intervention](#)

## GENERAL CURIA AGENDA

- From the 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> January, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, and his Definitory will be in Nairobi (Kenya) to meet with the Provincial Ministers and Custodians of the African Conference.
- On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024, Br. Darko Tepert, Secretary General for Formation and Studies, will participate in the Feast of Blessed Gabriele Allegra at the Gabriele Allegra Fraternity of CISA (Rome). On the 26<sup>th</sup> January he will meet in Mantua with the temporary professed friars of the Province of St. Anthony of the Friars Minor in Italy.
- From the 1<sup>st</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> February, Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitory General and Director of the Office for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults, will be in Nairobi for a meeting on Guardianship.
- From the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February, Br. Massimo will be in the Democratic Republic of Congo for a fraternal visit to the Provinces of St. Benedict the African and Our Lady of the Angels.
- From the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> February, Br. John Wong, Definitory General, will be in Manila, Philippines, for preparations for the meeting of the Franciscan Conferences of Asia Oceania (FCAO) scheduled for next April.
- From the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> February, Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas and Br. Dennis Tayo, Secretary General and General Animator for Mission and Evangelization, will participate in the meeting of the Commission for New Forms of Life and Presence in Europe in the Netherlands, in view of the next General Assembly.

ROME, 15<sup>th</sup> AND 16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024

## PUA, UNIVERSITY AND GRAND CHANCELLOR'S DAY

On the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> January, the Pontifical University Antonianum (PUA) held its traditional Feast of the University and the Grand Chancellor in Rome, at the Antonianum Auditorium, this year dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* (SBF) in Jerusalem, now the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of the PUA.



On Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> January, the Rector of the PUA, Prof. Agustín Hernández Vidales, in his words of greeting to those present, recalled Pope Francis' Apostolic Constitution "*Veritatis Gaudium*", which in No. 4 lists four criteria for the renewal and revival of the contribution of ecclesiastical studies to a Church that goes forth as a missionary (cf. [vatican.va](http://vatican.va)).

The Ambassador of Guatemala to the Holy See, Alfredo Vásquez Rivera, then spoke about the figure of St. Anthony of Padua and the statue that the Embassy donated to the University, and which was then unveiled.

The Student of the Year and St. Francis awards were then presented. At the end of the signing ceremony of the agreements with the e-Campus Telematic University and ANORC (National Association of Operators and Managers of the Custody of Digital Content), Prof. Sr. Mary Melone spoke, who spoke about the life of St. Anthony, the first master recognized by Francis himself, in terms of research, study, in-depth study and therefore proclamation of the truth of the Gospel.

On Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> January, the speakers focused on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*. The Rector underlined the importance of the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land, which dates back to St. Francis himself and is therefore over 800 years old. Prof. Rosario Pierri, Dean of the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology, quickly went through the history of the Studium, thanking all those who have contributed to its long-lived and prolific activity over the decades. José Cardinal Tolentino De Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, defined participation in the event as "an imperative ecclesial and cultural duty", be-

cause of the valuable work of the Studium over the years. Prof. Giuseppe Buffon, Vice-Rector of the PUA, presented a report entitled "Digging for God: *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* 1924-2024", focusing on the themes of political archaeology, the close link between the earth and the historicity of Christian origins, and how closely those stones are linked to the Incarnation.

The speeches were concluded by br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the OFM and Grand Chancellor of the PUA. Br. Massimo spoke about the figure of St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, whose 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death falls this year. In the Prologue of his Breviloquy, the Seraphic Doctor "makes clear the correct procedure with which to approach theological study: one begins with faith, proceeds with humana investigatio to arrive at savouring the truth and goodness of God: therefore the three stages of the journey are faith, reason and contemplation," the Minister said. He then dwelt on the link, not only historical, between the Studium Biblicum and the PUA: "The integration of the Studium into the then a College and then the Athenaeum Antonianum, desired at the beginning by my Predecessor of happy memory, br. Bonaventura Marrani and then constantly followed up by all the Ministers General, is an eloquent sign of the Franciscan approach to the study of theology and philosophy at the same time."

The programme concluded with the inauguration of the exhibition of the centenary of the SBF in the crypt of the Basilica of St. Anthony at the Lateran, presented by br. Gianantonio Urbani.

[Read the full text of br. Massimo Fusarelli's speech](#)



IN THE BOOKSHOP THE NEW BOOK BY BR. MASSIMO FUSARELLI, OFM  
**FRANCIS OF ASSISI. A RESTLESS LIFE**

“Francis of Assisi. A Restless Life” is the latest work by Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the OFM, on the Poverello (Poor Man) of Assisi. It is the biography which accompanies us, through the life of Francis, into the transformative power of the Gospel, that is capable of changing the lives of individuals and history and continues inspiring today as in the past, the values of peace, encounter, liberty, and respect for all creatures.

A story that goes through all fundamental steps of the life of the Seraphic Father: in his youth he stripped himself of his riches and embraced the way of poverty, his first companions who joined him and followed his preaching, the approval of his Rule by Pope Honorius III; and yet his openness to the women and the decisive meeting with Clare, the stigmata which did not stop him from spreading to the world the Gospel message until his death in 1226.

The book has been published by Rizzoli, and enriched by the preface of Mons. Felice Accrocca, the bishop of Benevento and Scholar in Medieval Franciscanism, and by the afterword by Card. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Mons. Accrocca defines the work of Br. Massimo as “a personal interpretation

which is enriched by the sources and personal meditation”. Reading the preface, “I feel that I find myself in a similar interpretation and I am convinced that a Saint can only speak to the people, warning them, after having lived in a same history, influenced by fragility, having personal limitations as anybody, before overcoming them and adhere to follow Christ totally and his paschal mystery of passion, death and resurrection”.

Cardinal Pizzaballa relates the Holy Land of 1200 to that of today: unfortunately, the situation was not different 800 years ago, but despite the war Francis went to those places in order to preach peace and make dialogue and encounter. “Francis’ journey to the Holy Land did not solve political problems of the time. He indicated the method which is the principle way today that teaches those who want to work for peace, here, in the conflictual Middle East: the meeting”, writes the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

He concludes by underlining even the “craziness” with which St. Francis made that attempt: “for us [Christians] the other is not a rival but a brother. For us our christian identity is not a stronghold to be defended, but a house which is welcoming and a door open to the mystery of God and man where all are welcome.



We, with Christ, we are for all. The Poverello of Assisi, eight centuries ago has shown us that this craziness is anyway possible. It is for us now to decide and choose with courage to live this evangelical craziness”.

**FRANCESCO D'ASSISI.**  
**UNA VITA INQUIETA**  
 (Francis of Assisi. A Restless Life)  
 By Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM  
 Prefaced by Mons. Felice Accrocca  
 Afterword by Card. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM  
 Rizzoli, 16th January 2024, 272 pp.

## FRANCISCAN BOOKMARK

**Hermano Francisco, ¿qué es la Navidad? La celebración de la Navidad en Francisco de Asís**  
 Francisco Pérez Hermoso, OFM  
 Ediciones Franciscanas Arantzazu

**La storia di Francesco**  
 Giovanni Nucci  
 Illustrazioni di Emanuela Bussolati  
 Edizioni Terra Santa

**Theologies of Hope in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries**  
 Christopher Dyczek, OFM,  
 Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023

# OFM WORLD

Intermediate Provincial Chapter,  
Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
(Central America and Caribbean)



First Professions in Singapore  
(St. Anthony's Custody)



Entrance to the Postulancy in Venezuela  
(Immaculate Conception Custody of the BVM)



Annual Retreat of the Friars in the Philippines  
(Province of St. Peter Baptist)



Entrance to the Novitiate in Colombia  
(Province of Santa Fe)



Friars at the #Seek24  
(Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe, USA)

## BR. DENNIS TAYO VISITED THE FOUNDATION ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN FOUNDATION CONDUCTED ITS FIRST-EVER GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On January 12, 2022, both houses of Khartoum and Juba were jointly established as St Francis of Assisi Foundation in Sudan and S. Sudan, an entity dependent under the care of the Minister General. A year after, the civil war broke out in Sudan in April of 2023. The friars in Khartoum were forced to seek refuge in Juba, S. Sudan. Today, after eight months of living together, the inevitability of a prolonged war in Sudan (projected to extend for two years or more) causes more uncertainties and restlessness among the friars. "What will tomorrow bring" for the brothers in the Foundation? Searching for direction, the friars were led to introspect on these questions: Where are we now? Why are we here? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?

With the promptings of the Minister General and his Delegate to the Foundation, Br Dennis Tupas Tayo arrived on January 3, 2024, in Juba to facilitate the Foundation's first-ever General Assembly, two years after its erection. He guided the friars to do a critical evaluation and strategic planning on the life, for-

mation, and missions of the Foundation. Hence, from January 4 - 8, 2024, nine friars journeyed together in formulating the Vision, Mission, and Core Values as well as the Foundation's Organizational Structure, tasking possible friars to assume the posts. Moreover, they crafted and ratified the draft of the Foundation's Particular Statute. All of these were submitted to Br Massimo Fusarelli and his General Definitory for approval and eventual implementation in the Foundation.



In doing the critical evaluation, the brothers reflected on their weaknesses and strengths as an international missionary community. They also examined the opportunities and threats of their external realities in the foundation.

Openly, they shared each other's outlooks and aspirations, difficulties, and frustrations, fraternal confrontations, leveling of expectations, and compromises toward a common path for the foundation. Amidst difficulties and struggles, the brothers with renewed fervor "embraced the journey and bloomed like a lotus," crystallizing 19 Assembly Resolutions of concrete activities to achieve their goals.

Among others, they realized the urgent need for formulating a Project of Life, and animation guidelines in both the formation and in existing missionary evangelizing ministries of the foundation. They also recognized the importance of systematizing and humanizing the basic assistance given to street children in Juba. Moreover, visiting and listening to the cries of Sudanese war refugees camped in Gorom (a locality covered under our parish in Juba), the friars saw the relevance of initiating concrete assistance to 14,000 families, now living in extreme difficulties. Furthermore, the friars are discerning of expanding their horizons to the needs of the Diocese of Wau, S. Sudan. Br Dennis and Br Peter Tindo (President of the Foundation)



flew and visited Wau, to see the realities of the three parishes offered by the bishop. The results obtained were thereafter discussed in the assembly to discern which parish is the most feasible choice while identifying important considerations in accepting the offer.

Finally, amidst war-torn realities and uncertainties they find themselves in, the friars face the year 2024 with a wider horizon, invigorated with a unified direction to achieve their goals, hopeful that, like a lotus "in muddy waters, beauty blooms the more!"

Br. Dennis Tupas Tayo, OFM  
*General Animator for Missions*

15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2004 – 2024

## 20 YEARS OF THE FRANCISCAN PRESENCE IN TURKEY

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 the Fraternity of St. Mary in Draperis- Istanbul celebrated twenty years of its presence in Turkey. In the letter which the Minister General Br. Massimo Fusarelli addressed to the friars, he remembered the origins, the past and future challenges which the Order and the Church face daily in a country that is "a bridge between the Middle East and West."

"On the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2004 the Fraternity of St. Mary in Draperis - Istanbul was instituted as a Guardianate, writes the Minister General. It is dedicated for the growth and maturation of our presence as Friars Minor in that country through dialogue and support to the Local Church, service to the immigrants, prisoners and the

needy [...] The General Definitory continues discerning with you on this presence so as to ensure possibility of attaining good quality of life and mission". [Read the full text of the Letter](#)



### DECEASED BROTHERS \*

- 8<sup>th</sup> January: Br. Francisco Javier Mac-Mahón Argandoña, Prov. of the Most Holy Trinity (Chile)
- 27<sup>th</sup> December: Br. Peter Yoo Song Won, Prov. of the Korean Martyrs (South Korea)
- 25<sup>th</sup> December: Br. Toon van Griensven, Prov. of Saints Martyrs of Gorcum (Netherlands)

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

HOLY LAND

**BR. BRUNO VARRIANO APPOINTED AUXILIARY BISHOP OF LATIN PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM**

**O**n January 9, the Holy Father appointed Br. Bruno Varriano Auxiliary Bishop of the Patriarchal Diocese of Jerusalem of the Latins, assigning him the titular see of Astigi.

Of Brazilian origin, Br. Bruno Varriano was born in São Paulo in 1971. He joined the Custody of the Holy Land in 1996. He is a priest and a psychotherapist, specializing in clinical psychology. As a clinical psychologist he worked in the French Hospital in Jerusalem. He holds a Licentiate in Spiritual Theology from the Pontifical Antonianum University in Rome and a Diploma in Biblical Formation from the SBF.

He teaches General Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Pedagogy and Spiritual Theology at the Studium Theologicum Jerosolimitanum. He has been serving as patriarchal vicar in



the island of Cyprus since 2022. We extend best wishes for good ministry to our brother, in the service of God's people.

PROVINCE OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES IN PERU

**BR. ERNESTO CHAMBI CRUZ ELECTED MINISTER PROVINCIAL**



**T**he Franciscan Province of the Twelve Apostles, in Peru, has elected Br. Ernesto Chambi Cruz OFM as Minister Provincial. This is the first lay brother to hold this service after the Rescript of the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 by Pope Francis, in which the Pontiff derogated from canon 588 §2 of the CIC the legislation regarding the access of non-cleric religious, belonging to clerical institutes of Pontifical Right (such as the OFM), to access governmental offices at all levels.

The nomination is confirmed by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The Elective Provincial Chapter, presided over by Br. Guillermo Lancaster Jones Campero OFM, also elected Br. Pedro Orlando Castro Castro OFM as Vicar and, as Definitors, the brothers Br. Eduardo Herrera Camizán OFM, Br. Rodolfo Ibañez Neira OFM, Br. Elvis Benjamín Pacheco Palomino OFM, Br. Abnelio Livia Tocto OFM and Br. Juan José Alania Espinoza OFM.

Br. Ernesto Chambi Cruz was born on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1968; he made his temporary profession in the city of Cusco on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 1988. He has been a solemn professed brother of the Province of the Twelve Apostles of Peru since the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1993. He has held various positions: vice-master of novices, teacher of students, guardian of St. Francis of Cusco, provincial treasurer, Definitor on 6 occasions.

He was Visitor General in the Custody of the Immaculate Conception of Venezuela, of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe of Central America, Panama and Haiti and of the Province of Santa Fe in Colombia. Before the election, he held the position of Definitor, Provincial Treasurer and Director of the San Francisco de Jesús de Lima Museum.

## NEW GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF S. ANTONIO OF BRAZIL ELECTED BR. ROGÉRIO LOPES OFM ELECTED MINISTER PROVINCIAL

The Province of S. Antonio of Brazil, gathered in Chapter, has elected its new government. Br. Rogério Lopes OFM was elected Minister Provincial, Br. Marconi Lins OFM, Vicar, and, as Definitors, the brothers Br. Wellington Reis da Conceição OFM, Br. Gilmar Nascimento da Silva OFM, Br. Francisco de Assis Beserra OFM, Br. Lenilson Santana Santos OFM, Br. Joanan Marques de Mendonça OFM e Br. Alleander-son Brito OFM.

Br. Rogério Lopes was born on September 11, 1983, in the city of Lagoa de Dentro, Paraíba. He entered Postulancy in 2005 in Pesqueira/PE. He entered the novitiate on January 20, 2006 in Ipojuca/PE. He professed first vows on August 2, 2007, in Ipojuca/PE. He professed solemn vows on September 10, 2011 in Fortaleza/CE, and was ordained priest on March 9, 2019, at the Convento São Francisco in Olinda/PE. From 2007 to 2012 he studied Philosophy at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC) and underwent a yearlong experience in the Holy Land/Jerusalem.

From 2013 to 2017 he studied theology at the Catholic University of Pernambuco (UNICAP). Br. Rogério has served as Guardian, Definitor and Provincial Treasurer. Since 2021 he has been Pastor of S. Miguel Parish in Ipojuca/PE.



## ONLINE SEMINAR OFFERED BY THE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT OF THE PUA THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES

The Philosophy Department of the Pontifical University Antonianum is offering an online course entitled "The Philosophy of the Canticle of the Creatures," which will begin March 7, 2024.

In 2025, the Franciscan Family will celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saint Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Creatures. This text, which is one of the first writings that exists in the Italian language, has been the subject of discussion on many different levels: religious, literary, artistic, historical, political, and aesthetical.

It is especially within a philosophical context that this simple but



brilliant work invites a new reading and new analysis that may offer new ways to appreciate the text and unearth the wealth of significance it holds.

This research seminar, taking place in the second semester of the 2023-24 academic year, asks what the Canticle of the Creatures has to offer today, what its author would say to the challenges and problems of our day.

The online seminar module will be offered on Thursdays, from 5-7pm beginning in March of 2024.

For more information: [filosofia@antonianum.eu](mailto:filosofia@antonianum.eu)  
[Download the course program \(Italian\)](#)

ROME, BASILICA OF THE ARACOELI  
**SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

**O**n the occasion of the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, the Minister General, Fr. Massimo Fusarelli, celebrated the Eucharist in Rome, at the Basilica of the Aracoeli.

In his homily, he highlighted the word “research”: from the people on the journey described by the prophet Isaiah to the Magi, from the chosen people to us, we are all called to go beyond ourselves. “Today we see people and portions of our societies closing themselves off in search of their own affirmation, denying the others and even attacking them, to the point of using violence. The Magi experience it in the falsely benign attitude of Herod, who is instead afraid of their research and of its fruit: to find a Child. The tyrant feels his power threatened and bends the Scripture itself to confirm it. Yet, the Magi continue on their way, they follow their intuition, trusting a weak sign like the star, they who were used to scrutinizing the sky and its signs”.



Fr. Massimo continued by underlining the importance of listening, which today few know how to or want to practice. “It was Herod’s fear yesterday, it is ours today. We want to dominate and to lose nothing, to secure a future for ourselves alone. Isn’t this perhaps the root of many wars, which proliferate in over a hundred warlike conflicts present on the planet, in the urban guerillas of our societies, in the refusal of others, in the violence against women and against the most vulnerable, in the aggression which populates the Internet?”, asked the Minister.

Then he concluded: “The Eucharist which we celebrate puts us on a journey, like the disciples of Emmaus; the Lord himself journeys with us and opens our eyes to the Scriptures in order to welcome him present here and among us. We too have come to seek the Child, to recognize him in Mary’s arms”.

[Read the complete text of the homily \(Italian\)](#)



***"WE ENTRUST OURSELVES TO YOU,  
 HOLY MARY OF GOD  
 AND QUEEN OF PEACE,  
 SO THAT WE DO NOT GET TIRED  
 OF CONTINUING TO BELIEVE  
 IN CHRIST JESUS TODAY  
 AND OF LEARNING TO DO SO  
 AGAIN AND AGAIN"***



**OFM**

ORDO FRATRUM MINORUM

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