

## BR MASSIMO AND BR VICTOR IN TOGO AND IVORY COAST VISIT TO THE PROVINCE OF THE INCARNATE WORD

From the 19th to 26th February the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli, and the General Definitor for Africa, Br Victor Quematcha, visited the Province of the Incarnate Word, in the West African region.

### Togo

On the 19th February Br Massimo and Br Victor met with Msgr. Nicodème Barrigah-Benissan, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Lomé. Amongst other things, the inculturation of Franciscan religious life was discussed and the different aspects of Franciscan charism in the mission of the friars in this part of the Church, in Togo in general, and in Lomé in particular.

On the same day, an extraordinary session of the Definitory of the Province was held, in which the local reality was presented, with its characteristics and challenges. The Minister General then addressed a message to the friars present. Thereafter, Br Massimo and Br Victor, accompanied by the Provincial Definitors, met with a delegation from the local OFS, and the day ended together with Vespers. The following day the Minister and the Definitor General visited various local entities: the parish of St. Anthony of Padua and the Franciscan College of the same name in Hanoukopé; the nursery run by the Sisters of St Francis of Assisi in Tokoin; the Philosophical Scholasticate of the Fraternity of St Francis of Assisi at Adidogomé, where Br Massimo met the Solemnly Professed friars of the Region.

On the 21st February, Br Massimo and Br Victor went on a guided tour of the mechanical workshop (an activity of the Province) of Adidogomé, presented by the Director, Br Delphin Sissakotiba.

Subsequently, they visited the Poor Clare Sisters of St Clare's Monastery in Aképé: during the meeting they spoke about the ongoing revision of the General Constitutions of the Order of Poor Clares, which integrates a reflection of a more feminine-sensitive approach and opens up the different realities of the lives of the Sisters from all over the world.

The day ended with a visit to the Postulancy House at the San Damiano Fraternity of Aképédo: Br Massimo blessed the new chapel of the Fraternity, still yet unfinished, and the new building site for the 'Postulancy expansion project'.



### Ivory Coast

From the 23rd to 26th February 2024, Br Massimo and Br Victor visited various areas and fraternities of the country, always welcomed with joy and great enthusiasm by the friars and Sisters of the Franciscan Family. They went to the Koumassi region, then reached the capital Abidjan, where they visited the Catholic



## GENERAL CURIA AGENDA

- Tempo Forte will be held from the 4th to 15th March in the General Curia.
- On the 6th March, the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli, will meet the students of the G. M. Allegra Fraternity at the Antonianum in Rome; on the 11th March he will present the book "Seeds of Fraternity: with Francis in the challenges of our time" in Milan.
- From the 8th to 10th March, the retreat of the Fraternity of the General Curia will be held at the sanctuary of La Verna.
- On the 12th and 13th March Br Massimo and Fr. Konrad Cholewa will be in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (Poland) for the meeting of the Lay Brothers of the North Slavic Conference; on the 15th March he will participate online in the Assembly of the Province of St Francis of Solano (Peru).
- From the 18th to 21st March, in Osnabrück (Germany), the General Definitory will meet the Ministers of the Transalpine Conference (COTAF).

Missionary Institute. They were in the "St Sylvester" fraternity of Yopougon Andokoi, where the meeting took place in a beautiful green setting, under rubber trees, so much so that the Minister exclaimed: "Here we are in the ecological fraternity!". Here Br Massimo also visited the chapel of the "Holy Face", and then imparted his blessing on the student friars and gave them a tau-Cross as a sign of encouragement in their formation.

After a brief stop at the parish of Saint Andrew Kagwa, entrusted to the pastoral care of the friars of Andokoi, he went to the Monastery of Saint Clare of Abobo-té, where he celebrated Vespers together with the Poor Clare Sisters. During the prayer, meditating on the experience of the Transfiguration, the Minister invited those present to move from the solitude of the desert to the construction of fraternity: "It is together, in fraternity, that we allow ourselves to be enlightened by Christ victorious over suffering and death; it is together, in brotherhood, that we learn to listen to the beloved Son of the Father."

In the following days, Br Massimo received a delegation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and then visited

the Saint Etienne (St. Stephen) parish of Koumassi, where he presided over the Eucharistic celebration. In his homily, the Minister General underlined that we are all beloved children of the Father, because we are loved in a unique way by God; like Francis of Assisi, "every Christian is invited to find in the words of Jesus the measure of his own thoughts, his actions, his life".

After the Mass, Br Massimo met the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order and concluded the visit by inaugurating and blessing the statue of Saint Stephen offered to the parish by some local benefactors.

*Written with the contribution from Br Jean-Martial Koffi, OFM Secretary of the Province*



## BR MASSIMO AND BR VICTOR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO VISIT TO THE PROVINCE OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS

From the 12th to 16th February the Minister General, Br Massimo Fusarelli, and the General Definitor for Africa, Br Victor Quematcha, visited the friars of the Province of Our Lady of the Angels, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This Province derives from that of St Benedict the African, and was canonically erected on the 16th February 2015. It is currently made up of 102 brothers, of which 75 are solemnly professed and 27 are temporarily professed. Amongst the solemnly professed there are a bishop, 61 priests, 6 transitional deacons, 4 brothers with clerical option and 3 lay brothers. All 27 temporarily professed are clerical options trained in the country and some in the Holy Land.

In addition to the training of postulants and novices which takes place in Mbujimayi and the animation of the Franciscan Family, the friars are mainly engaged in three pastoral sectors: parishes, Christian education and health. Thus these friars are distributed in 17 fraternities, both in the Republic of Congo and abroad; others live in inter-provincial fraternities in the country, some are at the service of other Provinces. The brothers serve 13 parishes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Belgium, France and Italy; they administer 46 schools in the dioceses of Mbujimayi and Tshilomba, a hospital in Mbujimayi and an orphanage in

Mwene-Ditu. The Minister General and the Definitor General visited the Dioceses of Mbujimayi and Tshilomba. They met all the members of the Franciscan Family: the solemnly professed and temporarily professed friars, the novices and postulants; the Poor Clare Sisters of Saint Clare of the Mamu wa Bupole Monastery in Mbujimayi; regular and secular tertiaries, in addition to the Franciscan Youth, Franciscan sympathizers, students, children and people of good will. In each place, Br Massimo and Br Victor met with the diocesan ecclesiastical authorities, members of the Franciscan Family and the Friars Minor.

At the center of the meetings is the commitment of the friars to the service of the different dioceses, to ecclesial communion and to respect for the Franciscan identity; all members of the Franciscan Family were reminded of their common vocation, that of living the Holy Gospel in fraternity and minority, but also the celebration of the Franciscan Centenaries, that of the Rule and Christmas of Greccio (2023), that of the Stigmata of Saint Francis (2024), that of the Canticle of the Creatures (2025) and that of the Easter of Saint Francis (2026). The Friars Minor were reminded of the relevance of the Franciscan charism both inside and outside our Fraternities, a charism to be lived with true sincerity and commitment.



This visit was an encouragement and a sign of hope in the difficult context of the Democratic Republic of Congo, characterized by the country's rich potential and the unspeakable misery in which the majority of the population languishes, by wars, insecurity and anguish, but also by the resilience and hope of a population that expects the Franciscans to be bearers of the gift of the Gospel which is the life and rule of the Friars Minor.

*Written with the contribution by Br Adélard-Marie Ntumba, OFM - Provincial Secretary*



FEBRUARY 2024

## REFLECTIONS BY BR MASSIMO



The large Cross on the square of La Verna stands out over the valley below and, in a certain sense, over the world. In this Lent of 2024, the year in which we remember the stigmata of St. Francis, let us look at it

together, and ask ourselves what keys it offers us to celebrate the Lord's Easter to-day.

What key does the Cross give us passing through these days marked by the "mentality of war"? What does it arouse in us? Are we just merely passing by it? How can we make the Risen One's greeting "Peace be with you!" that Saint Francis makes his own with "May the Lord give you His peace" still resound to-day?

What key does the Cross give us to look with open eyes at the scandalous reality of the misery and impoverishment of many, alongside the enrichment of a few? An effect of this is also the situation of so many migrants, never so numerous in history. Which side are we on?

What key does the Cross give us to interpret the reality of persecution of so many Christians, to-day more numerous than those of the ancient Church? Do we remember that risking one's life for the Lord is simply part of Christian discipleship?

What key does the Cross give us to discern the hopes and struggles of our journey as a Church, of religious life and also in our Family? Let us think, for example, of the realities of diminishment and weakness that we are experiencing to-day in different parts

of the world. Is it just a problem to be endured or also a paschal passage for new ways of being disciples of Jesus to-day?

What key does the Cross hold out to us to hear the cry of our "Common Home", with the more than disturbing signs that we have before our very eyes? Do we want to deny it by pausing like many others at the suspicion of "ecological ideology", or are we able to choose a wiser reading of the signs of the times in order to act accordingly?

In these and in so many other signs that we are experiencing, St. Paul's words are stronger to-day than ever: "The whole creation groans and suffers in the pangs of childbirth" (cf. Rom 8:22).

May the complexity of this work not paralyze us! May the shadow and light of the great Cross of La Verna, especially this year, help us to look into a more distant horizon, to read in the light of the Lord's Passover the pangs of death and life present in the world. Let us not let these questions fall to the side, let us ask ourselves personally, in our fraternities and with the laity with whom we share the journey. Have a great journey towards Easter!





ONGOING FORMATION IN THE GENERAL CURIA

**THE GIFT OF THE STIGMATA OF ST. FRANCIS ON ITS EIGHTH CENTENARY**

On Tuesday 27th February, in the Fraternity of St Mary Mediatrix of the General Curia, a permanent formation meeting was held on the theme: "The gift of the Stigmata of St. Francis on its eighth centenary". The meeting was led by Br William Short, Director of the College of St Bonaventure - International Centre for Franciscan Research and Studies.

In the first part the topics of gratuitousness and gift were discussed. Br William took as a reference the figure of Giacomina Frangipane de' Settesoli, known as "Brother Jacopa", who offered as a gift what Francis and the friars needed. Other characters from the life of St. Francis were also analysed: the woman of Machilone and the thieves of Borgo San Sepolcro. At the end of the exhibition, the friars divided into groups explored the culture of gratuitousness and gift, so that they

significantly characterize living together. Those present also talked about how to encourage concrete gestures of selfless service, which can express and realize the gift of oneself.

Subsequently, the themes of dialogue and mercy were addressed. Regarding the first, Br William chose the passage by Tommaso da Celano on the relationship between Brother Leo and Saint Francis: «On La Verna a companion of Francis, in the hope of being freed from a serious temptation "of the spirit", wished to have a writing from the saint's hand... At the end he added the friar's blessing, and said to him: "Take this little paper and keep it carefully until the day of your death." He was immediately free from every temptation, and the writing, preserved, later did wonderful things.»

Br William then spoke about Francis and the Stigmata: after having received them, he praises the creatures and later, as a response to the gift received, he descends to show mercy in service to the needy. In the groups, the friars shared how to foster, in the fraternity, an attitude of true dialogue, which allows listening, understanding, knowledge and mutual acceptance. Those present reflected on how to control words and judgments, so that they always "touch" others with mercy and compassion.

The meeting ended with the sharing of everything that was discussed in the groups.

**THE STIGMATA: A POINT OF ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FOR FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
**COMPI INITIAL FORMATION CONFERENCE**

From the 19th to 22nd February, 2024, the COMPI Initial Formation Conference was held at the friary of "St Francis in the Desert" in Venice, with the theme: "The stigmata in training". Br Luigi Riccio, OFM of the Puglia-Molise Province, shared his experience with us.

Having as a reference the biblical quote: "Have in yourselves the same feelings that were in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2.5) and wanting to understand the journey that Saint Francis followed emotionally after the encounter with the leper moving forward towards the great event of the Stigmata, passing through the experience of perfect joy, we were guided by Sr Michela Della Volpe, an Alcantarina Franciscan sister. We spent this time of formation in prayer, sharing and fraternity, at the end of which, each of us expressed our gratitude to

God and our brothers. There were many ideas for personal and community reflection, together with some questions and thought provoking themes that Sister Michela shared with us. May I share with you some of them which, in a particular way touched the hearts of many of us: being in the image and likeness of God and learning to look at others with the eyes of God; letting feelings and emotions pass through us, giving them a name (this is a sign of authenticity in a path of discipleship); remembering the "different" calls from the Lord in our lives, since, for each of us, as it was for Francis of Assisi, there is not a single call but multiple calls from God, in order to be able to continually resume the path of discipleship; facing fears, and thus seizing the opportunity to transform what may initially seem like an obstacle, an impediment, into a strength. For Saint Francis, in fact,



embracing the leper and the experience of perfect joy were both opportunities to transform one's way of seeing and thinking and above all they were a reason to make valuable and other necessary decisions, such as the choice of go to La Verna.

Right here, on this very mountain of La Verna, our Seraphic Father Francis chooses to go, to understand once again the Will of God, the place of arrival, but also of departure.

The saint of Assisi, with the sign of the Stigmata, receives a new call from the Lord; the fear he initially felt in touching the leper and the anger felt in being rejected by his brothers were transformed into joy, love and charity; Saint Francis, coming down from the mountain, began to follow Christ again, transmitting to his brothers a different outlook, a renewed trust, a strength fuelled by the joy of the Love of God.



PREPARATORY VISITS BY BR DARKO TEPERT  
**MEETING OF THE TEMPORARILY PROFESSED FRIARS OF EUROPE**



In preparation for the Meeting of the temporarily professed friars of Europe, during the month of February the General Secretary for Formation and Studies, Br Darko Tepert, visited the post-novitiates of some Provinces.

On the 3rd February in Bratislava he met the temporarily professed members of the Province of St. Saviour in Slovakia; on the 4th February in Graz those of the Province of St. Leopold in Austria and Italy and on the 5th February in Budapest those of the Province of the BVM Queen of the Hungarians.

Subsequently he went to Croatia to meet on the 8th February in Zagreb the temporarily professed of the Province of the Assumption of the BVM of Herzegovina, on the 9th February in Split those of the Province of the Most Holy Redeemer and on the 11th February again in Zagreb those of the Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius.

These meetings offered the opportunity to discuss any topics to be discussed at the next European meeting and to begin a discussion on the future of Franciscanism in Europe.

**FRANCISCAN BOOKMARK**

[Semi di fraternità](#)  
 Massimo Fusarelli, OFM  
 Edizioni Terra Santa

[Sulla strada dei miracoli](#)  
 Camminare, pregare e meditare nella  
 terra di Gesù  
 Marco Tibaldi  
 Edizioni Terra Santa

[Lent 2024](#)  
 Daily Reflections with Saint  
 Marianne Cope  
 Franciscan Media



# OFM WORLD

Second Vigil for Lent in the Holy Sepulchre (Custody of the Holy Land)



Family pastoral meeting, Province of the Assumption of the BVM (Italy)



Baccalaureate in religious sciences at the Pontifical University Antonianum (Italy)



Franciscan Outreach, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)



On the way praying to the Servant of God Br Bruno Linden, Province of the Immaculate Conception (Brazil)



Meeting of the Educational Communities of the Province St. Francis Solano (Argentina)

## EAST-ASIA CONFERENCE LAY BROTHERS GATHERING IN VIETNAM

The Lay Brothers of the Order of Friars Minor from the East-Asia Conference (EAC) gathered for a four-day collective reflection on “Rediscovering Our Fundamental Identity as Brothers” at the Thu Duc Friary in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam.

This second EAC Lay Brothers gathering set from February 26 to March 1, 2024, aimed to strengthen the bond of the lay brothers of the said Conference and to come up with a common statement based on the document released by the International Commission for the Preparation of the International Congress of Lay brothers in Italy.

Lay brothers from North and South Provinces of the Philippines, Vietnam, South Korea, and Japan engaged in a lively discussion of life and ministry. They also presented their respective proposals on possible ways to animate and further the lay brothers’ growth in the EAC-Conference. Present in the event were EAC President, Lino Gregorio Redoblado, OFM; EAC Secretary, Mark Angelo Vito, OFM; EAC Sec-

retary for Formation and Studies, Joel Sulse, OFM; EAC Secretary for Mission and Evangelization, Jovito Malinao, OFM; John of God Nguyen Phuoc, OFM Minister Provincial, together with the Formation and Mission Secretaries of St. Francis of Assisi Province, Viet Nam; and John Wong, OFM, Definitor General for Asia and Oceania.

Omer, OFM

Photo credit: Tran Minh Giau, OFM - Dakao Communication





BOQUETE, PANAMA

## ORDINARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MINISTERS PROVINCIAL OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CONFERENCE



From February the 19th to 23rd, 2024, the Ordinary Assembly of the Ministers Provincial of Our Lady of Guadalupe Conference was held at the St John the Baptist fraternity of Boquete, in Panama. It was chaired by its President Br Fredy

Gálvez. The Definitor General for Latin America, Br Joaquín Echeverri, and Br Luis Enrique Saldaña Guerra, the new Bishop of the Diocese of David, Panama, were also present.

The Provincial Ministers addressed various topics: the joint activities of the Conference within the framework of the 500 years of the arrival of the Franciscans to the region of Mexico; study of the document on the Historical Legal Evolution of the Conferences and the organization of the various activities; the election of the new Vice President of the Conference, and in fact, Br Enrique Muñoz was named. The meeting was also able to congratulate Br Luis Enrique Saldaña for his appointment as Bishop of the Diocese of David, and also to thank him for his service throughout these years in the Order.

ECUADOR

## CHAPTER OF THE MATS - PROVINCE OF ST FRANCIS OF QUITO



From February 20th to 22nd, 2024, at the friary of Our Lady of the Heavens, Azogues, Ecuador, the friars of the Province of St Francis of Quito celebrated the Chapter of the Mats with the theme: "Charisma, Communion and Mission: looking at the past with gratitude, living the present with passion and embracing the future with hope."

Under these dimensions, in the light of the Holy Spirit, the friars evaluated their journey throughout several centuries of glorious history, but with the need to open themselves up to the new demands of a society in an increasingly changing world.

Likewise, this space was conducive to establishing commitments that will guide the Province along a path of renewal and "prophetism", being ambassadors of peace and goodness in a country that has been plagued, in recent years, by violence and drug trafficking.

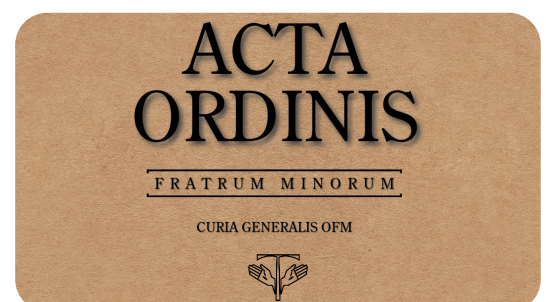
Br Ignacio Ceja, OFM, Vicar General, and Br César Kulkamp, OFM, Definitor General for Latin America, participated in this Chapter. May God, the ever-Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Francis of Assisi guide the journey of this Seraphic Province.

*Written with the collaboration of Br Oscar Castro, OFM*

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2023

## ACTA ORDINIS FRATRUM MINORUM 2023/3

Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum is available online:  
An. CXLII, SEPTEMBRIS - DECEMBRIS 2023 – N. 3



IN THE NETHERLANDS

**MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF THE ‘NEW FORMS’**

From 5-7 February 2024, the commission members of the ‘New Forms’ (Br Andraz, Br Bernard, Br Gabriele and Br Fer), have come together in City-convent San Damiano in ‘s -Hertogenbosch in The Netherlands. Brothers and sisters of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Order live together there. The friars who have come together tell us about this encounter:

During these days we have prepared a next meeting in Rome of friars from whole Europe who are living in the new forms or interesting in it. Please save the dates: arrival Sunday November 3rd – departure Thursday November 8th 2024. The theme will be ‘living minoritas in the New Forms’. We will present our own communities wherein we live, share what we have learned and where we still can grow in the New Forms. Both Br. Miran Špelič from Slovenia and our minister general Massimo Fusarelli will give us a lecture. We will share about the identity of the New Forms and the opportunities for our missionary zeal and try to clarify the questions around it. To put things into practice we will visit the New Form of Torre Angela in the outskirts of Rome. And of course there will be plenty of time to share the joy of being friars and to enrich each other during these days in smaller groups and one-to-one talks. Unfortunately, our brother Francisco Gómez Vargas, secretary general for missions and evangelization, could not join us because of health reasons.

In the meantime we are constructing a Map of Europe about where to find the New Forms. That will be a great help in visiting each other, with special opportunities to make these opportunities part of initial and ongoing formation.

We will send a letter of invitation to all provincials of Europe, including the program in detail and the way to subscribe.

And... never stay in The Netherlands without visiting a ‘full swing’ windmill! We could visit all four floors of windmill ‘Désiré’ in Megen, close to the 17th century friary of the brothers.

We are looking forward to see you in Rome!

*Andraz, Bernard, Gabriele e Fer*



CHARISM, COMMUNION, MISSION  
**REBUILD MY CHURCH**



From February 16 – 19, Friars from across Canada along with two Franciscan Sisters and several lay men and women gathered for a weekend of Synodal listening and sharing at Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre.

Varying in ages and backgrounds this diverse group leaned into what it means to be church today and to dream for the church. We considered the charism of the church, how we are called into communion and sent forth in mission.

*Br Martine Moquin, Secretary of Holy Spirit Province*



METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF BOUAKÉ, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

**MSGR. PAUL SIMÉON AHOUANAN DJRO, OFM HAS RETURNED TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE**

and the Novitiate on the 23rd September 1974. On the 28th December 1975 he made his Temporary Profession and on the 4th October 1980 he made his Solemn Profession. On the 18th July 1981 he was ordained a priest and on the 16th March 1996 he was consecrated a Bishop by Cardinal Bernard Yago. Msgr. Paul-Siméon Ahouanan Djro who was Bishop of Yamoussoukro until 2006, then Metropolitan Archbishop of Bouaké from the 22nd September 2006.

The Minister General of the Order, Br Massimo Fusarelli, sent a Letter to Br Michel Laloux, Minister of the Province Blessed Duns Scotus (France and Belgium) to whom Msgr. Ahouanan belonged, which reads: "I learned with great sorrow the news of the passage to eternal life of my dearest brother Msgr. Paul-Siméon Ahouanan Djro, OFM, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Bouaké, of which he was not only the pastor, but also the true point of reference for almost twenty years. [...] May his example of service and his zeal to promote dialogue and fraternity inspire us and encourage us to follow his example."

We entrust him to the Lord, praying for his soul that it may be received into the eternal peace of the good and faithful servants.

**O**n the 12 February, Msgr. Paul Siméon Ahouanan Djro, OFM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire.

[Read the Letter of the Minister General](#)

Born on the 19th December 1952 in Bingerville, Ivory Coast, he entered the Postulancy on the 15th September 1973

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**DECEASED BROTHERS \***

- 25th February: Br Daniele Brusa, Province of St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)
- 24th February: Br Charles Tshibuayi Kayembe, Province of St Benedict the African (Democratic Republic of Congo)
- 23rd February: Br Mario Dolores Esquela, Province of St Philip of Jesus (Mexico)
- 14th February: Br Egied Van Vlaenderen, Province of the Holy Martyrs of Gorcum (Netherlands)
- 13th February: Br Berthold Türffs, Province St. Elisabeth (Germany)
- 1st February: Br Angelo Catalonia, Seraphic Province of St. Francis of Assisi (Italy)
- 29th January: Br Polikarp Brolih, Province of the Holy Cross (Slovenia)
- 14th January: Br Leonardo Gobbo, Province of. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)

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

BY BR MASSIMO FUSARELLI, MINISTER GENERAL

**PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK "FRANCIS OF ASSISI. A RESTLESS LIFE"**

On the 27th February, in the Pontifical University Antonianum of Rome, Br Massimo Fusarelli presented his book "Francis of Assisi. A restless life", together with Monsignor Felice Accrocca, Archbishop of Benevento and author of the preface of the work. The event was attended, amongst others, by the Rector Magnificus of the PUA, Br Agustin Hernandez, Franciscan friars, nuns from various congregations and students.

Monsignor Accrocca described the book between the boundaries of the novel and biographical genre. The first chapter in fact has the characteristics of the novel: Br Massimo tries to recreate a historical-cultural environment that the Sources do not describe. However, since it was well known that at the time (end of 1100) the moment of giving birth was very dangerous for women, the Minister General reconstructs the scene of a foreign woman preparing to give birth.

The Archbishop explained that reference is made to the Sources in the following chapters: the key to understanding is to show the humanity of Francis. "The saint is a man with his limitations, with his weaknesses – said Monsignor Accrocca – we know that he also experienced two years of sadness, which today we could define as depression; However, when he met Christ, he began his journey of conversion. So, if he, with all his fragility, did what he did, it means that we can all do it."

Br Massimo revealed that writing the book was not initially his idea, but that he was asked to do so by the Rizzoli publishing house. A real challenge to write it, due to the different commitments he has as Minister General of the Order: "I used all my free time to write it, I did some research... I reread various aspects of Francis of Assisi, it was a dialogue between me and this young man who then became an adult, and I tried to build something based on the

questions I asked myself. I wrote it everywhere, even in airport waiting rooms," he said, referring to how the book was born.

On the title, "a restless life", he explained that the topic is found throughout the work: "It is the theme I chose, I tried to tell it in a fictionalized way and I believe that I got this restlessness from the mother and not from Peter... For Francis, all the challenges he experienced were a source of anxiety," he commented.

The book was designed above all for a secular audience and for young people: "I would be happy if it were read by people between 20 and 30 years old, because Francis still speaks to young people; I hope that this restless life can also speak to the restlessness of today's children", added Br Massimo.

The book tries to explain, in simple words, this search by Francis to follow the intuition of the Gospel: "He did not make any life plan, unlike what we friars do today; his life plan was to follow the holy Gospel," said the Minister, who in his work describes the reality that the Poverello-Poor man experienced, a reality of change in society and of war, which we also experience.

He then continued: "Francis speaks to the women and men of today who live in uncertainty about the future, due to the so-called «piecemeal world war». Francis lived in a time of war, in the time of the Crusades; he goes among the crusaders to tell them not to attack... There was something that was changing in the world that Francis had intuited."

Br Massimo ended the presentation by addressing the friars present, urging them to reflect on not having been called to replicate what the saint of Assisi did, on the contrary: Francis teaches to respond to the reality in which he is living now.

**OFM**

ORDO FRATRUM MINORUM

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