

20TH – 28TH MAY

CELEBRATIONS FOR THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE GOSPEL AND THE FIRST FRANCISCANS IN MEXICO

From the 20th to 28th May, the General Definitory was hosted by the Province of the Holy Gospel, in Mexico, for the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Gospel and of the first Franciscan friars, the so-called "Twelve Apostles", in the country. The General Government of the OFM participated in many institutional, celebratory and devotional events.

MEETING WITH THE CONFERENCE "OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE"



On the 23rd May, the meeting of the "Our Lady of Guadalupe" Conference with the General Definitory took

place in Veracruz, Mexico, in the context of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the twelve Franciscan apostles in Mexico.

The meeting began with the words of welcome from the president of the conference, Br. Fredy Gálvez Angulo, OFM: "500 years after the arrival of the Gospel, there are new challenges to be faced in order to carry out our evangelizing mission. Current needs and global challenges present new demands that, by virtue of our public commitment to be younger brothers following the example of St. Francis, call us to remember that we should never be afraid to start anew." Br. Fredy also thanked the presence of the Minister General and the General Definitory at this celebration.

Br. Joaquin Echeverry, Definitor General of the Conference, thanked the Ministers Provincial for their willingness to send friars for missions and services according to the needs of the Order. The Ministers then continued the dialogue with the Minister General on the realities >>

GENERAL CURIA AGENDA

- On the 3rd and 4th June 2024, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, accompanied by the General Definitors, Br. César Kulkamp and Br. Joaquín Echeverry, was in Bogotá, Colombia, for the Provincial Chapter of the "Holy Faith" Province; until the 11th June; he will be in Ecuador with Br. César Kulkamp for the visit to the Province of St. Francis of Quito.
- From the 12th-14th June, Br. Massimo will participate in the meeting of the Fundraisers of the OFM in the General Curia; on the 13th June he will be at the *Antonianum* for the Feast of St. Anthony.
- On the 15th June and 16th he will participate in the Chapter of Mats of the Province of St. Michael the Archangel (Italy). From the 17th-22nd June he will be in France visiting the Province of Blessed John Duns Scotus.
- From the 27th May-2nd June, Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas and Br. Dennis Tayo, Secretary and Animator of the General Secretariat for Missions and Evangelization, participated in the meeting of the International Council for Missionary Evangelization (CIME) in Istanbul, Turkey.
- From the 30th May-5th June, Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitor General and Director of the Office for the Protection, visited the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Central America and the Caribbean).

of each Entity, they talked about how to help people in the reality of migration, human trafficking, and drug trafficking as part of the Franciscan mission. In the same way, topics were touched upon concerning the protection of minors, initial formation, the regularization of friars in irregular situations and the commitment not only focused on the care of parishes, but on evangelization as Lesser Brothers/Friars Minor starting from a project of life and mission.

Thereafter, the Secretary General, Br. Antonio Maria lacona, presented the new Manual of the Provincial Secretary, emphasizing the changes made to it, asking for the necessary procedures and actions to be carried out, according to the changes in the procedures made by the General Curia. Br. Antonio also presented the functioning of the Order's new database.

In the afternoon, the Minister General in his speech invited the Provincials to give a different impetus to the mission, which embraces the whole life of the friars starting from a mission more shared out amongst the brothers: "Mission is not just an activity or a commitment or a job, it is the soul of our evangelical life, which must be integrated with our priorities: a life of contemplation and penance in fraternity, formation and studies, minority and poverty, witness to peace and care for our common home."

He also invited the brothers to always begin the mission from our charism, since it is not enough to do only good things: "We urgently need to revive this prophecy so that the flame of the charism does not go out and is extinguished in us."

He then went on to give an overview of the structure of the Entities of the Order in the world, showing how some Provinces are shrinking, whilst others are growing, and in this regard he asked to rethink the structure and mission of the Entities of the Conference: "Now we must take another step so that this collaboration becomes a presence and a stable mission, across national, cultural and linguistic borders."

The meeting ended with the Eucharist in the cathedral of Veracruz, where the Minister General recalled that 500 years ago the 12 apostles did not come to replicate what they did in Spain but came to evangelize in a new way. "What can we learn? That God is with us and in our midst, we can be witnesses of this reality: with the twelve apostles we learned that we can live in a new way," said Br. Massimo.

Download the message of the Minister General:
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MEETING WITH UCLAF



On the 24th May, the General Government met with UCLAF in Veracruz, Mexico. The day began with the celebration of the Mass in the cathedral of Veracruz, presided over by the Vicar General of the OFM, Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez. "The feast of the dedication of the Basilica of St. Francis is an excellent opportunity to deepen the implications, for our life and our mission, of the event we are celebrating in these days: the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Franciscan 'twelve apostles'. These brothers of ours, by taking on the task of evangelizing the inhabitants of these lands, have not only laid the foundations of the Church in Mexico, but have started one of the most distinguished evangelizing enterprises in the history of the Church and of our Order," said Br. Ignacio in his homily.

The meeting continued at the Clavijero Theatre with a magisterial lecture by Sr. Liliana Franco Echeverry on the theme "The Challenges of Religious Life for Latin America Starting from the Synod of Synodality." She began by talking about the "five keys to the spirit of synodality" that are indispensable: the art of listening, the contemplative gaze and reality, emanating anti-evangelical forms, existential and geographical itinerancy and finally missionary outreach in inter-congregationality and interculturality.

Sr. Liliana invited us to see the mission in terms of synodality: "The great mission is to help build the 'We', and this requires conversion." He invited the Franciscans to show in themselves: Francis, Clare, and the "smell" of the Gospel in life.

She went on to say that there is an urgent need for a pastoral conversion in a missionary key to make the ecclesial "we" possible, transcending singularities to live in the gift of plurality. The meeting continued with a message from Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, who recalled >>>

that the twelve apostles had a totally new encounter: they were able to carry out their evangelizing mission thanks to their solid cultural preparation and the reading of the signs of the times.

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THE LEGACY OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES FOR TODAY'S FRIARS



The celebration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the first Franciscans in Mexico continues. On the 25th May 2024, in the city of Veracruz, a procession was held from the Church of Cristo del Buen Viaje to the Benito Juárez Auditorium. At the beginning of the procession, Br. Massimo Fusarelli recalled the words with which Br. Francisco de Quiñones, then Minister General of the Order, sent the first twelve Franciscans: "Be bearers of the gift of the Gospel and evangelize in a simple way amongst the people." Br. Joel Cosme Torres, Minister Provincial of the Province of the Holy Gospel, said that today, in light of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the 'twelve apostles', we can rethink several things: as human beings, always being open to others; as Christians, to be attentive to the practice and life of the gift of the Gospel; As Franciscans, we should not forget to be at the side of the least: the poor. With these words the procession began.

Upon arrival at the Benito Juárez Auditorium, the Mass of the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity was celebrated, presided over by Br. Massimo Fusarelli, who in his homily said: "Light expresses the mystery of God in every culture, in every religion; for us it means that God is the mystery of Love, of truth, of Peace, of eternity, of sublimity, all truths obtained in the revelation of the Gospel." Br. Massimo went on to ask the following questions: what light did the twelve apostles bring to these peoples and what light do they continue to bring to us? In response, he emphasized three lights: the light of life, the light

of peace, and the light of human dignity. He concluded by saying that today we are called to defend and promote these three lights in the reality in which we live, against death, war and any power that takes away the dignity of a person.

After the procession there was a musical concert with the group Jesed who presented 5 new songs made in memory of the 500 years of Franciscan presence in Mexico and which will be part of an album that will be released at the end of the year.

CHOLULA, PUEBLA

On the 26th May, the General Definitory with the Ministers Provincial of UCLAF visited the friary of St Gabriel The Archangel in Cholula, Puebla. They also visited the UDLAP Franciscan Library where Br. Massimo Fusarelli inaugurated the exhibition of books by Franciscan writers from the Province of the Holy Gospel of Mexico from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Franciscan presence.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE AND THE CONCLUSION OF UCLAF

On the 27th May in Mexico City, the pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe took place, beginning with a procession along the Calzada de Guadalupe to the Basilica where the Eucharist was celebrated presided over by Fr. Massimo Fusarelli. At the beginning, the message of Pope Francis was read to the bishops, friars and faithful who have gathered to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the twelve apostles from Spain to Mexico: "When those friars minor arrived, their hearts and lives were filled with the joy of the Gospel, they had the certainty of being bearers of a hope that does not disappoint. but it is a source of joy... We must listen to you again and proclaim the Gospel always with renewed creativity, this is the mission that you still maintain today," the message said. The Pope also urged the friars to continue to put into practice the nickname "*Motolinía*" which they received from the indigenous people for living as



poor people in the midst of the poor. Later, the Minister General in his homily said: "Our Lady of Guadalupe is an extraordinary and wonderful example of inculturation.

Which he expressed through the way he presented himself, in the words of St. Francis: 'The virgin made Church', she should be and is the true model for us, the Church of God, the Church that can witness to all that heaven is not a fairy tale and is not far away, that God is not only above and is not unreachable, but he is here with us, among us, living together

and building a true life." In the afternoon, the meeting of the Provincial Ministers of UCLAF and the General Government closed with a dialogue in the auditorium of the Fray García de Cisneros Educational Centre.

In the evening, they participated in an ecumenical prayer at Holy Trinity Methodist Church for the churches and for peace in the world with Bishop Agustín Altamirano Ramos of the Methodist Church and pastors Edith Molina Valerio and Elizabeth Romero Ríos.

“GRECCIO AND LA VERNA. SOURCES OF JUSTICE, PEACE, AND RECONCILIATION”
JPIC INTERNATIONAL COURSE 2024

The General Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) and the Pontifical University Antonianum (PUA) of Rome held the annual course for JPIC animators of the Franciscan Family from the 20th to 26th May 2024.

The welcoming words of Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM, were followed by the inaugural greeting of Br. Agustín Hernández, OFM, Rector of the PUA, who presented some general lines of the master's degree in philosophy with specialization in "Integral Ecology" which the Pontifical University Antonianum offers. In the morning meetings, in Room A of the PUA, the foundations of justice, peace and reconciliation were offered at the biblical level by Br. Darko Tepert (OFM General Secretary for Formation and Studies), on the Magisterium of the Church (Prof. Sergio Tanzarella) and Franciscan spirituality (by Br. Giuseppe Buffon, OFM).



This course ran continuously for more than a decade until it was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024 it resumed with a positive response, given the participation of around fifty people, including participants and guest professors, from at least twenty-four countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

In this academic environment, the testimonial voices of members of the Franciscan Family who daily experience war in the Middle East, Congo, South Sudan, Myanmar, among others, also resonated.

During the afternoon meetings, various peacebuilding projects were presented: the Nagasaki Project, Japan (Br. Francis Furusato, OFM); the Total Peace of Colombia (Prof. Jairo Agudelo); the Franciscan Institute for the Culture of Peace in Split, Croatia (Br. Mijo Dzolan, OFM); the reconciliation process in Rwanda and Congo (Br. Jean-Claude Mulekya, OFM); interreligious dialogue in Istanbul, Turkey (Br. Antonio Duma), and the proposal of the Cuban-German philosopher Raúl Fornet-

Betancourt, or intercultural philosophy: philosophy for dialogue and coexistence in a conflictual world.

On the last day, Br. Taucen Girsang and Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, of the OFM JPIC General Office, developed the themes of spirituality, the profile and the mission that accompanies the JPIC animators of the Franciscan Family. A special

moment of the week was the visit to the sanctuary of La Verna and Assisi. The Fraternities of Santa Maria degli Angeli and La Verna welcomed the course participants with affection and joy, sharing lunch with them. The visit to the city of peace was led by Br. Antonio Lanzi, OFM.

In this course it was noted that we tend to talk more about war than peace. However, we Franciscans continue to build justice, peace, and reconciliation in various parts of the world: this is the legacy received from Jesus of Nazareth and St Francis of Assisi.

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GENERAL CURIA, MAY 10-18

MEETING WITH NEW MINISTERS PROVINCIAL AND CUSTODES

From May 10 to 18, the General Definitorium met with the new Ministers Provincial and Custodes of the Order at the General Curia. The meeting involved 21 brothers from different countries and, as always, has the objective of training the new Ministers and Custodes, mutual knowledge and fraternal listening, fundamental elements for the life of the Order.

On the first day, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, starting from the call of the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-24), focused on the meaning of the call (“We are not the saviors of the province... we are called rather to accompany them a stretch of the journey”); the comparison between the ideal and the real (“The margin between the evangelical ideal and the concrete reality is often very thin, and we suffer because it is not easy to find a space for action and change right here”); listen to the Spirit (“The renewed choice of our identity as brothers and minors, centered in the relationship with God and in the life of fraternal communion for the mission among and with the poor, is what the Spirit forcefully asks of us”); then giving three indications for how to move into the future, made of lights, but also of shadows. The day ended with vespers and the Eucharist celebrated

by the Vicar General, Br. Ignacio Ceja, who in his homily also recalled the importance of the call, “as animators of the brothers”, to be witnesses of the beauty of the vocation, helping each other to achieve it, without being afraid of the difficulties that surely have to be faced, but with patience, the same which God has towards all. Br. Ignacio concluded with a nod to the happiness to which the Gospel calls: “True, profound happiness, which sometimes passes through pain and renunciation, is however fruitful in life”.

On the following days, there were subsequent meetings with the different secretaries and officials of the Curia; the new Ministers also had a personal conversation with the Minister General, visited some offices of the Curia and the Pontifical University Antonianum. A whole day was dedicated to the theme of the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, in order to introduce a policy and code of conduct within each entity of the Order. In the homily of the Eucharist on May 17, Br. Massimo commented on the gospel of John: “We have heard the dialogue between the Resurrected Christ and Simon, to whom Jesus confers the mandate of authority. The center is not power, but love, which grows in the personal relationship between Jesus and Simon. Ours is a ministry of love and of mercy, according to St. Francis. Why? This comes from a personal relationship with Jesus, which means knowledge, familiarity, friendship, mutuality, custom that grew from many events, including betrayal. Jesus calls Peter by name and asks him ‘for more love’. Peter failed to give his life for his brothers. In fact, authority does not arise from good will.”

On Saturday, May 18, the new Ministers concluded their meeting with a pilgrimage to Assisi.

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Download the homily of the Minister General: [Italiano](#) - [English](#)

FRANCISCAN BOOKMARK

«¿Quién eres Tú...? ¿Y quién soy yo...?»
[Subir al monte Alverna para orar con Francisco de Asís](#)

Fr. Francisco Pérez Hermoso, OFM
Ed. Fr. Arantzazu

[Per una Teologia dell'ospitalità](#)

Claudio Monge
Prefazione di Enzo Bianchi
TS Edizioni

MAY 2024

REFLECTIONS BY BR. MASSIMO



From this past April 15 to 20 I visited the brothers of the Custody of the Holy Land, especially to be with them for a brief time while the war rages. I absorbed so much tension and fear in the streets, among the houses and above all among the people, and I confess that I still carry the echo of it within me.

I try to listen to this inner resonance to discern the dark time of history in which we are living. The mentality of war is spreading more and more, and I wonder how much it affects our ways of thinking and feeling, of reading reality and of acting and, as believers, how it affects our image of God and the personal and communal relationship with God.

The news we hear about the wars going on in the world are not just news. Something much more is at stake. We realize that war risks getting inside of us, changing us, pushing us to resignation and closing in on ourselves, taking away our taste for the future.

War, with its aggression that transforms the other into an enemy, is within us, and we know that we are in some way co-responsible for it. In fact, the sin has a social dimension. In the Holy Land I breathed the vile air of war and its consequences, as in my visits to Ukraine, to Goma, to the borders with Haiti, in Sri Lanka and in South Sudan, in northern Mozambique.

Francis of Assisi was not resigned to the almost inevitable idea of war. He rejected it as a young man and, as an adult, he sought a different path, that of meeting with the other, a discovered companion of humanity rather than an enemy. It was a risk: he didn't know whom he would meet in the camp of the adversary and how it would go. He crosses into the camp of the Crusaders and of the Saracens to the surprise and skepticism of almost everyone. Francis crossed an invisible boundary, an insurmountable wall. For this then he was able to announce the gospel with freedom and meekness. Peace, which is a heavenly gift, shaped his manner of being and acting, of watching and of feeling, of speaking as well as of touching. Before being conformed to Christ with the Stigmata, he is conformed with a meek and humble heart, proper to a minor brother, without barriers.

It seems impossible today to propose a model of this kind, or unrealistic. A dream, an illusion. And yet, we need it so much, because we die of the realism of the powerful and overbearing people of this world. I have intercepted this cry of peace and reconciliation in the eyes of the little ones and of the poor who crowd the refugee camps at Goma and at Juba, who silently cross the streets of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, who cry in Haiti, who ask why it changes with force of pain and hope in Ukraine in front of the burials of children too young to die like this.

I continue to cry aloud: how long, Lord?

Ordo Fratrum Minorum



Secretarius Generalis

Communiqué of the General Definitory on the Tempo Forte of May 2024

The Tempo Forte of May took place from the 6th to 9th of May at the General Curia "St. Mary Mediatrix," in Rome. Other "extraordinary" sessions as indicated on the website took place in the Philippines on 10th April, during the meeting of the General Definitory with the Union of Conferences FCAO (EAC and SAAOC), and from the 14th to 17th May at the General Curia.

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OFM WORLD

Solemn Profession in Cairo, Prov. Holy Family (Egypt)



Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of St. Francis, Assisi



Franciscans International Workshop on Human Rights in Madagascar



Diaconal Ordinations in the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus (Italy)



Cardinal Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, at Mount Nebo (Custody of the Holy Land)



Meeting on the "New Forms" in Katowice-Panewniki, Prov. BVM Recruitment (Poland)

CELEBRATIONS ACROSS OFM FRATERNITIES FROM INDIA

ST FRANCIS' STIGMATA CENTENARY CELEBRATED IN INDIA

ASSISIVANAM, HOUSE OF BASIC FORMATION, MADAPURACHAL, KERALA



The Assisivanam commenced the 8th Centenary Jubilee of the Stigmata with a memorable ceremony on 15 February 2024. Led by Br. Johnson MV, the Guardian, the liturgy was infused with deep reverence and devotion to honor this significant event in the life of

St. Francis. Each member of the community participated wholeheartedly in the ceremony, which unfolded in three distinct segments, symbolizing pivotal moments in St. Francis' life. The atmosphere was enriched with inspiring readings from biographies and hymns, adding spiritual depth and historical context to the occasion. [...]

SHALOM FRIARY PARISH, HYDERABAD, TELANGANA

The Jubilee of the Stigmata of St. Francis commenced on 22 March 2024, marking the last Friday of the Lenten Season. Br. Chinna, the Guardian, led the Mass and presided over the liturgy, which was graced by the presence of FMM sisters and the neighbouring Catechist Sisters of St. Ann (CSA), alongside faithful gathered for the occasion. The Parish community meticulously organized the liturgy, with the enthusiastic assistance of youth and choir members. The theme of the Jubilee, "New Life from the Wounds", resonated throughout the homily delivered by Br. Praveen D' Souza, the Parish Priest. As part of the Jubilee observance, special reflections and recitations of the Jubilee prayer will be held every >>

Friday. The liturgy commenced with poignant readings from the life of St. Francis, followed by the solemn procession of the St. Damiano Cross and the unveiling of the Jubilee Logo in the church.

ST. SEBASTIAN FRIARY PARISH, MADHAVARAM, TAMILNADU

On 8 April 2024, the Fraternity of St. Sebastian, OFS Fraternity and the Parishioners inaugurated the 8th Centenary Jubilee of the Gift of Stigmata to our Holy Father Francis of

Assisi. Br. Saji Mathew, Vicar Provincial presided over the Liturgy as the OFS Members animated the Liturgy. As the parishioners gathered for the concluding Eucharist on the feast of St. Sebastian, numbering more than a thousand, a profound sense of prayer and admiration enveloped the liturgy, honouring this significant event in the life of St. Francis of Assisi. Anticipation mounts for the upcoming celebration of the Stigmata feast on 17th September.

Read the full text on www.ofm.org

CHAPTERS OF MATS

PROVINCE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (POLAND)



From the 23rd – 25th May, the Chapter of Mats of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was held in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (Poland), with the motto: "Charism, communion and mission". At the Chapter, presided over by the Minister Provincial, Fr. Egidiusz Włodarczyk, 54 people participated: in addition to the friars, the religious of the Franciscan family and the sisters and brothers of the OFS were also present. Group work, prayer, dialogue, and exchange of experiences were the main points of this meeting.

In a joyful atmosphere, the participants sought to reflect (according to the recommendations of the Minister General and the General Definitory) on the necessity of the Franciscan charism in today's world and on the phenomenon of the person of St. Francis.

The capitulars, aided in their reflection by Msgr. Robert Woźniak, an expert on Franciscanism in Poland, undertook to follow three principles: *to be, to speak and to listen*.

In one of his speeches, Msgr. Robert emphasized: "The charism of repairing the Church that St. Francis received from Christ crucified has lost none of its relevance. As never before, the Church needs you Franciscans. Seek your charisma. Find out! A charism is a gift

given freely. We have no choice but to accept it. The renewal of the charism is above all a return to Jesus."

The proposals that emerged from the Chapter will be elaborated and sent to the North Slavic Conference.

PROVINCE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (USA)

The Chapter of Mats 2024 was the culmination of a process that began in the fall of 2023 with groups from four Provinces of the United States and Canada. 36 secular Franciscans, 36 solemnly professed friars, three simply professed friars, a postulant, three Franciscan nuns and two Poor Clare nuns took part in this process.

During the regional meetings, the participants, divided into two groups, reflected on the themes: Renewing our Vision; Walking in a Particular Style; Embracing the Future. Each group elicited concepts from the themes and were asked to perform a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis on each concept. After a break, the two groups came together to share their analyses and find commonalities and differences. Some of the most important concepts were then highlighted.

The provincial level Chapter of Mats was held in conjunction with a retreat for the friars. The meeting with 34 friars, plus 17 seculars, sisters, and nuns took place on Saturday, May 11 at the conclusion of the retreat.

Three breakout sessions took place. In the first round the friars were separated from the seculars, nuns and nuns. All members were asked to review the regions' responses published on the Province's website together with other relevant material. Each group was asked the questions: "What is Charisma?", "Who are the friars?", "What is unique about us?". In the second round the participants were invited to form groups of five and move from



table to table, mixing friars and secular/religious participants. In this session, the groups discussed what “Walking in a Particular Style” meant. The third moment focused on “Who and How we serve”, so that participants were able to identify the places that were most important to them.

Once all the areas had been addressed, the participants met again in the plenary session. Here, the groups scanned the results of the previous two sessions to familiarize themselves with the concepts and results of the discussion. The plenary session was then asked to rank their survey responses to find the greatest commonalities.

The Friars Minor of the Province of the Immaculate Conception see a need for change in the future direction of the Order and the Province. Relying on Divine Providence and cooperating with the Holy Spirit, they believe that they need to be more dedicated to prayer, a common life,

simplicity, and Evangelical joy. According to the seculars we must be more in the community, with people, beyond church structures, and in habits. We must also truly investigate the sociological factors around our fraternities and must invite our brothers and sisters from the other branches to join us in fraternal gatherings and ministries.



REVITALIZING LIFE AND MISSION

CHAPTER OF THE CUSTODY “MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD”, INDIA

The Brothers of the Custody of Mary, the Mother of God, dependent on the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, India, celebrated their Custodial Chapter from May 21 to 25, 2024, in Goa, India. Forty-seven Chapter members, along with the Provincial Definitory, gathered as one brotherhood to review, reflect, and refocus on the Franciscan elements of life and mission as friars. They also elected new leadership to guide the Custody towards a hope-filled future.

The Custodial Chapter was attended by both young and old friars, from the senior-most, Br. Richard D’Silva, aged 91, to the youngest, Br. Bhushan Minj, aged 29, manifesting the Custody’s rich blend of seasoned wisdom and youthful energy.

Under the theme “Bearing the Marks of the Crucified Christ,” the Custodial Chapter resonated with the 800th anniversary of the gift of the Stigmata to St. Francis of Assisi.

The Chapter honoured this centenary and drew inspiration from this significant encounter and experience of St. Francis to deepen the spirit of prayer and devotion within the Custody. The mandate, passed by the Chapter emphasized the revitalization of their life and mission, ensuring that they adhere to the spirit of St. Francis in a way that remains relevant and meaningful today. Br. Xavier Durairaj, the Minister Provincial, conducted the Visitation of the Custody, meeting with the brothers and fraternities. He presented a

realistic report that highlighted the vitality within the Custody and emphasized the need to strengthen their communal life.

He proposed various ways and means to invigorate the Custody’s mission. Alongside reports from secretariats, commissions, and fraternities, the brothers were able to review their activities and engage in constructive and positive discussions, setting a path forward for growth and development.

Goa, once home to two Portuguese OFM Provinces (1500-1835), holds a special place in the hearts of Franciscans in India. Hosting the Custodial Chapter in this historic city evokes the missionary zeal of past friars, serving as an inspiration for the friars of today. The new >>



leadership elected consisting of Br. Santosh Ekka as Custos and Brs. Jose Pallimattom, Arvind Kerketta, Salvador D’ Souza and Anil Xalxo has promised to lead the Custody strengthening and consolidating its existing presences and to respond to new avenues of missions both in India and abroad.

Speaking to the Brothers of the Custody, Br. Santosh Ekka stressed the aspect of service as the mark of leadership and has appealed to the brothers for their fraternal collaboration in leading the Dependent Custody of Mary the Mother of God towards an autonomous entity in the near future.

LAY BROTHERS’ MEETINGS

FRANCISCAN CONFERENCE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

From the 21st to 23rd May, in Teolcelo, Veracruz (Mexico), the Interprovincial Meeting on St Paschal Baylon was held, within which the Lay Brothers of the six Provinces that make up the Conference met to form themselves, share experiences and live together.

Almost 70 Brothers reflected on the Christological configuration of St. Francis starting from the stigmata, on the mission of the Lay Brother today, on the spirituality of St. Paschal Baylon and on the figure of Br. Pedro de Gante. This meeting took place in the framework of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Gospel and of the Franciscan Friars in Mexico and the 800th anniversary of the Impression of the stigmata on our Father St. Francis.



their identity as brothers and minors and to also be very daring to welcome back the completeness of our vocation. The 3 full days of presentation and fraternal sharings were focused on contemplation on the life of Lay Brothers; thoughts and ideas about Formation and finally on pastoral ministry and evangelisation matters. Throughout the week, Br David Leary facilitated the process of mutual deep listening, honest articulation of experiences and insights, and made sure that every voice in the room is heard.

From the richness of the discussions emerged several recommendations for the International Gathering to consider and these revolve around the structure and process of initial and ongoing formation that is essentially Franciscan but also human in its psychological and professional aspects. The recommendations also expressed the pressing need for intentional discernment to the lay brothers’ vocation and the appropriate accompaniment by formators and entity leaders.

To balance the serious work, event organiser Br Vernon Chua ensured that there were also recreational activities like visiting the various communities in Singapore and also touring some of the local attractions like Gardens by the Bay, not forgetting to enjoy a sumptuous seafood dinner by the beach, complete with tasting the famous Singapore Chilli Crab!

All in all, the participants sincerely felt that they had a week of directed fruitful discussion and life-giving fraternal experience.

[Download the final Communiqué](#)

SOUTH ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA CONFERENCE (SAAOC)

“Renewing Our Common Vision as Lay Friars in a Fractured World: Franciscan Contemplatives Formed for Pastoral Ministry and Evangelisation” is the discerned theme and orientation for the 15 lay brothers from the South Asia, Australia and Oceania Conference (SAAOC) gathered at the La Salle House in Singapore. The entities represented: Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia-Singapore, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste and West Papua.

Br Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, wrote a very encouraging letter to all gathered, inviting them to deepen



JAPAN-KOREA JOINT MEETING

The Japan-Korea Joint Definitors Meeting was held in Nagasaki, Japan from May 6 to 9. During the meeting, we discussed cooperation and collaboration between Japanese and Korean providers. In addition, we introduced the Nagasaki International Project, learned about the history of martyrdom in Nagasaki, and had time to pray for the victims of the atomic bombing.



LETTER FROM THE MINISTER GENERAL ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY 100 YEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF VENERABLE BR LINO OF PARMA

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the death of the Venerable Br Lino da Parma, the Minister General of the OFM, Br Massimo Fusarelli, addressed a letter to Br Enzo Maggioni, Minister of the Province of St Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy), to the fraternity of the Convent of the SS. Annunziata in Parma and to all those who will participate in the celebrations to remember the friar declared venerable by Pope St. John Paul II in 1999.

“We know that Alpinolo Ildebrando Umberto Maupas”, writes the Minister, “better known as Father Lino Maupas or simply Father Lino (Split, 30 August 1866 - Parma, 14 May 1924), had a complex life path, that manifested his rich personality and was certainly outside the usual schemes. [...] The soul of this profound inner movement was certainly for Br. Lino the love for the crucified Christ, recognized, loved and served in the last of the last. The greatest proof is that it was they, the poor, who recognized him. The coffin in which Fr. Lino's body was laid to rest was made by the inmates he cared for. There is nothing to add.”

Arriving in Parma on 18 June 1893, Fr. Lino remained there for the rest of his life, carrying out his ministry in the parish of



Annunziata, caring for the poor, those living on the margins of the law and the guests of the Prison and Juvenile Reformatory. He died in front of the Barilla pasta factory, while doing his best to get a young man employed. In his pockets were the rosary beads and a few crumbs of bread.

We read further in the letter: “Br Linus reminds us, Friars Minor, that Jesus Christ is at the center of our lives. And he reminds us that we would uselessly try to scrutinize the face of Christ if we avoided the gaze of his vicars, who are the poor.

They are the test of our faith and our following of Christ. [...] May the beautiful occasion of the centenary of his death help Parma, and not only Parma, to remember Br Lino, to take up his legacy and to allow ourselves to be animated by his evangelical spirit.”

From May 11 to May 19, the city of Parma celebrated the figure of Br Lino with a photo exhibition and other events linked to the friar who loved Christ and the poor.

[Read the Minister General's letter](#)

FAVOURABLE VOTES APPROVED FOR CANONIZATION BLESSED MARTYRS OF DAMASCUS

On the 23rd May 2024, the Holy Father Pope Francis received in audience Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, and approved the favourable votes of the Ordinary Session of the Cardinals and Bishops Members of the Congregation on the canonization of Blessed Emanuele Ruiz and his Seven

Companions of the Order of Friars Minor as well as Blessed Francis Mooti and Raffaele Massabki, Maronite lay faithful, Martyrs in Damascus in 1860.

The martyrdom event concerning the eleven Blessed Martyrs who are candidates for canonization is placed >>

in the context of the persecution against Christians that took place in the city of Damascus on the 9th July, 1860 and which resulted in thousands of victims. That same night, a command of rebels animated by a deep-rooted religious hatred, managed to penetrate through a hidden door indicated by a traitor, into the Franciscan friary of St. Paul: here eight Friars Minor – seven of Spanish nationality and one of Austrian nationality – and three Maronite lay Christians, who were also blood-brothers, were barbarously slaughtered. It was clearly a martyr's death: the eleven victims, in fact, before brutally inflicting the fatal blows, the attackers asked them to renounce the Christian faith and embrace Islam, an invitation that was decisively refused.



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APPROVAL OF THE DECREE OF VIRTUE VENERABLE ENRICO MEDI

On the 23rd May 2024, the Holy Father Francis received in audience Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, and authorized the promulgation of the decree concerning the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Enrico Medi, layman and father of a family, born in Porto Recanati on the 26th April 1911 and died in Rome on the 26th May 1974.

A man of hope and faith, of culture and science; exemplary husband and father, university lecturer and indeed an esteemed lecturer; Politician and upright administrator: these were some of the many traits that characterized the life and activity of the Venerable Enrico Medi, whose heroic exercise of the



Christian virtues the Church recognizes today, fifty years after his death. From an early age, the Servant of God based his

profession of faith on radicalism and coherence, so as to be able to combine fidelity to Catholic doctrine with a thorough knowledge of the human sciences and with his personal experience.

With a very intense life of prayer, with the practice of daily communion, with total obedience to the Ecclesiastical Authorities, with a silent and continuous apostolate of charity, he made a path of progressive personal sanctification that made him an authentic witness of the Gospel. [...]

The Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Venerable Enrico Medi was entrusted by the Diocese of Senigallia to Rev. Fr. Luca M. De Rosa, OFM, Postulator General of the Order of Friars Minor in 2006.

Read the full article on www.ofm.org

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ORDO FRATRUM MINORUM

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