

CANONICAL ERECTION OF THE NEW AUTONOMOUS CUSTODY OF BURUNDI AND RWANDA **OUR LADY OF KIBEHO**



On the 1st July, after a long journey of discernment and preparation, the canonical erection of the new autonomous Custody of “Our Lady of Kibeho” of Burundi-Rwanda was announced in Kigali, Rwanda. This event was attended by the Vicar General Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez and the Definitor General for Africa Br. Victor Luis Quematcha, together with the Visitor and Delegate General Br. Teofil Czarniak and Br. Fredrick Owor, Minister Provincial of the Mother Province of St. Francis of Nairobi.

The government of the Custody is made up of Br. Théoneste Twahirwa, Custos; Br. Herménégilde Birush, Custodial Vicar; Br. Innocent Harelimana, Br. Nicodème Kibuzehose and Br. Alexis Niyongabo, Custodial Councillors.

We thank the Lord for this sign of vitality of our Franciscan presence in Africa, which gives hope to the whole Order and to the Church.

GENERAL CURIA AGENDA

- From the 15th to 26th July 2024 the *Tempo Forte* will be held in the General Curia.
- From the 17th to 19th July, at Our Lady of the Angels, the General Definitory will meet with the temporarily professed friars of Europe.
- On the 21st July, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, will be in Foligno for the Celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Monastery of the Poor Clares of St. Lucia; from the 28th to 31st July he will participate in

- the evaluation of the year with the General Definitory. On August the 1st and 2nd he will be at Our Lady of the Angels for the Celebration of the Pardon of Assisi.
- On the 26th July, Br. Fabio César Gomes, Assistant General *pro Monialibus*, and Br. Cesare Vaiani, Definitor General, will participate online in the 9th meeting of the International Commission for the revision of the General Constitutions of the Order of the Poor Sisters of St. Clare.

1ST – 5TH JULY, PROV. SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS AND ST. JEROME
VISIT OF THE MINISTER GENERAL AND THE ZONE DEFINITOR TO CROATIA



Croatia engaged towards an ever closer collaboration. Various aspects of the journey were addressed: the schedule leading to the celebration of the Chapter of the Province of Zadar, which will become a dependent Custody, and then that of Zagreb.

The Minister and the Definitor also met with the Provincial Ministers of the South Slavic Conference, promoting an ever closer collaboration between the Entities that compose it.

On the 3rd July, the meeting was opened to almost all the friars of the Province of St. Jerome, for a moment of meeting, exchange, dialogue and comparison, on the occasion of the Chapter of the Mats of this reality.

On July 1 and 2 in Zadar, on the Dalmatian coast, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, and the Definitor General of the area, Br. Konrad Cholewa, met with the Definitors of the Franciscan Provinces of Zagreb (Saints Cyril and Methodius) and Zadar (St. Jerome), on the journey that sees the friars of these two Entities of

On the 4th and 5th July, the Minister General also visited the friaries of Dubrovnik and others in the surrounding area, thus learning about some aspects of the spiritual, artistic, historical and pastoral heritage that the friars of Dalmatia preserve and still try to promote.

26 JUNE – 1 JULY, PROVINCE OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI
VISIT OF THE MINISTER GENERAL AND THE AREA DEFINITOR TO POLAND

The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, together with the General Definitor, Br. Konrad Cholewa, visited the Friars of the Province of Saint Francis of Assisi in Poland from 26 June to 1 July 2024. The visit of the 121st successor of the *Poverello* (Poor man) of Assisi began in the former Poor Clares Monastery in Kalisz, and then continued, accompanied by the Provincial Minister, Br. Leonard Bielecki, the Vicar, Br. Franciszek Chodkowski, and the Government, to the religious houses in Jarocin, Wschowa, and Poznań.

The following day, 27 June, the friars serving in the fraternities of Pakość, Brodnica, Olsztyn and Kadyny were visited. The following day, the course was set in the region of Pomerania, where the Minister General met the communities of the convents of Gdańsk, Hel and Wejherowo.

On 29 June, in Toruń, on the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, the Provincial Chapter of Mats was opened with a Liturgy of the Mass presided over by Br. Massimo. The words were chosen as its theme: "With the Rule I am

satisfied". On 1 July, the Minister General, having concluded his meetings with the friars of the Polish Provinces, went to visit the communities in Croatia. On the same day, at the friary in Wejherowo, as part of the Chapter, the work of the various commissions began, preparing concrete proposals and projects for the Provincial Chapter which will be held next year.



PROVINCE OF BLESSED JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

VISIT OF THE MINISTER GENERAL AND THE DEFINITOR TO FRANCE



The friars of the Province of Blessed John Duns Scotus in France and Belgium were pleased to welcome Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General and Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitor General, from the 17th-22nd June. A visit animated by a deep desire to meet the friars and to better understand the challenges of actualizing the charism of St. Francis in France.

After being welcomed by Br. Michel Laloux, the current Provincial, Br. Massimo and Br. Albert were able to participate in the meeting of the Definitory, in Paris. The "Resurgence" approach was presented to them. "This is a process whose initial goal was, in the face of the demographic crisis, to redefine our presences and missions by 2030. It goes far beyond that. "As the months go by, we discover that this process makes us plunge back into the sources of our individual and community vocations. He provokes us to a missionary renewal in a secularized France, he awakens new calls," added Br. Michel Laloux.

Br. Massimo replied: "You do not resign yourself to an inexorable end. You have known several missionary movements, especially in small fraternities in marginalized contexts. You have a practice of religious life, you do not hesitate to experiment, this is a heritage for the Order. I perceive in this dynamic of "Resurgence" a concern for fidelity to your vocation. And I renew my invitation to dialogue to truly discern together what pleases the Lord and not to fall into strategic planning."

Amongst the other points addressed with the Definitory of France-Belgium: the storm of abuse that shook the Church of France. "We do not come out of this catastrophe unscathed, and we are heirs to these betrayals, but this invites us to think about evangelical modes of governance; it is an opportunity for conversion, as Br. Massimo said," enjoined Br. Frédéric-Marie Le Méhauté, the Provincial Vicar. The friars of France-Belgium say they have felt the closeness and support of the Order in this

important fight for the protection of minors and respect for the integrity of each person in contact with the friars.

Another challenge in the years to come is the renewed interest of a fringe of Christian youth in the figure of Francis of Assisi. The General was able to see the efforts of coherence, structuring and synergy between the services of Provincial Communication and Youth and Vocations Ministry. In his assessment, Br. Massimo encouraged the friars as follows: "Your reflection and your choices speak of openness, dialogue, engaging with the culture and mentality of today. Rejoice in being present with them, to be a subject, a subject that provokes opportunity for vocational questioning."

After meeting the community of the friars in Paris, the second stage of their visit took them to Vézelay (Burgundy) to discover the oldest establishment of the Order in France. It was in fact in 1217 that Blessed Pacific and some friars settled in a small hermitage, "La Cordelle", still inhabited by three friars. At the call of the Order and in the wake of Pope Francis' encyclicals, the friars explored the contemplative dimension dear to Saint Francis in this green setting. In order to allow the hermitage to continue through the centuries and for the friars to fully live this double dimension of contemplation and unconditional acceptance, a renovation project has been thought out with all the friars of the Province. It was given to the Minister and the Definitor General in the presence of the many volunteers involved alongside the friars. This project is expected to last two years and will begin this summer with archaeological excavations.

From the centre of France, Br. Massimo and Br. Albert then left for the West and the fraternity of Nantes. It is one of three homes (out of ten in total) that welcome the elderly in the Province. A trip that touched the friars who were greeted as follows: "You are old, you are sick.... but you are alive." Faced with the aging of the Order, which is particularly accentuated in Europe, Br. Massimo and Br. Albert, meeting in turn with the guardian but also with the Commission of the Elderly friars of the Province, were able to admire the concern and the efforts made to live as brothers "to the end" and to maintain the fraternal bond, especially with the friars in retirement homes. Br. Massimo invited the friars to be attentive: "In the years to come, you will be confronted even more with this challenge of ageing. This should not only weigh on the shoulders of the youngest, so it is necessary to continue to study a fair distribution of burdens and responsibilities for the structures of your elder brothers. »



In Nantes, the Minister met with the Interculturality and Internationality Commission. Fr. Miki Kasongo, Definitor and coordinator of the said commission, recalled the mission of the commission.

It is to welcome, accompany and listen to the friars who come from other Provinces on the one hand and on the other hand to prepare and accompany the fraternities that welcome with a view to the best intercultural way of living together. Fr. Massimo, praising this work of the commission, stressed that the Province of France and Belgium is among the few Provinces in the Order to do in-depth work on this reality. And asked the Commission to provide him with all the reports that will serve as inspiration for the Order.

It was finally in the Phocaeen city, in Marseille, that this week ended in the presence of the friars of Avignon and Marseille. A passage that reaffirmed the attention of the Order and even more so of the entire Franciscan Family for this Mediterranean Sea area, a place of so many human tragedies but also a crucible of a living together selflessly, as equals and certainly prophetically.

As the Minister was unable to go to all the communities of the Province of France-Belgium, a Zoom meeting allowed

all the friars to greet him and to question him on this or that subject. He concluded: "I also ask you, while understanding the fatigue you are experiencing, to remain open to the perspectives of the Order and the Conference (COTAF) in order to expand the mental, spiritual and geographical boundaries of your Franciscan life. We are one big family and you can also find inspiration elsewhere."

Emilie Rey, Communications officer of the Province of Blessed John Duns Scotus



SAN PAULO, BRAZIL

MEETING ON NEW FORMS OF PRESENCE AND EVANGELIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA TODAY

From the 24th –28th June 24 in the friary of "Santo Antônio do Pari" in São Paulo, Brazil, which belongs to the Province of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM, the meeting of the Commission for New Forms of Presence and Evangelization in Latin America today was held.

The members of the Commission participated: the coordinator Br. Gustavo Wayand Medella (Brazil), Br. Rodolfo Cesar Sosa (Argentina), Br. Segundo Paulo Yésquen Torres (Colombia), Br. Erick Mauricio Cacerez Rivera (El Salvador), as well as the Secretary General for the Missions and Evangelization, Br. Francisco Gómez Vargas, and the General Animator of the Missions, Br. Dennis Tayo Tupas. The meeting was also attended by the Definitor General for Latin America, Br. César Kulkamp.

During the working days, the group had the opportunity to examine the responses to the questionnaire sent to the UCLAF Entities on New Forms of Presence, evaluate the passes made so far and define new actions to animate and promote

the theme amongst Latin American friars. The programme included a visit and interaction with some services of SEFRAS (*Serviço Franciscano de Solidariedade*): the Frei Galvão Seminar, in Guaratinguetá, SP; *Chá do Padre*, together with the friary of San Francisco at the service of the homeless street dwellers; the House of Assisi, which works in the reception of migrants and refugees; SEFRAS Peri, which works with children and adolescents in the suburbs; and the Parish of Santa Cruz. They also had the opportunity to get to know the National Shrine of Aparecida.

To enlighten reflection on the issues, the Commission collaborated with Professor Alan Coelho of the University of São Francisco, Doctor of Religious Sciences at the Methodist University of São Paulo (UMESP), who addressed the theme "*Challenges of Mission and Evangelization Today in Latin America*".

Below are some of the themes proposed by the Commission to be prioritized: encouraging the Entities to in- >>

augurate a new fraternity amongst the poor by 2027; to encourage the Secretariats for Missions and Evangelization to work in depth on this issue in their respective Entities; to try to familiarize the brothers and fraternities with the experiences of the existing New Forms; to reflect on the Order's presence in the digital world, encouraging it to be ever more professional, prophetic and in communion; to continue to accompany and promote the Order's presence in the Amazon; the theme of Immigration.

Amongst the concrete recommendations are: the proposal of a virtual meeting with the participation of the General Defini-



tors for Latin America, the Presidents of the Latin American Conferences (Brazil-Southern Cone, Bolivarian and Our Lady of Guadalupe) and the ME Secretaries of these Conferences, to be held in August; the proposal to organize two meetings, in September and October, for sharing amongst the friars involved in the New Forms; the Commission's in-depth study of the themes of presence in the Amazon, work with migrants and the evangelization of young people; the possible realization of a Latin American meeting on New Forms of Evangelization in June 2025.

With the contribution of Br. Gustavo Wayand Medella

JUNE 2024
REFLECTIONS BY BR MASSIMO



Last April 8 I celebrated the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord in the course of a great meeting of Ministers, Custodes, Secretaries of Formation, Evangelization and JPIC Animators of the two Conferences of Asia and Oceania, together with the General Definitorium and Animators of the General

Curia. Looking together at the present and future of our Order on these continents, after having visited some very particular entities due to the position and the conditions in which they live, a word of Scripture resonated forcefully within me on that day.

“If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do the builders labor. If the Lord does not guard the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil.” (Ps 126:1); and also, “And I, the Lord, announce to you that I will build you a house!” (2 Sam 7:11).

How many times do we ask ourselves – and how many more times is it asked of the Minister General! – “Where is the Order going? What directions do you give us for the future? What ought we to do in this change of era? I confess that I don’t have a word that could apply to all the brothers scattered throughout the world in such different countries, cultures, histories, and conditions. This ques-

tion makes me dizzy and makes me feel very small. However, I don’t feel like giving cheap answers. For this reason, praying with that word of God, I then tried to recognize where the Lord is already building his house among us. I think of the many seeds of goodness and of forgiveness among the brothers; to the evangelical tension which is never extinguished among us; to missionary vocations; to those who continue to join us and to the elderly brothers which give testimony to a life spent with joy. I think of the brothers who live in war zones, marked by violence and by a great poverty, and remain close to the people. I think also to the brothers in difficulty and sometimes distant from the fraternity, because I try to listen to the groan of the Spirit from them too. I think of the infirmed brothers, who are undergoing a decisive moment of conversion and of meeting with the Lord. I think of our realities of growth and those which are diminishing and dying, both witnesses of the Paschal Mystery, in which all live. In these signs live the charism, the communion grows, the mission is liberated. The Chapters of Mats with many Entities are taking up these signs and all will flow into the Chapter of Mats of 2025 at Santa Maria degli Angeli, where I am sure that we will receive important words for our present and future, also thanks to the voice of lay men and women, Franciscan religious and consecrated women.

I know that the Lord builds this house of his which is our brotherhood. He asks us to continue to collaborate with Him, among us, and with persons of good will. We are not afraid: on this journey the Spirit of the Risen One inspires and accompanies us!

JULY 15TH, BISHOP AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH
ST. BONAVENTURE OF BAGNOREGIO

Bonaventure was born around the year 1217 in Bagnoregio, an Italian city situated to the north of Rome. His baptismal name was Giovanni, like his father, Giovanni Fidanza. Little is known about his childhood, aside from the fact that he was healed of a serious illness through the intercession of Francis of Assisi, as he himself narrates in the prologue of the *Legenda Maior* of St. Francis. In 1236 he moved to Paris to complete his studies. In 1243, after obtaining the title of Master of Liberal Arts, he made the decision to become a friar minor, being assigned as a member of the Roman province and assuming the religious name of Bonaventure. Between the years 1243 and 1248, he completed his theological studies under the direction of Alexander of Hales; after Alexander’s death in August 1245, he continued his academic career guided by Eudes Rigauld and William of Meliton. In 1248, he obtained the title of *bacalarius biblicus ordinarius*, beginning to comment on the books of the Old and New Testaments. Between the years 1250 and 1252, as *bacalarius sententiarus*, he read and explained the *Sentences*. [...]

Pope Francis, in the encyclical *Laudato si'*, underlines the relevance of the Seraphic Doctor’s thought, not only because he is the most cited Franciscan author in that document, but because, even today, he has the ability to question us on our path of relating with God, with ourselves, with our neighbor and with all creatures.

The Supreme Pontiff states: “For Christians, believing in a single God who is Trinitarian communion leads to the thought that all reality contains within itself a specifically Trinitarian imprint. St. Bonaventure went so far as to affirm that the human being, before sin, could discover how every creature ‘testifies that God is triune’. The reflection of the Trinity could be recognized in nature ‘when neither that book was dark to man, nor was the eye of man clouded’. The Franciscan saint teaches us that every creature carries within itself a properly Trinitarian struc-

ture, so real that it could be spontaneously contemplated if the gaze of the human being were not limited, dark and fragile. In this way he shows us the challenge of trying to read reality from a Trinitarian perspective.” (*Laudato si'* n. 239)

May the celebration of the 750th anniversary of the passing of St. Bonaventure help us to recover, as a Franciscan family, that contemplative gaze that allows us to read the signs of the times and to discover in our daily life the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Read the full article on www.ofm.org

Br Carlos Salto, OFM
 Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical University Antonianum



Read the letter of the Ministers
 General of the First and Third Order
 Regular on the 750th anniversary of
 the death of St Bonaventure

OFM WORLD

Friars and young people united to evangelize at the Festival d'Avignon, Prov. John Duns Scotus (France)



III meeting of vocational coexistence, Prov. Holy Name of Jesus (Brazil)



Young Adult Retreat in Lough Derg, Prov. of Ireland



Sisters of Mother Teresa visit the Porziuncola



Formation of the first OFS Fraternity in East Timor



Solemn Professions, Prov. St Peter Baptist (Philippines)

CHAPTERS OF MATS

CUSTODY OF ST. BENEDICT OF THE AMAZON (BRAZIL)

From the 4th – 7th July, the Custody of St. Benedict of the Amazon, Brazil, celebrated its Fifth Chapter of Mats, which took place at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, in Santarém, Pará. "From Assisi to the Amazon: remembering and re-viving Franciscan life and the Franciscan Mission" was the theme proposed by the local commission. About 130 capitulars including friars, lay people and nuns belonging to the Franciscan Family participated in this celebratory and fraternal moment.

The first day was dedicated to "Celebrating the encounter between Assisi and the Amazon". Br. Erlison Campos organized the participants into teams divided by colours and a pole covered with fruits of the earth, a symbol of the religious festivals of the region, was raised. The opening celebration was special, because in Br. Fábio Vasconcelos was ordained a deacon, through the laying on of hands by Msgr. Evaristo Spengler, OFM.

On the second day, the theme "Remembering: a look at the Jubilees and Franciscan life in the Amazon" was discussed. Present

at the opening table were the Bishop of the Diocese of Roraima, Msgr. Evaristo Spengler, OFM; Fr. Wilmar Santin, Ocar. of the Prelature of Itaituba, Msgr. Bernardo Bahlmann, OFM of the diocese of Óbidos, and Msgr. Irineu Roman, Archbishop of Santarém, as well as Br. Alex Assunção, Br. Erlison Campos and Br. Edilson Rocha, of the Custody of St. Benedict.

The reflections of the second day began with the intervention of Vitor Paiva of the OFS on the theme "Renewing our Franciscan vision on Amazonian soil, a look starting from the Church". After the first reflection and the opening table, a break took place. The afternoon began with prayer and praise for sister water, there were moments of prayer on the Franciscan Centenarians, then there was a round table on the main Amazonian challenges for Franciscan life, which was attended by journalists Jota Ninos and Joelma Viana, who understand the socio-political reality of the region. The afternoon ended with workshops on "Amazonian eco-spirituality" and "Amazonian art and Franciscanism"

"Reviving the Franciscan ardour on this sacred land" was the theme of the third day; the reflection was held by Sister >>



Nilda Munis, FMM, who brought biblical and Franciscan insights. Br. Wellington Buarque, OFM, spoke about "Going to the Sources: Elements of the Charism That Challenge Us to Continue." The friar, from the Province of S. Antonio (Northeast Brazil), was decisive in his speech when he emphasized that being a minor means becoming a minority, amongst those who suffer the most. Before lunch, the sharing of the local Chapters, which took place in May, took place as a preparatory stage. The groups creatively presented the results of the discussions on the supporting texts.

In the afternoon, the capitulars recited the prayer "Praise to Sister and Mother Earth", followed by group work. The afternoon ended with the prayer based on the "stigmata of St. Francis".

On the last day of the Chapter, he developed the theme "New Paths of Life and Mission." At 6:30 a.m., the Eucharistic celebration took place, in which everyone had the opportunity to contemplate the sunrise and the meeting of the waters of the Tapajós and Amazon rivers. The closing activities also included entertainment, group work based on the "World Café" methodology, the plenary; On the basis of the discussions and proposals made, a synthesis committee was tasked with writing the final document. The Chapter concluded with the celebration of being sent as missionaries followed by a festive lunch.

The Chapter was completely inspired to live the Franciscan charism. All the programming has been designed with the Chapter

of Mats in the aim of strengthening ties, reviving Franciscan spirituality in the Amazon and celebrating Franciscan jubilees. This is now followed by the stage of the Chapter of the Brazil-Southern Cone Conference.

CUSTODY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS (BRAZIL)

From the 1st –4th July 2024, the Custody of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Brazil, celebrated its Chapter of Mats at the friary of Our Lady of the Angels in Franca/SP. In addition to the friars of the Custody, the Chapter was attended by the Visitor General for the Custodial Chapter, Br. Luís Augusto Ferreira Lessa, OFM, Franciscan Sisters, lay men and women engaged in the most diverse fronts of evangelization in which we work.

As an introduction and words of inspiration for the subsequent reflections that would arise, we made use of the collaboration of some facilitators, remotely, who prepared the participants for the meeting in their interventions. We experienced four moments: the first animated by Br. Rodrigo de Castro Amedée Péret, OFM, who reflected on the theme "The Mystery of Creation – Preparation of the Theological Scenario (Integral Ecology)"; the second with Br. Gustavo Wayand Medella, OFM, Provincial Vicar of the Franciscan Province of the Immaculate, who addressed the theme "Downsizing starting from evangelization and new forms of presence today". The third reflection was made by Sister Vânia Martins, FNSA, with the theme "Spirituality from the 800 years of the Stigmata of St. Francis - from La Verna to the present day".

Finally, we welcomed the General Definitor for Latin America, Br. César Kulkamp, OFM, who presented a reflection on "The Calls of the Franciscan Charism Today in Our History – Life, Mission, Evangelization and Downsizing." Amongst the various moments proposed in this meeting, rich in fraternal experience and Franciscan mysticism, we point out the work in groups carried out according to the World Café mode, where it was possible to listen to each one in his or her most diverse ideas and proposals, starting with the question that was launched as a reflection for the participants: "How could the Franciscans live the charism today with all the challenges that look to the future?". After a summary formulated with the ideas and proposals obtained, >>

FRANCISCAN BOOKMARK

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Fr. Domenico Pulimeno, OFM
Edizioni Milella

[San Francesco,
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Fr. Cesare Vaiani, OFM
Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana

[L'eremo di Frate Francesco,
Analisi e attualità del De Religiosa
habitationes in eremis](#)

Fr. Paolo Zampollini, OFM
Cittadella Editrice

a final synthesis will be drawn up and presented to the Chapter of Mats of the Franciscan Conference of Brazil - Southern Cone from the 25th-29th August, 2024 in Belo Horizonte/MG - Brazil. From this meeting, a final document will be proposed to be sent to the OFM for the Order's Mat Chapter to be held in Assisi in 2025.

The Custos, Br. Fernando Aparecido dos Santos, OFM, presided over the closing celebration and in his homily emphasized the Lord's invitation to all of us: "The Lord invites us, or rather, calls us to the imperative 'come' to be and remain with Him, especially when we feel tired, fatigued, without strength or when everything becomes clouded and we cannot even see the compass, leading us to discouragement and spiritual tepidity."

"As we embark on this journey of seeking and encountering the Lord, a journey already begun by each of us since Baptism, we desire, in the footsteps of the people of Assisi, to discover and let ourselves be enchanted by every brother and sister we have met along the way, recognizing in them the Lord Himself who, not infrequently, remains wounded and disfigured while waiting for our closeness and fraternity. But to recognize the Lord, we must first know Him, create

intimacy with Him, communion, that is, eat from the same plate," added the Custos.

Let us pray to the Mother of God, our advocate and queen, to intercede for our entire Order. May St. Francis of Assisi, our Seraphic Father, help us to reflect and revive our identity as Friars Minor.

Br. Alef Henrique Pavini, OFM, Custodial Secretary



BRAZIL, 19TH-20TH JUNE 2024

VII INTERNATIONAL FRANCISCAN CONFERENCE

On the 19th - 20th June, more than 200 participants gathered at the Sacred Heart Campus of the University of St Francis (USF) in Campinas, Brazil, for the VII International Franciscan Conference, which this year had the theme "Bull Rule, Nativity Scene, Stigmata: Illumination for Franciscanism Today." The event, the result of a collaboration between the USF, the Franciscan Theological Institute (ITF) and the FAE University Centre, promoted conferences, round tables, book presentations and research by undergraduates, as well as cultural moments.

During the opening, Prof. Renata Bernardo, of the organizing committee, recalled the previous editions of the Conference, from 2005 onwards, and emphasized its importance for Franciscanism. "I hope that the Conference will contribute to a greater knowledge of those who deal with the important elements of the Franciscan world, which cover academic, human, cultural, religious, anthropological, historical, philosophical, political and social aspects. May I conclude with the words of Br. Orlando Bernardes, OFM: 'For Franciscanism, knowing man has become a permanent challenge, since I am convinced that God Himself has become a visible presence in the world,'" he said. The organization of the Conference focused on the Franciscan Centenaries: the goal is to

promote the consolidation of research dialogue on the topic, as underlined by the secretary and director of the House of Our Lady of Peace - Franciscan Social Action (CNSP-ASF) and Director of the Franciscan Theological Institute, Fr. Sandro Roberto da Costa, OFM. "In these jubilee years, between 2023 and 2026, we celebrate eight centuries of various founding events of Franciscanism, which remain in history and continue to resonate through the centuries. In a world that is constantly evolving, this conference offers us the opportunity to explore the richness, relevance and legacy of Franciscan values that have spanned the centuries and remain more relevant than ever," explained Br. Sandro.

For the Director General of the CNSP-ASF and Rector of the FAE, Prof. Jorge Apóstolos Siarcos, events like this are key to inspiring Franciscan values today. "It is a great honour to participate, especially here, being able to represent, with the permission of the friars, the educational face of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of Brazil, which has been working in the field of education for over 100 years. We are present both in basic education, through the Bom Jesus schools, and in higher education. All of us who work in education have a great challenge: to ensure quality teaching for our students. But without a doubt, the formation of these >>

people, inspired by Franciscan values, is fundamental.” At the opening of the event, the Rector of USF, Br. Gilberto Gonçalves Garcia, emphasized the importance of bringing together the Franciscan Family and the different institutions. *“We are here in a pool of Franciscan institutions. Although academies and institutes are the most cited, Franciscanism belongs to a large institutionalized Franciscan family that transcends institutions. Francis is welcomed into the academy, even though he is not an academic. Today the academy has the great responsibility of perpetuating, studying, researching and cultivating this great legacy. Over the centuries, academies, not only religious, but above all lay people, have been the great researchers interested in Franciscan memory, transformed into theology, philosophy, spirituality and mysticism.”*

Amongst the highlights of the programme, Leonardo Boff’s speech on the Greccio Nativity scene and that of Daniele Solvi, professor of Medieval Latin Literature and Humanities at the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli (Italy), on *“The Rule of Francis: a text in history”*. On the second day, Adelaide Ricci, professor at the University of Pavia (Italy), gave a talk on *“Apparuit Effigies: the stigmata between texts,*

images and memory”

. Participants were also able to visit the First Exhibition of Photographs *“Franciscans in the Republic: from memories to daily experiences in southern Brazil (1891 - 1941)”*, by the author Fabiano Batista Rodrigues, identified during his doctorate in Educational Sciences, discussed in 2024 at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, and which portray the daily life of the friars.

With the contribution of Br. Gilberto da Silva, OFM



CALVARY OF SHARGOROD, UKRAINE THE BLESSING OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS

On the 25th June 2024, the Franciscan friars of the Province of St. Michael the Archangel, together with the Ukrainian Bishops' Conference and the Apostolic Nuncio Msgr. Visvaldas Kulbokas, gathered in Shargorod, in the Vinnytsia region, to bless the stations of the Via Crucis. First of all, a prayer service for fallen soldiers and for peace in Ukraine was held in the Avenue of Heroes in Shargorod Cemetery. The participants honoured the memory of the de-

fenders who gave their lives for peace in Ukraine with a common prayer. Subsequently, Mass was celebrated on an altar in front of the Church of St. Florian in Shargorod, presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine. The Custodian of the Shrine of the Passion, Br. Rafal Makivsky, OFM, welcomed all those present. At the beginning of the Mass, the "Foundation Act" of the Calvary of Shargorod was signed. In his homily, the Nuncio recalled that he had personally >>

DECEASED FRIARS *

- 4th July: Br. Vincent de Paul Ciaravino, Prov. Immaculate Conception of the BVM (USA)
- 4th July, in Mexico: Br. Alonso Cardiel Castro, Prov. Ss. Peter and Paul
- 2nd July, in Italy: Br. Germano Pellegrini, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor
- 1st July, in Francia: Fr. Jean-Luc Picaut, Prov. Incarnate Word (Togo)
- 29th June, in Mexico: Br. Macedonio Arellano Delgado, Prov. Sts. Peter and Paul
- 26th June, in the Philippines: Br. Jimmy Tesoro Giron, Prov. St Peter Baptist
- 17th June, in Mexico: Br. José Rodríguez Lugo, Prov. The Holy Gospel
- 5th June, in Italy: Br. Giangrisostomo Coriambi, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor
- 17th May, in Italy: Br. Stefano Gitti, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor

* Information received by the General Secretariat secgen@ofm.org

known some of the fallen buried in the local cemetery. He also recalled that on the same day the widows of the fallen are in Rome to meet the Holy Father during the general audience on the 26th June. "Today we ask the Lord for mercy, protection and peace, not for our own merits, but for His mercy. Here we have the opportunity to pray, close to this new Calvary," the Archbishop said. The Nuncio stressed the importance of understanding the meaning of the Cross of Jesus so that it may become an instrument of salvation for us. This is possible by reading the Scriptures and reflecting on the Stations of the Cross.

"When we unite our suffering with that of Jesus Christ and become obedient to God, we truly cooperate in the work of salvation that God gives to mankind. Our suffering becomes a true gift for God and for our brothers and sisters," the Nuncio concluded. After Mass, which was attended by many Franciscan priests led by Br. Benedikt Sviderskyy OFM, as well as other clergy from all over Ukraine and other lay people, including Government Officials, the Stations of the Cross in Shargorod were blessed, passing from one Station to the next with spiritual reflections and

hymns. Construction of Shargorod Calvary began more than 15 years ago. The first stone, laid in 2008, was blessed in Rome by Pope Benedict XVI. In 2017, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, then Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine, proclaimed St. Florian's Church in Shargorod and the Stations of the Cross as a Shrine of the Lord's Passion.

With the contribution of *Br. Cristian Kryvakivskyy, OFM*



RESIDENCY PROGRAM IN MANILA

ASIAN FRANCISCAN FORMATORS TRAINING (AFFT) CONTINUES



After 3 months of online lessons, the 8 participants of the Asian Franciscan Trainers Training (AFFT) finally met in-person in Manila for a 2-week Residency Program, covering 2 modules: one on Group Dynamics and the other on Empathic listening.

The Program Coordinators, Br. Derrick Yap, OFM (Custos of Singapore-Malaysia-Brunei) and Dr. Josephine Chin, took time to know the participants better, to understand their learning needs and to gather feedback on the course thus far.

Participants come from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam and they will continue their term studies online from July until their closing Residency Programme in Singapore (25 November – 6 December), covering another 11 modules.

The AFFT, proposed and approved by the Ministers of the FCAO (Franciscan Conference of Asia-Oceania) in May 2023, [was launched online last March 11 with the release of the introductory video of the first module.](#)

OFM

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