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**4th October, St. Francis of Assisi**  
*The Order’s Government*  
*celebrations for the solemnity*

The Minister General of the OFM, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, together with the Definitor General, Br. César Kulkamp, celebrated the Solemnity of St. Francis of Assisi at the Sanctuary of the Stigmata in Canindé, Brazil. A choice that is not accidental, as the solemnity falls a few days after celebrating the 800th anniversary of the Stigmata received by the *Poverello*- Poor Man. “*Our wounds can open us to a new life,*” he said during the Mass he presided, then recalling some wounds of the local people: drought and desertification, unemployment and informal work, social inequality and limited access to services, violence, and crime. “*Today we bring these wounds and many others to St. Francis here in Canindé - he added - so that he can welcome them and accompany us to work so that a new life can be born from them.*”

Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, Vicar General, celebrated the solemnity in Assisi, where he also participated in the meeting of the Conference of Ministers General of the First Order and the TOR and the meeting of the Conference of the Franciscan Family.

In the General Curia, the Transit was presided over by Br. Salvador Burgos, Vicar of the House, whilst the Eucharist on the solemnity of the 4th October was presided over by Br. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, Master of the Order of Preachers.

The video of the Minister General's greetings:

[Italiano](#) – [English](#) – [Español](#)

The homily of the Minister General ([Português](#))

The homily of the Vicar General ([Italiano](#))



## Government of the Order

### Reflections by Br. Massimo

*September 2024*



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From the 5th - the 8th of August this year, I was blessed to visit the Saint Anthony of Lisbon Foundation in Timor Leste. I found there a vibrant fraternity, which is growing and looking with hope towards the future. The fraternity currently consists of 23 solemnly professed friars, 32 in simple vows, 3 novices, and 6 postulants spread out in seven different locations, including some that are truly missionary.

The Catholic faith is alive and lived out well there, amidst a simple and very welcoming people. I was particularly moved by the welcome I received there. The traditional rituals I engaged in with the local people have roots in their folklore but also beautifully expressed a unity of life, culture, and faith. Local people treasure their culture and draw their identity from their rich sense of tradition. The Friars share in the local culture and take special care of the Young Secular Franciscan Community, founded in 1988. That was the year that three Indonesian Friars requested and received permission to move to Timor and live closely among the native people as missionaries. They learned the local

language, the local mindset and inserted themselves well into the local culture. Closeness and attentive listening marked their style of life. The last 36 years have seen this closeness between the Friars and the locals grow and deepen. The diverse pastoral presence of the Friars includes education along with a wonderful pastoral echo program, missionary work, and a continued effort to radically bring the Church's mission right to the heart of ordinary people.

This small nation has fought long and hard for its independence, first from Portugal and then from Indonesia. Effects from the latest war can still be seen among the people as a whole and also on some of the individuals I encountered who have physical and emotional scars from the torture they endured. They are a small but determined people, willing to fight for their freedom and the ability to determine their own future. Truly the war has left profound wounds, but the people are strong and continue to move forward walking their journey together. They do not consider themselves doomed to repeat past wars but rather to learn from them how to move for-



ward. It seems to me an important lesson for many of us to learn in today's world.

Timor is rapidly changing these days. I couldn't help but notice an economic growth along with what seems to be a gradual, growing secularization of the culture. Faith and devotion are strongest in the eldest who love their traditions. But our brothers are aware of this. It was most heartening, therefore, to see the Friars at work in the lives of the young people, enjoying growth in numbers also among that community. The future looks good not only for the people of Timor but also for the Order and our mission to go out into the whole world. When one of our fraternities grows and flourishes, it is a blessing for all our Friars, spread throughout the world.

## 7 October, Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace

### Message of the Minister General



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A year after the terrorist attacks in Israel and after 12 months of conflict in the Middle East, a day of prayer and fasting for peace in the world was celebrated on the 7th October. The initiative was launched by Card. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM, Patriarch of Jerusalem of the Latins, who said: “In these twelve months we have witnessed tragedies that for their intensity and impact have deeply lacerated our conscience and our sense of humanity”.

The Minister General of the OFM, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, also joined the prayer by inviting all the friars of the Order, the contemplative nuns and the laity of the Franciscan Family to do the same. “With this gesture we too become, where we live, signs and mediators of peace, justice and reconciliation,” reads his message published on the 1st October.

Br. Francesco Patton, OFM, Custos of the Holy Land, in his letter had invited people to pray the Rosary: “The month of October is the Marian month dedicated to the prayer of the Rosary, let us try to enhance this form of prayer personally and in fraternity to implore the gift of peace”.

Read the General Minister’s message:

[Italiano](#) – [English](#) – [Español](#)

Read the letter from the Patriarch of the Latins in Jerusalem: [Italiano](#) - [English](#) - [Español](#)

Read the letter from the Custos of the Holy Land ([Italiano](#))

## General Curia Agenda



- ☑ Up until the 11th October, the meeting of the COM-PI and CONFRES Conferences will be held in the General Curia, with the participation of Br. Cesare Vaiani, Definitor General, and, on 11th October, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General.
- ☑ Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, Vicar General, will visit the Province of St. Francis of Quito in Ecuador until the 11th October.
- ☑ Br. John Wong, Definitor General, will be in Sydney (Australia) until October 10 for the Assembly of the Province of the Holy Spirit.
- ☑ Up until 13 October, the Animation Offices of the General Curia will meet the African Conference in Lomé (Togo).
- ☑ From the 14th-16th October, Br. César Kulkamp will participate remotely in the Chapter of Mats of the Bolivarian Conference.
- ☑ On the 14th October, Br. Massimo will celebrate Mass for the inauguration of the Academic Year at the Pontifical University *Antonianum*, in Rome.
- ☑ From the 14th- 18th October the General Definitory will meet in Krakow (Poland) with the Ministers and Custodes of the North Slavic Conference; from the 19th – 23rd October he will meet in Dublin (Ireland) the Ministers and Guardians of the Anglophone Conference (ESC).
- ☑ On the 20th October, Br. Massimo and Br. Gianni Califano, Postulator General, will participate in St. Peter’s at the Mass for the Canonization of the Martyrs of Damascus.
- ☑ On the 24th October, Br. Massimo will be in Zagreb (Croatia) for the blessing of the friary of St. Francis restored after the earthquake.
- ☑ From the 23rd – 25th October, Br. Fabio César Gomez, General Assistant *pro Monialibus*, will participate in the Assembly of the Confederation of St. Agnes in Prague in Chevilly-Larue, France.



## News from the Entities

### South Lebanon: the help of the Franciscans *The testimony of Br. Toufic Bou Merhi, OFM*



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The expansion of the conflict in the Middle East to South Lebanon has caused hundreds of civilian casualties and thousands of displaced persons. In Tyre there is a Franciscan fraternity that has opened the doors of the convent to accommodate families who survived the bombings and without a roof under which to sleep. In this fraternity live Br. Toufic Bou Merhi, OFM and Br. Richa Pierre, OFM; we have collected the testimony of Br. Toufic, parish priest of the Latins.

#### *What are you doing for the civilian population?*

What we know how to do is to be Franciscans for the people and in the midst of the people: our doors are open, we try to be close to them. At the moment we welcome over 150 people in our convent in Tyre, including 70 children, the rest are women and men. We don't let him miss anything thanks also to the friends around us; We brought them mattresses, offered water and food three times a day. The big problem is to manage this situation at a logistical and health level: we don't have many bathrooms; we do not have the facilities to welcome so many people. Our friary is small, but our heart is big, so we keep the shack going...

#### *How do you manage to feed so many people?*

What I can say is that Providence, especially in these difficult times, gives us lessons: I don't know where and how the food comes from, but people are calling friends to help, people I don't even know are calling the friary to offer their help.

#### *How is the situation right now?*

We see suffering around us, we see people who are afraid, who have had to leave home but who do not know where to go. They let Providence guide them. They are people who have no religion or colour for us: our doors are open to everyone; our hands are outstretched to help. I thank all those who are thinking about it and who give us a hand; I thank the Lord first for the strength, health and all the graces He gives us. We are close to ours, people to our villagers, to the suffering people and together with them we cry out: "no more massacres, no more war!". War does not solve problems, it does not give peace, but only feeds hatred; War

does not give rights, only destruction. Keep praying for us: we need many prayers for this massacre to end, thank you all.

Br. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General of the OFM, expressed his closeness to the brothers and victims of the war in South Lebanon: "I am following the situation in Lebanon these days through the brothers of the Custody of the Holy Land and I can listen to the burden of pain that war and the death of so many innocents brings with it. We see the war now spreading in the Middle East and the concern is growing ever greater. Peace seems impossible, yet it is precisely now that we must pray and hope more and support the life and hope of so many people who suffer from the consequences of the conflict and of our Friars Minor who always remain close to them, even at personal risk."

Pope Francis also addressed a thought to the Lebanese victims in the general audience on September 25: "I am saddened by the news coming from Lebanon, where in recent days intense bombings have caused many victims and destruction. I hope that the international community will make every effort to stop this terrible escalation. It is unacceptable! I express my closeness to the Lebanese people, who have already suffered too much in the recent past".



**Spiritual retreat “The Testament of Francis”**  
*Friars of the Province of “St. Elizabeth” (Germany)*



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From the 16th to 25th September 2024, the friars of the German Franciscan Province of St. Elizabeth made their spiritual retreat in Assisi and its surroundings, on the theme: “The Testament of St. Francis”. Under the guidance of Br. Johannes Baptist Freyer, they visited places related to the Testament and present in the Franciscan Sources, which are not usually part of the itinerary of groups of pilgrims to Assisi. It was an intense examination of the origins, but also of the present and future of our fraternity.

The main questions were: “For St. Francis, what was important to preserve?”, but also: “For us, what is important to preserve today?”

Br. Albert Schmucki, Definitor General, joined the group for a day to report on the current situation of the Order, especially with regard to the Provinces in Europe.

The themes and places of the individual stages were Penance and Mercy (Test 1-3) in San Rufino d’Arce and San Damiano. Living the Gospel with brothers and sisters (Test 14-15) at the SS. Pietà di Farnetto in Colombella. Simplicity of life and poverty (Test 16-17, 24) in Montecasale. The greeting of peace (Test 23) in Santa Maria della Vittoria, Gubbio. Rule and obedience (Test 27-28, 34-39) in Monteluco. My testament – What is important to me to pass on to Rocca Sant’Angelo. Prayer and the Di-

vine Office (Test 18-19, 30) at the Speco di Narni. Work and alms (Test 20-22) in Stroncone. Faith in the Church (Test 4-13, 25-26) at San Giacomo de Muro Rupto.

The historical and spiritual work with the sources of the Order was a moment of enrichment and fraternity for all. Even the oldest member of the group, Br. Heinz-Meinolf Stamm (85), who taught for many years as a professor of canon law in Rome, was amazed by the new perspectives on the Order and fraternity that has finally presented themselves.

**Solemn Professions**



*14th September, Prov. Immaculate Conception of the BVM (USA)*

Br. Daniel Cavalieri, Br. Jack Sidoti

*10th September, Prov. St. Michael the Archangel (Italia)*

Br. Gianmarco Maria Cellamare, Br. Giuseppe Piarulli

*7th September, Prov. Sts. Cyril and Methodius (Croatia)*

Br. Andrej Jozić, Br. Davor Palić

*Information received from the General Secretariat*

## “The Franciscans in Hispanic America” International Congress in Spain to remember the 12 Apostles of Mexico



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From the 21st-26th October, the International Congress “Franciscans in Hispanic America: Revision and Interpretation of the Legacy of the Twelve Apostles of Mexico” will be held in Spain. 5 days of talks to analyze the historical journey of the 12 friars of the Belvís de Monroy convent in Extremadura who arrived in Mexico 500 years ago, pioneers of the spread of Christianity in the so-called “New Spain” of the time and defenders of respect for the rights of Native Americans. They spread Franciscan values, leaving behind their humanizing action, which is still fully valid as an inspiring principle of human rights policies in Latin America.

The Congress, organized by the European and Ibero-American Foundation of Yuste (FAEIY) and the Royal Academy of Extremadura of Letters and Arts (RAEX), aims to bear witness to the work of the Twelve Apostles of Mexico, whose action today stands as a model of universal humanism, in defense of equality and human dignity.

The Congress is divided into two phases: in Guadalupe (21st and 22nd October) to enhance the Twelve Apostles and their direct action in New Spain; in Cáceres (24th and 25th October) and Belvís de Monroy (26th October) to highlight the rich legacy they left behind.

**CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL**

**LOS FRANCISCANOS EN LA AMÉRICA HISPANA:  
REVISIÓN E INTERPRETACIÓN DEL LEGADO DE  
LOS “DOCE APÓSTOLES DE MÉXICO”**

<p>21 y 22 de octubre de 2024 Monasterio de Santa María de Guadalupe</p>	<p>24 y 25 de octubre de 2024 Complejo Cultural San Francisco - Cáceres</p>	<p>26 de octubre de 2024 Convento de San Francisco del Berrocal - Belvís de Monroy</p>
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Ilustraciones de Mayte Alvarado, Descalzos. Los doce apóstoles de México. Fundación Academia Europea e Iberoamericana de Yuste

ORGANIZAN: FUNDACIÓN YUSTE ACADEMIA EUROPEA E IBEROAMERICANA

REAL ACADEMIA DE EXTREMADURA DE LAS LETRAS Y LAS ARTES

INSCRIPCIÓN

It will be possible to participate in the Congress both in person and remotely; registration is free and compulsory and must be completed by the 11th October [at this link](#).



## Franciscan Centenaries

### Centenary of the Stigmata in Goma Democratic Republic of the Congo



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In the context of celebrating 800 years of the Stigmata of St. Francis from the 16th-17th September 2024, the Franciscan family organized a pilgrimage in the refugee camp where our brothers and sisters are stigmatized by life and the effects of the war in Goma - Northern Kivu.

The decision was carried out of carrying out by the com-

mission of the representatives from the Franciscan family who work in Bukavu region, in easter part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

An intensive activity in the area of ongoing formation, enabled the friars to organize catechesis on the stigmata of St. Francis and on the pardon of Assisi through conferences in Franciscan parishes in the region of Bukavu



which was broadcasted by radio Maria of Bukavu sensitizing all the faithful in the region. The whole day of 17th September 2024 was characterized by four principal events:

1. The Eucharistic celebration which was presided by Fr. Marie-Pascal Rushura, Vicar Provincial of the Province of St. Benedict the African at the convent of the friars Minor in Goma with the participation of all the pilgrims.

2. Visting and listening to the refugees in the camp of Lushagala. The delegation of thirty-five pilgrims from the Franciscan family listened to the refugees in small groups sharing their on their daily life as refugees.

3. There followed public catechesis in the context of being a refueged and on the gift of the stigmata. The catechesis was given by friars Gustave Muderhwa and Marie-Pascal. It was a message of compassion, comfort and human contact from the sons and daughters of St. Francis of Assisi which brought joy to the refugees.

4. Distribution of things such as food and other things which were donated by the Christians from parishes and some other groups such as charismatic movement in Lushangala refugee camp where the density of ten thousand refugees in one camp has caused a lot of humanitarian disaster in the country. Unfortunately, they are no measures put in place that guarantee the living of the refugees.

The Franciscan family noted the presence of much suffering among the old people and persons with disability.

When food is distributed in the camps those who profit are the fittest. Those who are weak find themselves at the margins. This category of the refugees needs particular attention.

During the distribution, the Franciscan family begun with this category. This brought a positive impact to all the refugees.

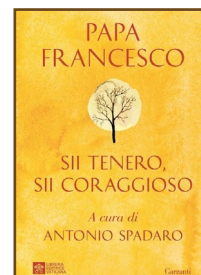
*Fr. Gustave Muderhwa, OFM  
Provincial Moderator for Ongo-*

*ing Formation in the Province of St. Benedict the African*

## Franciscan Bookmark



### Sii tenero, sii coraggioso



Papa Francesco

Edited by  
p. Antonio  
Spadaro

[Libreria Editrice  
Vaticana](#)

### Francisco de Asís Una vida inquieta



Br. Massimo  
Fusarelli, OFM

[Mensajero](#)

## 800 years since the arrival of the Franciscans in the British Isles

*Many celebrations in England to commemorate the anniversary*



WWW.OFM.ORG



Several events were held in the Province of Ireland to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the arrival of the Franciscan friars in the British Isles.

On the 10th September, the Franciscan Family made a pilgrimage to England: from Dover, where the first friars landed in 1224, to Canterbury, where they founded the first small fraternity. Another pilgrimage took place from the Catholic cathedral in Southwark (London) to the Anglican cathedral in the same city.

The Feast of the Stigmata was celebrated in the church of St. Francis in Stratford (London). Mass was presided over by the Bishop of Brentwood, Mgr. Alan Williams SM, whilst the homily was preached by Br. Aidan McGrath OFM, Minister of the Province of Ireland.

It was an opportunity to commemorate the centenary of the arrival of the friars, the 70 years of priesthood of Br. Brian McGrath OFM and the affiliation to the Province of Mr. S. T Mayair Gomes.



## Holy See

### Medjugorje Receives Nulla Osta from the Doctrine of the Faith *“The Queen of Peace”*



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The 19th of September, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith published a document entitled “Queen of Peace” to recognize and speak about the spiritual experiences connected to Medjugorje.

The Dicastery’s document, approved by Pope Francis, recognizes “the abundant spiritual fruits” that have been linked to the parish of St. James the Apostle in Medjugorje, a parish served by our Friars from the Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Herzegovina since its beginning.

In addition to their parochial work, our Friars accompany the many, many pilgrims that flock to this place of grace: ministering to them largely through the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist and teaching them about prayer and other tenets of the faith. The announcement has proclaimed a positive judgment with regard to the messages of Medjugorje, with some clarifications, and authorized a Nihil Obstat be declared to encourage public devotion. The Dicastery appreciates and acknowledges the validity of many of the spiritual experiences connected to this place of grace.

The links below can give you more detail as to what the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith declared as well as the Decree from the Bishop of the Diocese of Mostar-Duvno, under whose jurisdiction Medjugorje falls.

<https://www.vatican.va>

<https://biskupija-mostar.ba>

## Animation of the Order



### Meeting of the Executive Council for Missions and Evangelization General Curia, Rome



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From the 26th to 28th September 2024, the Executive Council for Missions and Evangelization (CEME) met in Rome. During these days of work, they learned about the initiatives followed by the Secretary General of Mission and Evangelization, Fr. Francisco Gomez Vargas.

In addition, with the help of experts, friars of the Order and others continued to work on the Ratio Evangelizationis, for which they have prepared the structure of the second part of the document.

Following the principles of the first part, the essence of the Franciscan charism was verified: the witness to the Gospel, indicated in the first chapter of the General Constitutions: *“The friars, followers of St. Francis, are obliged to lead a radically evangelical life, that is, in a spirit of prayer and devotion and in fraternal communion...”*. For this reason, the second chapter of the Ratio Evangelizationis will indicate a path for the evangelizing mission to be followed by the activities of the various fraterni-

ties, in the proclamation of the Gospel amongst the poor, in youth culture, on the digital continent, in parishes, in shrines, in education, in scientific activities, in social service and others.

The next meeting of the CEME is scheduled for December 2024.



### VI Continental JPIC Meeting of the Americas Concludes Boquete, Panama (September 16-21, 2024)



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26 Franciscan friars from various countries of the Americas (United States, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina and Brazil) met in the city of Boquete, Panama, to participate in the VI Continental Meeting on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

This meeting is held every three years and seeks to strengthen, resume and give continuity to the JPIC work of the Order of Friars Minor that pilgrim on the continent.

For five days, the friars shared experiences, challenges and good practices around the promotion of these values in their provinces or custody. The meeting focused on analyzing and systematizing

the actions carried out and evidencing the commitment of the JPIC animators on issues such as: migration and refugees; education; lifestyles; parishes and sanctuaries; and political advocacy.

“This meeting is a unique opportunity to reflect on how we are living in the current context, to be able to listen to the concrete projects and experiences of the friars and Sisters fill their existence and vocation with hope, since they are projects that reaffirm life in the midst of the diverse realities of the American continent,” said Br. Daniel N. Rodríguez Blanco, Director General of the JPIC Office.

### Why is this meeting important?

- **Strengthen the network:** The friars had the opportunity to get to know each other, share their challenges and celebrate their achievements, creating a stronger network to work together.
- **Inspiring action:** By sharing concrete experiences, participants inspired each other to continue working with creativity and passion in their communities.
- **Aligning efforts:** The meeting allowed for the alignment of the efforts of the friars throughout the Americas, ensuring that they work in a coordinated and effective manner.
- **Celebrating Franciscan spirituality:** In commemorating the VIII Centenary of the Stigmata of St. Francis, the friars reaffirmed their commitment to Franciscan spirituality and their call to follow in the footsteps of the Poverello of Assisi by touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others with hope.

### What were the main topics addressed?

- **Migration and forced displacement:** The friars discussed how they have accompanied mixed

groups of migrants and refugees from the continent, in order to promote joint actions through the Franciscan Network for Migrants of the Americas (RFM).

- **Education:** Innovative ways to integrate JPIC values into education, both formal and informal, were explored.
- **Lifestyles:** Participants reflected on how to live more sustainably and how to promote simple and supportive lifestyles inspired by the way of life of the Friars Minor especially in initial formation.
- **Parishes and shrines:** It was discussed how parishes and shrines can be spaces for meeting and social transformation.
- **Civil society and political advocacy:** The friars explored their participation in civil society and their impact on public policies to promote justice and peace.

Finally, the participants of the meeting highlighted the importance of networking and collaborating to achieve a significant impact on society. They also reaffirmed their commitment to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis, who dedicated his life to serving and welcoming those most in need, to promoting peace and reconciliation, to continue building the Kingdom of God.

“The only thing a JPIC animator needs to carry out his mission is passion: passion for Christ and passion for His people,” Br. Daniel noted.



## Deceased Brothers



- † 28th September: Br. Antonio Baù, Prov. St. Anthony of the Friars Minor (Italy)
- † 26th September: Br. Evaldo Teipel, Prov. St. Francis of Assisi (Brazil)
- † 25th September: Br. Godehard Elsing, Prov. NS of the Seven Joys (Brazil)
- † 20th September: Br. Pascual Barrio Fernández,

- Prov. Missionary of St. Anthony (Bolivia)
- † 18th September: Br. Salvador Gurrieri Di Pietro, Prov. Assumption of the BVM of the Rio de la Plata (Argentina); Joseph Cyril Baur, Prov. Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)

*Information received from the General Secretariat*

# Transitus Seraphici Patris Francisci



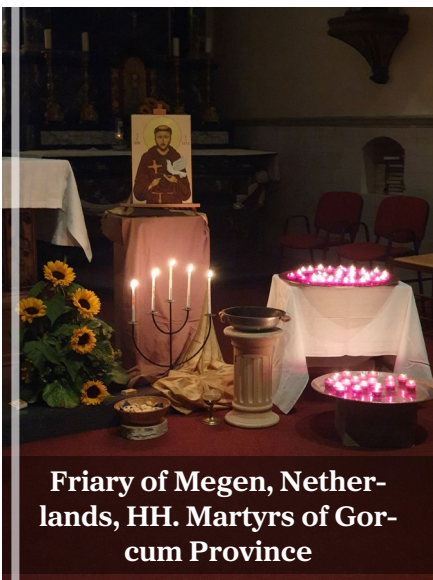
**Collina delle Croci, Lituania  
con OFS**



**Comunita di Csíksohely -  
Provincia San Stefano Re,  
Transilvania Romania**



**Convento Ntr Sra de los  
Ángeles de la Prov San  
Francisco Solano, Perú**



**Friary of Megen, Nether-  
lands, HH. Martyrs of Gor-  
cum Province**



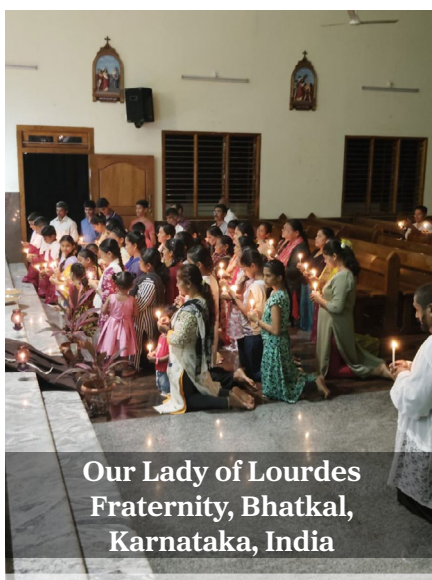
**Iglesia Nuestra Señora de  
Lourdes, Ofmcap, Dallas  
Texas USA**



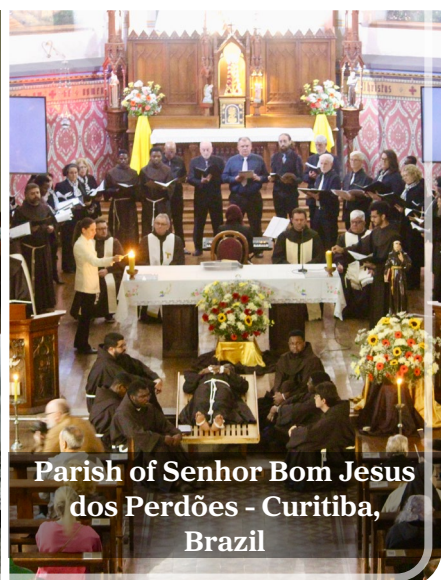
**NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF THE ABANDONED  
STA. ANA, MANILA, PHILIPPINES**



**OFS San Fernando Rey  
Ciudad de Resistencia, Pro-  
vincia del Chaco, Argentina**



**Our Lady of Lourdes  
Fraternity, Bhatkal,  
Karnataka, India**



**Parish of Senhor Bom Jesus  
dos Perdões - Curitiba,  
Brazil**

# Fraternitas



Parrocchia di San Bonaventura OFM di Hong Kong



Parroquia nuestra Señora del Rosario - Zumba Ecuador



Parroquia San Francisco de Asís Juigalpa, Nicaragua



Penitencial de San Agustín Palencia, España



Santuario Beato Giacomo di BITETTO



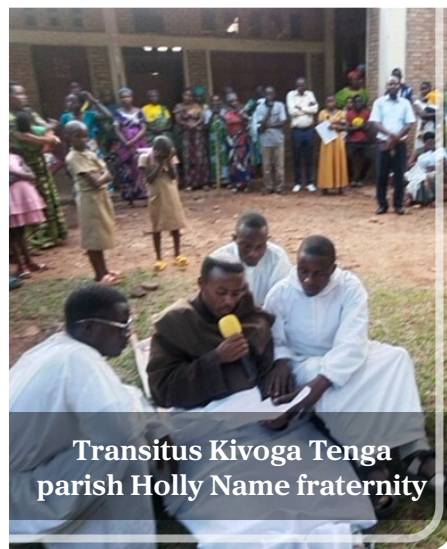
St Anthony's Friary, Bengaluru, India



ST. FRANCIS LEARNING CENTER ZAMBALS, PHILIPPINES



Templo del Convento de San Francisco - Irapuato Guanajuato, México



Transitus Kivoga Tenga parish Holly Name fraternity

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**OFM**  
Ordo Fratrum Minorum  
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